

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF SUPER ROMA'S HEALING
MINISTRY ON THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE: A CASE
STUDY OF GWERU AND MASVINGO DIOCESES**

BY

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DECLARATION

I the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has never been submitted to any college or university for academic credit.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the late Father Augustine Urayai.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ATR	African Traditional Religions
BCE	Before the Common Era
BSAC	British South African Company
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CCL	Code of Canon Law
CE	Common Era
DV	Dei Verbum
Fr.	Father
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
LCBL	Little Children of the Blessed Lady
LLCG	Light of Life Christian Group
LLF	Light of Life Fathers
LLS	Light of Life Sisters
OP	Order of Preachers
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PVO	Private Voluntary Organisation
SJI	Sisters of the Infant Jesus
ST	Saint
SMB	Bethlehem Missionary Society
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZCBC	Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference

ABSTRACT

Religious movements of renewal, revival and healing have been a key characteristic feature of Christianity in Zimbabwe. From as early as the pre-independence era, both national and transnational healing communities have operated with considerable vitality in their bid to put the Gospel into practice. The purpose of this research was to investigate the impact of Super Roma's healing ministry on Christianity in Zimbabwe, particularly on the Catholic Church where the movement is more pronounced. The study utilized the phenomenological, historical, sociological and theological methods. The unavailability of literature on Super Roma posed as limitation, thereby prompting the researcher to depend heavily on interviews to establish the impact of the ecumenically composed movement. Three research techniques were crucial in data collection, namely, interviews, questionnaires and sampling. Interviews were conducted at three mission stations where Father (Fr). Urayai, the protagonist of the movement operated as priest cum exorcist. These mission stations are: Mutero in Gutu district, St Kizito and Chinyuni in Zhombe and Chirumhanzu districts respectively. The impact of Super Roma's healing ministry was assessed at three theoretical levels, namely, membership, theology and practice. The information collected using narrative interviews was categorized based on objectives and interpreted qualitatively. Upon examination of research findings, it was established that Father Urayai's healing ministry that dates back to the late 60s provided both the foundation and context within which Super Roma emerged. Within the Roman Catholic circles, Super Roma has not been well received. It was often accused of introducing new doctrines that undermined some major articles of inter-denominationally accepted traditional Christian theology. For that reason, Super Roma has always operated on the fringes of traditional denominations, particularly the Roman Catholic Church. However, with faith healing occupying a key position in the life of the movement, the practice of Eucharistic intercommunion, a camouflaged strategy of 'stay and reform from within' as well as providing a safety net for orphans and other vulnerable children, Super Roma has gained ground as a national movement of Christian derivation in Zimbabwe. Against all odds, it has managed to recruit from a number of Zimbabwe's traditional mainline denominations.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 The concept of healing

A cursory examination of ancient cultures and religions reveals that from time immemorial, the practice of healing and exorcism has been a characteristic feature of ancient societies. Beliefs and practices of several ethnic religions and cultures exhibit a number of rituals directed at ensuring good health. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994:372) also confirms that illness and suffering that is associated with it have always been among the gravest problems that have confronted humanity from time immemorial. Consequently, from earliest times, means have always been sought to eradicate or at least alleviate pain and suffering.

The history of Christianity, like the history of other world religions and religious communities, carries with it the legacy of healing and health care. Zvobgo (1991:77-81) confirms that the Wesleyan Methodist medical missionaries relieved a great deal of suffering among Africans in Zimbabwe, especially in the rural areas where government hospitals and clinics were either very few or non-existent.

Whilst the history of a number of mainline churches reflects a legacy of healing and health care, statistics, however, indicate that on the African continent, the ministry of healing and deliverance has been dominated by African independent churches, Pentecostals and some charismatic communities (Mudyiwa 2014:196). A great variety of new religious movements have also taken advantage of the lack of the ministry of spiritual healing in some mainline churches to present themselves as alternatives to the institutional official denominations by claiming to offer what they refer to as clear and concrete answers to fundamental questions of the beyond (Arinze 1991). Over and above this, they claim to offer spiritual healing to their

members, employing some spiritual means (including exorcism) to heal and alleviate suffering.

The rise and spread of new religious movements has been viewed by Arinze (1991) as a marked phenomenon in the religious history of our times. Religious movements of renewal, revival and revitalization have been a characteristic feature of Christianity since its earliest centuries. These movements vary greatly in origin, beliefs, size, means of recruitment, behaviour pattern, attitudes towards the Church, other religious groups and society (Arinze 1991). An examination of the history of Christianity in general and Christianity in Africa in particular also testifies to this observation.

Whilst new religious movements often operate with considerable missionary impetus and vitality, an analysis of Christian history and thought attests to the fact that most new religious movements have always had a double-folded impact upon the institutional traditional Christian Church. Whilst some have intensified Christianity, others have greatly radicalized it, leaving the Church deeply divided (Arinze 1991). With their emphasis on healing and deliverance, a number of such religious movements have also left an indelible mark on Christian teaching, institution, worship, patterns of conduct among other aspects of Christianity. As noted by Daneel (1987), the growth in the number of these movements, particularly in Zimbabwe cannot be ignored.

One such new religious movement of Christian derivation that cannot be ignored in Zimbabwe is Super Roma. This research makes a penetrative investigation of the impact of Super Roma's healing ministry on the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe. Whilst Super Roma has been popularized by its beliefs and practices as a new religious movement, one of its most specific powers of attraction that dates back to the late 60s has been its unique

healing ministry enshrined in the person of Father (Fr.) Augustine Urayai.

1.1 Area of investigation

This study is pursued in the area of Religious Studies under the discipline of Christianity in Africa. It investigates the impact of Super Roma's healing ministry on the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe from 1964 to 2016. Within the Roman Catholic circles, healing is mainly centered on the Sacrament of Healing or Anointing of the sick. This Sacrament is administered by priests and Bishops to the sick members of the Roman Catholic community by anointing them on the forehead and palms with duly blessed olive oil (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1994). Following her tradition, the Roman Catholic Church has also retained the practice of exorcism, in spite of it being characterised by a number of problems.

Fr. Augustine Urayai, a charismatic Roman Catholic priest of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Gweru, practiced exorcism from 1969 to 2003. In the early 70s, this dimension of faith healing culminated in the transformation of his healing ministry into a dynamic ecumenical movement, independent in its organization, leadership and religious expression. The movement is currently referred to as Super Roma within the Roman Catholic Church circles. Within the Roman Catholic circles, Super Roma is perceived as an instrument of division, not in communion with the Roman Catholic Church, practically and theologically. However, a certain section of Roman Catholics views the same as an instrument of unity, essentially based on the missionary mandate. In view of this double-folded perspective, there is therefore a glaring need to carry out a penetrative study of Super Roma and all its ramifications.

Three distinct 'interest groups' within the Roman Catholic Church circles will be crucial in examining this impact: the white missionary clergy, the black indigenous clergy and the traditional black laity. Three levels of impact assessment are also critical, namely; the level of

Catholic practice, membership and theology. The study confines itself to a limited number of parishes in the Roman Catholic Dioceses of both Gweru and Masvingo, namely, Mutero in Gutu district, St Kizito and Chinyuni in the Zhombe and Chirumhanzu districts respectively. These are the areas where the phenomenon under investigation has been most pronounced.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The healing ministry of Fr. Urayai that gave birth to Super Roma has been well documented. However, little has been documented on the precipitating factors that led to the birth, development, and impact of Super Roma on the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe. This study, therefore, provides the missing link. It is hoped that, by making such an investigation, the impact of Super Roma's healing ministry on the level of membership, theology and practice shall be critically examined and evaluated.

1.3 Research questions

In order to achieve its objectives, the following research questions shall guide the study:

- a) What is the impact of Fr. Urayai's healing ministry on the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe?
- b) What are the factors that favoured the birth and development of Super Roma in pre and post-colonial Zimbabwe?
- c) What is the missiological significance of Super Roma in the continuum of the study of Christianity in Africa?
- d) To what extent has Super Roma theology affected the traditional Roman Catholic theology in Zimbabwe?

1.4 Justification

An analysis and evaluation of the factors that influence the origin and development of religious movements, particularly on the African continent, is one of the main tasks facing missiologists today (Daneel 1987:68). Whilst a number of researchers of African Independent movements have previously linked secessions mainly to Protestant churches and not the Roman Catholic Church, this view does not accord with the facts on the ground. Andersson (1958), Daneel (1987) and Sundkler (1961) among others have observed that since the 1960s there have been secessions from the Roman Catholic Church as well. Such secessions include the Catholic Church of the Sacred among the Bemba of Zambia (1955) and the Legion of Mary (1963) of the Luo people of Kenya among others.

Super Roma as a new religious movement in Zimbabwe has been in operation for the past four decades (1970-2016). Notwithstanding the bulk of existing literature available on other Independent charismatic movements and interdenominational associations, hitherto, little has been documented so far on this relatively young and fast growing movement, save for the works of Shoko (2003 & 2006) and Sibanda (1999) on the healing ministry and theology of Fr. Urayai, the Super Roma protagonist. The need for a comprehensive scholarly document that records the character and contribution of the movement per se is therefore pivotal. By engaging in this study we hope to make a contribution to the understanding of the missiological significance of Super Roma not only in Zimbabwe but in the study of the dynamics of Christianity in Africa as a whole.

1.5 Aim of the study

The study seeks to investigate the impact of Super Roma on the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe particularly within the Roman Catholic Dioceses of Gweru and Masvingo.

1.6 Objectives of the study

The study seeks to:

- a) Provide a background account of Fr Urayai's healing ministry.
- b) Evaluate the impact of Fr. Urayai's healing ministry within the Roman Catholic Church circles in Zimbabwe.
- c) Explore the dynamics and factors that favoured or inhibited the birth and development of Super Roma.
- d) Examine the missiological significance of Super Roma.
- e) Analyse the effects of Super Roma on the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe.
- f) Evaluate the relevance of Super Roma theology in relation to traditional Roman Catholic Theology.

1.7 Research methodology

1.7.1 Theoretical framework

The study utilizes the phenomenological, historical, sociological and the theological approaches. It also used the comparative method.

Phenomenology as an analytical method was used to examine the various forms of Fr. Urayai's healing ministry in order to isolate its basic patterns. The method emphasizes careful observation, thereby enabling the researcher to obtain information that serves both the insider and outsider (Cox 1992). The method describes and classifies phenomena whereas history examines and interprets the meaning of religious data. As a descriptive method, the phenomenological method records data without judging its value, describing the phenomena as accurately as possible. According to Cox (1992), *epoche*, (bracketing out), empathy and

eidetic intuition are always key features in the study of any religious phenomena.

Whilst the phenomenological method allows the phenomena to speak for themselves and respects the uniqueness of the religious phenomena under study (Cox 1992), *epoché* and empathy are, however, difficult to sustain, for no one can successfully play a *tabula rasa* in real life. Thus, as a Roman Catholic and participant in the Super Roma movement, the phenomenological method assisted in minimizing judgement and bias that the researcher previously had towards Fr. Urayai and the Super Roma movement. Following the same phenomenological method, the researcher did not view a-priori the healing ministry of Fr. Urayai or endorsed uncritically, the beliefs and practices of the Super Roma movement. Thus, the phenomenological method was critical in allowing the Super Roma phenomena to speak for themselves.

The phenomenological method was complemented by the sociological and theological methods. Bourdillon (1991) ranks sociology of religion as a methodological approach to the study of religion as it affects and is affected by other social institutions. The sociological method critically examines how society influences individual behaviour. It also evaluates the impact of individual behaviour upon the society as human behavior can be directly observed and interpreted (Haralambos & Holborn 2000).

Whilst improper interpretation is often regarded as one major weakness of the sociological approach, in this study, the sociological method did not simply provide a systematic study of the impact of Super Roma within the Catholic Church circles and beyond, but also the impact of other Christian denominations upon the Super Roma movement. Through the same method, the researcher was also helped to situate Super Roma in relation to other new religious movements in Zimbabwe. Thus, the comparative method was more pronounced than

both the sociological and theological method.

The theological method focused mainly on the theological significance of the Super Roma movement. Etymologically, theology comes from two Greek words, *theos* (God) and *logos* (word). Literally, it is the words about God or the study of God. Augustine of Hippo (354-430) defines theology (*theologia*) as reasoning or discussion concerning the deity. In spite of its weakness of putting more emphasis on Christianity, the theological method, apart from giving data, also acted as a critique to the data collected through other methods. The same method was also used to evaluate the missiological significance and general impact of the Super Roma movement.

Taking into cognizance of the fact that every methodology, as with every paradigm, has its own strengths and weaknesses (Pazmino 2009), harnessing the phenomenological, historical, sociological and theological methods in this study minimized biases and limitations of each particular method to a greater extent. With mixed methodology, biases and limitations simply cancelled each other.

1.7.2 Data gathering

In this study, three research techniques were crucial in data collection, namely, interviews, questionnaires and sampling. Interviews were conducted in three key remote mission stations in the dioceses of Gweru and Masvingo where Fr. Urayai operated as a Roman Catholic priest. These are, Mutero Mission in Masvingo province where he had his first inaugural case of healing, St Kizito Zhombe in the Midlands province which became the cradle of Super Roma in the 70s and finally Chinyuni Mission, also in the Midlands province, where he spent the last 13 years of his healing ministry before he succumbed to diabetes in 2003. A total of twenty people per every mission station were interviewed as this number was considered

adequate and big enough to capture the kind of information that this study sought to unravel. Thus, the study interviewed 60 participants.

Purposive sampling was used to interview the Roman Catholic bishops, priests, brothers, nuns and Super Roma leadership. The same method was also employed when interviewing Catholics and non-Catholics from the three mission stations aforementioned. Whereas purposive sampling is often associated with researcher bias since subjects are selected because of some characteristic, random sampling often increases credibility. It is viewed as accurate and rigorous (Patton 1990).

Thus, to maximize credibility, open ended questionnaires were administered in both English and Shona so as to cover a wide spectrum of people. The questionnaires were also translated into Ndebele in order to cater for the Ndebele speaking community in Gweru Diocese. Data were collected on recorded audio and video tapes on Fr. Urayai's life and healing sessions.

The information collected using narrative interviews was categorized based on objectives and interpreted qualitatively. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics where applicable. The distinction is often made that quantitative methods stress objectivity whereas qualitative methods include subjectivity along with objectivity Pazmino (2009).

1.8 Ethical statement

During the research process, the researcher made sure that there was voluntary participation of all participants. Particular attention was paid to anonymity and confidentiality of participants. Thus, potentially identifiable information provided by participants has been treated in strict confidence or given pseudo names. Participants who requested for anonymity have not been divulged in the thesis. Where the researcher disclosed names of participants,

prior consent of the participant had been granted. To maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of participants who preferred anonymity, the researcher assured all participants that all data collection forms would be destroyed once the thesis is submitted and accepted.

1.9 Literature review

Charles Sibanda (1999) offers one of the pioneering academic studies on the healing ministry and theology of Fr. Urayai that will be complemented by this study. He attests to the position that although Fr. Urayai is a controversial towering spiritual personality in the Roman Catholic Church, he possessed a God-given healing gift.

Tabona Shoko (2003 &2006) maintains a similar position to that of Sibanda (1999), as he also explored the healing ministry and theology of Fr. Urayai. Whilst the works of Sibanda (1999) and Shoko (2003 &2006) are helpful to this study by way of providing background information on Fr. Urayai, the two tend to be sectoral as they focus mainly on Fr. Urayai's healing ministry and theology. Not much is said on the impact per se, a significant gap that this study intends to fill. The impact shall be assessed at three levels, namely: Roman Catholic practice, membership and theology. Apart from exploring Fr. Urayai's method of diagnosis and therapy, the study is set to be broader as it further explores the dynamics and factors that have favoured or inhibited the birth and development of Super Roma, whose beliefs and practices are a reflection of a combination of some strong Platonic, Stoic and Gnostic tendencies.

Both the social and Christian milieu that shaped Fr. Urayai are critical for this study. Walter Nyatsanza (1995) offers short biographies of Gweru diocesan priests. In his biography of Fr. Urayai, Nyatsanza highlights the social milieu that shaped Fr. Urayai and chronicles the various mission stations where he worked as a Catholic priest. However, Nyatsanza does not

examine Fr. Urayai's healing ministry or further investigate the mission and challenges of Fr. Urayai's Super Roma in pre and postcolonial Zimbabwe.

The Christian milieu during the time of Fr. Urayai is well documented by A. J. Dachs and W. F. Rea (1979) and Janice McLaughlin (1996) among others. Dachs and Rea (1979) explore the work of the missionaries in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) from 1879 to 1979 that culminated in the establishment of mission schools, medical centers and seminaries. The two also recorded the historic ordination of Father Augustine Urayai, Father Francis Mugadzi and Father Kizito Mavima at Gokomere Mission in Masvingo in 1964 as the first black priests for the Catholic Diocese of Gweru. McLaughlin (1996) narrates the various contributions of Roman Catholic missions during the liberation struggle. Whilst the works of McLaughlin (1996), Dachs and Rea (1979) highlight the Roman Catholic milieu that shaped Fr. Urayai, these works did not trace the impact of the same Fr. Urayai's healing ministry within the Roman Catholic Church circles, a gap that this study intends to fill.

The dynamics of Christianity in Africa indicate that healing and exorcism was not peculiar or restricted to the Middle Ages as exemplified by the works of the former Zambian Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo (1991) and the Tanzanian Roman Catholic exorcist, Father Felician Nkwera (1936). When the African contexts had demanded urgent theological and pastoral responses to real African problems such as illness, Milingo (1930) and Nkwera (1936) stood up to provide an alternative therapy for their respective societies. Whilst Milingo and Nkwera shed light on issues such as the causes of illnesses, symptoms of diabolic attack, healing methods and procedure among others, they are inadequate to serve as resource books on the impact of Fr. Urayai's healing ministry in Zimbabwe due to their contexts that are largely non Zimbabwean.

From a Zimbabwean perspective, Marthinus Daneel (1970& 1987) engaged in penetrative studies of the African Independent Churches of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and observed that their ability to go beyond conventional healing methods and probe sufficiently into the spiritual causes of illnesses acted and continue to act as their key recruitment technique. Paul Mwazha (1998) chronicles how God commissioned him to minister to the sick. The works of Daneel and Mwazha of Africa are also of paramount importance to this research as they reflect a Zimbabwean context. The two works, however, do not recognize healing in the mainline churches, particularly the Roman Catholic Church where Fr. Urayai, Milingo and Nkwera were practitioners. Whilst Mwazha and Daneel associated faith healing and speaking in tongues with African Independent churches, their analyses did not reflect the present situation in the mainline churches that are today practicing both faith healing and speaking in tongues as represented by the Catholic Charismatic group in Zimbabwe and Shoko's (2003) article on spiritual healing in Zimbabwe's mainline Churches.

J.N.K Mugambi & L. Magesa (1990) focus on two aspects of ecumenical movements in Africa. They first trace the history of the Ecumenical Movement on the African Continent, from the early North African Church Fathers to the Missionary Movement of the 19th Century. Second, they attempt to characterize the relationship between the Ecumenical Movement and the streams of Christianity found on the continent such as Catholics, Protestants, Pentecostals and Charismatic Churches. D. Maxwell (2007) also traces the transformation of Ezekiel Guti's prayer band, the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God into a significant religious movement in Zimbabwe and beyond. Whilst Mugambi and Magesa's (1990) article is too general, Maxwell's (2007) contribution is more particular and Zimbabwe-focused. However, both works shed light on the context in which Ecumenical Movements are operating on the African continent. In the light of the two works, there is therefore, need to unravel the interconnections between Fr. Urayai's ecumenical movement and other

charismatic movements in Zimbabwe, particularly on general factors that often characterize the birth of religious movements. The Encyclical letters of Pope Paul VI (1966 & 1975) that called for constant renewal for the Church and ecumenical collaboration at regional, national and local levels shall also be critical in examining the interconnections and implications.

The Christian Church has always faced challenges and reform even from its earliest stages. August Franzen (1969) catalogues the various challenges of the Christian Church since its inception some two thousand years ago. Norbert Brockman and Umberto Pescantini (1991) refer to such challenges as great tests of the Christian faith. Among such tests of faith are the sporadic bloody persecutions of the early Christians, various theological controversies, heresies, the split of the East and West in 1054, renaissance and reformation among others. Though the challenges of the Christian faith were treated in contexts other than our own, Hilaire Belloc (1975) and Verlyn D. Verbrugge (1984) shall be important in tracing and interpreting similarities and differences between developments within Super Roma and events that unfolded in the study of Christian History and Thought, particularly during the early and middle ages.

1.10 Breakdown of chapters

This study consists of six chapters. Whilst Chapter One is the general introduction, Chapter Two introduces Father Augustine Urayai's healing ministry as he laid the Super Roma foundation and provided the context within which Super Roma later emerged. Chapter Three focuses on the transformation of Father Urayai's healing ministry into a new religious movement. Of particular interest to this chapter are factors that led to the birth and development of Super Roma. Whereas Chapter Four explores the movement's organizational structure and theology, Chapter Five examines Super Roma challenges from 1970 to the

present. Chapter Six concentrates on data analysis as it evaluates the impact of Super Roma on the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter has, among other things, covered the area of investigation, statement of the problem, research questions, justification and objectives of the study. It has also covered research methodology, ethical statement and literature review. The next chapter introduces Fr. Urayai's healing ministry.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HEALING MINISTRY OF FATHER AUGUSTINE URAYAI AND LAYING OF THE FOUNDATION

2.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the study outlined its focus and undertook a review of the literature, alongside describing the research process. This chapter focuses on the healing ministry of Fr Augustine Urayai. An in depth exploration of the life and works of Fr. Urayai, Roman Catholic priest cum exorcist, is pre-requisite and basic to the understanding of the impact of his healing ministry and the various factors that later contributed to the birth of Super Roma in Zimbabwe.

This chapter introduces both Father Urayai and the healing ministry. It is divided into three main parts. The discussion about the evangelization of Zimbabwe by the White Fathers is covered in the first segment. Since it would not be possible within the scope of this particular segment to deal with the history of other mainline churches, I shall provide a close-up perspective on some key episodes in the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe. Exhausted as the history may appear, the discussion about the evangelization of Zimbabwe in this chapter is pivotal as it presents us with the Christian milieu and the precipitating factors that significantly contributed to the birth and development of Fr. Urayai's healing ministry. The second part covers background information to the person of Fr. Urayai and it concentrates more on his early life and vocation to priesthood. The third and main segment explores Fr. Urayai's actual healing ministry and methodology. Before a critical examination of the milieu in which Fr. Urayai's healing ministry is undertaken, it is critical to briefly look at the meaning of the name 'Super Roma.'

2.1 Problem of nomenclature

In the phenomenological study of religion, James Cox (1992:31) refers to naming the phenomena as one of the nine crucial steps. In his step-by-step method, he underlines the point that to avoid distortion, descriptive categories of types of phenomena should be as value free as possible. Some words, although not wrong in themselves, carry connotations which misrepresent the actual meaning for the believer. The phenomenologist, therefore, must be aware of the danger of creating names which prejudice his descriptions (1992: 31).

From an interview carried out on Father Urayai and tape recorded by Mr. Alex Sibanda in 1994, Fr. Urayai underscores the point that the name ‘Super Roma’ is often used as a nickname or an incriminating label (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94). The official documents of the ecumenical movement that also operates as a registered private volunteer organisation, however, reflect the name, The Light of Life Christian Group (LLCG) as the official name (LLCG Activity Calendar 2010).

Since earlier on methodology I have insisted that I shall employ a phenomenological approach and privilege the practitioners’ own self-understanding, the name Super Roma, which happens to be the more popular of the two names shall, therefore, feature more prominently in the thesis. Most importantly, pioneering academic studies¹ on the same phenomenon have also used the name Super Roma. Thus, being fully aware of Cox’s (1992:31) factors to consider when selecting names, namely, avoiding distortion and making sense of religious phenomena, the use of the name Super Roma is simply the researcher’s personal preference and may not be universally accepted by the group to which it is applied. The ramifications of the name

¹In 2006, Shoko published an article in the Swedish Missiological Themes under the title “Super Roma: Towards a New Theology of Healing in the Roman Catholic Church”. Earlier in 1999, Charles Sibanda had also alluded to the same name in his Honours dissertation submitted to the University of Zimbabwe under the title: “An Inquiry into the Ministry and Theology of Fr. Augustine Urayai.”

shall be dealt with later in the third chapter. For now, let us turn to the evangelization of Zimbabwe by the white missionaries and examine the milieu in which Fr. Urayai's healing ministry was born.

2.2 The evangelisation of Rhodesia

The history of the evangelisation of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) by the white missionaries is remarkably well documented by Dachs and Rea (1979), Ignatius Zvarevashe (2005) and McLaughlin (1996) among others. Even though the history appears an exhausted one, it is still necessary to briefly zoom in on some major episodes in the evangelization of Zimbabwe in order to determine the extent to which Fr. Urayai was shaped by his own Christian milieu.

The coming of the Christian Church in Zimbabwe can be classified as comprising three discernible phases which, following on the same logic, may be referred to as the first, the second and third attempts.

2.2.1 Phase one

The earliest known and recorded attempts to evangelise the country of Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) was made by the Jesuit Society in 1560. In particular, the attempt was through Fr. Gonzalo da Silveira, a Jesuit of Portuguese origin sent to convert the famous Karanga King, the Munhumutapa, popularly known as the 'Gold King' by the Portuguese (Zvarevashe 2005:27). Within three months of his efforts to evangelise, the Jesuit priest was assassinated. J. Weller and J. Linden (1984) record and confirm that during the night of 15-16 March 1561, the murderers stole into Silveira's hut, threw a rope round his neck, strangled him and threw his body into the Msengezi river. Fr. Gonzalo da Silveira's death marked the end of the first attempt.

2.2.2 Phase two

From the first, rather abortive attempt by the Jesuits, no other evangelizing mission is on record until the 17th Century when a second attempt was spearheaded by the Portuguese Dominican Friars. It was not until 1607 that they began to work in Zimbabwe. These came during the struggles for the throne by the various Munhumutapa houses. The Dominicans, however, met with great difficulties and gave up, and this marked the end of the second attempt.

2.2.3 Phase three

The third and successful phase characterizes the present Catholic Church in Zimbabwe. The phase was once again championed by the Jesuits who returned to present day Zimbabwe under the patronage and protection of Cecil John Rhodes. Rhodes had obtained a Royal Charter for his British South African Company (B.S.A.C) to occupy the land bound to the south and north respectively by the Limpopo and the Zambezi rivers. During this period the missionaries came as chaplains with the Pioneer Column while the Dominican Sisters came as nurses. Dachs and Rea (1979:30), Zvarevashe (2005) and McLaughlin (1996) among others concur that this attempt by the Jesuits and the Dominican Sisters and other religious congregations, such as the Trappists, Marianhill missionaries, and Precious Blood Sisters signified the successful period that implanted the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe. The same was also confirmed by Randolph (1978) when he asserts that effective missionary work started in Mashonaland in 1890 under Fr. Prestage and Fr. Andrew Hartmann who came as chaplains. Mother Patrick of the Order of Preachers (OP) also came with her assistants as nurses and teachers with the Pioneer Column from South Africa together with the B.S.A Company in 1890 (Dachs & Rea 1979:30).

Whilst Randolph (1978) underlines that effective missionary work started with the coming of

the Pioneer Column, Zvarevashe (2005:32) argues that the Church was established in Zimbabwe in 1879, eleven years before the colonialists came into the country. Randolph (1978:22) also observed that, at that time, the population of the territory which is now Zimbabwe must have been more than half a million, but less than the 700, 000 estimated population for the year 1901 when statistical records first began to be published.

As missionary efforts intensified, various Catholic dioceses were created to share and make missionary work easier. Education and health were also among missionaries' top priorities as government partners. Dachs and Rea (1979: 30-43) also confirmed the steady increase in the Catholic Mission establishments through out the country. To date, the Roman Catholic Church has a total of eight Dioceses, namely Harare and Bulawayo Archdioceses, Dioceses of Gweru, Mutare, Hwange, Chinhoyi, Gokwe and Masvingo. Augustine Urayai belonged to the Diocese of Gweru.² Appendix 1 shows the 8 Roman Catholic Dioceses of Zimbabwe.

2.2.4 Catholic health delivery system

The history of Christianity in Zimbabwe carries with it a legacy of health care. As far as Roman Catholic health delivery system is concerned, the Church in Zimbabwe is to a larger extent indebted to the Dominican Sisters of King William's, who later founded a separate congregation in Zimbabwe, coming to be known as Dominican Sisters of Harare (Dachs & Rea 1979:15). Describing the wonderful missionary work done by the Mary Ward Sisters who took over Musiso Hospital in Zaka from the Dominican Sisters, Dachs and Rea (1979:151) confirm: 'In no time St Anthony's so grew as to include a primary school, a hospital run by the Mary Ward Sisters and a Swiss Doctor, an orphanage and 25 out schools.'

² The Diocese of Gweru was raised to the status of a Diocese on the 1st of January 1955, having been erected in 1946 as Fort Victoria Prefecture and committed to the Bethlehem Missionaries from Switzerland. Masvingo Diocese was carved from Gweru in 1999 with Michael Bhasera as its first Bishop.

The Dominican Sisters complemented the work of the priests in a very big way. Whilst sisters concentrated more on the physical health of both Catholics and non-Catholics by establishing hospitals and clinics around the country, their counterparts, the priests who were predominantly whites, concentrated on administering healing sacraments instituted by Jesus, namely Penance and the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, among other Sacraments.

However, whilst the healing apostolate of both priests and nuns helped missionaries get closer to the local people, it did not provide answers to all African health problems. The area of spirit possession and deliverance remained unaddressed, thereby creating a gap that called for urgent attention. Thus, critics of white missionaries argue that despite its successful medical history on the Zimbabwean soil, purely western medicine and approach did not probe sufficiently into the spiritual causes of African illnesses (Daneel 1987:22). Sometimes it left Africans deeply dissatisfied or aggravated the situation.

Quoting from Pretorius (1972), Daneel (1987:77) accused missionaries of preaching a superficial and impoverished gospel and further criticized them for failing to see the validity of a completely different cosmological system of thought. He calls it, 'cosmological underestimation' (1987:11). The failure or reluctance by the white missionaries to address the existential needs of the African populace had far reaching consequences on the African continent, particularly on the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe. It is into such a gap that exorcists like father Urayai and other African independent movements later stepped in to fill.

Commenting on the rapid development of African Independent Churches, Daneel (1987:25) quoting Barrett (1968) and Ndiokwere (1981) underlines that the development amounted to a sort of 'spiritual' or 'prophetic' revolution in Africa, involving an estimated 7 000 groups with millions of followers. Daneel (1987:11) also observed that well before the political

independence of Zimbabwe, Shona Zionism among other independent movements was a dominant phenomenon. In Rhodesia, for example, the Zionist Christian Church of Bishop Mutendi with its Headquarters in the Bikita Reserve had a membership of more than 10 000 spread all over Rhodesia; the Zionist Apostolic Faith Mission of Bishop Andreas Shoko with its Headquarters in Chibi Reserve had an estimated membership of 5000 to 7000, mainly in the Southern reserves of Rhodesia. The Zionist Apostolic Church of Bishop David Masuka with its Headquarters also in Bikita had an approximate adherents of 5 000 in the South-Eastern Rhodesia (Daneel 1970:11).

Whilst the most specific power of attraction and/or recruitment technique of Shona Zionism like many other Independent movements in Rhodesia remained healing and deliverance, in their Roman Catholic counterparts there was still that silent, as yet inarticulate yearning for the same approach. Consequently, both new and old Catholic converts in times of serious illnesses often sneaked out to seek assistance from the tried and tested African traditional healers or African Independent Churches who formally dominated the area of faith healing with their message of deliverance. Understandably, a number of Roman Catholics merged Christian and indigenous beliefs, thereby creating a culture of 'double dealing' among Catholics.

For the Roman Catholic Church to remain relevant in such a milieu and also amongst its ever increasing traditional black laity, there was, therefore, urgent need to read the signs of time and adapt to the changing environment. There was need to introduce within the Roman Catholic health delivery system, a practitioner who would go beyond the conventional healing methods in his or her diagnosis and therapy, thereby curbing and combating the culture of 'double dealing' inherent among Roman Catholics then.

Before we explore Fr. Augustine Urayai's pioneering healing praxis for which he is particularly famous, this discussion will now turn to his early life and vocation in order to demonstrate how his healing ministry developed. There is little doubt that his healing ministry could have been to some extent influenced by practitioners of his time and an adaptation to the signs of times. Whilst Fr. Urayai provides very few personal details in his own writings, he had a handful of admiring biographers such as Nyatsanza (1995), Sibanda (1999), Shoko (2006) and Mudyiwa (2014). For methodological purposes, for the period before ordination, I shall identify Father Augustine Urayai simply as Augustine and 'Fr Urayai' for the period after ordination.

2.3 The early life of Augustine Urayai.

Augustine Urayai Madyauta was the first born child of David and Veronica Pfumbatidza. His birth certificate indicates that he was born on 10 August in 1931 at Holy Cross Mission in Homera under Chief Chirumhanzu. He was first named Paradza Madyauta Urayai before he changed his name to Augustine when he was baptised as a Catholic. Of the nine children born of David and Veronica, three passed away in infancy and the other six survived, four boys and two girls. Those who survived were Augustine, Pauline, Michael, John, Clemence and Theresa (Sibanda 1999:5).

For the better part of their lives, both David and Veronica were upholders of the African traditional religion before they were baptized Catholics at a later stage, beginning with Veronica. As a young boy, Augustine Paradza lived with his other family members as subsistent farmers in the district of Chilimanzi (now Chirumhanzu) in the Midlands province. Chirumhanzu district, just like most other districts in Zimbabwe is largely an agrarian community with a subsistence economy. On the 9th of September 1941 Augustine was baptized a Catholic at Holy Cross Mission and was entered as number 4018 in the Baptism

register (Nyatsanza 1995:26).

From 1937 to 1939, Augustine did his Sub A to Standard One or lower primary at Makanya Primary School that was served by two Holy Cross Mission based nuns belonging to the congregation of the Little Children of the Blessed Lady (LCBL). In 1940, upon the completion of his Standard One, he went for part of his upper primary (Standard Two up to Six), to Holy Cross boarding that was run by the Jesuits and the Assumption Sisters who formed part of the teaching staff. It was at Holy Cross mission where Augustine and his friend Leonard Mundure became altar servers during the daily celebration of the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The Eucharist or Lord's Supper is the source, centre and summit of Christian life (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1994:336).

2.4 Vocation to priesthood

An analysis of Augustine's life indicates that it was during his primary school days at Holy Cross Mission that the seeds of becoming a priest must have been sown in his heart. Before Augustine disclosed this desire to Fr. Winter, his immediate responsible authority at Holy Cross mission, he first shared it with his close friend, Mundure. Upon discovering that the two young enthusiasts had both separately entertained the same thoughts for a while, they then jointly approached Fr. Winter. Fr. Winter welcomed the idea and took it upon himself to see that the vocation of both Urayai and Leonard was nurtured and guarded jealously. The White Father wanted to be close to the boys so that he could monitor them closely. Thus, he asked them both to work at the mission while he kept a close ecclesiastical watch upon them before making arrangements for the two to train at Chishawasha Seminary³ in now Harare (Sibanda 1999:6).

³Chishawasha Seminary was dedicated to two Patron Saints, namely, John Fisher and Thomas More.

When the behaviour of both Augustine and Leonard satisfied Fr. Winter, he gave the green light for the two to proceed to Harare. The first time Augustine set foot at Saints John Fisher and Thomas More Major Seminary, he discovered that the going was an uphill task. His first real challenge came from none other than his parents, especially David, his father, who apparently vehemently disliked the idea of his first born son Paradza becoming a Catholic priest, as it clearly meant that he was thus abrogating the culturally expected role to marry and perpetuate the family name. Sibanda (1999:8) notes that barely two weeks at Chishawasha Seminary, Augustine's father made a police report that his son had been abducted by the white fathers. Consequently, the Chilimanzi (now Chirumhanzu) District Commissioner responded swiftly (Sr Pia Chikava, interview 11/04/11).

Sr. Pia⁴ also highlights that the Commissioner quickly wrote a letter to call for the immediate withdrawal of Augustine, much to the disappointment of Augustine's lecturers and seminary mates. After his immediate withdrawal, the young Augustine found himself back at Holy Cross mission, proceeding with his studies. He was disheartened and disappointed by the move but he found himself powerless to reverse the situation.

However, the behaviour and negative attitude of David seemed to have watered and fertilized Augustine's vocation. Undeterred by his father's efforts to backpedal his vocation, armed with the zeal of becoming a 'fisher of men', Augustine decided to face David for the second time. In an interview conducted and recorded by Sibanda (1999:6) at Chinyuni parish, Fr. Urayai had this to say:

Then one day I just gathered courage and approached my father and threatened him that I was going to run away to another place where he was not going to find me. My

⁴ Sister Pia Chikava is the former Mother General of the Sisters of the Infant Jesus. She featured on the video entitled '*Mbiri yaBaba*' (The Glory of God the Father) on the painful struggles and determination of Fr. Urayai later recorded by Fr. Michael Trebor in 1958. The video featured Alois Mavheneka as Augustine the seminarian, and Sister Pia as Augustine's spiritual director among other actors and actresses. The video is kept at the Bishop's House in Gweru and is often shown to young boys and girls preparing to take up the celibate life. It is on this video tape that Augustine reflected that he was a man of indomitable will.

mother, who by then was now a baptised Catholic also reasoned with him. And one day he just called me and told me that I was free to go and join the Seminary.

When Augustine was finally given the green light to continue with his seminary studies, he did not go back to Chishawasha seminary but found himself under a completely new leadership. By then, the Vicariate of Fort Victoria (now Gweru diocese) had been ear-marked to become an independent diocese. When the diocese of Gweru was created and commissioned to the Society of the Bethlehem Fathers (SMB) of Switzerland in 1946, Monsignor Alois Haene became its first bishop. Dachs and Rea (1979:147) underline that as a man who had the local church in mind, Bishop Haene was committed to founding more mission stations and promoting local clergy. Two years after assuming the office of Bishopric, amidst some controversy from amongst his white critics, Bishop Haene founded a Minor Seminary⁵ at St. Joseph's Hama in Chirumhanzu in 1948 from which those who acquitted themselves well would proceed to the Major Seminary at Chishawasha that had been founded by Bishop Chichester a decade earlier.

Augustine had no better option than to join the newly established system in his proximity. He was joined by five other young enthusiasts, namely, Kizito Mavima and Nicholas Sixto (both from Chirumhanzu), Francis Xavier Mugadzi and Marco (both from Gokomere) and Andrew Jacob (from Driefontein). The inclusion of Augustine in the team of the first six local or black minor seminarians under Fr. Joseph Riech as superior and director was also confirmed by Nyatsanza (1995:14).

Seminary life for the young seminarians was not a bed of roses at St Josephs Mission. Initially, before proper accommodation was organized for them, they used to stay with other

⁵ Minor Seminary is a Roman Catholic Secondary School with a normal school curriculum where students with a desire for priestly vocation would enroll. It is often from such a school that trainee priests would then proceed to a Major Seminary for priestly training.

pupils at the boarding place. Later they moved to a thatched hut away from the rest, but continued to attend lessons with the rest. During their stay at St Joseph's, Augustine and his friends completed their Standard Four, Five and Six (1948-1950) before their seminary was later moved to Gokomere Mission in Masvingo province in 1950.⁶

Shoko (2006:352) also records that at Gokomere mission the minor seminarians enrolled for their first courses in Lower Teachers' Training and the South African Junior Certificate. However, Augustine and Kizito struggled with the course, much to the disappointment of Fr. Shonburger, the then Principal at Gokomere mission. Whilst the principal wanted the two (Augustine and Kizito) to discontinue their priestly studies, Bishop Haene directed that they should continue. Following a period of resistance, the Principal finally obeyed the Bishop's orders and allowed the two to proceed.

However, instead of allowing Kizito and Augustine to take up a more challenging Cambridge Ordinary certificate, he recommended the two for the Primary Teacher's Higher Training Course. Francis Mugadzi was recommended for the more challenging Cambridge Certificate (Nyatsanza 1995). Nyatsanza (1995:16) also notes that during this time, more seminarians joined the group of these young pioneers. Francis Machaya, Herman Nhariwa, Anthony Tarutira, Xavier Marimazhira, Simplicio Mubako, and Tobias Chiginya (who later became the first black bishop of Gwelo diocese) were among the new comers.

In 1956, the first group of minor seminarians enrolled at Chishawasha Major Seminary to study philosophy and theology together with other local seminarians from other dioceses in Zimbabwe. Augustine, Kizito and Francis were also among the pioneers from Gweru Diocese.

⁶From Gokomere, the minor seminary was again moved to Chikwingwizha near Gweru in 1962.

At the end of their three years of philosophical studies in 1959, the trio went on probation to various missions in the Diocese of Gweru, as was the Catholic practice and tradition then. Sr. Pia Chikava underlined that Augustine was sent to Mukaro mission in the district of Gutu for his year of probation (Sr. Pia Chikava, Interview 11/04/11).

This probation system was introduced so that seminarians could get the necessary experience during their year long tour of duty at various mission postings. It was also meant to assist seminarians in making appropriate decisions on whether or not to continue with the priestly calling. A year later, Augustine, Kizito and Francis resumed their studies at Chishawasha Seminary. This time they came back to study theology for four years.

As each academic year passed, from philosophy to theology, the three received their orders of priesthood. Morrow (1949:348-349) mentions a total of seven orders to priesthood. Of the seven, whilst four are classified under minor orders, three fall under major orders. Morrow classifies the orders of porter, lector, exorcism and acolyte as minor orders. Major orders include: sub deacon, deacon and priesthood. The order of exorcism which comes third gives the priest-to-be the right to exorcise. Like his two counterparts, Augustine also received the order of exorcism.

Thus, before the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) any priest was an exorcist by the order of exorcist. Order of exorcism used to be part and parcel of the general priestly vocation administered to seminarians but today things have changed. Today the practice is that Bishops may give particular priests the authority to practice exorcism if deemed necessary. Thus, exorcism has become a particular work of a few officially appointed priests.

Having displayed unparalleled fortitude, Augustine, Kizito and Francis received their seventh

order of priesthood. After seven years of priestly training, they were ordained priests by Bishop Aloysius Haene on the 12th of December 1964. Nyatsanza (1995:17) also confirms that on 12 December 1964 the first three African Gweru Diocesan seminarians were ordained priests in the '*Gato raMuzondo*' at Gokomere Mission. The event was historic not just for Gweru diocese but also for the entire Catholic community in Zimbabwe. Harare and Bulawayo dioceses had already ordained their first African priests in 1947 and 1958 respectively. Harare had ordained, Fr. Isidore Chikore and Fr. Simon Tsuro. Fr. Bernard Ndlovu, the first Rhodesian black priest for Bulawayo diocese, was ordained on the 20th of October 1958 at Empandeni mission (Dachs & Rea 1979).

Apparently, the same year that Augustine was ordained a priest, his father David was also baptized a Catholic (Sibanda 1999:8). After their historic ordination, the newly ordained priests celebrated their first masses at their respective traditional homes, a practice that has today become common in all the eight Roman Catholic Dioceses.

2.5 The priestly ministry of Father Augustine

Following his ordination at Gokomere Mission, Fr. Augustine Urayai worked at various mission stations and posts in Gweru diocese, as illustrated on Table one below. Nyatsanza (1995:26), Sibanda (1999:8) and Mudyiwa (2014:198) also confirm Father Urayai's appointments to the same parishes in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Gweru. The mission stations below shall prove significant later in the discussion of Fr. Urayai's healing ministry and extra-ordinary experiences because the impact of his ministry and challenges varied according to these mission stations.

YEAR(S)	MISSION/PLACE	RESPONSIBILITY
July 1965-Dec. 1966	Serima Mission	School Manager
Jan. 1967-Dec. 1971	Mutero Mission	Pastoral Work
Jan. 1972 -1974	Mashaba Parish	Pastoral Work
Jan. 1975–Dec. 1975	Matibi Mission	Pastoral Work
Mar.1976-Dec. 1977	St. Kizito- Zhombe	Pastoral Work
1978	Switzerland	Holiday
Mar. 1978- Jul. 1979	Serima Mission	Pastoral Work
Jul. 1979-Oct. 1979	Silveira Mission	Pastoral work
Oct. 1979-Nov.1980	Sabbatical Year	
Dec. 1980 –Dec. 1990	Mutero Mission	Pastoral Work
Jan. 1991-1999	Chinyuni Mission	Pastoral Work
1999- Aug. 2003		Sick Leave

Table One: Mission stations of Fr. Urayai (1964-2003)

It is interesting to observe in Table One that for the whole of his priestly life, Fr. Urayai was never appointed Priest-in-charge⁷ of any parish.⁸ He always occupied the role of a curate or assistant priest mostly in the rural parishes, something that probably might have attributed to his soft and humble appearance as a priest. Even though Fr. Urayai had a bumpy road to priesthood, the period of his Seminary formation endowed him with an unquenchable passion for a life of prayer and a deep desire for exorcism. The seminary period of Fr. Urayai proved significant in preparing him for the challenging pastoral work ahead. Shoko (2006) portrays him as a man of deep spirituality.

⁷ Priest in Charge or parish priest is the proper pastor of the parish entrusted to him. He exercises the pastoral care of the community entrusted to him under the authority of the Diocesan Bishop, whose ministry of Christ he is called to share, so that for this community he may carry out the offices of teaching, sanctifying and ruling with the cooperation of other priests or deacons and with the assistance of lay members of Christ's faithful, in accordance with the law (Canon 519).

⁸ A parish is a certain community of Christ's faithful stably established within a particular Church, whose pastoral care, under the authority of the diocesan bishop, is entrusted to a parish priest as its proper pastor (Canon 515).

Whilst the seven orders of priesthood, particularly the order of exorcism that he received at Chishawasha Major Seminary could in all probability have influenced him to pursue the ministry of exorcism, as a general observation, it stands to reason that his gift of healing further developed through prayer, practice and his close relationship with God. From the evidence whose revelation shall form the pivot of the ensuing discourse, it is with little doubt that the subject of this chapter, Fr Augustine Urayai, was a recipient of this special gift of healing. It is, therefore, logically befitting and equally interesting to know how his healing ministry began.

2.6 The gift of healing

Father Urayai's healing ministry had very humble beginnings. Both Sibanda (1999) and Shoko (2006) concur that it was a process for Fr. Urayai to finally realize that he had the gift of healing. During an interview conducted by the researcher in 2012, Sister Winfrida Zvizhinji who worked with Father Urayai for over two decades revealed that as a newly ordained minister, Fr. Urayai confessed that from the first days of his priestly ministry at Serima Mission, he had the passion for blessing the sick, especially after the celebration of the Holy Eucharist (Sr. Winfrida Zvizhinji, Interview 20/09/10). Thus, after the celebration of Holy Mass, the sick would queue up to receive the blessing of the young Fr. Urayai, son of the soil.

Scores of people could also be seen carrying bottles of sanctified water on their way back to their respective homes. The blessing of sick congregants especially after the celebration of the Holy Eucharist is a practice that is still manifest among some priests, particularly Catholics and Anglicans. It is even more common and pronounced among independent and Pentecostal churches.

Apart from laying hands on the sick after celebrating the sacrament of the Eucharist, Fr. Urayai also had the habit of administering the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, a practice that could have also nurtured and fanned his otherwise yet-to-be discovered healing gift. In his own words Fr. Urayai had this to say:

I would make sure that every Sunday after Mass I laid my hands on the faithful especially the sick... Many of them got strengthened and a few sick parishioners with incurable diseases also got better (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

Much to his surprise, most of those to whom he administered the Sacrament were healed, even those with terminal cases or incurable illnesses, both physical and spiritual. Gradually, through experience, meeting one case after another, Fr. Urayai strongly felt that he was being called to the healing apostolate in addition to being an ordained Roman Catholic priest. From Serima Mission, Father Urayai was transferred to Mutero Mission, where he had his inaugural case of exorcism.

2.7 Inaugural case of healing

Fr. Urayai's inaugural case of healing did not come until 1969. From the interview carried out in 1994 in Redcliff, Fr. Urayai still remembered his first inaugural case of healing and exorcism that he conducted on Mr. Ignatius Munyongani (now late). Ignatius was one of the first Christians in Machawira area. In fact, he was a teacher of catechism at Machawira centre in Gutu.

Gutu is the third largest district in Masvingo Province, southern Zimbabwe, after Chiredzi and Mwenezi. It is the northernmost district in the province. Machawira centre is in the eastern direction of Gutu, Mpandawana growth point, about 45 km from Mutero Mission.

Mutero Mission comprises three main areas, namely Chinyika, Makura and Mutero. Each of the three areas has a total of more than ten outstations and is usually manned by one priest.

The Parish priest of the Mission normally served Mutero area due to its proximity to the mission. His two assistants would automatically serve either of the two areas, namely, Chinyika and Makura (Charles Marumisa, Interview 12/08/13). Fr. Urayai's predecessor in Chinyika area, Fr. A. Stoffel, had earlier labelled Ignatius Munyongani a traditional healer and subsequently banned him from receiving Holy Communion. Ignatius had also stopped practicing his Catholic faith as a result of attacks by alien spirits (*Mashavi*). Narrating his inaugural case of exorcism Fr. Urayai had this to say:

It happened like this: In 1967 I was transferred from Serima to Mutero Mission. One day in 1969, I was invited to give a retreat to some Catholic women at Mutero Mission. During one of my talks I encouraged those with personal problems to come and see me in my office during break time. A certain woman then came to my office during break time and first cried in front of me for several minutes. I did not stop her. She was Mrs. Munyongani from Machawira centre in Gutu, the only woman who later survived the Pokoteke bus disaster of the early 90s. Her husband, Mr. Munyongani, who was a teacher of Catechism back at Machawira Centre was constantly attacked by alien spirits that had been sent to him by his father who wanted him to become a *n'anga*. Mr. Munyongani and his wife, however, disliked this idea, knowing very well that their Catholic faith condemned all that. Traditional and medical doctors had failed to cure him... On her knees, Mrs. Munyongani then begged me if I could come to her aid. I accepted and we agreed that I would visit them on 03/08/69. Before I attempted to exorcise the evil spirits from Mr. Ignatius Munyongani, I first sought the Bishop's approval as required by Canons 1151⁹ and 1152.¹⁰ The Bishop allowed me and gave me a Latin prayer for exorcism which I still have.

On that day, Sylvester my Catechist (1940-1981)¹¹, Ignatius and I were in one of the huts eating roasted groundnuts. In no time Mr. Munyongani was attacked by evil spirits and he began to shout and shake profoundly. Out of fear, my Catechist dashed out for his dear life. For a moment I also thought of dashing out of the room... However, I gathered courage and called for my priestly cassock.¹² After vesting in my black cassock, I blessed holy water and started the battle. That day I saw a mystery. As I was pouring holy water on Mr. Munyongani, his head could become as small as the size of a tennis ball and his neck would stretch to a point where his head touched the roof of the grass thatched hut in which the exorcism was taking place. The head would pierce through the roof, only to be held back and prevented from escaping by the shoulders. It took me almost seven hours to drive out the spirits,

⁹ Canon 1151 states that no-one who has received the power to exorcise can lawfully perform exorcisms on obsessed persons unless he has received particular and express permission from the bishop.

¹⁰ Canon 1152 paragraph 2 further states that this permission is to be given by the Ordinary (Bishop) only to a priest who is pious, prudent and of good life.

¹¹ Having completed his catechetical training course in the mid 60s together with many other catechists for the Diocese of Gweru, Sylvester was first posted to Mutero Mission, his home area, where he worked under Father Stoffel. When Fr. Stoffel was replaced by Fr. Urayai in 1967, Sylvester continued to work under Fr. Augustine Urayai until he died in 1981. He was a very humble and devoted catechist who also had a talent of singing.

¹² A Cassock or Soutine is the principle vestment used by ecclesiastics. It is a robe reaching down to the feet, and buttoned in front. For priests it is black, for bishops violet, for cardinals red, and for the pope white. In some countries priests go everywhere in their cassocks (Morrow, 1949:297).

from 7pm to 1:00am...After the exorcism, I began to nurse in my mind the thinking that God could be calling me to another mission (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

When Fr. Urayai was through with the exorcism, he went back to the mission very excited. However, he began to reflect deeply on the future of his priestly ministry. What he discovered during the exorcism of Ignatius gave him the hunger and passion to continue with many other exorcisms in future. For him, this new dimension of healing was like a call within another call or a vocation on top of another. Without wasting much of his time, the excited young Fr. Urayai paid a second visit to his Bishop in order to give an update. In addition, he also wanted to plead with the bishop that he could be allowed to offer similar services to his Christians in the event of attacks from the devil. Fortunately his wish was granted by his Bishop on December 3, 1969, making him the first official disposer of demons in the entire Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe (Sr. Pia Chikava, Interview 11/04/11).

Before Fr. Urayai left the Bishop's house for Mutero Mission, his Bishop, however, warned him about the dangers of exorcism. He warned him that exorcism required intensive concentration before and during the process, powerful and prolonged prayers and often physical strength if the patient is in a phase characterized by violent physical action and guttural sounds. Most importantly, the bishop also revealed to him that exorcism required a holy life on the part of the exorcist himself. Just as Jesus encouraged his disciples to fast and pray (Mark 9:29), the Bishop also encouraged Fr. Urayai to fast and pray so that he could be effective in his battles against the powers of darkness. Consequently, Fr. Urayai made a resolution to fast three times a week: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays (Priest Anonymous, Interview 11/12/14).

Having received unwavering support from his bishop and most of the white Fathers, Fr. Urayai then took a bold decision to continue with his new dimension of healing. The decision

that he took was to change his priestly life, as well as his entire world view. Thus, he continued to pray and fast. He also continued to read the Scriptures to find out how the disciples cast out evil spirits when Jesus was no longer with them. Consequently, his ability to go beyond conventional healing methods and probe sufficiently into the spiritual causes of illnesses contributed significantly to his positive impact within the Roman Catholic Church circles and beyond. This ability also later acted as one of his most specific powers of attraction and a recruitment technique in his entire ministry and subsequent formation of the Super Roma movement.

For cases that required medical attention, Fr. Urayai always referred them to hospitals and doctors. For those that needed exorcism, he always tried to assist and offered the much needed alternative form of therapy. In some cases he allowed both medical attention and exorcism to be administered concurrently to ensure holistic healing.

2.8 Father Urayai's method of healing

From his inaugural case on 3 August 1969, Fr. Urayai conducted several other healing sessions¹³ and his methodology changed with time and experience. Both Shoko (2006) and Sibanda (1999) concur that Fr. Urayai had a spectacular method of healing, with Shoko (2006:349) calling it 'an electric method based on missiological and phenomenological models.' In most cases, Fr. Urayai's methodology usually consisted of six key stages, namely; exhortations, blessing of water and salt, drinking of blessed water and/or milk, tying the victim with cords, the actual exorcism and finally counselling the victim. Sibanda (1999:16-20) also confirms some of the same key stages.

¹³ The researcher was privileged on many occasions to witness a number of Fr. Urayai's healing sessions, particularly at Mutero and Chinyuni mission stations. The researcher was later ordained a Roman Catholic priest in 2001, just two years before Fr. Urayai succumbed to diabetes in 2003.

2.8.1 Stage One: Exhortation

Though Fr. Urayai varied his methodology depending on the condition of the patient, in most cases, before he could perform any exorcism, he would begin by giving a very short lesson either to the victim, the victim's relatives there present or both. He always made sure that the exhortations were directed at enlightening those present about the nature, dangers, operations and symptoms of attacks by evil spirits. Most of the symptoms were also observed by Davis (1994:54-58). Davis explored the healing ministry of Fr. Nkwera (1936), the Tanzanian priest- cum-exorcist and contemporary of Fr. Urayai.

Though signs and symptoms of demon possession also varied depending on the type of demon and its intention, some indicators of possible demonic possession, according to Fr. Urayai include:

Speaking foreign or ancient languages of which the possessed person has no prior knowledge, supernatural abilities and strength not subject to that person's gender or age, knowledge of hidden or remote things which the possessed has no way of knowing, an aversion of anything holy and profuse blasphemy and/or sacrilege. Other signs include lack of appetite, cutting, scratching and biting of skin, unnatural bodily postures, loss of control of personality and entering into a frenzy or rage, attacking others, change in the person's voice, violent rejection of all religious objects or items, antipathy towards entering a church, speaking Jesus' name or hearing Scripture, among others (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

Numerous other signs of attack or possession resemble so much the common symptoms of natural diseases that people are made to believe that their patients simply suffer from various diseases. However, there is one major difference, namely, whereas the usual diseases are curable, the devil induced diseases are not even diagnosable medically (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94). Davis (1994) and Felicitas (1988) call them neurotic diseases. In the case of devil induced diseases, it can even happen that conventional medical treatment may increase the pain rather than reduce it. In most cases, as highlighted by Fr. Urayai and Davis, victims may suffer severely from insomnia for days and weeks; nightmares, severe headaches (*musoro*), chest (*chifuva*) and abdomen (*mudumbu*), legs (*makumbo*), arms (*maoko*), compression of the

chest, back and head as if a heavy weight was laid on them, frequent dizziness, weak or painful joints, heart problems and convulsions as if they were epileptic. Heart problems are usually a result of evil spirits that use the heart as their seat. Evil spirits may discharge waste (*unye*) material into the victim's stomach (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

Fr. Urayai (1994) confirms that some evil spirits would first put their patients into a coma after which they show them rotten human bodies, snakes or wild animals. They sometimes force the same people to eat human flesh. Whilst some patients feel like they are being baked in a furnace; others feel like they are being sprinkled with boiling human fat, leaving visible burns and bruises on their skin. Many patients are incised during the night on queer places on their bodies. The incisions often itch. Sometimes the cuts are very deep and large to an extent that they bleed profusely. The same signs were also confirmed by Davies (1994).

Still other patients fail to take any medication, they cannot swallow a pill, injected limbs swell up and become infested. Certain patients feel very hungry but they lack any appetite as soon as food is served to them. Should they taste the food, they vomit immediately. Surprisingly, others never get satisfied with whatever amount of food they eat. Whilst some patients become frail and weak, (Davis 1994), others often utter strings of insults and obscenities in combination with copious divinatory or prophetic pronouncements (Felicita 1988).

Davis (1994) and Fr. Urayai (1994) further highlight that it is also common for some patients to become mute, while others talk a lot of nonsense. Evil spirits may cause other patients to run mad. They deform other persons or twist their limbs. Sometimes they cause palpitations with very high blood pressure. To some, other devils cause barrenness and continuous miscarriages, irregular monthly periods or over-bleeding. Some devils materialize and perform sexual relations with the patients while they prevent some married couples from

sharing the same bed.

The devil also forces many church goers to stop praying and to fear visiting churches even, to abandon the sacraments and sacramentals. Such people hate even holy pictures and shun anything that has been blessed. Certain Christians are persuaded to change their religions with a false promise that such a change will cure them. Usually, possessed persons become very nervous and are easily angered. Others become cowardly so that they may not look face to face with anyone or even stay alone in a room. They fear even their own bodies.

Davis (1994) also observed that to some, evil spirits inject a bad smell, especially when they appear in public. Some families break up because of hatred from out of nowhere, while certain children are accused by parents for another's fault. Sometimes the devil sends snakes, snails and centipedes or throws stones, sand, gravel or mud into patients' houses. At other times he sends crows, flies or other insects to follow their patients where ever they would go. Some patients have vomited snakes, worms, charms, money, lizards and other objects. Some of the symptoms can have physical illnesses such as blindness, deafness, dumbness or some physical disability.

In other cases, the attacks can be psychic or psychological disorders (*Kurwara pfungwa/Kupenga*) (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94). Having been convinced that his patients/audients have understood most of the common signs and symptoms of diabolic attack, Fr. Urayai would then go to stage two, namely, blessing of water.

2.8.2 Stage Two: Blessing of salt and water

The exhortations were normally followed by the blessing of buckets of cold water and salt using the memorized Latin prayers that he received from Bishop Haene. At this stage Fr.

Urayai would make sure that he vested in his velvet stole¹⁴ or cassock, just as was the common practice in the early and middle Ages. However, he would sometimes conduct services without any of the two.

During the blessing of water and salt, God is besought to endow the two elements with a supernatural power of protecting those who use them with faith against all the attacks of the devil. With his hands hovering above the water, Fr. Urayai claimed that at that very moment he drew in energy from God and sent it into the water and the client's body. Fr. Urayai called this supernatural power or energy from God, Good or High *Od*.¹⁵ Whilst from God comes High Od, supernatural power from Satan is referred to as Low Od.

At this second stage, Fr. Urayai taught that when blessing water and salt, he only acted in the person of Christ, *in persona Christi* (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94). He only acted as a channel, instrument or vehicle through which Christ operated. Hence concentration on the part of the priest during the actual blessing of water was highly called for.

In a standing posture, with his eyes closed and hands outstretched above the water, he would say the blessing as it is translated in the *Collectio Rituum* (1962:163-165). The English translation of the Latin prayer went as follows:

I exorcise you, water, in the name of your Creator, God the almighty Father, and in the name of Jesus Christ, his son our Lord, and in the power of the Holy Spirit: that you may be strong to repel all the forces of the enemy, to root out and destroy the enemy himself with his apostate angels, through the might of the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who will come to judge the living and the dead, and the world by fire. **Amen.**

¹⁴ A stole is a long silk band worn around the neck by priests during services and is crossed on the breast of the priest. It is the symbol of authority in the Roman Catholic Church, of all vestments the most blessed (Morrow: 1949:297).

¹⁵ Good or high Od comes from God. Bad or low Od comes from Satan. Positive odic or vital force exists in and about all things created by God. It is found in every animal, in every plant, in every stone, in every metal, in all water, in every star, in every spirit and in all other existing things. It is nothing material, but spiritual (Greber, 1970:71)

Let us pray. God, who in the substance of Water hast founded the greatest sacraments for the salvation of mankind, graciously hear our prayers, and instill into this element prepared by many cleansings the power of thy blessings + : Grant that this creature of Thine, in the service of thy blessing, may effect the purpose of divine grace to banish evil spirits and drive away diseases; that whatever in the homes and houses of the faithful is sprinkled with this water may be released from all uncleanness and delivered from all harm. Let no noxious spirit remain there, nor breath of corruption; may all the snares of the hidden enemy come to naught; and may the sprinkling of this water put to flight whatever threatens the safety or the peace of those who dwell there: that their health and vigour, for which they call upon thy name, may be protected from assaults on every side. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Then, putting salt into the water three times in the form of a cross, he continued:

Let salt and water be mixed together, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Let us pray.

O God, Creator invincible, King of unconquerable might, ever gloriously triumphant; who dost restrain the forces that would hold us in thrall; who dost overcome the furious raging of the enemy; who dost powerfully defeat the wiles of our foes: in ardent supplication we entreat thee, Lord, to look with favour upon this mingled salt and water; make it radiate thy goodness, make it holy with the dew of thy loving-kindness; that wherever it is sprinkled with the invocation of thy holy name, all the plagues of the unclean spirit may be dispersed, the fear of the poisonous serpent be driven far away, and the Holy Spirit be everywhere present with us who implore thy mercy, through our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son, who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the same Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The blessing of water always took place when the victim was already dressed up for the occasion and was done at the very place where Fr. Urayai would want to conduct the healing session. Unlike other faith healers and *n'angas* who have special places or shrines where they normally carry out their healing sessions, Fr. Urayai could perform his exorcisms anywhere as long as he felt the place was conducive to do so.

During his time at Mutero Mission, he preferred to use the veranda of his Church at Chinyika parish. When he was transferred to Chinyuni in Chirumhanzu, he went on to use his garage as his shrine. When performing healing sessions in towns and cities, Fr. Urayai would even use

the bathing room or even a tub. What mattered most for him was the availability of water (Deogratius Madanhire, Interview 15/08/12). Upon the completion of the long memorized Latin prayer, Fr. Urayai would then proceed to the third stage.

2.8.3 Stage Three: Drinking of blessed water

After the prayer of exorcism, the victim was made to drink at least a litre of blessed salty water, or milk sometimes. The salty water or milk was meant to provoke the waste (*Unye*) of the evil spirits that could have been deposited in the stomach of the victim. For one reason or another, if the victim was too weak to drink the water on his/her own due to the nature of attack, the victim was assisted or forced to do. Sometimes the stage was omitted, especially when there was irrefutable evidence of a violent attack or possession that was threatening the life of the victim.

In cases of violent attacks, Fr. Urayai would go straight to stage four and splash the victim with blessed water, adjuring the evil spirit to leave in the name of Jesus. Under normal circumstances, whilst the victim was drinking the salty water, Fr. Urayai would often extend his hands on the victim in prayer. The patient was expected to finish the water in the shortest time possible in order to proceed to stage four, namely tying of the patient with cords.

2.8.4 Stage Four: Tying the victim with cords

Stage four was the tying of the victim/patient with cords. For normal cases and procedures, when the patient was through with the cup of salty water, Shoko (2006) noted that Fr. Urayai would then tie the patient's legs (together) and hands (at the back) with strong cords. Fr. Urayai made sure that the victim was restrained so that he/she would not cause harm to him/herself and to others.

Stage four was a common practice for both regulars and new comers. However, for some regulars who normally came for what Fr. Urayai referred to as ‘regular check ups’, tying of the victim was often omitted (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94). However, in most cases Fr. Urayai did not want to take things for granted.

In the event that involved violent dramatic phenomena such as the possessed person shouting, falling on the floor, or violently shaking and beating up people, Fr. Urayai would invite others, particularly from those in attendance to come to his aid. However, in most cases, he required no assistance.

2.8.5 Stage Five: Challenging and casting out the evil spirit(s)

When the safety of both the healer and the healed were guaranteed by tightly tying the hands and legs of the victim by cords, the battle would then begin. Of all the stages, this was always the longest and perhaps most painful. Using the same cup/mug that the victim had used to drink the water, Fr. Urayai would then pour holy water on the victim's body, beginning with the forehead, shoulders, hands, and legs until every part of victim's body was wet.

Soaking the entire body was done to weaken the evil spirit with High Od. When every part of the victim's body was soaked, Fr. Urayai would then concentrate more on pouring water on the victim's forehead. When asked why he concentrated on the forehead, Fr. Urayai answered:

The forehead is where the physical body and the spirit are joined by a spiritual cord known as the silver cord. For this reason, I pour holy water on the forehead so that the evil spirit may release the spirit of the victim that it would have displaced (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

During the process, the patient was encouraged to drink some of the water that passed past his/her mouth. This was done to further weaken the evil spirits inside the victim's body. The

supernatural power or High Od in the water would provoke the evil spirits and made them uncomfortable. In most cases, as soon as the process began, the victim became completely unsettled, inhaling and exhaling sharply. At this moment, he/she would attempt to escape.

While some would scream, groan, cry at the top of their voices or crawl on the floor, others would insult and shout at the exorcist. At this stage Fr. Urayai would then begin to dialogue and converse with the spirits, not requesting but demanding and ordering it/them to leave the victim, in the name of Jesus. The nature of such conversations or dialogues would include asking the name of the evil spirit and its intention among other questions. This was done whilst the exorcist repeatedly poured water on the forehead of the victim (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

The formula that Fr. Urayai used at this stage changed with time and experience. Whilst he was initially satisfied by simply casting out demons in the initial stages of his ministry, he soon discovered that the method had no lasting results. The same spirits would come back to haunt the same victim after temporarily leaving their victim(s). However, after a protracted period of working with patients and evil spirits, he soon changed the formula and demanded evil spirits to make a Catholic prayer of contrition before leaving their host.

Fr. Urayai claimed that such a method produced lasting results because any spirit that would have made a perfect act of contrition whilst in the body of its host would go to purgatory. Such repentant spirits would later reincarnate on earth in another body, continent and country after a period only known to God's planning angels (Fr. Urayai, Interview, 30/08/94). This concept of reincarnation shall be further expounded under the theology of Super Roma in the fourth chapter.

According to Sibanda (1999:20), one such famous prayer of contrition that Fr. Urayai often used went as follows in vernacular:

Ptu! Satan handichakudi. Jesu ndiye ave Mambo wangu. Yeso Mambo wangu, makandifira pachipyaniso. Ndichitarisa chipyaniso, ndinoda kurega kutadza chose. Yeso wangu ndiregerereivo. Ndinokumbiravo kuti mundinzwirevo tsitsi. Handidi kukutadzirai pakare.

When translated, the prayer reads: 'I disown you Satan! Jesus is my new Master. Jesus is now my Lord. Lord Jesus, you died for me on the cross. When I look at the cross, I want to sin no more. My Jesus, have mercy on me. I will sin no more.

For some stubborn spirits such as avenging spirits (*ngozi*), ancestral spirits (*mudzimu*), goblins (*zvikwambo*) or familiars (*zvidhoma*), Fr. Urayai employed what he popularly referred to as 'the two metre drive' (Deogratius Madanhire, Interview 15/08/13). The 'two metre drive' was a method whereby Fr. Urayai would splash water onto the face of the victim from a distance of almost two metres. This method was said to be more painful than the ordinary and 'normal' way of simply pouring water on the victim's forehead. However, from Fr. Urayai's experience, the method was one of the most effective methods because it quickly weakened the demons and forced them to confess and leave.

An equally effective method employed against stubborn evil spirits was the use of incense. Fr. Urayai would cover the victim in a blanket and make the victim inhale the smoke from the burning incense. In addition to incense, he sometimes touched the victim's forehead with a cross, Holy Bible or stole. He could also anoint the victim with holy oil (chrism) especially on the forehead, ears, eyes, mouth, palms or feet. According to Fr. Urayai, all the 'tools' that he used contained each a special healing power or High Od that made evil spirits uncomfortable and unable to stay on/in the victim (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

It was not always the case that once the healing session had started, it would finish the same day. In other instances it could take several days, weeks or even months. Much depended on the nature of the invading spirit and the method that Fr. Urayai used. Spirits of a very low rank normally were quick to confess and free the victim when compared to some high ranking spirits such as ancestral spirits (*midzimu*), avenging spirits (*ngozi*) or some familiars (*zvikwambo* and *zvidhoma*). These were often stubborn and cheeky. More so, the use of incense sometimes proved more effective than simply laying of hands or sprinkling with water.

Some evil spirits, however, testified and confessed that they sometimes temporarily hid in people's long finger nails, human hair, dread locks, ears, eyes, armpits or even in between the buttocks or any other part of the victim's body. To counter such demonic tricks, Fr. Urayai would often press the victim's eyes, ears or stomach. This exercise often led to vomiting of the water earlier consumed (Sebastian Meso, Interview 20/10/13). Hence, Fr. Urayai often attacked the practice of keeping long finger nails, human hair and dread locks during his sermons.

It was regarded as normal and expected for a victim of diabolic possession to vomit during the healing process. Vomiting was viewed as one way of getting rid of waste materials that were deposited in the stomach of the victim by evil spirits. Whilst some vomited immediately after drinking holy water and/or milk, others vomited during the healing session and still others soon after the process. As the victim vomited the 'garbage,'¹⁶ healing was also effected at the same time.

One other way victims discharged the waste material was through having a running stomach,

¹⁶ Evil spirits usually feed on the deposited garbage in the stomach of the victim.

immediately after the healing session. However, on fewer occasions, some victims experienced the running stomach in the middle of the healing session. Few other cases discharged the waste through bellowing (*kudzvova*) during or after the healing session.

It is also crucial to note that through interacting and conversing with evil spirits, Fr. Urayai came to the understanding and realization that most illnesses and diseases that afflicted people were primarily caused by witchcraft and evil spirits that populated and continue to populate the traditional spiritual cosmos. Common among such evil spirits included spirits such as ancestral spirits, (*midzimu*), alien spirits (*mashavi*), lion spirits (*mhondoro*), avenging spirits (*ngozi*). In a similar manner, he also encountered spirits associated with witchcraft such as *zvidhoma*, *zvituxwani*, and familiars (*zvivanda*), puppies (*zvishiri*). Such spirits are a powerful cog in the Shona spiritual world and are capable of causing illnesses such as psychological, physical and psychic disorders (Shoko 2006:351).

As earlier mentioned, for complicated cases that he felt required medical attention, Fr. Urayai would always refer them to the hospitals and clinics. He strongly believed that God actively works through such human institutions. In most cases, Fr. Urayai would tape record most of his conversations with evil spirits. He would later use the same tapes during his sermons, counselling sessions or some other instructions when he deemed it necessary. Stage five was followed by stage six which basically aimed at counselling the victim after the expulsion of demons.

2.8.6 Stage Six: Counselling the victim

After successfully challenging and liberating the victim from the bondage of demons, stage six centered on counselling the victim. However, in the event that the healing session had not been successful, the stage was postponed to a later date and time. It was a common

occurrence sometimes that evil spirits would react strongly and negatively to any suggestion made by the exorcist as he tried to lead them through the Roman Catholic prayer of contrition. Hence sometimes, evil spirits would refuse to leave their host, much to the disappointment of the exorcist. This usually happened when relatives refused to denounce the possessing spirit(s) wholeheartedly. Such scenarios were common with cases that involved mostly stubborn ancestral spirits.

In the case of a successful exorcism, the counselling session took several directions. Basically, the counselling session was based on the outcome of the healing session. When deemed necessary, Fr. Urayai would play the tape he would have recorded so that the victim would know what transpired during the healing sessions because most victims slipped into a trance when the exercise started. Playing the tape usually left the victims dumbfounded when they got to know about the nature and intention of the evil spirits that were troubling them. However, if the outcome of the exorcism would fuel animosity among family members, Fr. Urayai would keep the tape record to himself. On several occasions, he often asked relatives to excuse them during the actual exorcism if the evil spirit requested to make a confession.

During his counselling sessions, Fr. Urayai always discouraged his patients from mixing Christianity with African traditional practices. He also advised them not to seek assistance from traditional healers (*n'angas*) and prophets (*vaporofita*). In fact, Fr. Urayai labelled both *n'angas* and prophets 'wolves in sheep's clothing' (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94). He accused them of using Satanic powers or Low Od. He maintained that most patients of traditional healers and prophets were not aware of this dimension. Probably, Fr. Urayai got this influence from the white missionaries who first came to evangelise Zimbabwe.

The white missionaries categorically attacked the most influential and central cult of ancestor

veneration and called it superstition. Fr. Urayai, however, differed from the missionaries in the sense that, for him, the cult of ancestor veneration was not just superstition, but evil and Satanic. Thus, he encouraged his patients to desist from ancestor veneration, beer drinking and smoking among other prohibitions. According to his ‘research findings’ through his experience with patients, traditional practices invited evil spirits into the lives of patients. Above all, he encouraged his patients to lead a holy life, a life of prayer and fasting. The counselling session would normally end by setting dates for the next healing session and a blessing of those present.

2.9 Selected cases of exorcisms by Fr. Urayai

From several hundreds of cases of diabolic possession and exorcisms conducted and tape recorded by Fr. Urayai for the three decades of his healing ministry (1964-2003), I have purposively selected only three for close analysis. This is in addition to the case of Mr Ignatius Munyongani in 1969. The three include: exorcism of Mutero Secondary School girls (1987), the exorcism of Joe at Chinyuni parish (1992) and, lastly, the exorcism of Angela Washaya (1970). Of the three cases, the exorcism of Angela Washaya shall be reserved for Chapter three since it is directly and closely linked to the birth of Super Roma. Whilst the exorcism of Mutero Secondary School girls introduces us to the origin of the name Super Roma, the exorcism of Joe at Chinyuni Mission highlights some key elements of Super Roma theology of death and life after that will be dealt with in the next Chapter.

2.9.1 Mutero Secondary School Girls (1987)

Without underrating the exorcism of Ignatius Munyongani, one prominent case of demon possession and exorcism carried out and recorded by Fr. Urayai took place at Mutero Secondary School in 1987. Both Sibanda (1999) and Shoko (2006:360) also made reference to the same case. The case consisted of the exorcism of *zvidhoma* that had ruthlessly attacked

all the Form Four girls who were due to sit for their Ordinary Level examinations. Rumours had spread that the evil spirits belonged to one of the Form Four girls who was also due to sit for her examinations. Apparently the girl did not want her other classmates to sit for their exams.

On that day, there was real chaos and pandemonium at the mission as the Headmaster and teachers on duty tried in vain to bring the situation back to normalcy. On a number of occasions, the girls would get hysterical and fall unconscious in front of teachers, nurses, ancillary staff and other pupils. Some of the affected girls started beating up teachers and ancillary staff. When the case was brought to the attention of Fr. Urayai, he immediately dashed to the school to make an investigation. Seeing that the situation needed urgent attention, Fr. Urayai ordered that all the victims be taken to Mr. Tachiona's house, one of the Primary School teachers, where he normally conducted his healing sessions (Simon Tachiona, Interview 10/10/14).

The evil spirits were not just stubborn and violent, but also cheeky. Being assisted by a number of heavily built Form Four boys and some teachers to control the otherwise uncontrollable girls, it took Fr. Urayai the whole day to complete the healing session. When the spirits were asked why they had only attacked girls and not boys, they boastfully and cheekily answered in vernacular, '*Hune hana nhete*', meaning that girls are chicken hearted (Patrick Chagwiza, Interview 15/10/13).

When the spiritual operation was completed, one of the eye witnesses is said to have commented that what Fr. Urayai had displayed and demonstrated that day was 'Super Roman Catholic,' meaning it was above and beyond what an ordinary and traditional Catholic Church is capable of achieving. From then on, the healing method of Fr. Urayai was often referred to

as the Super Roma healing method' (Simon Chaputsira, Interview 20/04/12). The implications and ramifications of the name Super Roma shall be re-visited in the next chapter. The same name (Super Roma) was also later adopted and applied, not just to Fr. Urayai's new theology of healing and exorcism, but also to the new movement that later formed under his care and patronage.

2.9.2 The exorcism of Joe (1992)

The exorcism of Joe at Chinyuni parish was also captured by Sibanda (1999). In 1992, when Fr. Urayai was serving at Chinyuni parish, a certain young man named 'Joe' came for healing. Joe was suffering from a mental illness that had affected him for close to a year. During the diagnosis, Fr. Urayai was dumbfounded by what he heard through Joe. When he commanded the spirit to speak in the name of Jesus, the spirit that had troubled the young man for years had this to say:

...I used to be one of you my friend. I was once a priest like you. You can even know me if I disclose my name but am too shy because of the side I am at the moment...When I died I found myself having almost the same body as I had when I was walking on earth. The only difference was that I could travel very fast...However, a certain force, which I can not describe compelled me to go to a certain place where I now know as '*Magedhe*'. I was received there by certain people who were wearing white and bright garments and entered a very big gate. I was told that the place was the resting zone, so I rested there for some time.

I was then taken farther through another gate where I was given some healing treatment. I was feeling very fit when I left the healing zone to go to yet another zone, now the judgement zone. This one is a very big theatre like-hall, where I was made to sit on a high stool overlooking everybody who was in there. Then immediately I began to see the story of my life being shown on the walls of the theatre. Everything came up, the good and the bad. Even those things I thought no one knew of. I was so humiliated that day. I wanted to find somewhere to sink, but there was none... I did not qualify to go to the feasting zone. A very strong and thundering voice then commanded me to leave immediately and go to where I belonged. Satan was happy to receive me...(Sibanda 1999:23).

2.10 The role of audio tapes

A number of interviews conducted at Mutero Mission do confirm that Fr. Urayai possessed several audio tapes. The audio tapes were used to record his healing sessions. The same tapes

were also used in some of Fr. Urayai's catechetical instructions. Through these audio tapes and his ability to go beyond conventional medicine in diagnosis and therapy, he managed to convert and baptize a number of new converts into the Roman Catholic family. Apart from Christians who left their former denominations to join the Roman Catholic Church, there were also cases of converts from former practitioners of the African traditional religion. However, according to research findings, there are no traceable records to such claims since Fr. Urayai had a tradition of not entering most of the newly baptized into the baptismal register (Informant, Interview 10/07/2014).

It is highly probable that Father Urayai was too busy with his healing ministry to the extent that he had no time to enter new converts into the baptismal register as required by Canon Law. Critics revealed that Fr. Urayai had time for anything else (Bishop Anonymous, Interview, 10/10/13). Whilst there were immediate attempts to doubt and discredit the claim that Fr. Urayai converted thousands to the Roman Catholic Church due to lack of clear and clean evidence, the account took hold nevertheless.

Through his many healing sessions, he was quick to make a name for himself to an extent that, like Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo of Zambia and Fr. Felician Nkwera of Tanzania, he became the most popular exorcist in the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe then. His highly successful healing of the afflicted also made him popular beyond Catholic borders. His clientele included not just Catholics of all Catholic Dioceses, but also members of other churches who visited his parish when all other forms of healing elsewhere failed. Scores of people covered long distances simply to listen to Fr. Urayai's taped testimonies (Emmanuel Mupure, Interview 27/07/14). By so doing, Fr. Urayai had laid down both the foundation and context within which an ecumenical movement later emerged.

However, whilst Fr. Urayai became popular within and beyond Catholic borders, his healing ministry later became controversial and had a double-folded impact. Whilst the lay faithful applauded him for introducing the ministry of deliverance within the Roman Catholic Church, his fellow black clergymen claimed that Fr. Urayai's ministry, particularly his theology of healing, was heretical and an instrument of division. Challenges of Fr. Urayai's healing ministry shall be examined in chapter five.

2.11 Conclusion

The second chapter of this study has introduced us to the person of Fr. Urayai, his healing methodology and diagnosis. The chapter has established that although Fr. Urayai faced quite a number of challenges, he had the gift of healing that drew vast crowds in search of an 'alternative form of therapy.' Through working with several patients for thirty nine years during his priestly ministry, among other things, he was made to change his theological and biblical stance, much to the disappointment of those who had mentored him. His experiences with evil spirits also made him change his entire metaphysical thought. Consequently, he adopted a new theology and healing method as he laid the foundation for a prayer group that emerged within the context of his healing ministry. The next chapter shall examine the various factors that contributed to the birth and development of Super Roma.

CHAPTER THREE

THE BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF ‘SUPER ROMA’ (1970-2016)

3.0 Introduction

The current Chapter discusses the dynamics and factors that favoured or inhibited the birth and development of Super Roma. The Chapter consists of two key segments. Whilst the first segment examines the causal factors, the second concentrates on the development of the movement. From the onset, it is important to note that while we refer to Super Roma by this designation, the name evolved later in the development of the religious movement. Since it is within the context of Fr. Urayai’s extra-ordinary experiences with evil spirits that the name Super Roma was born, it is, therefore, critical that at some point within the scope of this chapter we further outline the implications and ramifications of the name.

3.1 The call and commission of Fr. Urayai

The commissioning of Father Augustine Urayai is, from a stylistic point of view, linked with factors often associated with the appointment and commissioning of leaders of prophetic movements in Africa. These factors include: dreams, visions, prophetic revelations or physical transportations to heaven (Daneel 1987:157). Whilst the order of exorcism that Fr. Urayai received at Chishawasha Seminary and his inaugural case of healing in 1969 could have both fanned his passion for exorcism, the exorcism of Angela Washaya, on the 12th of June 1970 was such a critical inaugural experience that transformed Fr. Urayai’s entire healing ministry into a new religious movement. In fact, the experience marked the birth of a religious movement.

3.1.1 The exorcism of Angela Washaya

The exorcism of Angela Washaya at Washaya centre on the 12th of June 1970 by Fr. Urayai stands at the centre and summit of Fr. Urayai’s gift of healing and the subsequent formation of

a dynamic religious movement.

Washaya Center is one of the many outstations under Chinyika Parish in Gutu where Fr. Urayai often conducted his healing sessions. Chinyika parish is about a few metres West of Chinyika Muslim Centre.¹⁷ Washaya Center is about six kilometers North of Chinyika parish. During Fr. Urayai's era, Chinyika area had a number of other outstations, namely, Magombedze¹⁸, Chitsa, St. Martins, Ndahwi, Makudo, Machawira, Zimuto, Man'oro, Zvavaduma, Makonese, Jokoro, Mudonhi and Washaya (Charles Marumisa, Interview 12/08/13).

At Washaya Centre, a certain girl of marriageable age by the name Angela Washaya was often a victim of spirit possession and diabolic attacks. For several days and weeks Fr. Urayai had exorcised countless demons from her, but the situation did not become any better. In fact, it was becoming worse and hopeless. The case of Angela was proving to be even more difficult than that of Ignatius Munyongani of 3 August 1969. Sometimes the evil spirits would appear to have disappeared, only to re-appear with some devastating results on the young and innocent girl. So, it was during one such exorcism that Fr. Urayai had his divine commission to champion the formation of an ecumenical prayer movement. He was only five years in the priestly ministry then. The episode left an indelible mark and impression on the otherwise young, sceptical, cautious and very Roman Catholic Fr. Urayai.

In an interview conducted and tape- recorded on the 30th of August 1994, Fr. Urayai still remembered a series of events that took place on that particular day and after. He narrated:

After my first case of exorcism in 1969, sometime later in my pastoral work, another case of possession occurred. This time it was a girl, Angela Washaya by name. She

¹⁷ The prime and basic purpose of Chinyika Muslim Centre among other things is to provide a suitable venue for teaching and propagating the Islamic Faith to all Muslims living in the Gutu area (Mandivenga, 1983:76).

¹⁸ The researcher comes from Magombedze Centre.

came from a small outstation called Washaya, which is under Chinyika area. The case of Angela was a very tough one. I had exorcised her for several days and weeks at her homestead. The evil spirits would for sometime appear to have gone, only to reappear with redoubled energy and ferocity.

The situation was becoming worse and hopeless. I was almost giving up. It was on one of these recurring exorcisms that one evening after I had tried to exorcise Angela, being assisted by two catechists, namely, Richard Tashaiwa and Sylvester Madanhire, that I saw Sylvester shaking his head in a strange way. When I saw it happen, I asked Richard to assist me in transferring Angela into a separate room and ordered him to stay there until I would call him back. In fact, I made this arrangement after I had been asked to do so by what I thought was Sylvester at that moment. Then I heard a thick voice through Sylvester saying, 'Father, I am a good spirit from God. You and many other people are so far used to seeing and hearing only evil spirits speaking through human beings, but I am a holy spirit from God.' I was deeply disturbed. Fear was written all over my face. At first, I thought it could be one of the devil's many tricks meant to confuse me and jeopardize my priestly ministry.

To further complicate issues, I had never given a second thought to how communication of good spirits or angels with man was effected in the Bible or would be possible on earth. In fact, the possibility of communicating with spirits (Spiritism) had always been given very little attention in the Christian Church, the Catholic Church in particular. So, in this regard I was as ignorant as any other priest or bishop of my time... 'Father, I see that you doubt that I am a good spirit and you are not ready to accept me. If you are not ready to accept, then I can leave but you will never see me again. If you accept me I can assist you in your pastoral work because I have told you that I am a good spirit from heaven. In fact I am an angel. If evil spirits can speak through human beings, what can stop angels from doing the same?' he continued... I only came to accept and believe when he had handled without fear my stole, crucifix and my Jerusalem Bible which evil spirits could not dare touch during my exorcisms. From that moment I began to pay closest attention... It was on 12 June 1970 (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

3.1.2 The case of Angela is explained.

As the voice continued, the first thing that the voice revealed to Fr. Urayai was the nature and character of the case of diabolic possession that he was dealing with. The case of Angela was a complicated one. It was revealed that an ancestral maternal spirit (*Chimbuya*) had been dedicated to Angela from childhood. The case was becoming complicated for the reason that by then the evil spirit had invited 60 other devils that were making Angela their abode. For as long as Angela's relatives entertained and worshipped the spirit, no form of exorcism would be possible.

The same spirit had also caused both Angela and her father to become sick. Thus, Fr. Urayai was advised by the voice to first convince Angela's relatives to denounce the spirit wholeheartedly in order to defeat it. If they failed to do so, he would be wasting his time, for the same spirit would continue to harm more innocent family members, including Angela. As a matter of fact, Angela's father passed away the same year in the month of October as the voice had predicted. Narrating the same incident, Fr. Urayai continued:

Then he went on to praise my first exorcisms on Ignatius saying that it was classical and God was pleased with it. He also told me that God was pleased with my sermons, especially at funerals. Then he went on to ask me if I wanted a gift, of which I agreed. On this he only said, 'the gift will come later'. At first I thought it was going to be a gift from overseas but later on I realized that the gift he meant was a spiritual gift of exorcism. He went further and hailed me for taking an uncompromising stance on veneration of ancestors, bringing home ceremonies (*Kurova guva*)¹⁹, beer drinking and smoking among others. These, he said, were associated with evil spirits and should not be confused or in any way mixed with pure Christianity... However, on this particular incident, he did not disclose his real name. He only introduced himself as a high ranking angel from heaven... We discussed a number of things and he then promised to visit me again in a similar fashion. I was tipped to make the whole scheme my closely guarded secret (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

3.1.3 The angel's second visit

On the second day of the angel's visit, Fr. Urayai and Sylvester were on a motor bike, on their way to Chinyika parish to prepare for Sylvester's wedding that was approaching. As they went they discussed quite a number of spiritual issues, especially those that affected their parish. Whilst in the middle of the discussion the catechist asked the priest if he could stop the motor bike for a while, for he complained that he was feeling ice cold right on top of his head. Relating the incident, Fr. Urayai had this to say:

Then on a separate day I was carrying Sylvester on the carrier of my motor-bike. It was in the evening and we were on our way to prepare for the catechist's wedding that was due to take place at Chinyika parish. I was surprised to hear Sylvester asking me to stop immediately. He complained that his head had suddenly become ice-cold right on top. I complied but we both remained seated on the bike, ready to proceed. Then at once I heard the same voice that had blessed me at Angela's place repeating the same blessing. 'Father, I have seen that you are so curious to know my name.

My name is archangel Cherubim, one of the seven archangels in heaven', he

¹⁹ The Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe adopted *kurova guva* as official liturgy in 1982.

continued. When the name Cherubim was mentioned, I remembered one Roman Catholic song that makes mention of that name....But in the Roman Catholic Church we do not rank Cherubim as one of the archangels. We profess only three archangels namely, Michael, Gabriel and Raphael... He then disclosed quite a number of things. Chief among them was the formation of a prayer movement under his guidance. Reasons for the formation of the movement were also spelt out... Then I knew I had opened yet another chapter in my ministerial priesthood... From that moment onwards, the angel was coming almost every evening, especially during our evening or night prayers, or sometimes early in the morning around 04:00 hrs. He later advised me to read the book by Johannes Greber entitled *Communication with the Spirit World of God*. The book narrates some extraordinary experiences of a German based Roman Catholic priest who had also become a privileged recipient of celestial teachings back in 1923. The book confirmed what I was experiencing at my parish... (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

3.2 Reasons for the formation of a religious movement

The need to correct falsified sections of the Bible, the need to return to spiritism and the need for renewal and revival were outlined as the key reasons for the formation of a new ecumenical religious movement. These reasons were to a greater extent adapted from Greber (1970).

3.2.1 The need to correct falsified sections of the Bible

The manifesting spirit had a long lecture with Fr. Urayai on the falsification of the Bible. Holding Fr. Urayai's Jerusalem Bible, he openly challenged the Magisterium (Teaching Authority of the Roman Catholic Church) and declared that some significant parts of the Holy Book had been tampered with and altered, either intentionally or unintentionally through wrong translations.²⁰ In this regard all religions and Churches without exception contain a grain of truth and a wealth of error (Greber 1970:7). Hence re-alignment of all Christian dogmas and doctrines was, therefore, said to be pivotal as erring man (human) in history had revised the biblical accounts, omitting what they could not understand or adding their own mistaken notions (Fr. Urayai, Interview, 30/08/94).

²⁰ Chapter four on the theology of Super Roma shall highlight some of the key scriptural sections that are said to have been falsified and tampered with.

3.2.2 The need to return to spiritism

The angel also commented at length on the topic of spiritism in the Bible and how the Roman Catholic Church at some point in her history barred such kind of communication. According to the Archangel, communication of man (human) with both the good and evil spirit worlds (Heaven and Hell) was as old as humanity. Right from the days of the first man on earth down to the present, these two worlds have always communicated with humanity more or less in a similar fashion through the use of mediums as intermediaries. Even today, God was said to be in constant communication with humans, either directly or indirectly through human mediums. The Bible was also given as evidence of such a communication (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

The angel then explained, step by step, how God communicated with humanity from the Old Testament up to the contemporary period. Making reference to Greber (1970), the angel explained how God used prophets and patriarchs as mediums in the preparation for the coming of Christ to enact the plan of salvation. He also explained how the Church later became man-made, ruled and guided by erring mortals and how century after century the same erring mortals had fabricated many false and new doctrines. Thus, after many centuries of ignorance and falsity, the need to re-introduce once again holy angels to re-instruct and guide humanity as the only authentic and infallible source of all religious truths was felt. Fr. Urayai had, therefore, been divinely chosen and sent to champion the new era in a bid to bring the entire nation of Zimbabwe to light (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

3.2.3 The need for revival and renewal

Having disclosed to Fr. Urayai how the Mother Church had fared and failed in the past, the angel called for the urgent need for *aggiornamento*, reform and renewal, in all denominations (Fr. Urayai, Interview, 30/08/94). The angel disclosed the need to resuscitate not just the

practice of communicating with angels through mediums, but also a renaissance of the theology and spirituality of the early Christians to speed up God's plan of salvation. In fact, there was need to return to Christ's baton stick teachings (Emmanuel Mupure, Interview, 27/07/14).

The early Church accomplished the communal theology for which it is fondly known, with a special manner and purity which established certain standards and examples to be cherished by generations to come. It is also during this period of the early Church that Christ's precepts are found in their pristine purity and cleanness (Greber 1970). Hence, the Archangel Cherubim-led movement was to strive to emulate the same standards. Archangel Cherubim did not, however, intend the founding of a new religion or Church but simply putting in place a purely spiritual Christianity that was to be guided and held together sorely by the spirit of love exclusive of any church organisation (Fr. Urayai, Interview, 30/08/94). Such spirituality was believed to be universal and timeless, capable of purging all religions, denominations and churches of human made Christianity and all elements which could bring division (Greber 1970). Stanislaus Bigirimana (2000) calls it the 'Highest Common Factor' model.

To achieve the Highest Common Factor, the movement was to be, therefore, inter-denominational. It was also to employ the 'stay and reform from within' strategy. Participants were to remain full members of their respective denominations and then try to theologically and morally reform the various denominations from within. The group was also to be apolitical, non-violent, independent and non-affiliated to any religion, church or organization and bound by the common sharing of the Eucharist (Fr. Urayai, Interview, 30/08/94).

The group would also welcome any person irrespective of race or background beliefs who is genuinely interested in pursuing the true Christian way of life. However, there was going to

be a preferential option for phlegmatic denominations compared to evangelicals, Pentecostals and members from African Initiated Churches (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94). All operations of the movement were to be masterminded by Archangel Cherubim himself, regulating the activities of the movement and the spiritual lives of the individual members with Fr. Urayai only acting as the human agent. It is, therefore, in the light of the three aforementioned reasons that the movement was later to be named the Light of Life Christian Group or the Light of Life Brotherhood (Super Roma Informant, Interview 25/10/13). The meaning of the name Light of Life shall be discussed later in this chapter.

It is also critical at this stage to mention that communication with angels within the new movement was to be done in two phases. Phase one (1970-2003) was meant to be preparatory and it consisted of angels communication through human beings as mediums. Phase two (2003 and beyond) would consist in communicating with angels on an individual basis through meditation and contemplation in order to establish the inner church or inner circle. The inner circle is a community of true disciples and representatives of Christ on earth, a community of spiritual giants (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

3.3 First phase of the movement: (1970 -2003)

3.3.1 Early converts

A few weeks after Father Urayai's inaugural experience and the manifestation of the 'hierophany' (Eliade 1957:12), a small group of interested Roman Catholics who initially followed Catholic traditional theology gathered together at Chinyika parish in Gutu to deepen their prayer life and knowledge of the Scriptures. The small circle or community formed around Sylvester, the deep-trance medium, under the guidance and leadership of Archangel

Cherubim who always spoke through Sylvester, Fr. Urayai's albino catechist.²¹ The Archangel Cherubim led movement²² met every weekend to receive some instructions on good moral behaviour, Bible lessons and to celebrate Mass or the Eucharist. Whilst Fr. Urayai often referred to the association as *Boka* (group) or *Sangano* (Conference), he often referred to Archangel Cherubim as Brother Kero (*mukoma Kero*) (Charles Marumisa, Interview12/08/13).

Members of the circle brought with them a highly critical mind, a desire for new teachings and inner readiness and willingness to transform their lives as new, extra spiritual lessons flowed out to them. At the same time, a wide critical mind was created among the Roman Catholics who attended. A sceptical mind plus a reading culture was also created as more and more teachings were vouchsafed to them. The reading culture and critical mind, however, did not lead to the cry for the re-writing of the Bible or a re-arrangement of ecclesiastical hierarchy, but rather a passion and thirst for authentic and reliable spiritual knowledge. Many of them were ready to explore and re-visit issues to do with both the canonization and translation of Scripture just for the sake of getting more informed.

When the group was first formed, there were only two families and a few others from Chinyika area who were members. The very first members who came to join the newly founded group were identified and hand picked by Archangel Cherubim himself but the system later changed. With time members became free to introduce their friends and relatives to the *boka* as long as they went through an undisclosed process of vetting by Archangel

²¹ In his article on Albinism published in the African Identities journal, Machoko (2013) argued that the biggest obstacle preventing people with albinism from taking part in Zimbabwean society derives from African traditional religious myths and beliefs which made them to live in ambiguity. For him, these myths and beliefs persist even today. However, in the case of Sylvester, in spite of his life of ambiguity, he became a vital cog in the life of the entire Super Soma movement.

²² Daneel (1987) talks of the Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Nigeria, one of the many spirit type churches which originated around the beginning of the 19th century. It has not yet been established whether the Church has any links with Fr. Urayai's Cherubim led movement in Zimbabwe.

Cherubim himself. Among the very first members was Sylvester Madanhire, whom Fr. Urayai always referred to as ‘his beloved catechist’ (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94). The Washaya family was also among the earliest converts. The same also applied to Ignatius Munyongani from whom Fr. Urayai had cast out evil spirits on 3 August 1969.

In its earliest stages, the *boka/sangano* was purely Roman Catholic in its membership. Under the guidance of Archangel Cherubim, Sylvester (catechist cum medium) and Fr. Urayai, members who joined the *boka* increased steadily, giving more emphasis to teaching than healing. However, Fr. Urayai’s healing ministry continued to act as one of the key recruitment techniques (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94). It is also important to note that the fellowship grew up mostly among the most active members of the congregation, but continued to remain in the mainstream Roman Catholic Church. By then, the *boka* had two complementary apostolates or ministries, namely, healing and teaching. For Fr. Urayai, it was a promising beginning (Simon Magona, Interview 10/08/13).

The Bible remained focal point in the life of the newly founded movement and continued to act as a powerful corrective. However, Mr. Magona noted that slowly, some elements of traditional Roman Catholic theology became obscured if not eclipsed by a new theology emanating from the medium, particularly during prayer sessions (Simon Magona, Interview 10/08/13). The next Chapter shall discuss the movement’s theology in detail.

Among other things, the new movement drew closer to the doctrine of the Reformed Mission Church by making monogamy, abstinence from liquor and prohibition on divination and ancestor worship-qualifications for membership. Equally proscribed as early as 1970 were traditional practices such as traditional dancing, polygyny, *Kurova Guva*, taking in of tobacco and snuff among others. There were also dietary observations such as abstaining from eating

of pork (*Nguruve/Hochi*) and dried vegetables (*Mufushwa*). Beer, tobacco, pork and *mufushwa* were said to have low or negative energies from Satan that attracted evil spirits. Divorce, family planning and polygamy were said to be in sharp contrast with God's natural laws and His plan of salvation (Alex Sibanda, Interview 10/03/13).

Commenting on how prayer sessions were conducted at the *boka* then, Fr. Urayai had this to say:

All prayer sessions were held with deepest reverence and the highest form of order. Members would sit around a table with burning candles, at first one burning candle and then for the Lord's Supper all seven candles burning, according to the instruction and guidance of the angel. We started with a hymn then followed by exchanging the sign of peace through handshake. Then holding our hands together in a circle we quietly examined our consciences and broke into a prayer of contrition...then came the first reading...the second reading from the gospel...then came the much awaited lesson from archangel Cherubim. This was followed by the Lord's Supper led by the priest or the archangel himself, a concluding prayer and blessing from the Archangel, question time, planning of spiritual work to be done and fixing of dates and places of next meetings, all done by the medium. Holy Communion was administered to all members present, regardless of their denominations (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

Such meetings continued clandestinely at Chinyika parish from 1970 as the angel had advised. It is unfortunate that during interviews at Chinyika parish in 2012, the researcher could not come across any surviving member from this period as most of them were said to be late. However, Sithole of Washaya Center who also joined the movement at a later stage had this to say about the movement:

We did not lose membership of our various denominations. We continued to be full and active members of our respective Churches. Members of the *boka* were taught never to regard the movement as an independent Church but to find a deeper expression of their faith and love of God within their own denominations and to acknowledge and appreciate with joy the really Christian values that are at the very centre of their denominations. We were also taught never to openly challenge our Church doctrines and authorities since the information we got from *boka* was meant to be private and confidential, only to be regarded as extra spiritual lessons.

We were also encouraged to fully and actively participate in our Church activities and attend all private sessions at the parish in order to plan together how we could ecumenically worship and evangelise as God's children, as a demonstration of our collaborative ministry and missionary co-operation. However, the majority struggled to understand the lessons, especially the form in which they were given. But with time

through interacting with archangel Cherubim more often, the meaning and purpose of life on earth was explained; the doors to the high heavens as well as to the dark spheres (hell) were opened a little and the law of cause and effect was illustrated by way of actual life stories showing its consequences in the hereafter. The continuation of life after earthly death, the ways of divine justice, law and order, the necessity of re-incarnation continued to unfold. Christ's life on earth, His suffering and ultimate sacrifice on the cross became intelligible and meaningful to all those who gathered for such teachings. All mysteries were de-mystified, myths de-mythologised and more light was shed on concepts such as Creation, pre-existence, original sin, the Holy Trinity, reincarnation, the Lord's Supper and the problem of evil among others (Leonard Sithole, Interview 10/12/12).

3.4 The development of the movement

After serving Mutero Mission for almost four years, in December 1971, Fr. Urayai was transferred to the then Mashaba (now Mashava) Parish. For the smooth running of the *boka*, contrary to the rule that catechists serve their home areas, Fr. Urayai took along Sylvester to Mashava parish. By then Sylvester was married and had since been blessed with a baby boy named Deogratus (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94). Because of distance, Fr. Urayai's transfer to Mashaba made him change time for prayer sessions from weekly to monthly. The same system was being followed at the time this study was conducted. Thus, once every month, Fr. Urayai and Sylvester often sneaked²³ out to attend prayer sessions.

During his short stint at Mashaba parish, another angel spoke through Sylvester during one of their monthly sessions and introduced herself as angel Luciana. Luciana highlighted that she had come to work with the community in Zimbabwe. For sometime, the two angels took turns to speak through the same medium during prayer sessions until at a later stage when the need to train more mediums was seen as crucial. When Sylvester's family grew a little bigger, Fr. Urayai assisted him to start a small business in Gokwe district so that he could be financially self-sustaining. He opened a shop for him at Gumbamarara (Super Roma Informant, Interview 15/07/15).

²³ Since Archangel Cherubim had tipped Fr. Urayai to take the birth and development of the movement as a closely guarded secret, it was critical for the two to always sneak out in order to attend all prayer sessions without being noticed by their immediate responsible authorities.

At the end of 1974, Fr. Urayai was transferred to Matibi Mission. During the same period, monthly sessions continued uninterrupted. Members also continued to join and strived to lead a holy life. They also continued to observe all prohibitions such as abstaining from alcohol, smoking, and veneration of ancestors, divorce, family planning and polygamy among other things. Consequently, more Roman Catholics, particularly those who had for long cherished the above prohibitions, joined hands with the newly founded movement and vowed to propagate the same in the Roman Catholic Church in order to transform the same from within (Sr. Martha Chakabveyo, Interview 20/05/08). On several occasions, Fr. Urayai and Sylvester continued to visit each other for updates and spiritual edification.

In 1976, Fr. Urayai was further transferred to St. Kizito Parish near Empress Mine, much to the delight of Sylvester and his family who then was a few kilometers from Fr. Urayai. The transfer made Fr. Urayai re-unite with his beloved catechist. During his stay in Zhombe, Fr. Urayai's popularity continued to grow and members increased rapidly to include even more non-Catholics. Methodists, Anglicans, Dutch Reformed and Salvation Army, among others also became members of Father Urayai's prayer movement, with him standing as their overall Father and Priest. He became like a freelancer priest (Super Roma Informant, Interview 15/07/15). Like their Catholic counterparts, non Catholics who had joined also vowed to be more committed and dedicated to ecumenically deepen their knowledge of the Bible as children of the same Father regardless of their religious affiliation and disapproval of their immediate responsible Church authorities. They also vowed to morally transform their respective denominations from within.

By that time the movement had attained historical magnitude and could no longer be ignored by the world around it. Not only had it become a phenomenon of interdenominational

dimension, it had also become a phenomenon of national dimension (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/0/94). Fr. Urayai's healing sessions continued to positively impact the lives of the surrounding people thereby becoming one of his most effective powers of attraction and a recruitment technique as already highlighted. However, by virtue of him being a Roman Catholic priest, he recruited more from his denomination than any other. Thus, the Roman Catholic dominance was always visible. With the *Boka* members continuing to escalate, the need for more mediums was felt. However, such training did not come immediately.

3.4.1 School of mediums begins (1978-83)

As the community continued to grow and the need for more mediums was felt, under the guidance of Archangel Cherubim, Fr. Urayai secretly started a small school of mediums in Zhombe from 1978.²⁴ The school was popularly known as the Gumbamarara School of Mediums within the movement circles simply because it was situated at Gumbamarara township (Super Roma informant, Interview 12/08/13). It was situated at the store of Mr Madanhire, the catechist, near Empress Mine. The mediums were to be instruments of the spirit-world intended to make possible communication between heaven and earth in Zimbabwe.

A number of interested trainees converged at the catechist's homestead to train as mediums. However, whilst a handful of interested trainees fell along the way side, a total of 15 enthusiasts, all from Zhombe area were prepared to endure the training. The school was open to both males and females, single or married. Out of the 15 trainees who endured to the end, two were males and 13 were females (Peter Chisango, Interview 20/04/12). The whole team at Gumbamarara School of mediums was meant to train as deep trance mediums. Fr. Urayai

²⁴ Fr. Urayai's sabbatical year came as a blessing in disguise as he fully utilized the same year to set the structures of the much awaited school of mediums. All this was done without the knowledge of his immediate superiors.

explained how deep trance mediums function:

A person is said to be in a deep trance state when his or her spirit has left the material body entirely. In this state the spirit which has gone forth from him/her will be connected with its physical body by a band of Od. Through this band of Od, the medium's body receives enough vitality from the spirit to keep its organs functioning. It is along this band of od also that the spirit finds its way back into the body of the medium. In the place of its own spirit, another spirit being enters the body and delivers its message by means of the medium's organs of speech. A deep trance medium, however, knows or remembers nothing of what the spirit would have said but when consciousness returns, the medium feels as though he/she was having a very deep sleep. What is true of mediums who work with good spirits is also to some extent true of those that work with evil spirits like mediums or *Masvikiro* in the African or traditional sense except the fact that unlike good spirits, evil spirits force their way into their hosts and drain their energy/od during the process (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

Apart from deep trance mediums, Fr. Urayai further revealed that there are also other mediumistic gifts at the disposal of human beings. Such gifts include clairvoyance and clairaudience among others. People gifted with clairvoyance are able to see things that other people cannot see. They can see objects or events that the physical eye cannot see. Those with clairaudience are able to hear what ordinary people cannot hear. There are also those gifted with telepathy. These can read the minds or perceive thoughts of other people or transmit their thoughts to other people, near or far off (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

Whilst some people are gifted with the gift of pre-cognition, others are also gifted with the gift of retro-cognition. Those gifted with pre-cognition can see or tell future events before they happen. Retro-cognitionists are able to go into moments or times that have already passed. For Fr. Urayai, such mediumistic gifts are prevalent not only in both the Old and New Testament times but also among many traditional religions as well, particularly the Shona cult of ancestral worship (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94). Such gifts are common to all human beings regardless of whether one is used by an angel or not. Individuals only need to develop them through prayer and practice. The same mediumistic gifts were also said to be even more common in spirit type Churches and they often use such gifts as a recruitment technique as

well. However, opinions continue to differ greatly, especially as to the question of the nature of spirits that operate and bestow such gifts upon humans.

The training of Super Roma mediums was to some extent reflective of the general training of mediums, particularly in African traditional religions. Mbiti (1975:157) sheds more light on the training of mediums in the African Traditional Religions, particularly in countries like Ghana and Nigeria.

In countries like Ghana and Nigeria there are schools for their training, which may last from several months to several years. Others are trained on an individual basis by priests, medicine men, diviners and other leaders. They may have a calling, like medicine men, or the parents may give over their daughter to be trained as a medium. In some cases, a particular divinity or spirit may ask for a certain girl or woman to become its medium for a while or indefinitely. If the medium is trained in a school, she lives with other trainees. Their training involves learning a new language, communicating with spirits, saying certain prayers, singing professional songs, dancing and the necessary exercises for inducing spirit possession. At the end of their training they are brought out in a big public ceremony, at which the relatives receive them with joy, presents and congratulations. They wear new clothes and often have new names and ways of behaviour. They then begin practicing, normally in association with priests, medicine men and diviners.

In more or less the same manner, the Zhombe based mediums were trained to develop their mediumistic powers so that they could be used basically as deep trance mediums or speaking mediums.²⁵ The training lasted for a total of three to four years. Among other things the primary object of the training of deep trance mediums was to develop their ability to release as much spiritual energy (od) as possible through mental concentration or meditation. Of the 15 trainees, there was one male medium who later replaced Sylvester as chief medium when Sylvester later died in 1981, soon after independence in 1980. One young lady was also to be used by angel Luciana (Alex Sibanda, Interview 10/03/13).

After the death of Sylvester in 1981, his residence that was being used by the trainees was

²⁵ Fr. Urayai, however, regarded all mediums in the African traditional religion as agents and instruments of the devil.

later sold. Consequently, the school of mediums was moved from Gumbamarara to Mrs Makoni's (now late) residence, about 10 km away from Sylvester's place. Mrs Makoni, popularly known as *mbuya vaMbudzi*, was also among the medium trainees (Informant, Interview 20/07/15). Thus, from 1981 to July 1983, all the trainees used the Makoni residence for their much needed spiritual lessons and meditations. When a new house was bought in the town of Kwekwe in July 1983, most female mediums then moved from Zhombe to the city to occupy the new house at Number 6 Cedrella Avenue in Msasa Park. By then, a handful of trainees had developed as deep trance mediums (Informant, Interview 20/07/15). Both the training of mediums and the new house that had been bought by Super Roma authorities were promising and welcome developments for the entire movement.

3.4.2 Central venue for spiritual lessons

When the school of mediums was transferred from Zhombe to Kwekwe, the need for a central venue for prayer sessions was also keenly felt. Thus, whilst on the one hand the Masasa house became the new venue for the movement's monthly meetings, the same house continued to be residence and school for the majority of both developed and developing female mediums.

Kwekwe, formally Que Que, is a city in central Zimbabwe located in the centre of the country (Midlands Province), roughly equidistant from Harare to the northeast and Bulawayo to the southwest. According to Kwekwe Municipal records of 2012, its population stood at 47, 607 in 1982, 75, 425 in 1992 and the preliminary results of the 2002 census suggested a population of 88, 000. The city of Kwekwe is the centre for steel and fertilizer production in the country. Thus, perhaps the city of Kwekwe was opted for by Super Roma due to its centrality.

The newly established center was popularly known as *kuCentre* (centre) within the movement

circles. Among the movement's elderly, it was known as *Kumusoro* (above). Words such as *Kucentreor Kumusoro* were used deliberately to confuse and misdirect inquisitive non members (Patrick Chagwiza, Interview 15/10/13). It is also critical to mention that after the training of mediums in Zhombe, a number of other angels joined archangel Cherubim and angel Luciana to communicate through the newly trained mediums. Names such as Archangel Gabriel, Michael and Raphael among others also featured prominently during Fr. Urayai's spiritistic séances. Other common names such as angel Phillip, John and Thomas were also part of the Archangel Cherubim-led celestial team.

Referring to angels who often communicated with them through mediums, members of the Archangel Cherubim led religious movement often used the name *Matenga*²⁶ or *Varidzi* (owners). Phrases such as, 'Archangel Cherubim said...' or 'Angels said...' were so prevalent among group members, especially during general discussions, in the comfort of their homes or during annual retreats. In fact, Sibanda underlined that such phrases became part of the group's every day vocabulary, but were never to be used in public (Alex Sibanda, Interview 10/03/13).

For a very long time, the house in Kwekwe was used as the movement's main 'hide out', centre and headquarters where the Archangel Cherubim-led team of spirit teachers continued to deliver their celestial teachings uninterrupted. Members from as far as Gutu, Mutare, Bulawayo, Gokwe and Triangle among other areas converged monthly at the centre to witness for themselves. Some top Roman Catholic priests and nuns also became members of the movement during this time, with many others joining the movement later. As priests and nuns moved to and from their respective Dioceses, the new movement also continued to spread. To

²⁶ The term *Matenga* could also be used with reference to the heavens. Whilst the Roman Catholic Church believes in the existence of one heaven, Super Roma talks of seven heavens. Paul talked of a man taken right into the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:1-2). Thus, the meaning of *Matenga* varied according to context within the movement circles.

a greater extent, periodic Roman Catholic ignorance and tolerance also helped the movement to grow as Roman Catholic bishops sought not only to explain issues in the new religious movement, but also to relate it to Catholic theology and practice before taking action (Emmanuel Mupure, Interview 27/07/94).

As per *Matenga* instruction, no member disclosed their affiliation status. Whilst some members brought with them note books, others brought their tape recorders and still others, video tapes to capture proceedings. God's great plan of salvation, the meaning and purpose of human life, death and life after, the Ten Commandments, Sermon on the Mount, the significance of Holy Eucharist, love and forgiveness among other topics featured prominently during monthly sessions. The main purpose of the lessons was to make Catholics better Catholics, Anglicans better Anglicans, Methodists better Methodists, without concentrating on their religious affiliation (Alex Sibanda, Interview 10/03/13). *Matenga* continued to summon members to conversion, repentance and amendment of life. By so doing, *Matenga* regulated the operations of the movement as Archangel Cherubim had earlier promised in the early 70s.

Even though a more central venue had been established, the movement's monthly sessions and annual retreats could still be held on rotational basis in places such as Gutu, Bikita and Chirumanzu occasionally. The movement's leadership could also hire halls in and around the city of Kwekwe for the same cause (Alex Sibanda, Interview 10/03/13).

3.4.3 Preparation and procedure for sessions

Matenga always emphasised the need for members to prepare for prayer sessions. Individual preparation for prayer sessions was highly recommended. As part of their preparations, members were advised to lead a holy life. Leading a holy life encompassed a number of

things such as prayer, meditation, fasting, love and forgiveness, among other things. Such spiritual exercises were said to be key in preparing the milieu that was conducive for effective communication with angels during prayer sessions. On the actual day of the session, members were also encouraged to take a bath prior to the session and to make sure that they were punctual. Punctuality meant that members should be at the venue of the session at least 15 minutes before. The same preparations were also recommended before the commencement of the movement's annual three day retreat normally held in the month of April of every year (LLCG Activity Calendar 2013).

In addition to individual preparation, venue or room preparation was also of great importance. To begin with, the venue (room or hall) was supposed to be clean and tidy. At least the room was to be prepared three hours before the session and whoever was assigned to do the preparations was expected to do so quietly or singing softly. The altar or table in front where mediums and/or priests sat was to be decorated with clean linen and fresh or live flowers. There were to be no dead or artificial flowers.

A few dishes of clean water were to be placed in the room to absorb all impurities before the prayer session. The dishes would, however, be removed just before the start of the session if deemed necessary. If deemed necessary as well, when all preparations were over, the door could then be locked to make sure that no one used the room for other things before the session. Such preparations always facilitated effective communication between *Matenga* and the *boka* members. In fact, such preparations gathered the required od necessary to communicate with celestial visitors. The same preparations have since been maintained by the movement up to today.

Commenting on how the actual prayer sessions were conducted during this period and

beyond, Fr. Urayai said:

When everyone is seated at their proper places in the room, with all priests and mediums in front, we would sing one or two songs being led by the choir just to lift up our spirits. Uplifting songs were then followed by the hymn of peace (*Rugare*) during which all members would stand to share the sign of peace so that we forgive each other before the Lord's Supper...Then came the opening prayer and reading of a Scriptural text, followed by a period of silent meditation, during which the leading angel is expected to greet the audience in the formula; 'The Lord be with You'! The greeting is followed by a lesson or lessons of the day from the same/different mediums according to the plan of the chief medium. Lessons flowed in both English and Shona, well punctuated by different denominational/interdenominational hymns...without drums or rattles, no dancing or even clapping of hands. Hymns were to be sung meditatively

Then came the celebration of the Lord's Supper being led by the available priest or chief medium (always male). Catholics and non-Catholics received Holy Communion as usual. The highest form of concentration was required during Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper was followed by question time, planning of work to be done, setting of dates for next meetings and final blessing...Then came the much awaited time for privacy, during which other members would then leave the venue of the session quickly and quietly, only carrying the message of the day.... Such experiences changed my world view completely (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

As underlined, in most cases, *Matenga* often gave congregants time for privacy after prayer sessions. Time for privacy occupied a central role for any member of the movement who had a traditional background of consulting African traditional mediums for any social mishaps. It was during privacy time that individuals with personal or family problems would go and consult the medium(s) as individuals or as families on any issue of concern. Since *Matenga* had discouraged members from consulting *n'angas* and other traditional and Pentecostal sacred practitioners, with the introduction of privacy, members of the *boka* found it (privacy) as a proper replacement and an alternative.

To a great extent, such an arrangement and practice contributed significantly to the expansion of the movement, as more members travelled long distances primarily for privacy (Alex Sibanda, Interview 10/03/13). Consultations ranged from wanting to know if one is being chosen by God into marriage or celibacy, courses to take at colleges and universities, or even choosing a life partner, among many other things (Kugwa 2005). Those planning to get

married also consulted *Matenga* on various issues that pertain to married life such as family planning, divorce, polygamy, discipline, faithfulness among others.

The youth were continuously warned to desist from pre-marital sex as it often led to baby dumping, contraction of venereal diseases, HIV and AIDS, unwanted pregnancies among other dangers. Above all, breaking the sixth commandment was and continued to be regarded as a grave sin against God. Hence, youth were advised to wait until their marriages were ratified in their respective Churches or at least in court. Since messages derived from mediums during such consultations were from the spirit world, members concerned strongly believed that such messages constituted the truth and were, therefore, to be obeyed without questioning.

Following the same logic, the movement was often referred to as the Community of Truth or *Sangano reChokwadi* in vernacular (Alex Sibanda, Interview 10/03/13) that is in possession of a special gnosis. The importance of messages from hierophanies was also echoed by Cox (1992:110) when he said:

Every religion prescribes in some sense how the believer 'ought' to behave. The 'ought' is an imperative because its authority is traced back to the hierophany. To disobey the moral imperative is to disrupt life, to threaten well-being, to move away from the centre toward chaos, to counteract the ordering effect of the original sacred event.

Apart from the practice of privacy, one other factor that contributed to the development of the movement was the issue of independence and civilization. Before the country achieved independence from its colonial masters in 1980, like many other oppressed Zimbabweans, at that time it was so difficult for members of the group to be mobile. Zimbabwe's hard won independence brought with it many changes, especially in the area of free movement of people from rural to urban areas. Thus, the much awaited independence also came as a blessing to the *boka* since its members could move from rural to urban areas in search of

employment and at the same time spreading the beliefs and practices of the religious movement. A handful of other members also ended up in the Diaspora (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13).

In 1995, the movement celebrated its historic Silver Jubilee in Kwekwe. The venue for the celebrations was Number 6 Cedrella Avenue (Alex Sibanda, Interview 10/03/13). From 1995 onwards its members increased sharply to an extent that another more spacious venue for prayer sessions became a pre-requisite.

3.4.4 Basildon farm²⁷

Following recommendations from *Matenga* to look for a more spacious venue, a 209 hectare Basildon farm, about 25 km in the Western direction of the city of Kwekwe, was purchased in 1999 and developed for purposes of prayer sessions. The venue only became functional in 2002. The importance of such a place as Basildon was also in line with Greber (1970) who recommended that when a group of seekers after God has decided to unite in an effort to get into communication with the good spirit world, the first thing to be determined upon is the place at which its meetings are to be held regularly. The place should thus be chosen so as to ensure the greatest possible privacy.

In the light of the above, apart from providing an appropriate venue for holding monthly sessions and facilities for the regular practice of the Super Roma faith and religious assemblies in and around Zimbabwe, more importantly, Basildon farm was to become the new Headquarters of the movement for generations to come (Alex Sibanda, Interview

²⁷ First to be obtained from Kwekwe Municipality was a 12 hectare Gaika plot, just about 1.5km from the city of Kwekwe. However, before the place was developed for its intended purpose, it was deemed too small for Matenga's mega plans.

10/03/13). In 2002, membership within the movement was estimated at around 2000²⁸ nationwide (Chemson Chemhere, Interview 12/08/13).

When Basildon Farm was officially opened in 2002, more priests and nuns particularly from the Roman Catholic Dioceses of Masvingo, Harare, Mutare and Gweru continued to secretly visit the venue to quench their spiritual and theological thirst. To avoid being spotted by their superiors, sometimes these priests would attend meetings on rotational basis (Macdonald Masvosva, Interview 20/10/10). The clandestine operations of the movement were, however, not meant to be a permanent phenomenon. Apart from the need to secretly nurse and nurture the movement in its infancy stages, it was also necessary during that time to protect both Fr. Urayai and the mediums whom the general public regarded as ordinary file members of their respective denominations. Understandably, for that reason, there was dire need to temporarily operate in private (Macdonald Masvosva, Interview 20/10/10).

Subsequent to the official opening of Basildon Farm, five other new centres were created in order to decentralize the movement's spiritistic meetings and to cut travelling costs. Two more centers were opened in towns, namely, Harare and Bulawayo, whilst the remaining three were opened in the rural areas where Fr. Urayai had previously operated. These were: Mutero, Chirumanzu and Zhombe (Patrick Chagwiza, Interview 15/10/13). Thus, the movement had a total of six centers, three in towns and three in the rural areas. The arrangement came as a relief to members who used to travel long distances to attend meetings in Kwekwe. With the introduction of the new set up, members were encouraged to attend monthly meetings in their respective centres.

Whilst sessions could sometimes be held without priest(s) due to tight schedule in their

²⁸ The number also includes children

respective Dioceses, no session could be held without mediums. Thus, mediums had to travel to all the five centers within the same month on different dates for prayer meetings. To a greater extent, Fr. Urayai also made sure that he availed himself in order to cement and galvanize the movement in spite of his old age.

Basildon Farm is very dear to the entire movement. Upon completion, the Basildon headquarters would have a 5 000 capacity Great Hall as the main building. The construction and completion of the Great Hall is often referred to as the Great Project within the movement circles.²⁹ According to Minutes of the LLCG executive committee of 2010, the centre and headquarters would also witness the construction of a crèche, boarding primary and high schools, clinic, university, orphanage and a convent among other buildings.

Members are, therefore, exhorted to pledge, contribute and donate generously towards developing the 209 hectare Basildon Farm. Contributions are expected to come in the form of money, manual work, ideas and prayers. For Super Roma members, what is of importance is not just the completion of the centre but what the centre shall continuously achieve as the towering centre of spiritual solace for thousands and thousands of Christians in Zimbabwe in the near or distant future. The idea of building a university at the place is probably to ensure that the Super Roma philosophy and ideologies are further spread not only among Zimbabweans, but also beyond borders at the highest academic level.

As per *Matenga* instruction, the construction of Basildon Farm would be done without the aid of donor funding. As a spiritual project, members were tipped that it is more meritorious to contribute than to turn to non-members for assistance. To this effect, with the ailing

²⁹Whilst the spiritual Great Project consists in the salvation of all souls, including Lucifer himself at the appointed time, the physical one consists in developing Basildon Farm. The spiritual Great Project is matched with the physical which acts as the vehicle for the achievement of the spiritual goals.

Zimbabwean economy, a considerable amount of Super Roma funding comes from Super Roma diasporans, particularly those in continents like Europe, America and Australia. Those in African countries like South Africa, Mozambique and Botswana also make huge contributions towards the realization of *Matenga's* dream at Basildon. Local Super Roma members also respect their huge monthly pledges in addition to regular visits to Basildon Farm to donate their labour (Sr. Cresencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13). In the near or far future, both the Light of Life University (to be) and Super Roma diasporans shall be key instruments in the externalization of Super Roma beliefs and practices. At Gaika Plot, a number of projects were also running to ensure that the movement's supply line is kept alive.

3.5 Phase two of the movement (2003-beyond)

The year 2003 marked the dawn of a new era in the history of the Super Roma movement. As had earlier been promised to Fr. Urayai and the entire group, on the 21st of June, 2003, *Matenga* concluded their communication through mediums and opened the second phase of communicating with members on individual basis through meditation and contemplation. This then meant that all members were to strive to practice the prayer of meditation in order to commune with God's angels. Members were tipped to learn to meditate as it was only through the prayer of meditation that they would each at their own time become members of the inner circle or inner church (Sr. Cresencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13).

For Super Roma, the inner church is above and beyond a mere building. It is also above and beyond just a mere worshipping congregation or church in the ordinary sense. When the movement talks of the inner church, reference is made to a community that Jesus gave birth to, a community of the chosen ones, a community of spiritual giants. Not the chosen ones in the sense of predestination or just a core, but the chosen ones in the sense of those who live the Christ Conscious Way, those who live like Christ. Thus, by inner church, reference is

therefore made to 'a church within the Church', a community within the Community or a 'circle within another circle' (Sr. Cresencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13).

Such a Church has nothing in common with the worldly Churches and religious denominations which Greber (1970) says are the work of man, conceived in human error, and like all of man's handwork, ephemeral. Thus, the inner Church, the Church of the heart, the universal church is that which expresses itself in the imitation of Jesus, particularly through unconditional love and forgiveness. Members of the inner church or inner circle, therefore, are the true disciples of Jesus, those who do the will of the Father in heaven (Matthew 7:21-23).

The Christ-conscious way is the way of the Nazarene (Christ) because he stands as a timeless role model. Those who live the Christ conscious way are those who do not just say 'Lord', 'Lord' without doing what He commands them. Members who live the Christ Way become members of the Church that Christ made reference to when he said, 'On this rock I will build my Church.' Thus, the inner church is a community of those who worship God 'in spirit and truth' (John 4:3-4), a community where members become members by their own-self, without being chosen or appointed. It is a community that exists beyond the boundary of material things, a community of Christ's true representatives on earth, not just theorists.³⁰

Entering into the Inner Church is tantamount to discovering oneself and apprehending one's unity with the Creator. It is tantamount to discovering or experiencing a consciousness that is beyond the ordinary physical consciousness. It could be likened to moksha, nirvana and holiness in Vedantic Hinduism, Theravada Buddhism and Christianity respectively. Once attained, the inner cycle is an experience which the adherent enjoys and into which he/she

³⁰Super Roma believes that Christ's true representatives on earth may be found in all Christian denominations and religions.

seeks to lead others, only through leading a holy life.

The start of this new era had been earlier arranged and announced to the entire group members. Thus after 33 years of spiritual training, the movement was considered mature enough to navigate its way among other new religious movements and denominations. To this effect, several committees to take care of both temporal and spiritual needs *ad infinitum* had earlier been selected. The next chapter shall explore the organisational structure and theology of LLCG.

On the actual day of *Matenga's* departure or change of communication, (21 June 2003), some Roman Catholics nuns who had been secretly attending monthly meetings were tipped to join the movement on a permanent basis. They were to join the Kwekwe-based mediums who, from then on were also to operate simply as nuns and not mediums. With their Roman Catholic training, the Catholic trained sisters were to play a central role in training other nuns for the religious movement. Consequently two nuns from the Little Children of the Blessed Lady in Harare (LCBL), one from the Sisters of the Infant Jesus (SJI) in Gweru and one from the Mary Ward Sisters abandoned their congregations to permanently join the Kwekwe-based sisters (Sr. Cresencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13).

In his concluding remarks, *Mukoma Kero* urged a moral code based on love, charity and humility and asked members to abide by his lessons, abandoning worldly concern. Ironically, barely two months after the departure of *Matenga* in June, Fr. Urayai whom the movement had regarded as mentor and founder, died in the month of August and was buried at Driefontein Mission in Gweru Diocese. Despite his death, Shoko (2006:368) noted that Super Roma still thrives.

3.6 Care of orphans

Caring for orphans and other vulnerable children has always been Fr. Urayai's dream from as early as the early 70s. When LLCG was founded in 1970, its main thrust was exclusively on teaching and sometimes healing, until around the late nineties when the issue of orphans and vulnerable children also became an extension element of their mission. The move came probably in response to the words of James the evangelist who insisted that faith alone without deeds is dead (James 2:17) or from John Paul II (1991) who called for the protection of children's rights.

When Pope John Paul II (1991) addressed children of Bahia in Brazil, the rights of children were his main concern. He summarized the rights under three main categories. First and foremost, all children have the right to survival through adequate food, shelter, clean water, health care and the loving concern of adults.

Secondly, children have the right to be protected by adults. It can be protection from abuse, neglect or exploitation. Thirdly, children have also the right to develop in a safe environment, with formal education, constructive play and the opportunity to participate, be it in its social, economic, religious or even political life. Concluding his address, Pope John Paul (1991) commented that if being a child is important, then all children are important. There cannot be abandoned children, or children without families, or street children. There cannot and must not be children used by adults for immoral practices.

Thus, for nearly a decade, the movement had provided basic needs to needy children in and around the city of Kwekwe. Having been satisfied with the work of the ecumenical movement, in 2007, the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare registered the movement to operate as a private voluntary organization (PVO). According to LLCG

registration letter of 2007, the movement is registered as PVO 04/2007. To date the movement caters for more than 50 orphaned and vulnerable children between the ages of 1-18 and it uses the name Light of Life Christian Group as its official name. No official documents of the movement, however, reflect the name Super Roma.

3.7 The name Light of Life

The Archangel Cherubim-led religious movement was first called by the name Light of Life in the early 80s. To be specific, the name was given by *Matenga* during one of the movement's monthly meetings in Chirumanzu (Alex Sibanda, Interview 10/03/13). The name was taken from John 8:12 where Jesus referred to himself as the Light of Life. Sibanda notes that for more than a decade (1970-1980), the movement had operated without a proper name.

In essence, the name Light of Life implies being a true follower of Christ who is the Light of the world; being a role model like Christ who was and still remains a role model par-excellence. It implies an imitation of Christ, being another Christ (*Alter Christus*). The emphasis, therefore, is on knowing Jesus more clearly, following him more closely and loving him more dearly. Being a member of the Light of Life Christian Group, therefore, implies a reflection of all the Christological qualities (Christ Consciousness), especially love and forgiveness (Alex Sibanda, Interview 10/03/13). Like a city built on the hill top or light put on the lamp-stand, the presence and impact of members of the movement would, therefore, be inevitable. The lives of individual members are supposed to shine like light in the sight of men so that seeing their good works, the outside world would give credit to God and be motivated to become members of the same group.

In line with the name Light of Life, the Christian Group also uses the phrase, 'I stand for the Truth,' as its motto and guide (LLCG Activity Calendar 2010). Simply stated, standing for the

Truth is interpreted as standing for Christ who is the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6). The emphasis, therefore, is not on dogmas, doctrines or denominations but rather on leading a holy life that is centered on the preferential option for Christological qualities and spiritual values over and above other values such as bodily, aesthetic or even intellectual. Orthopraxis is expected to precede orthodoxy. Whilst the name Light of Life is popular amongst members of the movement, the name Super Roma is more popular within the Roman Catholic circles. Pioneering academic studies on the movement have also used the same name. However, the ramifications of the name Super Roma need to be further examined.

3.8 The name Super Roma

Statistical information based on research findings, particularly from Mutero, Chinyuni and St Kizito mission stations where the Super Roma phenomenon is dominant, indicates that the origin of the name Super Roma is rather hazy. From a total of 30 people interviewed from the three Roman Catholic missions about the origins of the name Super Roma, 20 people who expressed ignorance on the proper origin of the name could only interpret its meaning. From the remaining 10 people, 7 indicated that they had only heard about the name but were unable to explain either the origin or meaning of the name. Only three people, all Roman Catholics, attempted to give an account of the origin of the name. However, the three came up with three different views.

The first theory or view that accounts for the origin of the name Super Roma associated its origin with the exorcisms that Fr. Urayai performed at Mutero Mission in the late 80s (Simion Chaputsira, Interview 20/02/12). In the second Chapter the researcher made reference to a case of demon possession that affected all Form Four girls at Mutero High School who were due to sit for their qualifying examinations. After Fr. Urayai had successfully cast out the evil spirits from all the girls, an eye witness is said to have commended that what Fr. Urayai had

done and demonstrated was exceptional and Super Roman Catholic (Patrick Chagwiza, Interview 15/10/13).

It is assumed that the eye witness meant that the spectacular healing method that Fr. Urayai had displayed was far above and beyond what the Roman Catholic teaches or is capable of achieving. Consequently, the name began to be applied to both Fr. Urayai's healing method and his key associates within the Mutero area. Phrases such as 'people of Urayai' or 'Super Roma people' (*vanhu vaUrayai* or *vanhu veSupa Roma*) were common as from the late 80s, especially at Mutero mission where Fr. Urayai was stationed then (Patrick Chagwiza, Interview 15/10/13). Thus, from the late 80s when the name was first used at Mutero Mission, to date, the name is continuously being used. By the time this research was completed in 2015, the name was almost three decades old.

The second view claims that the originator of the name Super Roma was the late Fr. Kizito Mavima, formerly of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Gweru (Sr. Martha Chakabveyo, Interview 20/05/08). Fr. Kizito Mavima was one of the first three black priests for the Diocese of Gweru together with Fathers Urayai and Mugadzi. Having been together with Augustine for a number of years and having observed Augustine's prayer life during and after their seminary training, Fr. Mavima is said to have jokingly referred to Fr. Urayai's deep prayer life and teachings³¹ as 'Super Roman Catholic' during one of their priests' Council meetings in the late eighties.

Contrary to the first two views, the third view argues that the term did not originate with the bishops, priests or lay faithful, but has connections with some dissident disturbances and the

³¹ Having interacted with celestial beings, Fr. Urayai became very strict on traditional practices such as beer drinking, smoking, polygamy and ancestral worship among others. The Roman Catholic Church had not yet taken a bold stance on such practices. Thus, Fr. Urayai's stance and position was referred to as 'Super Roman Catholic.'

emergence of the so-called ‘Super ZAPU’ in the early eighties (Cuthbert Nguvo, Interview 15/04/10). Super ZAPU was an arm or rather a hawkish ‘splinter’ of ZAPU that was fighting the dissident war in Matabeleland.³² For the key movers of this view, the actual originator of the name remains unknown. However, the movers confirm that the name originated in the early eighties, a period during which Super ZAPU was still active in Matabeleland.

The three views, however, seem to agree on the meaning and interpretation of the name Super Roma. The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (1989) defines ‘super’ as above, superior to, more than, more efficient. Taking it from the etymological meaning of the word ‘Super’, the name Super Roma was applied to Fr. Urayai’s healing method, his teaching as well as to members of his newly founded religious movement. Thus in its strictest sense, the name referred to Fr. Urayai’s uncompromising position on practices such as ancestor veneration, bringing home (*Kurova Guva*) ceremony, beer drinking and smoking among others.

From the time of its inception in Zimbabwe, the Roman Catholic Church has been dragging her feet on coming up with a decisive ecclesiastical position on such practices. Roman Catholics in general are known to be involved in such practices as evidenced by phrases such as ‘*imwa asi usararadze*’ (Drink but do not get drunk). In fact, the Roman Catholic Church has been making frantic efforts to inculturate some of the practices but seems to be compromising. It has often been accused of being too generous (Emmanuel Mupure, Interview 27/07/14). Thus, as a result of Fr. Urayai’s uncompromising solo stance on the above practices, most of his teachings were regarded as above and beyond what the traditional Catholic Church taught in her catechetical books. Subsequently, upholders of such a teaching or position were viewed as Super Roma or high/first class Roman Catholics. However, in essence, the name was popularized as an incriminating label and a mockery (Alex Sibanda,

³² ZAPU means Zimbabwe African People’s Union.

3.9 Conclusion

Chapter three has explored the dynamics and factors that favoured the birth and development of Super Roma. Of overriding and overarching importance is the fact that the formation of Super Roma to a greater extent mirrors the general factors that often characterize the birth of new religious movements in Africa, namely divine appointment and commission. The Chapter has established that unlike in other religious movements and denominations where the activities of religious movements and lives of individual members are regulated by human beings, for a period of 33 years, the activities of Super Roma were regulated by *Matenga* until in 2003 when communication through mediums was transformed. The establishment of the school of mediums, time for privacy given to members after prayer sessions, free movement of members after independence and the ‘stay and reform from within’ strategy among other factors contributed significantly to the development of Super Roma. Whilst a handful of some top Roman Catholic clergy viewed Super Roma as an instrument of division within the Catholic circles, a certain section viewed the same phenomenon as an instrument of unity among various Churches and a demonstration of lived ecumenism. Chapter four shall explore the organizational structure and theology of Super Roma.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND THEOLOGY OF SUPER ROMA

4.0 Introduction

The second and third Chapters introduced us to the healing ministry of Father Augustine Urayai and the subsequent transformation of his healing ministry into a vibrant new religious movement respectively. This fourth Chapter sets out to explore the organizational structure and theology of Super Roma in greater detail. The Chapter consists of two equally significant parts. Whilst the first segment concentrates on the organizational structure, key theological concepts that have already been raised or alluded to in the previous chapters shall form the pivot of the second segment. Such concepts include: healing and exorcism, life after death, attitude to African traditional practices, ecclesiastical authority, canonicity of Scriptures, the Lord's Supper and ecumenism among others. Before a discussion of Super Roma's key theological concepts, it is critical to focus on the movement's organizational structure. In this Chapter, the name Light of Life shall feature more prominently.

4.1 Organisational Structure

Ever since Super Roma was founded in 1970, it has since carved its own identity that reflects a 'unique' organizational structure. Unlike in churches where there is a greater variety of official positions and titles such as popes, cardinals, archbishops, bishop, junior bishop, priest, minister, Baptist, apostle, overseer among others, the administrative structure of Super Roma which is predominantly lay, consists of the Great Council, Executive Committee and the Spiritual Council (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13).

4.1.1 The Great Council

Unlike in the Catholic Church and other denominations whereby the pope or bishops are vested with ultimate authority in the affairs of Church, the highest decision making body of the Light of Life Christian Group is the Great Council. Whilst the Spiritual and Executive Councils table and address spiritual and material affairs of the group respectively, the Great Council addresses both spiritual and material concerns, especially those of the greatest magnitude (Macdonald Masvosva, Interview 20/10/10).

Of particular significance in the Light of Life Christian Group's Great Council is its composition and operations. The very first members of the Great Council were not randomly picked, but carefully selected by *Matenga*. First and foremost, the Great Council is composed of members from both the spiritual and executive councils, some nuns and one representative from the priests. Such a composition, which is gender balanced, was made probably to effect highest objectivity and fairness in decision making. Normally, this body meets four to five times a year (LLCG Activity Calendar 2013). As the highest decision making body that has the mandate to discuss matters of both material and spiritual nature, members are urged to behave in an exemplary fashion as a way of witnessing to their faith. Among other things, prayer and fasting must be at the center of their lives.

Whilst in other denominations a general council may not be taken de facto as an independent body on its own, the LLCG Great Council is one such body that has its own rules and regulations. In exercising its duties, the Great Council is advised to first pray or take a long fast if deemed necessary.

4.1.2 The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee manages all the material and temporal affairs of the group. Among other things, it is its duty to run the affairs of orphans and vulnerable children that are in the custody of the LLCG. Material needs such as food, education, accommodation and clothing among others were being administered on a home based care programme at the time of writing. By so doing the executive committee links the LLCG with the outside world. In fact, the Executive Committee represents the more visible and public face of the LLCG.

Apart from meeting the material needs of the disadvantaged children under the custody of LLCG, the executive committee is also responsible for developing Basildon farm so that it becomes the Zion city or the Jerusalem of the movement. It is the duty of other members of the group to make contributions in cash or kind towards the welfare of the organization on a monthly basis. Such contributions are later channeled by the Executive Committee to where they are most needed. The Executive Committee also engages in massive outreach programmes whereby office bearers visit all the orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in their respective homes to assess the situation on the ground (James Mhosva, Interview 10/08/10). It is the duty of the Executive committee to visit members of the organisation in order to tap wisdom on how best they should run the organisation on a professional basis.

Due to the nature of their work that is so demanding, the Executive Committee is advised to meet monthly (LLCG Activity Calendar 2013). Such an arrangement enables them to pray and make policies that govern the organization from a material point of view. All cases they fail to handle in their capacity are then referred to the Great Council. The executive committee consists of the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Vice Secretary and Treasurer. Members of the Executive Committee are elected during an Annual General Meeting of Light of Life members. According to the LLCG constitution, the Executive

Committee office bearers may remain in office for not more than two terms. Each term is only two years long (James Mhosva, Interview 10/08/10). Over and above, along qualities such as good conduct and a long period of membership, it is also critical that candidates chosen should demonstrate group loyalty and be conversant with the practices of the religious movement. The same also applies to the Spiritual Council.

4.1.3 The Spiritual Council

The Spiritual Council and the Executive Committee are like two levers of the same door or two sides of the same coin. Whilst the Executive Committee is totally in charge of the material well-being of the group, all spiritual affairs of the same are catered for by the Spiritual Council. The council consists of ten, also gender balanced members (all lay people) appointed by *Matenga* to take charge of the prayer life of the LLCG community. Unlike Executive Committee office bearers who serve only two terms at most, members of the Spiritual Council should remain in office until death. Only fellow Spiritual Council members know the procedures of replacing a deceased member of their Council as per *Matenga* instruction.

Apart from conducting prayer sessions that are normally held once per month,³³ the Spiritual Council is also responsible for supervising the work of recruiting new members, as well as receiving the same into the group upon completion of the recommended syllabus. It is also part of their work to teach, explain the syllabus to catechists as well as visit members of the group in their respective areas in order to assess their spiritual needs.

The Spiritual Council also encourages members at gatherings and prayer sessions to read the Scriptures diligently and to study them carefully, to read with faith and humility so that they

³³ LLCG members are also encouraged to meet weekly in their respective sections for general spiritual discussions.

are open to the grace and power of God speaking to them in the Scriptures. In addition, the Council also encourages members to be committed to a life of prayer and meditation, to re-dedicate and re-commit themselves to living a true Christian life (Patrick Chagwiza, Interview 15/10/13). With the powers vested in them by *Matenga*, they can refute falsehood, correct error, give encouragement, but doing all with patience and with care to instruct (1 Timothy 4:1-2).

Most importantly, Spiritual Council members are responsible for the safe keeping of all the spiritual lessons delivered to the religious movement from the time of its inception. Apart from being custodians of all lessons, audio or video taped during phase one of *Matenga*'s communication through mediums, it is also their duty and responsibility to translate some of the lessons delivered in English into vernacular for the betterment of every member of the group. In addition, Spiritual Council members select and read lessons from *Matenga* during the movement's monthly prayer sessions. Since lessons delivered to the group are strictly for members as a directive from *Matenga*, efforts to get a copy of lessons or LLCG syllabus from the archives of the Spiritual Council were, however, fruitless and may remain so *ad infinitum*.

Unlike the Executive Committee that meets monthly, the Spiritual Council does so three to four times a year. The spiritual leader and his vice, who are both part of the ten member group shoulder a heavier burden of responsibility in terms of organizing, guiding and accomplishing the Mission the movement was established for, namely prayer. Three other groups that fall under the spiritual council are priests, nuns and choir.

4.1.3.1 Light of Life Fathers

Priests occupy a central and pivotal role in LLCG. Their place in the religious movement is of unique and irreplaceable importance. Following their suspension from the Roman Catholic

diocese of Masvingo on the 12th October 2005, the seven clergymen reassembled and began to offer services to the movement on a full time basis, identifying themselves as Light of Life Fathers (LLF) (Super Roma Anonymous, Interview 15/10/13).

As Fathers, their priestly duties are manifold. Celebrating the Lord's Supper is at the centre of other duties and is only reserved for Roman Catholic trained priests and no other as a directive from *Matenga* (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13). With the powers that they received at ordination and acting *in persona Christi*, priests as Fathers continue to nourish the members through the celebration of the Sacrament of the Eucharist when members meet for monthly sessions. Since to exclude someone from the Eucharist is interpreted as being excluded from God's love, company and family, the Eucharist is ecumenically shared, unlike in other denominations and churches where members of other denominations are excluded. However, as for other sacraments such as Baptism and Marriage among others, members are encouraged to receive them in their respective denominations. Whilst the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) stipulates that celebrating the Eucharist ecumenically is the highest form of ecumenism, Catholic ecumenism is, however, exclusive of other denominations. More often, it is guided by its Canon Law and a host of papal decrees and encyclicals.

Apart from celebrating the Lord's Supper with the LLCG community during their monthly sessions, praying for the religious movement is one other priestly duty. Priests as Fathers are supposed to pray and intercede for the movement. In addition to their daily meditations, they also engage in long fasts (6 days) once every school term. By so doing they also teach members of the movement the importance of prayer through their own personal prayer lives. Prayer is viewed as a remedy of every malady.

Even though the role of teaching the theology of LLCG can be done by any member who so wishes, the role of priests as overall spiritual teachers is highly regarded. They strive to enrich members with their own moral and spiritual wisdom. Whilst priests may teach or touch on any aspect of human life, their teaching responsibility is mainly centered on matters spiritual. They inculcate in their members a wisdom that would enable them to know and conduct their lives in such a way as to obtain true happiness that is interpreted as eternal life within the LLCG. By so doing they guide and shepherd their flock.

Like members of the Spiritual Council, priests as Fathers may instruct and correct erring individuals as a way of jealously guarding their vouchsafed theology against any heresy. It is also the duty of priests as Fathers to continuously care for their flock. Apart from counselling, Sr. Muzuva also observed that priests are usually in the forefront in visiting sick members of the community, the elderly, bereaved and afflicted (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13).

Like other Catholic congregations of priests such as the Jesuit Fathers, Dominican, Carmelites, Franciscan Fathers, Capuchins and many others around the globe, the LLF have since retained the vows of celibacy, poverty and obedience (to God) but unlike them, they have gone beyond denominational boundaries to be inter-denominational pastors. Even though the Light of Life Fathers fall under the Spiritual Council, they sometimes execute their duties in an advisory capacity to the Executive Committee if deemed necessary.

Since the practice of exorcism did not end with the death of Fr. Urayai, the Kwekwe based LLCG Fathers sometimes offer deliverance (exorcism) services to members of their movement who may require such. However, the LLCG movement has more than 30 other lay exorcists (males and females) dotted around the country who keep the healing ministry of Fr.

Urayai ablaze in the movement. The special team of exorcists (*Vanamatiri*) received their healing gifts from *Matenga* and they operate only within the boundaries of the religious movement (Charles Marumisa, Interview 12/08/13). Using their discretion, only priests may cross boundaries and offer such services to whosoever that may be in desperate need of exorcism. Whilst Light of Life Fathers celebrate Mass on a daily basis, Light of Life Sisters have Mass celebrated for them weekly by the same priests. The rest of the community members receive Holy Communion from their inter-denominational priests once every month (LLCG Activity Calendar 2013).

4.1.3.2 Light of Life Sisters

The Light of Life Christian group has its own nuns who identify themselves as Light of Life Sisters (LLS). Kugwa's (2004) article refers to them as 'The Super Sisters'. According to the LLS's constitution, their headquarters is at 6 Cedrella Avenue Msasa Park in Kwekwe. Like the Light of Life Fathers, Light of Life Sisters also fall under the Spiritual Council board.

Unlike the composition of the Light of Life Fathers that is currently purely Catholic, the LLS is not just inter-denominational, but inter-congregational. It is inter-denominational in the sense that among them there are sisters who are members of the Methodist and Anglican denominations. Kugwa (2004) also observed that the LLS are inter-congregational in the sense that among them are former members of the congregation of the Sisters of the Infant Jesus (SJI), Mary Ward Sisters and Little Children of the Blessed Lady (LCBL) among others. Whilst the LLS are mainly composed of former members of other religious congregations who abandoned their congregations to serve the interests of the newly founded religious movement, the remaining section is made up of former mediums who had been with the group from as early as the late seventies (Charles Marumisa, Interview 12/08/13). From

21 June 2003, all former mediums started identifying themselves as sisters or nuns, as recommended by *Matenga*.

One of the main duties of the LLS is to pray for the movement. Like the Light of Life Fathers who are expected to teach the importance of prayer by leading a prayerful life, LLS also engage in daily meditations, monthly recollections and long fasts of 6 or more days as a way of directing members of the LLCG community to a prayerful life. In fact, their fasts are more frequent, longer and even more rigorous than those of other rank and file members of the community.

In addition to prayer, the LLS also counsel members of the LLCG and all persons in need in society at large, especially orphans and other vulnerable children. They assist the needy through monitoring the distribution of material needs. They also attend all prayer meetings of the Light of Life Christian Group as well as perform with diligence all duties as per their professional calling or qualifications. Above all, Sr Muzuva commends that LLS always abide and live by the spirit of their creed and constitution but are not directly involved in the direct day to day operations of the LLCG (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13).

The conviction that the body of Christ cannot be divided is an important element in their living together. The LLS claim to be part of the main group of the LLCG, though they operate as a group of nuns. The idea that some individual members of the LLS go to their private churches in plain clothes for Sunday services does not dilute their mission, but rather adds flavour to their style of worship and deepest desire for a lived ecumenism. Whilst former Roman Catholic members who have joined the Super Roma sisters may remain Roman Catholics only by baptism, they are currently not able to attend Sunday services due to their controversial affiliation to the Super Roma movement.

However, whilst the Light of Life Fathers do not intend to train new priests for the movement but continuously rely on Catholic trained personnel³⁴, the Light of Life Sisters have plans to train their own sisters at Basildon farm. Such sisters would then serve the interests of the Light of Life movement for generations to come (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13). Unless and until the Roman Catholic Church changes her position on Super Roma, it therefore, logically follows that the same LLS trainees may continue to be regarded by the Roman Catholic Church as ‘not part and parcel of the Catholic family’ (Informant, Interview, 10/10/2015).

4.1.3.3 Light of Life Choir

Together with priests and nuns, the Light of Life Choir also falls under the Spiritual Council. Taking into cognizance of the fact that like other Christian communities, the LLCG strongly believes that singing is praying double, the role of the choir in the movement is such a critical one. Through music, choir members are *od* providers, particularly during prayer sessions and annual retreats. The current LLCG choir selected by *Matenga* just before the end of phase one in 2003 is composed of 40 members from different denominations. Of the 40 members, 27 are females and 13 are males (Simion Chaputsira, Interview 20/04/12).

The LLCG choir is guided by their constitution. Every member of the choir is expected to exercise a high level of self-discipline: discipline in the mind, discipline in words and discipline in deeds. According to the LLCG choir constitution, punctuality is considered part of discipline. Members are also expected to be at the venue for the session by 2.00pm for singing practice. This has to be observed in various centers. Attendance is expected to be

³⁴ Apart from receiving services from the seven suspended clergymen, Super Roma from time to time receives services from a handful of other Roman Catholic priests who survived the witch-hunt of 2005 that led to the suspension of a total of five priests and two deacons from the Diocese of Masvingo.

100% for choir members. In all the six centers, prayer sessions always begin at 4.00pm (Simon Chaputsira, Interview 20/04/12).

Songs can be selected as per occasion and according to lessons delivered. Some particular songs for the Lord's Supper are an exception since these can be taken from a set of songs belonging to a particular church organization such as the Roman Catholic Church that has a long history of celebrating the Eucharist. At all prayer sessions and retreats, choir members are expected to be the first to enter the session room and last to leave.

According to the 2013 LLCG Activity Calendar, choir members meet at least once every month. A General Meeting is also held once every year and it is only through such meetings (General Meetings) that amendments to the constitution can be made. Whilst amendments to other sections of the constitution may be made, no amendments or adjustments may be made to the total number of choir members (Simion Chaputsira, Interview 20/04/12).

Whilst the Great Council, Executive Committee, Spiritual Council, priests, nuns and choir are independent bodies within the organizational dynamics of the Light of Life Christian movement, team work is highly recommended for them to realize their key goals. Their main task as leaders is not to take the LLCG members where they want to go but where they are supposed to go. Hence to reach the intended destination of being the Light of Life, it is the duty and responsibility of leaders to inspire confidence and boost the morale of all members, regardless of their denominational affiliation.

It is important also to note that members of the three councils, namely, Great, Executive and Spiritual continue to be affiliate members of their respective denominations like any other LLCG member, to participate fully in all denominational activities and above all to abide by

all church rules and regulations. Within LLCG, the circular structure of leadership is preferred to the pyramidal. The circular structure allows room for dialogue and communion, whilst the pyramidal structure gives little room for such. In a pyramidal structure of leadership, leaders form the hierarchy and laity are the faithful whose duties are to obey, pay and pray. According to LLCG, such a community is not a community of equals. The LLCG organisational structure is expected to reflect a community of equals whereby all members feel accepted and at home. Having examined the key groups within the movement, in the following section the study focuses on its theology.

4.2 The Theology of Super Roma

In this section of Super Roma theology, we shall limit ourselves to concepts such as healing and exorcism, life after death, attitude to African traditional practices, ecclesiastical authority, and canonicity of Scriptures, the Lord's Supper, prayer, fasting and ecumenism among others. It should be underlined from the onset that Super Roma theology does not bear marks of Fr. Urayai's genius, but is ostensibly the result of *Matenga's* recitation. To a greater extent, the theology also owes its theoretical thrust from Greber (1970) and Porter (2001), among other Pseudepigraphical works that remained in the periphery of traditional theology for centuries.

4.2.1 Theology of healing

Since its inception in 1970, Super Roma has made an effort to come to grips with the problem of sickness and disease, employing both physical and spiritual means to cure and heal. Consequently, to a greater extent, Super Roma has developed its new views and insights with regard to the concept of healing in general. However, to a greater extent, Super Roma theology of healing resembles Roman Catholic theology.

Super Roma defines healing the same way it is defined by The New Bible Dictionary (1996). The New Bible Dictionary (1996:452) defines healing simply as the restoration of one to full health who has been ill in body or mind or both. The key word in this definition is restoration. A person who is restored to good health means he/she was either physically or psychologically unbalanced, diseased or damaged. With respect to physical damage or disease, the New Bible Dictionary (1996) further states that healing often involves the repair or reconstruction of living tissue or organs and the resumption of normal functioning of one's body. In psychological disorders the term healing is normally used to describe an improved mental state. Thus, when a physically or psychologically unbalanced person is healed, people often say restoration has been effected.

With regard to healing, Super Roma underlines that God is the fundamental element for any healing to take place. God as the fountain of all God's energy is, therefore, the summit and source of all healing. Thus, God addressed Himself as 'Yahweh your Healer' (Exodus 15:26, 23:25). According to the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference Pastoral Study Paper (1989), as source and summit of all healing, God mostly heals by using parts of His creation as healing instruments. If God is the primary source of all healings, it, therefore, logically follows that all His instruments are secondary sources. In this case, parts of God's creation include both medical and faith healing practitioners. When practitioners carry out their healing duties, they do so in the person of Jesus Christ (*in persona Christi*), the premier exorcist of all times who healed both physical and spiritual disorders.

Like most Christians, particularly Roman Catholics, Super Roma strongly believes in the power of conventional medicine. Thus, during his hey days as an exorcist, Father Urayai often advised patients with cases that he felt did not require exorcism to first visit their nearest clinics or hospitals for medical attention before coming for exorcism. Super Roma believes

that all health delivery systems are God's instruments to effect healing upon His people. In fact, the movement strongly believes that all conventional medicine contains High Od. Just as Porter (2001) classifies angels into a large number of different groups, according to their areas of responsibility, so also does Super Roma.

Whilst in the Bible an angel is primarily a messenger, as underlined by Porter (2001:16), in the Super Roma movement, angels have much more varied and extensive roles. In addition to angels who control natural phenomena, there is also a whole range of celestial beings whose primary function is to dispense High Od and heal the sick either directly or indirectly through nurses and doctors. Super Roma refers to these as healing angels and they operate under the leadership of Archangel Raphael. These angels always direct medical practitioners in their researches and clinical operations (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13). Thus, in the light of this, Super Roma encourages its youth to train as doctors and nurses for purposes of participating in God's economy of salvation through working as God's healing instruments.

The book of Sirach (38:1-15) describes the relationship between God as the primary source of all healings and human medicine.

Honour the doctor with the honour that is due in return for his services: for he too has been created by the Lord. Healing itself comes from the Most High...The Lord has brought medicines into existence from the earth, and the sensible man will not despise them. He has also given men learning so that they may glory in His mighty works. He uses them to heal and to relieve pain...There are times when good health depends on doctors...

In addition to a strong belief in conventional medicine, Super Roma also mixes conventional medicine with the use of plants for medical purposes (Sr. Linaster Ticharwa, Interview 12/03/13). As part of God's creation, all plants are believed to be therapeutic and as such are to be used as alternative medicine. The two are said to be complementary. Each herbal prescription is, therefore, a cocktail of many substances, usually tailored to the individual

patient. Any herb or plant part is used for its scent, flavour, therapeutic or medicinal properties. Within the Super Roma movement, for more than three decades (1970-2003), it has been the responsibility of *Matenga* to prescribe the right herb to patients who were in need of such. To date, many group members are herbal specialists.

Just as conventional medicine possesses healing Od, so also does botanical or herbal medicine. Super Roma members are, therefore, encouraged not just to use herbal medicine but also to create their small herbal gardens at their homes. Apart from it being cheap, such a practice would also save them from the temptation of engaging African traditional medical practitioners for healing services. Thus, Super Roma discourages its members from seeking herbal medication from quarters they are not in league with. Herbs from quarters such as *n'angas*, medicine men and women, diviners and seers among others, in spite of them being also therapeutic by nature, are believed to have Low Od from the devil simply because they would have passed through the hands Satan's agents (Sr. Linaster Ticharwa, Interview 12/03/13). We shall discuss more about Super Roma's attitude toward African traditional practices later in this Chapter.

Whilst Super Roma believes that most illnesses may be healed through either conventional medicine or the use of herbs, save for some physically or psychologically unbalanced conditions, the movement is aware that some illnesses may require other forms of healing such as exorcism.

4.2.2 Theology of exorcism

For more than four decades, exorcism has been and continues to be one of Super Roma's critical recruitment techniques. Just as Od is critical in effecting healing in conventional medicine, Super Roma teaches that Od is also of fundamental universal and timeless

importance in carrying out any form of exorcism. God as the source of Od, is the possessor of ultimate power to drive out evil spirits. Super Roma concurs with McBrien (1995:1174) on the point that through exorcism, humanity fully possesses the ultimate weapon against the inroads of Satan.

Even though God is said to be the ultimate healer, Super Roma teaches that the moral life of the exorcist plays a very critical role. The Roman Catholic Church is also concerned about the piety, knowledge and integrity of the life of the priest exorcist (Canon 1173). For Super Roma a good moral life helps the exorcist accumulate as much High Od as possible which enables him/her to properly and effectively dispense his/her spiritual duties.

With Od everything good is possible. The exorcist can heal or protect himself/herself the same way Job was protected by a spiritual wall/armour around him, his house and all his domain (Job 1:10). With a spiritual magnetic field around the exorcist, he/she can also heal and protect others in a manner similar to Peter's shadow healing those tormented by evil spirits (Acts 5:15). With enough Od, the exorcist can also perform distant healings, the same way Jesus healed the daughter of the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:22) and accomplished many other healings. Just as healing angels always direct the operations of medical practitioners, Super Roma teaches that angels under the leadership of Archangel Michael³⁵ are responsible for directing and assisting exorcists in their daily battles against the powers of darkness.

Prayer and fasting are said to be critical in the life of the exorcist especially when he/she is preparing for a healing session. Jesus also emphasised the need to fast and pray (Mark 9:29). Through regular periods of seclusion, meditation and prayer, good conduct, balanced

³⁵ The book of Revelation states that Archangel Michael was responsible for driving out the rebel angels out of heaven (Revelation 12:7-12)

behaviour and good character, exorcists accumulate the required Od. For the same reason, Jesus often went out into mountains and valleys to pray and ask God for such odic power (Matthew 14:23, Luke 6:12).

Unlike the Roman Catholic Church that teaches that no one may lawfully exorcise the possessed without the special and express permission of the Bishop (Canon 1172), Super Roma sees no reason for getting permission from any human power since the movement is not under the authority and supervision of any bishop or pontiff. Unlike the same Catholic Church that stipulates that permission to exorcise must be granted by the Bishop only to a priest who is endowed with piety, knowledge and integrity of life (Canon 1173), exorcism in Super Roma is not reserved for priests. Lay people (both men and women) are among the group of exorcists (*Vanamatiri*) specially selected and equipped by *Matenga* to do the job. To date, Super Roma has about 10 female exorcists in all the six centers mentioned earlier. Thus, Super Roma exorcists pay their allegiance direct to *Matenga* and not to any mortal and sinful human being (Macdonald Masvosva, Interview 20/10/10).

Perhaps the most controversial aspect in Super Roma's theology of exorcism is the idea of recycling of souls and re-directing repentant evil spirits to heaven or paradise. Super Roma teaches that when an evil spirit (in the victim) is either forced or persuaded by the exorcist to repent and make a perfect act of contrition, the spirit is then taken by God's planning angels. Consequently, another life is later planned for the same spirit. Failure to repent or make a perfect act of contrition, the evil spirit wanders around and may later pounce on the same victim with re-doubled energy, especially when the victim lapses in prayer. Whilst Super Roma exorcists are free to depart from Father Urayai's Latin prayer of exorcism mentioned in the second chapter (section 2.8.2), they may not be free to depart from his methodology and theology of exorcism as a directive from the angels or *Matenga*.

4.2.3 Theology of angels

Through an interaction with angels for over three decades through mediums, the Super Roma movement has a unique interpretation of the nature of angels or *Matenga* as they are popularly called within the movement circles.

Whilst the Bible makes no mention of the creation of angels, Super Roma strongly believes in the creation of angels by God out of time. God as the universal creative Spirit and Source, Transcendent, Omniscient and Omnipotent, existed before time. He existed beyond space and time, *es extra one tempus*. Super Roma concurs with Mandivenga³⁶ (1983:17) who underscores that, as Father Almighty, God created beings endowed with intelligence, for instance angels. As purely spiritual creatures, angels have intelligence and will. They are personal and immortal creatures, surpassing in perfection all visible creatures.

The concept of angels as a hierarchy, headed by a group of senior angels who came to be described as Archangels is also central in the Super Roma articles of faith. In the order of creation, Super Roma stipulates that first to be created by God were the seven Archangels. Even though the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) makes mention of only three archangels, namely, Gabriel, Michael and Raphael, within the Super Roma circles, both Lucifer and Christ are ranked among Archangels. In the order of creation, Lucifer came first and Christ was second. The remaining five Archangels taught by Super Roma include: Michael, Gabriel, Seraphim, Raphael and Cherubim, the founder of the Super Roma new religious movement in 1970.

With the assistance of Lucifer his first Son, Super Roma teaches that God further created the rest of other heavenly beings, known as angels or holy spirits, innumerable in number. Each spirit bore a divine spark, a tiny part of God himself. Thus, in his image God created them and

³⁶ E.C Mandivenga was writing with special reference to the beliefs and practices of the Islamic religion.

behold, they were all equal before Him (Greber 1970). To all His angels including Archangels, God gave the greatest gift of free will (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

Having been created out of light, angels performed and continue to perform a variety of functions. Lucifer, to whom God had entrusted with creative powers, later committed the sin of apostasy and got expelled out of heaven (Revelation 12:7) together with one third of heaven's total population (Revelation 12:3-4). The Bible refers to this historic fall as the Fall of Angels (Revelation 12:7-10). Super Roma teaches that when Lucifer committed the sin of apostasy and got expelled out of heaven, Christ took over from him and is the incumbent King of heaven. To Cherubim God allotted the task of judging, Michael the commander of the celestial army and Gabriel is God's messenger. Raphael and Seraphim are responsible for healing and planning respectively (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94). Greber (1970:267-269) also makes reference to the seven Archangels and their responsibilities.

Within the Super Roma circles, angels have much more varied and extensive roles. In addition to angels who control natural phenomena as observed by Porter (2001), there are figures such as angels of peace, angels of death, war and healing among other functions. As intermediaries between God and mortal humanity, angels encourage humanity towards righteous and pious deeds and protect it from evil spirits. Underlining the role of angels in Islam, Mandivenga (1983:17) also confirms that angels record people's deeds from cradle to the grave. Most importantly, Super Roma believes and emphasises that angels have been present since creation and throughout the history of salvation, communicating God's will with humanity through human mediums.

In line with the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Churches, Super Roma also strongly believes that individual souls, countries and cities have their guardian angels too. The fallen angels or demons are therefore, viewed as the daily seducers of humans to evil with only human free will standing as their limiting factor. Thus, for the Super Roma movement, the

title *Matenga* is only reserved for angels that remained loyal to God. Angels that followed Lucifer are often called evil spirits, demons or spirits of darkness (*Mweya yakaipa*, *Mweya yetsvina*, *Mweya yerima*) (Munyaradzi Nhatarikwa, Interview 12/08/13)

Whilst the belief in angels is very ancient and widespread as has been noted, Super Roma is among the few movements that have linked humanity on earth to the fallen angels. The movement teaches that human beings are incarnations of the same fallen angels recorded in Revelation 12:7-17 who are currently participating in God's plan of salvation to effect their gradual ascent and restoration. Logical as it may sound, the movement's doctrine of angels highlights some insoluble contradictions, especially when contrasted with Roman Catholic traditional understanding of angels. Their assertion that only angels are infallible in matters of theology and morals renders the Magisterium (Teaching Authority), the Bible and the Roman Pontiff fallible.

4.2.4 Ecclesiastical authority

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) stipulates that in Catholicism, the Magisterium or Ecclesiastical authority is the authority that lays down what is the authentic teaching of the Church and such authority is vested uniquely in the pope and the Bishops who are always in communion with him. Sacred tradition and Sacred Scriptures make up a single sacred deposit of the word of God which is entrusted to the Church. By virtue of his office, the Code of Canon Law (1983), the Supreme Pontiff (Pope) is infallible in his teaching and proclaims by definitive act a doctrine to be held concerning faith and morals. Contrary to the Roman Catholic view of ecclesiastical authority, Super Roma subscribes to the position that only God's angels are infallible in matters of faith and morals.

Super Roma draws most of its insights on ecclesiastical authority from Greber (1970). Super Roma underlines that only angels are authentic teachers in matters of faith and morals. The same belief is also highlighted by Greber (1970:353). Like Greber (1970), Super Roma also argues that the teachings of Christ no longer seem to exert any meaningful influence upon the people of today because Christ's precepts are no longer being held in their pristine purity and clearness. According to Super Roma, many errors have crept into Christianity in general and the Roman Catholic Church in particular as a result of Church authorities (Fr. Urayai, Interview, 30/08/94).

As noted by Greber (1970:353), the key reason is that the teachings of Christ got defiled when they flowed through human channels or finite ecclesiastical authority for the past 2000 years. The evil that has always been in human authority or people in general and the powers of evil which always surrounded them have so sullied and rendered unpalatable Christ's pure precepts that they have lost their life giving power. Following the same logic, Super Roma underlines that, on their own, or out of their own consciousness, humans cannot promulgate the fundamental precepts of the true Christian faith, but can only do so as God's instruments. When Super Roma talks about humans, reference is also made to priests, bishops and popes. The same also applies to the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith. (Emmanuel Mupure, Interview, 27/07/14).

Super Roma further teaches that from the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13), the early Christians were taught not by ecclesiastical authorities, but by God's angels speaking through human mediums before the practice was later condemned by Church authorities, particularly the Roman Catholic authorities of that time (Fr. Urayai, Interview, 30.08.94). Since then, the Holy Spirit(s) that Jesus promised his disciples in John 16:12-15 communicated and guided the early Church through mediums (Greber1970).

Super Roma also concurs with Greber (1970:356) that the disciples themselves had also to be instructed anew by the same spirits concerning what Jesus had taught them. Even Bishops were named by the manifesting spirit before they were later appointed and elected by human agencies. It was also through such mediums that the faithful could at any given time ascertain whether a doctrine was true and how it was to be understood. They also had the privilege of enquiring of God at their religious gatherings and were answered by his spirits speaking through mediums (Greber 1970:357).

Super Roma stipulates that during the time when spiritism was still active in the early Christian Church, sermons were also preached by angels or benevolent spirits commissioned by Jesus through mediums, not by mere human beings (Fr. Urayai, Interview, 30/08/94). According to Greber (1970), the elimination of spiritism from the Christian Creeds, particularly during the Middle Ages, resulted in theological errors of most varied and far-reaching nature as it then opened doors to human caprice and lust for temporal power. Consequently, Christianity became humanmade and split into countless creeds, each one of which contends that its doctrine alone represented the true teachings of Christ. Apparently, the same divided and humanmade Christianity has been handed down for generations and generations by human and fallible ecclesiastical authorities. Greber (1970:6-7) laments:

Hundreds of creeds claim to be the dispensers of truth, the first destroying what the second adores, and the third proclaiming as the simon-pure truth what the fourth condemns as abominable heresy.

Despite the fact Super Roma renders ecclesiastical authority fallible in matters of both faith and morals, *Matenga* always encouraged members of the ecumenical movement to respect and pray for their authorities and leaders, both temporal and spiritual, so that they may remain true to their calling and continue to act as God's instruments. The fact that from 1970 when Super Roma was founded, members of the movement have remained affiliated to their

respective denominations is reflective of the conviction that the various denominations still possess some residue of Christ's precepts.

Ecclesiastical authority often works hand in hand with Canonicity of Scriptures. Having highlighted Super Roma's perception of ecclesiastical authority, there is also a glaring need to look at the movement's insights with regard to canonicity of the Scriptures.

4.2.5 Canonicity of scriptures

The need to correct falsified sections of the sacred canon was raised by Archangel Cherubim on the occasion of the exorcism of Angela Washaya (section 3.1.1) as one key reason for the formation of Super Roma.

The word 'canon' means standard or rule. Simply stated, it is the list of authoritative collection of inspired scriptures. Whilst the position of the Holy Scriptures is so central and critical to the Super Roma movement, the movement accuses ecclesiastical authority for falsifying some key sections of the Bible. To understand the position of Super Roma on the canonicity of scriptures, a brief scan through the process of canonization itself may be of great benefit.

Porter (2001:6) re-visits the process of canonization. He writes that as it stands to date, the Hebrew Bible, or Old Testament, is a selection from a large mass of ancient scriptures that included the Pseudepigrapha.³⁷ Similarly, Porter (2001) further indicates that the New Testament was selected from a body of literature that included some apocryphal works. The final selections then became the Jewish and Christian Canons of Scripture and only such

³⁷ Pseudepigrapha literally means works with a false title or works attributed to someone other than the real author. In this context, reference is made to non-canonical works that did not become part of the Jewish, Christian or mainstream theology but remained unsuppressed, especially in the peripheral regions. The bible of the Ethiopian Church is one such example that contains the book of Enoch and the book of Jubilee among other books.

books were recognized as authoritative and divinely inspired. The Hebrew canon began to evolve sometime after the end of the Jewish exile in Babylon at the end of the 6th century Before the Common Era (BCE). It was, however, only fixed near the end of the 1st century (CE) or even later.

The New Testament was settled only in the 4th century (CE). With the closing of the canons, other writings inevitably became 'lost' from the Bibles of Judaism and mainstream Christianity which denounced them as heretical or erroneous. Apparently, such writings were never completely suppressed, especially in more peripheral regions (Porter 2001).

It is, therefore, on the basis of the 'lost Bible' that Super Roma strongly argues that ecclesiastical authority of that time tampered with Sacred Scripture, canonizing what was meant to be left out and leaving out what was supposed to be the core of Sacred Scripture (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94). Super Roma argues that certain scholars, called correctors, who were appointed by ecclesiastical authorities and actually commissioned to select, compile and correct the text of Scripture in the interest of what was considered orthodoxy, were responsible for censoring and tampering with original scripts of the Holy Writ. The book of Jeremiah seems to point to the same accusation when he lamented:

How do you say we are wise and the Law of the Lord is with us? Lo, the pen of the falsifying copyists has converted it into a lie. The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them (Jeremiah 8:9).

Following the same argument, Super Roma claims that inasmuch as ecclesiastical authorities wanted to consolidate their position as infallible sources of truth, they resorted to the forgery or omission of several Scriptural passages in order that the desired evidence might be forthcoming. Thus, Super Roma strongly suspects that the doctrines of the infallibility of the pope, Holy Trinity, Mariology, creation and original sin, among others were seriously misrepresented or falsified by the first Magisterium (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview

20/10/13).

Super Roma claims that the fullest and most remarkable narrative of God's work of creation and the original sin is found in the Pseudepigrapha and not in the book of Genesis. Taking it from the same source, Super Roma claims that the book of Genesis misrepresents both the creation story and the concept of the original sin. To this effect, Super Roma teaches an alternative version of creation and the original sin.

In short, the movement teaches that long before anything physical was created as described in the book of Genesis, there was a planned or spirit creation of all things by God the Father, in a world of spirits or heaven, hence the belief in the pre-existence of the soul. Secondly, Super Roma underlines the point that the original sin is not a heritage from the sin of humanity's progenitors (Adam and Eve), but rather a sin committed in the same world of spirits by fallen angels described in the book of Revelation Chapter 12, long before the events described in any of the accounts of the earth's creation. Thirdly, as already underlined, Super Roma strongly links humanity on earth to the same fallen angels who under the leadership of Lucifer were cast out of heaven by God through Archangel Michael (Sr. Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13).

The same fallen angels, as taught by Super Roma, are currently participating in God's plan of salvation to effect their gradual ascent to heaven for restoration and re-unification with God, as already highlighted. Following the same logic, the doctrine of predestination has no place within the Super Roma movement since human free will plays a central role in determining people's destiny. Thus, re-unification and restoration depends squarely on one's free will that can be used for good or for bad.

For Super Roma, the fall of the angels represents not just the original sin and root of all evil (*radix mali*), but the genesis of the problem of evil that both philosophers and theologians have grappled with since time immemorial. The act of disobedience, according to the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (2005) made the fallen angels a *massa damnata*, meaning mass of perdition or condemned crowd. The same belief is also held by the Super Roma movement.

As a result of the Fall, and act of disobedience, the angels lost the beatific vision, their sanctifying grace, state of innocence and turned into evil spirits. Their image was tarnished and disfigured as a result. Thus, death and corruptibility did not originate with God, but the natural result of angels turning away from God. The coming of Christ the Saviour was God's final plan to justly enforce the release of the fallen angels under Lucifer (Greber 1970). Had Sacred Scriptures not been falsified or tampered with, Super Roma claims that the above version of creation and the original sin should have at least been part of the present canon.

Since Super Roma is composed of different denominations that use different versions of the biblical canon, *Matenga* always advised members to use versions available in their respective denominations. With resources permitting, members were, however, tipped to use Johannes Greber's (1980) English translation/version which is believed to be closest to the original scripts of the teachings of Christ. However, the fact that Johannes Greber's version has not yet been translated into vernacular may stand as one stumbling block, especially to some Super Roma members who may not be well conversant with the English language.

Taking into cognizance of the fact that Super Roma's perception of canonicity of the Scriptures represents an anthology of the unofficial and unorthodox theology that has remained on the periphery for centuries, there is also need to explore the movement's

teachings concerning death and life after.

4.2.6 Concerning death and life after

The question of death and life after has perplexed humankind since time immemorial. Answers to the question about what happens when people die are as diverse as the customs and beliefs of the people. Yet, most religions agree on one fundamental idea, namely the immortality of the soul, spirit or ghost. The belief in the immortality of the soul to a greater extent is all but universal. Similarly, Super Roma firmly subscribes to the concept of a conscious existence of the spirit after death.

For the Super Roma movement, the concept of death and life after combines two aspects, namely, death and life after. Since the concept of life after death implies the concept of salvation, this section shall treat the two concepts separately, beginning by highlighting Super Roma's understanding of the concept of death.

With the aid of the Sacred Scriptures, Super Roma begins by making a distinction between spiritual and physical death. Simply stated, spiritual death is the separation of a spirit from God. To begin with, Super Roma believes that alongside the innumerable host of benevolent angels, Lucifer rebelled and sinned against God (2 Peter 2:4, Revelation 12:7-17). Consequently, he was cast out of heaven (into hell) together with them. Lucifer and his apostate angels were, therefore, the first to die spiritually. Thus, when Super Roma talks of the 'dead' reference is made to those who have separated themselves from God because of their unbelief and by defection, like the apostate angels. By defection, apostate angels made themselves spirits of darkness (Greber 1970). The kingdom of the 'dead,' is, therefore, the kingdom of Lucifer. It is the realm of the enemies of God (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

The sacred scriptures talk of the kingdom of the ‘dead’ and that of the living. Whilst heaven is referred to as the kingdom of the living, hell is pictured as the kingdom of the dead. For Fr. Urayai and Super Roma, it is within the power of humans to communicate with spirits in either of these kingdoms. Humans may seek counsel either of the spiritually dead, in which case they will be consulting evil spirits (Greber 1970), or, as the Bible puts it, ‘consulting the dead.’ Deuteronomy 18:11 tells us that anyone who “consults with the dead” is “detestable to the Lord.”

Greber (1970) concurs with Fr. Urayai when he underlines that seeking counsel from the dead or from the world of apostate spirits would be the greatest possible affront to God. It is tantamount to idolatry, which consists of communicating with evil spirits and would lead to the second death (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94). Second death here referred to is the separation of the spirit from God after physical death. Hence, God’s strongest command voiced in the Old Testament was to root out necromancers from among His chosen people. However, apart from consulting the spiritually dead, humans may also turn to the counsel from the world of good spirits or as the scriptures put it as well, ‘enquiring of God’ (Isaiah 8:19). The world of good spirits is the world of the living, as opposed to the world of the dead.

Physical death or the ‘first death,’ as it is popularly known within the movement is viewed as the separation of the material body and the spiritual body. It is the end of earthly life whereby the body goes back to dust and the spirit goes to heaven for judgment. This separation is inevitable because the days of each person are fixed by the Creator (Job 14:5). People die because they sinned by deserting God in the beginning when they pre-existed in heaven as angels (Fr. Urayai, Interview, 30/08/94).

Physical death comes about when the planning angels cut or snap from a living person the spiritual silver code that connects or joins the physical and the material body. The author of the book of Ecclesiastes makes mention of this code.³⁸ Once the silver code is snapped by the responsible spiritual masters or planning angels to be specific, nothing can bring back to life the lifeless body (Super Roma Informant, Interview 10/05/14). In addition, the cutting or severing of the silver code goes beyond any scientific verification.

Commenting on physical death, Fr. Urayai (1994) and Shoko (2006) concur that upon the completion of their lives on earth, when the silver code is cut by the planning angels, spirits of the deceased begin a long spiritual purification journey and process. The duration of the journey differs from person to person, depending on the type of life each would have lived on earth. It is shorter for those who lived a good/virtuous life and longer for those who lived an unrepentant, immoral life. For the virtuous, a team of celestial beings comprising guardian angels, deceased relatives and many other spirit friends are sent by God to give escort. It may take several weeks, months, or even years for a spirit to reach its initial intended destination.

The only definitive destinations of spirits after physical death are either heaven or hell. When a person dies, his/her spirit is expected to go to heaven. However, as indicated above, spirits do not go to heaven straight as is commonly believed and taught by various creeds. Before their fate is ascertained, they have to pass through four zones (*Magedhe*) or compartments, namely: resting, treatment, judgement and feasting. Both Shoko (2006:355-356) and Sibanda (1999:24) also confirm references to the four separate zones within the Super Roma movement.

The **resting zone**, which happens to be the first zone, enables the spirit to rest and get used to

³⁸ Ecclesiastes 12:5-7 ‘...while man goes to his everlasting home. And the mourners are already walking to and fro in the street before the silver code has snapped...’

the spiritual laws and environment as well as taking a rest from the tiresome earth-heaven journey. Since the earth is a place of suffering, pain and spiritual bruises, all the illnesses that the body suffers torment the spirit as well. If the physical body is wounded and tired, the spirit is wounded and tired as well and thus it requires some rest. The resting zone re-energises and re-vitalises the weakling and ailing spirit. The period of resting normally varies from spirit to spirit depending on the level of spiritual development of each spirit at the time of death.

When the resting time is over, the spirit enters the second zone where it is treated by the healing angels. This zone is some kind of a spiritual hospital where visiting spirits or new comers are energised by spiritual nurse aids with spiritual energy or odic force (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94). It is called the **treatment zone**. The kind of treatment that is given to the spirit after death is said to be necessary because when the body is weak and ill, the spirit is also said to suffer the same, hence the need for hospitalisation to ensure swift spiritual healing. There are, however, cases whereby some spirits refuse to comply and remain adamant, insisting that they want to remain in the resting zone waiting for the sound of the trumpet. This is most common with spirits of those Churches or denominations who teach such a theology on earth. Planning angels are, therefore, left with no option except to plan another life for such spirits and make sure that they are born in a family that upholds different beliefs. This takes place before the spirit enters the judgement zone (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

The third zone is the **judgement zone**. Particular judgment is passed on each person immediately after death. The existence of such a judgement can be deduced from the parable of Dives and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). Whilst Super Roma believes in the resurrection of the soul, the movement does not subscribe to the concept of general judgement or sounding of the trumpet on the last day.

Super Roma believes in particular judgement. The movement stipulates that both the resting and treatment zones alluded to in the previous segment make the spirit strong and fit for zone three which is the judgment and decisive zone, the most feared one. Judging angels who are under the leadership of Archangel Cherubim are in charge of this most feared zone (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13). All authority to judge squarely rests upon them. God judges no-one.

In the judgment zone, a video is shown to the spirit in the presence of other angels and departed relatives who have already found their places in heaven. The video recounts the person's activities during their life on earth and it is upon these life scenes that judgment is based, but all confessed sins do not show on the video tape (Shoko 2006:356). One's actions towards neighbours are critical in the judgment zone (Matthew 25:42-46). Those who would have loved their neighbour on earth have mercy shown them, while those who would have done the opposite are condemned. The only spirit that took the shortest time in all zones was that of Jesus the Christ who took less than a minute after his resurrection. In fact, all the judging angels and other angels manning the various zones simply stood up to salute the Master's Return (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

Spirits that pass the video test will enter the fourth zone, the **feasting zone**. It is in the fourth zone where celebrations, eating and drinking in the company of saints, angels and departed relations take place. As underlined by Shoko (2006) after the celebrations, the successful spirits would then proceed to heaven and be allotted their dwelling places. Their allotted dwelling places, however, range from sphere number one to sphere number three (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13).

Thus, contrary to the position held by other denominations that the spirit will be reunited with the body at the final resurrection, Fr. Urayai maintains the position that there is no such thing as resurrection of the human body as already underlined. The body returns to the dust from where it came, and the spirit returns to God, its creator (Ecclesiastes 12:7). For this reason, Fr. Urayai often discouraged people from mourning at funerals arguing that it is pointless to mourn and cry when angels in heaven are rejoicing and celebrating the return of a one time deserter of heaven. The dramatic resurrection of Ezekiel's dry bones (Ezekiel 37:1-14) has, therefore, no place in Super Roma theology of resurrection.

4.2.6.1 Divisions in heaven

Super Roma stipulates that heaven is divided into seven spheres, commonly referred to as heavens (*Matenga*), bright or high spheres. Each of the seven spheres is as many times bigger than the material world, with varying degrees of beauty and splendor. The seventh sphere is not just the highest but the most glorious of them all, where God alone majestically resides in unapproachable light (1 Timothy 6:16) and can only be approached by Christ and the Archangels.

Jesus and Mary occupy the sixth sphere. Whilst Mary's earthly relationship to Christ was that of mother and son, Super Roma teaches that from the beginning of creation, the spiritual relationship of the two has always been that of duals (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94). The two had been 'duals' or life partners from the beginning of a spiritual creation of all things in heaven. For that reason, Jesus and Mary are addressed as King of Glory and Queen of heaven respectively. To address Mary as Mother of God (*Theotokos*) is, therefore, tantamount to being heretical within the Super Roma circles. She is addressed as Mother of Christ (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13).

The fifth sphere is the abode for the remaining five archangels, namely Archangel Cherubim, Archangel Michael, Archangel Gabriel, Archangel Raphael and Archangel Seraphim. Other angels that did not revolt against God, the two thirds that remained loyal to Christ during Lucifer's revolt happily reside in the fourth sphere. Lucifer went to hell with one third of heaven's total population (Revelation 12:4). The same fourth sphere is also reserved for the saints.

By saints Fr. Urayai refers to those who have been declared and canonized so by God and not by any mortal beings, those who have re-joined their heavenly spiritual families and choirs, those who have assumed and retained their original angelic functions and offices. Spirits who are still in the process of spiritual evolution are not referred to as saints. Thus, some of those that have excelled in holiness on earth and consequently been declared saints by human beings may not be so according to God's judgement, for sainthood is determined only by God's Spirit World and not by erring mortals (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

Spirits in either the first, second and third heavens are not referred to as saints. For Super Roma, salvation, therefore, in the strictest sense, consists not just in attaining the first, second or third spheres, but rather in reaching the fourth sphere where one eventually re-unites with the rest of the other angels who did not participate in the rebellion against Christ. However, whilst spirits who have attained the first three spheres are also said to have attained salvation, the concept or word salvation would have been used loosely. In essence, salvation is restoration (*apocatastasis*) and re-unification with God (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13).

The first, second and third spheres are called spheres of progress (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13). The three spheres are reserved for spirits that are still on their long

purification process or spiritual evolution. Simply stated, the three spheres are reserved for the fallen angels. Saint Paul confesses that he was taken, ‘whether still in the body or out of the body’ as far as the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2).

Of the three spheres, the third is the highest. Each of the three spheres is divided into two, namely, the good side and the bad side. The ‘bad’ side is what is commonly referred to as purgatory.³⁹ Spirits who require cleansing are temporarily posted and purified in purgatory before they occupy their places either in the first, second or third spheres’ good side depending on their harvest, points or scores in the judgement zone. The duration of their stay in purgatory to a great extent depends on prayers of the living (Macdonald Masvosva, Interview 20/10/10). Thus, Fr. Urayai stressed very much on praying for the dead and the helpless spirits in purgatory during his priestly life.

Spirits who find themselves in the third sphere may not have another earthly life planned for them by the planning angels. These are considered as having achieved their highest stage as mortals. Several duties and assignments are, therefore, assigned to them in preparation for retaining their original places in the fourth sphere (Macdonald Masvosva, Interview 20/10/10). Such spiritual assignments are meant to make them perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:48).

4.2.6.2 Reincarnation

Re-incarnation is one of Super Roma’s distinctive features and cardinal articles of faith. Reincarnation is only common among spirits in the first and second heavens or spheres, and those coming from hell. Only spirits that repent in hell get the chance to reincarnate on earth.

³⁹ The Roman Catholic Church also teaches that all who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven. The Church formulated the doctrine of faith on purgatory at the Councils of Florence and Trent (CCC no. 1030-31).

Stubborn unrepentant evil spirits continue to act as Satan's agents on earth (Emmanuel Mupure, Interview 27/07/13).

It is only when an individual finally rejoins spirits in the fourth sphere that he/she puts an end to the seemingly endless cycle of rebirth or re-incarnation (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94). Thus, the possibility of Adam and Eve having reincarnated several times in order to attain the highest stage of perfection is, therefore, high because it is only through such a seemingly endless cycle of births and re-births that spirits evolve and are cleansed and purged until they reach the intended stage, namely the fourth sphere.

Reincarnation is facilitated by the planning angels after a period only known by God and his angels. The same was also confirmed by Shoko (2006) when he notes that a second chance will be given to those who would have forfeited their chances of going to God's side. There is a possibility that the same spirit can be born more than ten or fifteen times in different bodies, continents, countries or races in order to attain the highest level of perfection. Reincarnation, therefore, defiles the logic behind spirits re-uniting with their mortal bodies on the day of judgement. For Super Roma, for as long as restoration or re-unification has not been achieved, humanity may as well forget about escaping from the problem of evil. The problem of evil is meant to cleanse and purify the fallen angels like gold before they are restored back to their original state of bliss as God's angels, a state they possessed before the original sin (Revelation 12:7-17).

4.2.6.3 Theology of hell

Just as heaven is the throne and abode of God, so also is hell the abode of Satan and his apostate angels or evil spirits. Hell is often referred to as *Makomba*, dark or low spheres within the Super Roma circles. It is pictured as the fiery lake of burning Sulphur (Revelation

19:21), currently reserved for those who break God's Ten Commandments and fail the video test.

Super Roma strongly believes that from the beginning of the spiritual creation of all things by God in heaven, hell was not in existence. It was only called into being by Christ so that it could offer correctional services to angels referred to in the book of Revelation 12:7 who had committed the sin of apostasy. The same was also noted by Sibanda (1999:22). As has already been highlighted in earlier segments, Super Roma links humanity to the same fallen angels. Within the Super Roma circles, the sin of apostasy that subsequently led to the fall of angels is viewed as the actual original sin and not the sin of Adam and Eve as is commonly assumed and believed.

Super Roma stipulates that when Lucifer and the apostate angels committed the sin of apostasy, Jesus created a total of seven dark spheres for rehabilitation of the rebel angels. During the fall of angels captured in the book of Revelation, the extent of the plunge downwards, according to the Super Roma version, varied according to the guilt of individual spirits after the sin of apostasy. The most guilty were banished to the lowest depths, but the less guilty such as Adam and others were allowed to dwell in better conditions (Fr. Urayai 1994). Lucifer, who was the chief culprit and protagonist, was driven down to the fourth sphere. The fifth, sixth and seventh spheres were left unoccupied. Lucifer was only driven furthest to the seventh sphere by Christ after his death on the cross (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94). The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) teaches that after death, Jesus descended into hell. The Bible also confirms that he descended right down to the lower regions of the earth (Ephesians 4:9).

Thus, the coming of Christ that took place about two thousand years ago constituted a critical

turning point in the history of the fallen angels. It brought with it a number of advantages. To begin with, Christ's redemptive death signified the removal of the original sin and the accomplishment of God's Great Plan of Salvation. By dying on the cross, Jesus nullified the original sin that separated humanity from God. Christ's redemptive act did not just lead to the removal of the original sin and the final release from bondage of those in Lucifer's prison, but also condemned Lucifer to the lowest of the seven dark spheres (Ephesians 4:9), where Jesus permitted him to operate from and never to visit the earth as he used to do before the redemptive act.

Within the Super Roma circles, the condemnation of Lucifer to the seventh dark sphere of hell was the Final Judgment (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94). The process of making a reality the return of all the fallen angels, including Lucifer himself at the end of time is referred to as the Great Project. Hence, Super Roma does not subscribe to the doctrines of perpetual suffering in hell or the second coming of Jesus as taught by other denominations (Macdonald Masvosva, Interview 20/10/10).

Since hell is divided into seven apartments, the extent of the plunge downwards for spirits that fail the video test in the judgement also varies according to the guilt of individual spirits. For a period only known by God's planning angels, spirits who fail the video test in the judgement zone will reel under excruciating pain and agony without respite in hell. Spirits who would have joined hell are not allowed to leave until they develop a tail and two horns (Shoko 2006:356). Upon developing horns and tails, such spirits would then become Lucifer's recruiting officers. These are later sent to the testing ground/earth as Lucifer's vassals to lure more spirits to Lucifer's side.

Both Sibanda (1999) and Shoko (2006) indicate the belief that, having graduated from hell

and assumed various names and functions, such as ancestral spirits (*Midzimu*), alien (*Mashavi*,) or avenging spirits (*Ngozi*) among others, they exert tremendous influence on people by enticing and persuading them to misuse their freewill and prefer evil. Whilst ancestral spirits are sent to deceive relatives, alien spirits come without specific targets but both always claim to be good spirits, with powers of both clairaudience and clairvoyance. Being Lucifer's agents, they portray evil as being advantageous and glorious in comparison to doing the will of God which in contrast, the infernal agents paint as being laborious, disadvantageous and plain stupid (Sibanda 1999).

It is a common phenomenon that in the upward movement of spirits to the four zones, there are some spirits that do not reach the intended destination. These do not even go as far as the resting zone. Whilst some spirits are called back by their relatives through traditional practices such as *Kurovaguva* (bringing back ceremony) or *Kubata Zita* (naming ceremony), others for one reason or another may just hesitate to begin the upward journey for fear of what Fr. Urayai referred to as 'their poor harvest' (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94). Such spirits for some time become earthbound and begin to haunt the living. They can inflict illnesses and diseases, misfortune and make several demands upon the living until a time when judgement is forced upon them. For such spirits, chances of making it to heaven are next to nil. Their destination is hell (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13).

Fr. Urayai further notes that chances of re-incarnation are also given to those spirits who would have gone to hell in the event that they make a perfect act of contrition and have resolved to start their lives all over again. However, as long as humanity still clings to traditional practices and rituals, their chances of re-incarnation, let alone restoration and reunification with God remain rather remote (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

4.2.7 Perception of African traditional practices

Both Sibanda (1999) and Shoko (2006) observed that Father Urayai had a very negative attitude toward African traditional practices. Father Urayai's extraordinary experiences with both evil and benevolent spirits for over three decades contributed immensely to his negative stance on traditional practices.

Super Roma teaches that just as God is the ruler of heaven, so also is Satan the ruler of both hell and earth. Hence the Bible describes him as Ruler of this World (John 12:31) among many other names and titles such as Father of lies (John 8:44) and the Serpent or snake (Genesis 3). Just as God through human instruments such as prophets, mediums, pastors and men and women of good will establishes His kingdom on earth, so also does Satan or Lucifer labours to establish his own kingdom through human agents such as *n'angas*, diviners, medicine men and women among others. In short, Satan tries to establish his kingdom by deceiving and misleading people through some traditional practices and rituals such as ancestral worship, bringing back ceremony (*Kurova Guva*), divination, rain making and naming ceremonies among other rituals and practices (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

When asked why he was so negative about African traditional religion and practices, Father Urayai simply answered in vernacular, '*Ndakaudzwa naMatenga kuti zvizhinji zvechivanhu zvine low od yekumakomba uye kupira midzimu kana kurova makuva kudarika mutemo waMwari wekutanga*'. (The angels told me that most traditional practices and rituals have low od from hell. Ancestral worship and bringing back ceremonies are a direct violation of God's first commandment) (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

Having received lessons from celestial beings for more than 30 years, Super Roma members have come to believe that though Lucifer (Satan) is God's first born son, from the moment he

committed the sin of apostasy and got kicked out of heaven together with the fallen angels (Revelations 12:7-12), he turned out to be God's arch enemy. As master of both hell and earth, he specializes in deceiving God's children on earth, who apparently, as taught by Super Roma are the same fallen angels who sided with him and committed the original sin of apostasy with him. Thus, being Lucifer's former subjects, he does not want any of his subjects to escape from his rule. He is unwilling to waive his right of sovereignty even in the case of those subjects who had repented of their misdeeds and long to return to God's Kingdom.

As a deceit specialist, Satan, therefore, employs tactics and tricks through his human agencies and instruments to make sure that he remains in total control of humanity. The same point was underscored by Sibanda (1999:26) when he wrote:

...Satan and his other followers are too smart to lie if they can accomplish their purposes by misleading the truth. They like to deceive by raising questions (as with Adam), or by using truth to bring about an immediate, apparently innocent activity (like ancestral worship or bringing back ceremony) that has long range disastrous consequences, (as in Jesus' temptations), or by telling only part of truth. This is deceit, a deliberate attempt to mislead.

Not only does Super Roma condemn traditional practices and rituals, the movement also forbids members from contributing in any form towards the realization of traditional rituals of any nature at what ever level. In addition, members are also discouraged from eating or drinking anything on such gatherings. Meat consumed at traditional rituals is considered as sacrificed to idols, and as such, infested with Low Od. Hence, *Matenga* always advised Super Roma members simply to stay away from venues of traditional rituals in order to avoid the risk of being accused of actively participating in the building up of the kingdom of Satan. Instead of participating in African traditional rituals, members were always encouraged to jointly participate in the sacrifice offered by Christ, namely the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is said to have replaced all other traditional rituals.

4.2.8 The Lord's Supper (Eucharist)⁴⁰

Just as the Eucharist has remained at the centre of worship among many Christian Churches, Super Roma also views the Lord's Supper as the source and summit of their Christian life and worship (CCC 1994). Whilst other creeds prefer to call it the Communion, Holy Mass or the Eucharist among other names, the Super Roma movement refers to it as the Lord's Supper. For the Super Roma movement, the time of the Lord's Supper is viewed as the holiest moment one can ever have in his/her earthly life.

Within the Super Roma circles, the Lord's Supper is a reminder of God's unconditional love and forgiveness. It is a memorial and re-enactment of how Jesus sacrificed his life for the apostate angels in order to win them back to their original home of bliss. Thus, by partaking of the body and blood of Jesus, which according to them is the Power of Christ, members of the Super Roma movement accept to be used by Jesus as his instruments (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13). This power of Christ enables members to love and forgive like Christ, to be other Christs, *Alter Christus*. One's commitment to following Christ is, therefore, central in any Eucharistic celebration, not just the mere act of receiving bread and wine.

By celebrating the Eucharist, members of different denominations who constitute the Super Roma ecumenical movement unite themselves to Christ who in turn makes them sharers in his spiritual bond with the Father. Super Roma underlines the point that they do not receive the body and blood of Jesus, but only his power (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13). For them there is no real presence of Christ as such in the bread and wine as maintained by the Roman Catholic Church and other Protestant denominations but rather a symbolic one, a position also earlier taken by Zwingli during the Reformation period. Thus, within the Super

⁴⁰ Since representation of phenomena as understood by the participant is the hallmark of phenomenology of religion, the researcher was also privileged on a number of occasions to participate in the Lord's Supper conducted by the Super Roma movement.

Roma circles, the words of consecration have been changed to:

On the night he was betrayed he took bread and gave thanks, he broke the bread and gave it to his disciples and said, take this all of you. This is the SIGN of my BODY, this is the POWER of my BODY. Do this in memory of me.

When Supper was ended, he took the cup and gave thanks, he gave the cup to his disciples and said, 'Take this all of you and drink from it, this is the SIGN of my BLOOD, this is the POWER of my BLOOD....Do this in memory of me (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

For the Super Roma movement, it is not the Eucharist *per se* that matters, but the pure heart that is aligned in attitude of reverence to the Christ that the Christ energy pours and energises all members as much as members can still access the same spiritual energy without the outward symbolism of bread and wine. Hence in essence, the Eucharistic meal or Lord's Supper is symbolic of the spiritual communion which Christ meant to maintain with His followers despite the fact that he would be parted from them on earth (Greber 1970).

Such a communion knows no religion, denomination or boundary up to today. It is universal and timeless. On this ground, the Super Roma movement finds no sin or error in administering Holy Communion to all its members, regardless of their religious affiliation. By so doing, Super Roma believes that they constitute a single unit in spirit with Christ, as well as among themselves, a unity that Christ prayed for so fervently and touchingly on the night before he was handed over to his enemies (John 17). Such a practice has had a positive impact upon members of other denominations as well, even though some conservative Roman Catholics frown at the practice and insist on giving Holy Communion only to those in full communion with the Roman Catholic Church as stipulated by the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994).

For Super Roma, the Lord's Supper is a feast of love and forgiveness (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13). Whoever does not feel love in his/her heart is not therefore fit to receive the rite commemorative of love. Whosoever harbours within him hatred, enmity, anger,

envies and other forms of spite against his/her neighbour would be guilty of the greatest hypocrisy by receiving communion. It would be an insult of the most flagrant kind of him/her who instituted this rite in commemoration of his love (Greber 1970). Consequently, all who contemplate receiving communion should first search their hearts, to know whether they truly love the Lord and their neighbours, since otherwise the communion would be a mockery of Christ (Greber 1970). In the event that people quarrel over something just before the celebration of the Lord's Supper, Super Roma members are discouraged from participating in the Love Feast, as doing so would be tantamount to a mockery of Christ's act of love and forgiveness (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

For this reason, the Eucharistic Communion, therefore, demands a good preparation with confession before one partakes of the meal. Without down playing the significance of confessing one's sins to a priest, Super Roma emphasized the importance of making one's confession direct to God the Father through Christ with a contrite heart. Thus, the best way of preparing oneself for the Lord's Supper is through improving one's relationship with God and neighbour. It has also been mentioned in the third Chapter (section 3.4.3) that individual and room or venue preparation for the celebration of the Lord's Supper is of fundamental significance.

During the Lord's Supper itself, concentration is highly recommended as well. The presiding priest is encouraged to formulate his own prayers and not to rely on some old memorized prayers that may be outdated, anachronistic and out of context. Members are not supposed to move around, but simply sit and be absorbed in the proceedings. To make sure that highest concentration is realized, Super Roma celebrates the Lord's Supper without drums, rattles or any other instrument. It is believed that Christ himself would come to change the bread and wine into his power during the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Members are, therefore,

often encouraged to behave the same in their respective denominations, particularly during the celebration of the same memorial. Abolishing the Lord's Supper is not just being heretical and downplaying the redemptive act of Jesus, but also tantamount to committing the sin of apostasy (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94). In fact, abolishing the Lord's Supper is tantamount to downplaying the very core of ecumenism.

Whilst the Lord's Supper in the Super Roma is celebrated by Roman Catholic priests, the movement, however, encourages its members to receive other sacraments such as baptism, marriage, penance and confirmation from their respective denominations (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13).

4.2.9 Theology of ecumenism

Perhaps, taking it from Jesus who earnestly prayed for unity of all Christians (John 17:1-36), since its inception in 1970, the Super Roma movement has made ecumenism one of its key guiding principles.

Appendix two shows the denominational representation within the Super Roma movement. Following the same chart, within the interdenominationally constituted Super Roma movement, Roman Catholics are the majority with 38%, followed by Methodists with 21%. Salvation Army and Anglicans have 18% and 15% respectively. The Dutch Reformed has 4% and there is 3% for the Baptist Church. The remaining 1% is reserved for other churches. The fact that the Super Roma movement has succeeded in bringing members of different denominations under one roof and on one Eucharistic table is reflective of the fact that the movement is based on the fundamental truths of ecumenism. For Super Roma, the ecumenical nature of the movement is such a breakthrough (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13).

A simplified Text on the African Synod (1995) outlines the fundamental elements of ecumenism that continue to bind Christians together. The first element states that all people, despite their religious affiliation, share a common origin and a common destiny which is God. Secondly, it is the will and desire of God to liberate and to save all humanity. Lastly and more importantly, the new commandment of love embraces all the members of the human family regardless of denominational and theological differences. Firmly grounded and bound by these elements of ecumenism, the issue of religious and theological differences among Super Roma members becomes something trivial or non-existent (Simion Chaputsira, Interview 20/04/12).

Whilst on the one hand the coming together of Christians from various denominations became a gigantic step towards an authentic and lived ecumenism, on the other hand it prevented denominations from monopolizing God whose multifaceted nature is present in all religions and denominations *ad infinitum*.

Super Roma underlines the point that before members of different denominations could dream of achieving the highest form of ecumenism, there is need to overcome several obstacles to genuine unity. Chief among such obstacles as highlighted by Morrow (1966) would be differences on the level of doctrine and of the interpretation of the bible, on the nature and mission of the Church, on moral questions and church discipline. Morrow (1966) also highlights the need to overcome a heavy heritage of ill-feeling, hatred, prejudice, distrust and dissensions amongst members themselves. The ill-feeling might also be a result of the memory of persecutions, crusades or impact of the reformation. After the Reformation, doctrines and dogmas have always been great impediments for true unity. Thus, being guided by the same theology of the economy of salvation and a unique interpretation of the sacred canon, any other doctrinal difference that might exist between denominations is regarded as

trivial within the Super Roma movement.

Whilst the common celebration of the Eucharist stands at the center of Super Roma's idea of ecumenism and the ultimate goal of ecumenism, the movement also emphasises co-operation in several other areas at the social, cultural, and religious levels. Thus, apart from ecumenically holding weekly discussions, monthly prayer sessions, an annual three day retreat to help members remain spiritually uplifted, remains a significant and important event on the Super Roma calendar.

Members attach a particular importance to this event since it ecumenically affords them soul searching exercises, chief among them being a three hour meditation session for each and every member. The composition of the organizational structure of Super Roma is also reflective of a strong commitment to ecumenism. However, the fact that the Super Roma movement seems to be more comfortable with mainstream churches and not Pentecostals and African Independent churches remains a cause for concern. In addition, the fact that the celebration of Lord's Supper is only reserved for Catholic trained clergy may also make enthusiasts doubt the ecumenical character of the movement and its commitment to commune.

4.2.10 Theology of prayer and fasting

Super Roma believes in the centrality of prayer and fasting. Nothing considered of significant importance in the movement's daily life happens outside prayer. To this end there are prescribed times for prayer which are as follows: 04:00hrs for morning meditation, 12:00hrs for midday prayer, 18:00hrs prayer for the sick, 20:00hrs for night prayer (Fr Urayai, Interview 30/08/94). Punctuating their day with periods of prayer reminds the group members of the closeness and importance of God to their lives throughout the whole day.

For the Super Roma movement, each day begins with morning meditation at 04:00 hrs. During meditation, members are encouraged to concentrate and fix their minds and to empty their thoughts of all worldly matters. The oftener a person devotes himself or herself to such spiritual concentration, the easier it becomes for such to communicate with angels on an individual capacity without the aid of mediums. Of all races, Hindus produce some of the best in this area because Hindu children are taught to meditate from childhood. Hindus refer to meditation as submersion of the spirit (Greber 1970).

In imitation of the practice of Hinduism and other religions that practice meditation, Super Roma also encourages children to meditate at 04:00Hrs with their parents or guardians. However, children often take less time compared to their parents and elders. It is critical to have an intention for each daily meditation that one performs so that the individual focuses and prays for the same intention through out the day and patiently waits for God's answer.

Though prayer may take place anytime within a specified period, Super Roma members are also encouraged to say a short prayer at midday. During midday prayer, members get an opportunity to reflect on their spiritual progress, examine their consciences and make amends (Emmanuel Mupure, Interview 27/07/14).

They are also urged to pray especially at 18:00hrs together with their families for such is an opportune time to teach their children the significance of prayer. It is a strong belief among members that during that time, God sends His healing angels upon the earth to bless families and assist with spiritual medication in hospitals and clinics. Thus, six o'clock prayer is often referred to as prayer for the sick (Emmanuel Mupure, Interview 27/07/14). As a way of giving respect and honour to the visiting invisible spiritual nurse aids, Super Roma has an hour of silence from 6pm to 7 pm where televisions and radios may be switched off to provide the

required environment. During that holy hour, parents or guardians may read Bible stories to their children or other spiritual stories, sing hymns, meditate or engage in any spiritual discussions in the comfort of their homes (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13).

Members are tipped not to miss the 8:00 pm night prayer. During the 8:00 prayer, members conclude and wrap up their daily activities before they retire to bed. It is also a common belief among members that after night prayer, guardian angels take individual members' daily performance reports to Christ. To this effect by 9:00pm or latest 10:00pm, all members should be in bed. Members strongly believe that, a couple of angels are assigned to each person, one to record all righteous deeds, the other to note of all wicked ones. On the day of judgement, the twofold report will then confront the person concerned, serving as unassailable testimony of his/her earthly behaviour. Since the deeds would have been so accurately reported by celestial beings, as noted by Mandivenga (1983:17), individuals concerned may not deny any of them. The same is also believed by the Islamic religion.

Above all, members are taught the importance of personal and spontaneous prayers that refreshingly engender the attitude of a personal and direct appeal to the Deity. In this regard, prayer thus radically departs from crammed recitations of 'ancient' and fossilized words gleaned from some liturgical source to the sum total of all daily activities from morning till sunset. However, prayers like the Lord's Prayer and the Roman Catholic 'Glory Be'⁴¹ have remained central in Super Roma.

Praying the Rosary within the Super Roma movement is optional. Roman Catholics who join Super Roma, are encouraged to recite the Rosary in their homes and denomination. Thus, for Super Roma, the rosary is respected but is not compulsory due to the inter-denominational

⁴¹ "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

nature of the movement. Grace before and after meals is also a requirement. Over and above, members are also encouraged to partake of all meals in silence because eating is highly regarded as a form of prayer (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94). Vegetarianism is also encouraged but not demanded.

Super Roma members are often discouraged from making prayers that are individualistic (Simion Chaputsira, Interview 20/04/12). Instead, they are encouraged to pray for all people. More importantly, they are encouraged to pray for the nation, all political and religious leaders. Taking it from Saint Paul who underlined the issue of submitting to civil authority (Romans 13:1), Super Roma strongly believes and teaches that all leaders are chosen by God and are, therefore, answerable before God for misleading those under their care.

Prayer goes hand in glove with fasting. The two constitute the most effective arsenals in the fight against powers of darkness. Members are free to choose any weekday from Monday to Saturday to exercise self-restraint. With the exception of a few, upon whom fasting may have a 'deleterious effect' (Mandivenga 1983:25), the rest of the members are advised to make fasting as part and parcel of their life. Preferably, members who are physically fit and spiritually able may go as far as six or more days of refraining from food and drink or other bodily comforts. Fasting enables the inner person or spirit to be more effective (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13).

In pursuance of fasting, particularly a long fast, no other intense devotional activity that drains the devotee's energy may be done except long periods of meditation or simply relaxation. Notwithstanding the spiritual benefits of fasting, the spiritual exercise may serve as a therapy (Mandivenga 1983:25). Through the body-mortifying practice, the body releases all the toxic material in the system that may be hazardous to human health. Thus, for Super Roma, fasting

purifies both the physical body and the spirit.

In summation, Super Roma stipulates that the best form of prayer is leading a holy life. The best form of meditation is also leading a holy life. The best form of fasting still remains leading a holy life. Thus, holiness is, therefore, not suggested but demanded of all members regardless of denominational affiliation.

Whilst Super Roma's interpretation of concepts such as healing, exorcism, canonicity of scriptures, ecclesiastical authority, Eucharist, death and life after among others is unique and independent, the fact that it is reflective of a new interpretation of the entire salvation history presents a number of areas of potential clash with accepted traditional Christian theology, particularly in the Roman Catholic Church.

4.3 Conclusion

The fourth chapter has explored in greater detail the organizational structure and theology of Super Roma. The chapter has established that whilst Super Roma is run by lay personnel, there are no roles that are exclusively reserved for men except for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The Chapter has also established that Super Roma theology occupies a central role in defining the character of the ecumenical movement and is of unique and critical importance. Whilst Super Roma theology exhibits some residue of traditional Christian theology and practice, to a greater extent, the theology is reflective of a theology breaking with the old Christian tradition. In fact, it is reflective of a new reformation. The fifth Chapter shall examine the challenges of Super Roma.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUPER ROMA CHALLENGES (1970-2016)

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter has explored the organisational structure and theology of Super Roma. This current chapter examines the various challenges of Super Roma from 1970 to 2016. The chapter consists of two equally important segments. Since the birth and development of the Super Roma movement is inseparably linked to Fr. Augustine Urayai's healing ministry, the first segment shall look at challenges targeted at Fr. Urayai as the Super Roma protagonist. The second part concentrates on challenges directed at the rank and file members of movement itself.

5.1 Challenges to Father Urayai's healing ministry (1970-2003)

This particular section examines challenges of Fr. Augustine Urayai from 1970 to 2003. Both Sibanda (1999) and Shoko (2006) wrote extensively on challenges to Fr. Urayai's healing ministry.

Although scores of people, both Roman Catholics and non-Catholics flocked to Fr. Urayai for what Shoko (2006:361) referred to as 'an alternative form of therapy,' the entire ministry of Fr. Urayai had been a Way of the Cross (*Via Dolorosa*) (Emmanuel Mupure, Interview 27/07/2014). His challenges, however, varied from parish to parish and were also sporadic.

The strategy to first target the Super Roma protagonist was dubbed 'strike the shepherd and the sheep will scatter' (Emmanuel Mupure, Interview, 27/07/2015). The first challenge to Fr. Urayai's ministry of healing and deliverance came from none other than his Gweru diocese authorities. The Diocese orchestrated a number of tactics to try and perhaps force him out of the priestly ministry so that he could concentrate on nurturing his newly founded religious

movement. Whilst Fr. Urayai was often accused of failing to marry smoothly his special gift and the Church demands of availability in his own assigned parish (Nyatsanza (1995:27), his few years at Mutero mission (1967-71) went with no major challenges. However, serious challenges orchestrated by the Diocese of Gweru began when Fr. Urayai was transferred to Mashava parish.

5.1.1 Mashava parish (1972-1974)

It was during Fr. Urayai's short stay at Mashaba⁴² (1972-1974) that the Roman Catholic authorities and other top influential Catholic black priests became suspicious and uncomfortable with his healing ministry (Chagwiza, Interview, 20/10/ 2013). As early as 1972, Fr. Urayai had already started tape- recording some of his healing sessions for future use. When the voice of opposition was raised, the Bishop was forced to carry out his own investigations in order to establish the truth about the young priest's healing ministry. In order to establish the truth about Fr. Urayai's healing ministry, the authorities first targeted his tape-recordings.

Sibanda (1999) and Shoko (2006) do concur that to this effect, in February 1974, a delegation comprising Fathers, Remli, Conrad and Mugadzi, (Fr. Urayai's former classmate) was sent by Bishop Haene to Mashava parish on a fact finding mission. Fr. Urayai was first served with a letter from the Local Ordinary that ordered him to go to Chikwingwizha Minor Seminary to answer a few questions about his operations. Upon his arrival at the seminary, he found himself under house arrest. The bishop, who seemingly was getting pressure from the senior black priests, had the plan of restricting Fr. Urayai in order to allow investigations to be carried out smoothly without his interference (Shoko 2006). Thus, it was clearly stated in the letter that Fr. Urayai was not to travel out of the diocese or country without the bishop's

⁴² Mashaba changed to Mashava after independence in 1980.

knowledge and approval. Disturbed and surprised, Fr. Urayai, however, complied, but he also wrote a letter to the bishop to register his disapproval of the whole operation.

Undeterred by Fr. Urayai's letter, thorough investigations that lasted for 30 days were conducted during his absence in March 1974, much to his disapproval. The investigating team first confiscated all the audio tapes that belonged to Fr. Urayai on which he had recorded conversations with evil spirits and surrendered them to the Bishop's House in Gweru (Sr. Martha Chakabveyo, Interview 20/05/08). The delegation also interviewed one of the sisters at Mashava convent in order to get some inside information on the operations of Fr. Urayai. The sister-in charge of Mashava convent, however, was sympathetic and protective of Fr. Urayai (Sr. Martha Chakabveyo, Interview 20/05/08).

Shoko (2006) also comments that it was imperative to closely monitor Fr. Urayai's activities in order to determine his source of power, protect Catholicism and prevent commotion in the Church. When investigations were complete, Bishop Haene called Fr. Urayai to the Bishop's House in Gweru for a thorough discussion that lasted for several hours. Failing to find fault in Fr. Urayai's healing praxis, the Bishop declared him not guilty and thus, acquitted him. The same position was also taken by the majority of the white priests who by then were still a dominant force in the diocese of Gweru. They saw nothing wrong with Fr. Urayai's healing sessions since the phenomenon (exorcism) was also common in their respective European countries. Even though the Bishop and the majority of the white Fathers had acquitted Fr. Urayai, the majority of his black counterparts still doubted his source of power and insisted that his exorcisms were more akin to traditional healing practices. However, undeterred by the voices of opposition that distracted him, Fr. Urayai still had the courage and passion to continue.

5.1.2 Matibi mission (1975)

From January 1975 to December 1975, Fr. Urayai was transferred to Matibi Mission. During his short stint at Matibi Mission, he continued with his healing ministry, but to a limited extent since he was still new in the area and constantly under ecclesiastical surveillance.

One Roman Catholic nun who preferred anonymity, however, reported that a white Roman Catholic brother and a priest at Matibi Mission teamed up to beat up Fr. Urayai after Fr. Urayai had accused them of hiding his car keys in their bid to stop him from attending his otherwise clandestine and controversial healing and Super Roma sessions. The case was reported to the bishop but seemingly, the bishop was protective of his white counterparts (Roman Catholic Anonymous, Interview 20/05/13).

5.1.3 St Kizito Zhombe mission (1976-1977)

From the evidence gathered through some thorough investigations and interviews, events took a serious nose dive when in 1976 Fr. Urayai was transferred from Matibi to St. Kizito Mission in Zhombe district. He served St Kizito from January 1976 to December 1977, the same year the late Bishop Tobias Chiginya replaced the otherwise sympathetic bishop Haene as Bishop of Gweru diocese. Unlike Haene, Bishop Chiginya had quite a different and more radical approach to Fr. Urayai's healing ministry.

In 1978, the new bishop ordered Fr. Urayai to discontinue his healing ministry and further labelled him *an'anga* during one of their priestly sessions. Shoko (2006) underlines that Fr. Urayai, however, ignored the stigma, violated the bishop's order and went ahead to exorcise privately. Discovering that Fr. Urayai was stubborn and uncooperative, the bishop went further and transferred him to Serima Mission from March 1978 to July 1979. Before Fr. Urayai took up his new transfer, the Bishop slammed him with a sabbatical year so that he

could seriously monitor his healing ministry and perhaps go for a psychiatric examination (Priest Anonymous, Interview 15/10/14).

Describing how nervous the Roman Catholic authorities had become as a result of the operations of Super Roma, Fr. Urayai remembered an incident where his Bishop had set a trap for him.

As more and more challenges continued to pile, on more than one occasion, a senior priest from Gweru diocese was tasked by the bishop to nicodimously follow me to Kwekwe where we used to conduct our prayer sessions. Surprisingly the priest mysteriously got lost in the city of Kwekwe and eventually lost track of my car. This was later revealed to me at one of our prayer sessions on the same day by archangel Cherubim who jokingly said to me, '...We just confused the priest a little bit' (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

5.1.4 Sabbatical year (1978-1979)

During the period of the suspension, Fr. Urayai decided to go back to his roots. In fact, he stayed with Michael, his young brother, in the city of Gweru for a few months. Reliable sources do confirm that he spent most of the time in Zhombe where he had started the school of mediums for his Super Roma movement (Super Roma Informant, Interview 15/10/13). On several occasions, Fr. Urayai used to jokingly refer to his sabbatical year as a spiritual detention (Walter Mutarisi, Interview 02/10/96).

The bishop, however, later lifted the suspension and called Fr. Urayai back in December 1980 to resume his priestly duties. Reflecting on the reasons why the bishop could have lifted his ban, Fr. Urayai had this to say:

I think the Bishop was probably forced to lift my suspension due to public pressure. ..Then, on the 5th of December 1980, I received a letter of re-appointment to serve as a priest again. I was posted at Mutero mission (Sibanda 1999:12).

5.1.5 Mutero mission (1980-1990)

From December 1980 to December 1990, Fr. Urayai was back at Mutero Mission.⁴³ Having been at Mutero Mission from 1967 to 1971, his re-appointment at the same mission came as a blessing in disguise. Apparently, it was during his second tour of duty at Mutero mission after a hiatus of about nine years that Fr. Urayai attracted a massive following, some of whom began to address him as the Right Reverend, a title often reserved for Bishops.

His clientele included the young and old from various Christian denominations. Soon after his re-appointment, he resumed his healing sessions at the same Chinyika parish. The Bishop, however, allowed him to continue but began to employ other methods to frustrate and derail his healing ministry. Apart from being left to fend for himself, especially when he went out to camp at Chinyika parish for his famous healing sessions, the Diocese gave him an old Mazda B 22 that badly needed an engine overhaul and relegated him to peripheral rural parishes. For a long time he used a motor-bike for his pastoral duties.

With the help of his motor-bike, Fr. Urayai, however, continued to be mobile. His weekly programmes usually at Mutero Mission combined healing sessions and pastoral work. He used to perform his exorcisms on Wednesdays and Thursdays at Chinyika parish. He would leave Mutero mission on Tuesdays in order to prepare himself for the Wednesday/Thursday exorcisms.

People who knew Fr. Urayai's timetable often waited for him on Tuesday evenings so that he could serve them either Tuesday evenings or Wednesday mornings, depending on the time he would have arrived at the parish. However, Fr. Urayai always reserved days like Friday, Saturdays and Sunday for other priestly duties such as celebrating Holy Mass, home and

⁴³ It was during the mid 80s when the researcher met Fr. Urayai in person at Mutero Mission for the first time.

hospital visits among others. In some instances, he would walk long distances to celebrate Mass or perform an exorcism due to transport problems. A group of young boys, however, often accompanied him in his missionary and pastoral journeys to help carry his heavy Mass box but once every month, he would sneak to celebrate the Eucharist for his Super Roma members (Deogratius Madanhire, Interview 15/08/12).

The plan to frustrate the Super Roma protagonist, however, did not work as most of his financial and moral support came from none other than his Super Roma members, particularly the working class. Thus, the Super Roma movement became his life line.

5.1.6 Chinyuni mission (1991-2003)

From Mutero Mission, Fr. Urayai was further transferred to Chinyuni parish, a remote outstation of Hama St Joseph's in the district of Chirumanzu where he served from January 1991 to 2003. By then, Bishop Chiginya had been replaced by Bishop Francis Mugadzi, who was Fr. Urayai's former classmate. Bishop Mugadzi, however, continued with the strategy of his predecessor. He did not stop Fr. Urayai, but continued to relegate him to peripheral rural parishes. During Fr. Urayai's time, Chinyuni parish served eight other outstations, namely, Maware, Tokwe, Mashamba, Shashe, Gundura, Chizvinire, Gwanza and Munatsi (Sibanda 1999:13).

Unlike most priests' houses in the Diocese of Gweru, the one at Chinyuni badly needed renovation, with no water and inside sanitary facilities (Sibanda 1999). Sibanda (1999) further observed that Fr. Urayai had to contend with fetching water from a nearby primary School and sharing the outside toilet with parishioners. In short, living standards at Chinyuni parish fell far below the standards of any Roman Catholic Mission station or parish in the Gweru diocese then. Under such difficult conditions at Chinyuni parish, Fr. Urayai continued with

the timetable that he was using whilst at Mutero Mission, using his garage as the suitable place for carrying out his exorcisms (Shoko 2006). However, scores of people continued to flock to Chinyuni parish in search for an ‘alternative therapy’ when healing elsewhere had failed. Others came as far as Harare, Bulawayo and Mutare (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

Whilst at Chinyuni parish, life turned out to be sour for Father Urayai. In the early nineties, the unexpected happened. Two young men in their twenties lost their lives when Fr. Urayai attempted to cross the flooded Shashe river.⁴⁴ A year or two later, Fr. Urayai got a shock of his life when a certain woman who had been brought for exorcism died at his Chinyuni parish. However, since the woman had been taken to Chinyuni mission in a very critical condition, both her relatives and the police gave Fr. Urayai the benefit of doubt (Simon Magona, Interview 10/08/13).

Perhaps the worst challenge that Fr. Urayai faced came in the late nineties when he was diagnosed with diabetes. Doctors had advised that he required proper medical attention, diet and enough time to rest. The doctors had also advised that he should slow down his healing operations. Fr. Urayai, however, ignored the doctors’ advice and continued to overwork himself. Consequently, his situation worsened. When the situation deteriorated, he collapsed during one of his many healing sessions at his Chinyuni parish and got admitted at St. Joseph’s, a nearby Roman Catholic rural hospital in the Chirumhanzu district. Seeing that he was not receiving proper medical attention, probably due to limited medical facilities at the said hospital, one of his Harare-based acolytes, Mr. T. Faranisi, hired an ambulance and transferred him to St. Anne’s hospital in Harare hoping to speed up his recovery. Upon the consent of the Bishop of Gweru, the same Faranisi family took it upon itself to care for Fr. Urayai and paid for most of his medical expenses (Tizai Faranisi, Interview 25/01/11).

⁴⁴ One of the two who died was a seminarian, Patrick Gumbo.

From the late nineties, the condition of Fr. Urayai did not become any better. Instead, it deteriorated. He was later brought back to the Diocese of Gweru where he continued to receive medication under the supervision of Gweru Diocesan authorities. By then, he had stopped his healing sessions and had also stopped attending Super Roma sessions. After battling with diabetes for over five years, Fr. Urayai died in August 2003 at the age of 72, having spent close to four decades in the healing ministry. He was buried at Driefontein Mission⁴⁵ in Chirumhanzu District as a sign that he was still a legitimate son of the Roman Catholic Church. Despite the fact that Urayai was among the first three black priests for the Diocese of Gweru, he died without having tested the position of priest-in-charge. He died an assistant priest.

In spite of the fact that Fr. Urayai faced a number of challenges as the first black exorcist, not just for the Diocese of Gweru but the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe, he still stands as the best known exorcist in the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe today. Whilst Fr. Urayai faced numerous challenges as the Super Roma protagonist, more serious challenges were, however, directed at the rank and file members of the Super Roma movement.

5.2 Challenges faced by the Super Roma movement

Super Roma challenges were twofold. Whilst a number of challenges targeted at the ecumenical movement were from without, a handful of challenges also came from within. Among those that originated from within, the most notable challenges include: the departure of Matenga and the death of Fr. Urayai.

⁴⁵ Driefontein cemetery is where priests, brothers and sisters of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Gweru are laid to rest.

5.2.1 Departure of Matenga (June 2003)

The departure of *Matenga*, the subsequent end of spiritistic séances and the change of communication from mediums to meditation at first came as a big blow to the Super Roma movement. With the departure of the voice that used to set the tone and regulate the operations of the movement and lives of individual members, for sometime a handful of members behaved like sheep without a shepherd.

From the evidence gathered through interviews, whilst the majority of the members staggered ahead as per the Matenga-prescribed ethical code, a handful of cases of lapsed members were reported in almost all the six centers. That was a reflection of serious internal challenges for the religious movement (Munyaradzi Nhatarikwa, Interview 12/08/13). Whilst some members resorted to smoking and beer drinking, others went as far as consulting *n'angas* and other traditional practitioners (Super Roma Anonymous, Interview 10/10/13). Perhaps the best way to describe what characterized the initial stages of the second phase may be found in the book of Judges: 'In those days there was no king in Israel, and every man did as he pleased' (Judges 17:6). Thus, members fell far short of what they were expected of demonstrating, namely, to be the light of life and spiritual giants (Super Roma Anonymous, Interview 10/10/13). However, the situation later improved when most members got used to a life without *Matenga*'s external manifestation and a life without time for privacy.

5.2.2 The death of Fr. Augustine Urayai (August 2003)

An equally disturbing phenomenon was the death of Fr. Urayai. The death of Fr. Urayai in August 2003 baffled the whole ecumenical movement formed by Super Roma. Ironically, Fr. Urayai was called to eternity barely three months after the official departure of Matenga in June 2003.

Since those whose teaching people revere and follow can be said to have fathered them (Nyathi 2004), Fr. Urayai was a father figure to the entire Super Roma movement. To the entire movement, he was 'The Right Reverend' (Charles Marumisa, Interview 12/08/13). As the man who had initiated, pioneered and championed the whole Super Roma scheme, Fr. Urayai was viewed as more than just a Catholic priest, but a priest without borders. He was both Mother and Father, not in the sense of bringing children into the world and caring for them: his fatherhood or motherhood were viewed in connection with his ability to develop in a child or person that which made them human; a language to communicate, a mind to understand and a heart capable of loving, thereby initiating a child to an awareness and love of God, prayer and praise. He was a father of consolation, a father of prayer and a father who bestows blessings (Nyathi 2004:116).

His ability to control, guide and lead was viewed as exceptional and second to none. He was viewed by the entire movement as a father who teaches, prays and teaches how to pray, who protects, father of the straying, of those who mourn, orphans, the poor and the sick and a councilor *par excellence*. He was a moral compass, a hierophany, the Moses leading his people into the Promised Land (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13).

However, when Fr. Urayai died, the Roman Catholic Church (particularly Gweru and Masvingo Dioceses) intensified its attempts to stamp out or perhaps neutralize the Super Roma movement. Apparently, challenges that were orchestrated from without left an indelible mark on the character of the entire Super Roma movement.

5.2.3 Negative media attention

The first media coverage and exposure of Super Roma did not come until December 2004. When the first plan to frustrate Fr. Urayai failed, the Gweru Diocesan periodical (*Moto Magazine*) went a step further and employed the ‘what you hear in whispers, proclaim from the housetops’ strategy (Mupure, Interview, 27/07/2015). The strategy was aimed at stigmatizing and probably tarnishing the Super Roma image through the media. Kugwa’s (2004 & 2005) articles published in the *Moto Magazine* did not just view Super Roma as controversial and suspicious, but also strange and satanic. In his 2004 article, Kugwa also accused Super Roma members, among other things, of sometimes switching off lights during meetings in order to greet each other with a kiss. Such practices were prevalent among the now defunct sects such as *Wapusawapusa*, and *Uyai Mose*. These now defunct sects had a reputation of some immoral activities during their services. Such immoral and seemingly Satanic activities also included random kissing of each other in church, under the cover of darkness.

Whilst one senior Gweru Diocese clergyman in one of the priests meetings referred to Super Roma members as ‘Fanatics, Fundamentalists and Prophets of Baal who procreate year after year, in the same meeting, two more junior priests referred to Super Roma members as heretics and traitors respectively (Gweru Diocese Priests Meeting, 10/05/2005). Whilst some of the outrageous stories fabricated about Super Roma were later disproved, they, however, had left a legacy of mistrust. The media exposure of Super Roma further inaugurated a series of even more serious efforts to silence the new movement, just as the Christian Church had silenced some heretical splinter sects during the period of the early and Middle Ages.

5.2.4 Banning of Super Roma sisters from Sunday services⁴⁶

The media exposure of Super Roma led to the banning of Super Roma sisters. On the 30th of January 2004, St Edwards, a parish in the Gweru diocese, banned the Kwekwe-based Super Roma sisters from attending Mass. For nearly two decades (1983-2004), the same sisters had attended Mass at the Roman Catholic parish in Kwekwe in plain clothes and participated in church activities like all other parishioners. The ban came as a big blow that signalled the advent of the exposure of the religious movement. Fr. Chapwanya, the then parish priest of St. Edwards parish vowed to leave no stone unturned in his efforts to try and stamp out Super Roma and defend the Roman Catholic Church.

Whilst Fr. Chapwanya successfully banned the Kwekwe-based sisters from attending mass at his St Edwards parish, the Sisters of the Infant Jesus (SJI) based in the city of Gweru also expelled some sisters whom they suspected to have links with Super Roma. A 75 year old sister, Martha Chakabveyo, fell victim of the witch hunt and was given only 24 hours to pack and leave the convent (Sr. Winfrida Zvizhinji, Interview 20/09/13). Whilst on the one hand some sisters got expelled, on the other, a handful of sisters from other congregations such as Mary Ward, Little Children of the Blessed Lady and the Sisters of the Infant Jesus voluntarily abandoned their congregations and volunteered to join the Super Roma sisters. Kugwa's (2004) article also confirms the same development. However, in spite of the ban, the Super Roma sisters continued with their private life at Number 6 Cedrella Avenue without interfering with parish activities.

For several months, the Super Roma sisters at number 6 Cedrella Avenue in Masasa survived on Bible sharing and simple Church services on Sundays to keep themselves spiritually uplifted and motivated. When the Diocese of Masvingo suspended seven clergymen from

⁴⁶ A total of nine Super Roma sisters were banned from attending Church services at St Edwards in Kwekwe by Fr. Chapwanya (now late) in 2004

active ministry over their involvement and participation in Super Roma activities, the suspended priests began to celebrate the Lord's Supper for the 'Super Sisters' once per week, usually on a Sunday (Super Roma Informant, Interview, 20/10/2013). When this research was conducted in 2015, the situation had not changed.

5.2.5 Suspension of 'double-dealing' priests⁴⁷

Of all the deliberate efforts to mitigate the expansion of Super Rom after the death of Fr. Urayai, perhaps one of the harshest came in 2005. This strategy targeted all priests suspected of clandestinely attending Super Roma prayer sessions. On the 12th of October 2005, the Bishop of Masvingo Diocese⁴⁸ suspended seven key clergymen (five priests and two deacons) from his diocese over their involvement and links with Super Roma. Chipangura (2006) underscores that doctrinal damages underpinned key reasons for their suspension. The suspensions that were dubbed operation *Murambatsvina* (Restore Order) by the *Moto* periodical of 2006 had also been triggered by the media attention and exposure of Super Roma in 2004.

Among the suspended priests from the Diocese of Masvingo was the Bishop's Vicar General, the Bishop's personal secretary, his advisor and the priest in charge of the Diocesan Lay Apostolate, among others (names reserved). Part of the decree of suspension that is reflective of the Roman Catholic traditional disciplinary system read was dated 11 October 2005 and it read:

...I hereby suspend you from ministerial priesthood prohibiting you from all acts of the power of order and power of governance as well as the exercise of the rights or functions attached to this office...for a period of 10 years.

⁴⁷ Most of the suspended clergymen, however, preferred anonymity, and for that reason, their names are withheld.

⁴⁸ The Diocese of Masvingo was created on 24 April 1999 and it was carved from Gweru Diocese. Bishop Michael Bhasera became its first Bishop after previously laying the foundation of Gokwe Diocese.

The seven suspended men of God whom the Super Roma welcomed with open arms were, however, also quick to make an appeal to the Pope's representative in Zimbabwe. In their report to the Papal representative that was dated December 2005, they also wrote:

It is our feeling that the suspensions were done unprocedurally in our humble opinion...We, therefore, kindly request that as a matter of urgency, for the good of the Church in Zimbabwe and the Salvation of all souls (Canon 1752), you attend to this matter and do the best that you can to solve and bring the truth to light.

The suspension of the clergy, however, had a double-folded impact. Whilst on the one hand the Diocese succeeded in getting rid of 'suspected heretics and double dealers,' on the other hand, the move was a welcome development in the Super Roma movement. Instead of relying on visiting priests for the celebration of the Eucharist as was the practice, the suspended priests were from then on to operate as full time Super Roma clergy. This was a development that on the one hand made the Super Roma movement self ministering and on the other hand created a shortage of personnel in the Diocese of Masvingo.

5.2.6 Withdrawal of Super Roma seminarians⁴⁹

The suspension of 'double dealing' priests was immediately followed by the withdrawal of seminarians. Seminarians who were believed to be Super Roma in practice or in thinking were immediately withdrawn from all seminaries in Zimbabwe, including Chishawasha and St Augustine's Major seminaries. Beer drinking, smoking and deep spirituality were used as the criteria during the witch hunt to distinguish Super Roma seminarians from those who were not. Consequently, most seminarians from the Dioceses of Gweru and Masvingo resorted to drinking and smoking so as not to be labelled Super Roma members. Whilst the strategy to some extent proved to be effective on the one hand, on the other, it also affected a number of innocent seminarians who otherwise naturally had an innate passion for a good moral life.

⁴⁹ Two seminarians who belonged to the Super Roma movement lost their vocation as a result of the witch-hunt

Most importantly, the same strategy also affected the quality and spirituality of the Masvingo Diocesan clergy (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13).

In order to counter the Roman Catholic strategy of trying to suffocate the Super Roma life line through the suspension of seminarians, a number of Super Roma seminarians, however, opted for other congregations, such as the Jesuits, Carmelites and Franciscans other than the Diocesan clergy where the Super Roma issue was topical and a hot potato.

5.2.7 Sanctions imposed upon Super Roma members

The suspension of seminarians was followed by ‘scatter the sheep’ strategy (Emmanuel Mupure, Interview 27/07/14). The strategy was targeted at the lay faithful suspected to have links with the Super Roma movement. As noted by Sr. Muzuva, whilst the strategy was employed in both Gweru and Masvingo parishes, it concentrated mostly in towns, where Catholic authorities (particularly Bishops and priests) imposed sanctions and interdicts on all suspected Super Roma members (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13). Consequently, suspected Super Roma members, particularly at St Edwards and St Paul’s in Kwekwe and Redcliff, were denied Sacraments, especially Matrimony, Baptism and the Eucharist. They were also denied Catholic burials and were advised not to participate in any Catholic activity (Sr. Crecencia Muzuva, Interview 20/10/13).

Super Roma members were also banned from joining any Catholic association at the parish or pay tithes. Receiving tithes from Super Roma members was regarded as tantamount to receiving tithes from ‘Satan’s agents.’ Following the same logic, giving Holy Communion to Super Roma members was also regarded as tantamount to sharing the Holy Eucharist with ‘agents of the devil’ (Anonymous, Interview 10/08/14). To that effect, physically strong men

and women were chosen at St Edwards and Redcliff parishes to assist priests in identifying and stopping Super Roma members from receiving Holy Communion.

In an interview conducted at these two parishes, one informant stated that a number of disheartened Super Roma members left the Roman Catholic Church to join the Methodist and Anglican denominations. Whilst a handful of Super Roma members, particularly in towns such as Gweru and Kwekwe left the Catholic Church to join other denominations, others were deeply affected psychologically and decided not to affiliate to any particular denomination. For fear of being labelled Super Roma members, a number of otherwise naturally upright Catholics resorted to drinking and smoking in order not to be labelled Super Roma members. A number of parishioners at the affected parishes also took advantage of the confusion to settle their personal vendettas amongst themselves (Sr. Winfrida Zvizhinji, Interview 20/09/10).

In addition to efforts made by the Dioceses of Gweru and Masvingo to try and frustrate Super Roma members, sporadic cases of interdicts were also reported in areas such as Zhombe which is dominated by Salvation Army and Methodist members. Two Super Roma members of the Salvation Army and Methodist Churches in Zhombe area were also temporarily suspended from leading or participating in any Church activity due to their links and connections with Super Roma. Both were relieved of their responsibilities as early as 2001 and were replaced by new leaders (Chemson Chemhere, Interview 12/08/13).

The move was meant to allow investigations to be carried out uninterrupted. The ousted leaders, however, complied in order to avoid commotion in the said denominations. However, the ban was later lifted and the two were called back to resume their normal duties (Penny, Interview 10/08/14). The Anglican Church in Redcliff also banned one Super Roma family

from participating during Sunday services. The issue was, however, resolved and the affected family was acquitted of the charges.

5.2.8 The position of the Catholic Bishops

Having employed a number of strategies to try and impede Super Roma's development, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC) collectively took a decisive stance on the new religious movement in 2005. The Pastoral Letter written by the ZCBC dated 7th of December 2005 stating their position on Super Roma or Light of Life Christian Group further dampened Super Roma's hopes of official recognition and mutual co-existence with the Roman Catholic Church. In their statement, the Bishops collectively re-emphasized and re-articulated the norms governing the formation of public associations in the Roman Catholic Church.

The Roman Catholic governing code states that the competent authority to establish public associations is the Holy See, the Episcopal Conference or the Diocesan bishop (Canon 312). It, therefore, logically followed that Fr. Augustine Urayai, as a mere Roman Catholic priest cum exorcist had no canonical authority to establish a public association, whether Roman Catholic or ecumenical. Thus, to this effect, the Bishops in their collective wisdom dismissed Super Roma and viewed it as playing the devil's advocate. In fact they interpreted it as anti-Roman Catholics practically and doctrinally (ZCBC 2005). Acting on behalf of the Congregation for the Doctrine of faith, the Zimbabwe Roman Catholic shepherds ended their pastoral letter by discouraging their sheep from associating with Super Roma in order to avoid being misled in both theology and practice.

Whilst the ZCBC's collective position was clear, individual Bishops within the same college of bishops had different views with regard to the same phenomenon. Whilst most Bishops

refused to comment on Super Roma in their individual capacities, Bishop Munyanyi of Gweru later advised:

It would be wise to identify those involved in Super Roma, re-orient them but not to harass them. It might as well be good to give them to the elderly convinced Catholics or priests to give them talks. They need to be preached to by some spiritually strong people from a strong Catholic background and I will be the last person to get into it. Dismissing them is not a solution (Bishop Martin Munyanyi, Interview April 2006).

Having been dismissed by the Zimbabwe Catholic shepherds, the biggest challenge that the Super Roma movement had to grapple with for many years was stigmatization. Naturally, whenever two objects or world views meet or contact each other on a social plane, there is always bound to be an effect or impact of one upon the other, of the new upon the old and vice versa. Thus, it is critical to mention that whilst the impact of the Roman Catholic Church upon Super Roma has been severe such as the persecutions of early Christians in the Roman Empire, the impact has been sporadic and spasmodic. In fact, out of the 8 Catholic Dioceses of Zimbabwe, the impact concentrated mainly on two Dioceses, namely Masvingo and Gweru where the phenomenon is more pronounced.

Perhaps Anthony Egan's (2003) observations may best summarise the relationship between Super Roma and these two Dioceses from the 70s when the movement emerged:

When conflicts occur (for whatever reason) between people of different religions [including different denominations of the same faith] there is a tendency for such a 'softening' to disappear...Demonization of the enemy results. Conflicts along religious lines [including inter and intra-religion fault lines] thus often become the most brutal of conflicts.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the various challenges of Super Roma from as early as 1970. Super Roma Challenges were both from within and from without. Whilst internal challenges were few and short-lived, external challenges were long lasting and more severe. In fact, external challenges were largely reflective of the impact of the Roman Catholic Church on the

Super Roma movement. In spite of the numerous challenges, the Super Roma movement has continued to thrive unabated. The next chapter shall concentrate on the general impact of Super Roma in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER SIX

THE IMPACT OF SUPER ROMA IN ZIMBABWE

6.0 Introduction

This chapter sets out to make a critical examination of the impact of Super Roma as a new religious movement in Zimbabwe. The chapter shall proceed by stating the study's major findings and explanation of the meaning and significance of the research findings. Among other things, the study shall also relate the findings to those of similar studies; state the relevance of the findings as well as making suggestions for further research. Throughout, various limitations of the study shall also be underlined and highlighted.

Whilst it is critical to analyse the impact of Super Roma on Zimbabwean Christianity in general, acute attention shall, however, be given to the Roman Catholic Church and not on society in general, mainly for three reasons. Firstly, it is within the Roman Catholic Church where Super Roma originated. Secondly, whilst Super Roma is interdenominational and ecumenical, it is within the Roman Catholic Church that the movement is more pronounced and for that reason, more attention shall be given to the Catholic Church. Thirdly and most importantly, it is also within the same Roman Catholic Church where Fr. Urayai, the Super Roma protagonist, belonged. However, where applicable, the impact of Super Roma on other Christian denominations in Zimbabwe shall also be highlighted and critically examined.

6.1 Fr. Urayai's healing ministry (1964-2003)

The introduction of the ministry of healing and deliverance in the Roman Catholic Church by Fr. Urayai in the late 60s requires special coverage and analysis. According to interviews carried out at Mutero mission, St. Kizito Zhombe and Chinyuni under St. Josephs' mission, Hama, which is located in the Chirumanzu District, out of a total of sixty interviewees from

the three mission stations, forty confirmed that they were attracted to Super Roma by Father Urayai's healing ministry. The remaining twenty confirmed that they were attracted to Super Roma by the practice of spiritism (Anonymous, Interview, 10/10/2014).

Thus, Fr. Urayai's 'alternative form of therapy' (Shoko 2006:361) within the Roman Catholic Church was of overriding and overarching significance. From 1969 when he had his inaugural case of healing, his healing ministry always complemented and was also complemented by the existing health delivery system of medical centres and the Sacrament of Anointing of the sick. Whilst Catholic hospitals and the Sacrament of the Anointing of the sick were critical in providing healing, the Roman Catholic delivery system was always considered inadequate without the ministry of healing and deliverance. Hence, a number of Roman Catholics always sneaked out of the Church in search of healing from quarters not in league with the Roman Catholic Church. The same also happened with members of other mainline Churches where the ministry of deliverance had not yet been introduced.

Apart from the problem of 'double dealing' Catholics who secretly consulted traditional medical practitioners, the ever increasing African independent churches in Zimbabwe also gave the mainline Churches a hard time with their message of deliverance. Roman Catholics in particular always accused African independent churches of stealing their sheep. Daneel (1970) observed that since the last century, Christianity has been characterized by rapid growth in the membership of the independent African churches. Quoting from Barrett (1968), writing on South Africa, Daneel (1970:9) reveals by that 1970, there were more than 6,000 of these churches with a total membership of approximately 7 million to be found in more than 275 African tribes.' The majority of these, if not all, used healing and deliverance as one of their key recruitment techniques. Due to the centrality of healing and deliverance within

Zionist Churches in particular, Daneel (1970) referred to Samuel Mutendi's Zionist church⁵⁰ headquarters as Hospital a (*Hospitara*).

Although the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) clearly condemned traditional practices such as consulting traditional healers, the early missionaries thought the practice would just die a natural death. However, to their dismay, the practice of consulting traditional practitioners and healers from the more vibrant African independent churches continued unabated and Roman Catholics also joined the bandwagon. Probably the underlying reason for joining the then fashionable African independent churches was the fact that the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe had not yet read the 'signs of times' then (Segundo 1993). It had not started putting the Gospel into practice, particularly, the unequivocal mission to drive out evil spirits and to heal in the name of Jesus as was already common among the spirit-type contemporary churches.

Thus, in a bid to address the anomaly within the Roman Catholic Church, Father Augustine Urayai stepped in to fill that important gap, becoming the first black exorcist in Zimbabwe's Roman Catholic Church to wrestle demons with holy water and incense. His clientele included not just Catholics of all ages, but also members of other denominations who visited his parish when all other forms of healing elsewhere failed; an indication that his healing ministry came as a relief even among other mainline churches.

Whilst it could be true that he used his healing method as a recruitment technique, the fact that Fr. Urayai had a legacy of not entering names of the newly baptised in the Catholic baptism register as canon law demands, may possibly disqualify the claim. However, the fact that within the Super Roma movement, Roman Catholics are in the majority is reflective of

⁵⁰ Mutendi is the founder and Bishop of the Zionist Church whose headquarters is in the Bikita District.

the fact that although Fr. Urayai's healing ministry cut across a number of mainline churches, he recruited more from his own Church than from other mainline churches.

It is also important to note that whilst Fr. Urayai introduced the healing ministry within the Roman Catholic Church in the late 60s, his sub-Saharan Catholic counterparts namely, Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo of Zambia (1930) and Fr. Felician Nkwera of Tanzania (1936) also introduced similar ministries in their respective countries almost at the same time. Both Fr. Nkwera and Archbishop Milingo made names for themselves when they conducted public religious services of healing and deliverance as early as 1969 and early 70s respectively. Within the Anglican Church of Zimbabwe, Fr. Lazarus Muyambi had already introduced the new ministry in his Anglican Church as early as 1962 when he first had his inaugural case of healing (Shoko 2003:211).

The introduction of the ministry of deliverance within the mainline Churches was critical. It was an indication that whilst on the one hand statistics seem to indicate that on the African continent, the ministry of healing and deliverance is growing everyday among African independent churches, Pentecostals and some charismatic communities, however, on the other hand, mainline churches, particularly, the Roman Catholic Church of Zimbabwe, continues in her mission to put the gospel into practice by also freeing people who are afflicted by evil spirits. Apparently, as observed by Shoko (2006:349), healing in the mainline churches appears to relate significantly to independent churches and modern charismatic healing communities.

6.1.1 Fr. Urayai's healing method

This thesis has established that Fr. Urayai had a unique healing method. The healing method was initially referred to as Super Roman Catholic in the late 80s (Chagwiza, Interview,

20/10/14). Fr. Urayai's systematic healing method comprised six main stages, namely: exhortations, blessing of salt and water, drinking of blessed water, tying the victim with cords (in the case of casting out evil spirits) challenging and casting out the evil spirit and counselling the victim (section 2.8). His method of pouring and plashing holy water from a distance of two meters and forcing evil spirits to then recite a Catholic prayer of contrition before setting free their victims was peculiar to Fr. Urayai alone. For him, spirits that were cast out from their victims would later reincarnate.

Fr. Urayai's healing method, however, had a double folded impact. Whilst on the one hand a number of ordinary Roman Catholics throughout all Catholic Dioceses in Zimbabwe applauded him for introducing a new method of healing, a handful of his fellow priests doubted his method, particularly his theology of healing. His theology of re-cycling of spirits and reincarnation may be regarded as 'new' and liberal in the Roman Catholic theology of healing but controversial on the other hand. As already highlighted in chapter two (section 2.8.5), Fr Urayai strongly believed that repentant evil spirits would later reincarnate on earth, in another body, continent and country, after a period only known by God's planning angels (Fr Urayai, Interview, 30/08/94)

Whilst religious experiences are beyond the verification principle and not subject to empirical evidence, Fr. Urayai's method and theology seem to be devoid of scriptural basis since nowhere in the Bible did Jesus or his disciples re-cycle evil spirits either to paradise or heaven. Instead, when Jesus drove a whole legion of evil spirits, 2000 in number, out of a maniac living in a cemetery, he made them enter a herd of swine upon their request (Luke 8:26-39). The concept of re-cycling of spirits, therefore, may need further investigation and study because the Roman Catholic Church does not subscribe to the idea of recycling of souls and of reincarnation.

The Roman Catholic Church is, however, clear on the doctrine of reincarnation. Regarding the same belief, the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) teaches:

Death is the end of man's earthly pilgrimage, of the time of grace and mercy which God offers him as to work out his earthly life in keeping with the divine plan, and to decide his ultimate destiny. When the single course of earthly life is completed, we shall not return to another. It is appointed for men to die once. Hence, there is no reincarnation. Hell is the abode of the eternally damned.

With such a controversial theology of re-cycling of spirits and reincarnation, Fr. Urayai was always treated as a renegade Roman Catholic exorcist. His ministry was viewed as an instrument of division within the Roman Catholic Church.

Reincarnation that is denied by Christianity is, however, central to the teachings of Buddhism, Hinduism and Taoism. In addition, Origen (ca 185-215), a controversial Catholic theologian, had earlier taught that there is reincarnation. He was, however, labelled a heretic by the Catholic Church (Sibanda 1999). Perhaps there is also need to further investigate both the rationale and feasibility of re-cycling of spirits in order to make a re-appraisal of Fr. Urayai's healing method.

6.1.2 Missiological significance

Whilst Fr. Urayai's healing method may be regarded as controversial, his healing ministry has both a biblical and traditional basis. Even though Fr Urayai to some extent departed from Jesus' healing methods and employed his own, his ministry of healing and deliverance is, however, still based on Christian orthodox and missiological ideology, namely, 'fulfillment of the Good News' to heal (Shoko 2006:349).

Fr. Urayai's ministry is firmly anchored on the sacred Scriptures, particularly on Jesus Christ, the premier exorcist of all time. He is the one who commissioned his disciples and believers

to heal and cast out demons in his name and he is the one who promised them conspicuous victory and success (Mark 16:17). In more or less similar fashion, Jesus' disciples furthered their Master's healing ministry. The same legacy of healing in Jesus' name continued in the early Church and beyond.

With regard to the same practice of exorcism, it should, however, be underlined that the practice is not peculiar to Fr. Urayai or Christianity, but is a shared ministry. In fact, the practice is as old as humanity and cuts across cultures and religions. Mudyiwa (2014) notes that a cursory survey of cultures and religions in the pre-Christian era reveals that spirit possession and exorcism were common characteristic features of several ethnic societies of antiquity. Beliefs and practices of cultures such as Ancient Mesopotamia, Babylon, Assyrian Tablets, Hindu Scriptures, Ancient Persia and Judaism, among others exhibit the practice of demon fighting well before the advent of Christianity. Withnall's (2014) article also confirms and emphasizes that belief in spirit possession is widespread both geographically and historically and is far from rare even in modern western societies. And there appears to be many forms of exorcism to such an extent that every exorcist uses his/her own.

6.1.3 Catholic position on exorcism

The Roman Catholic Church has always maintained a traditional attitude towards exorcism. Both the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) and Canon 1172 stipulates that no one may lawfully exorcise the possessed without the special and express permission of the Local Ordinary. The Law further stipulates that the permission is to be granted by the Bishop only to a priest who is endowed with piety, knowledge, prudence and integrity of life. Thus, in the light of the mind of Canon Law, Fr Urayai's healing ministry has both a biblical and traditional basis.

However, whilst the Roman Catholic position on healing derives from scripture and tradition, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (1999) underlines that, the Church has, however, learnt through historical experience that the imprudent use of exorcism may be counterproductive, and has done more harm than good historically. For her, the emphasis is rather not targeted at simply driving out evil spirits but bringing the spirit of faith, the Holy Spirit to the victim. Hence, justifiably, to some extent there was need to regulate the manner in which both Fr. Urayai conducted his exorcisms.

However, in spite of the challenges currently being faced by the ministry of healing and deliverance in Africa and the 'more harm than good' that has been done by the ministry of healing, Lagerwerf (1987:55) quoting from Igenzoza (1985) continues to argue for the importance of the ministry of exorcism or deliverance, for a more dynamic contextualization of Christianity in Africa, particularly in the mainline Churches. One of her premises in the argument is the claim that exorcism has succeeded in bringing relief to some affected people whereas other methods have apparently failed. For that reason, the ministry of healing is expected to occupy a central and critical role in all Christian churches in honour of Jesus' unequivocal mission to drive out evil spirits and to heal in his name.

To that effect, Withnall's (2014) article also reveals that in July 2014, the reigning Roman Catholic Pontiff, Pope Francis made exorcism official Catholic practice. By making exorcism official Catholic practice and recognizing demon fighting priests under Canon Law, Pope Francis has opened a new and critical chapter in the Roman Catholic Church. Withnall (2014) further underlines the point that the pope has formally recognized the International Association of exorcists, a group of 250 priests who, like Fr. Urayai, have been battling the forces of evil across 30 countries for many years. Indeed, it was seen as a welcome

development and a cause for great joy, not just for the 30 countries, but the entire Christian community.

In the light of this development, it is, therefore critical for Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops to appoint exorcists for their respective dioceses in order to make exorcism an integral part of the Church's evangelization. A number of Zimbabwean Bishops had been dragging their feet and taking 'a distant and detached' approach to the ministry of healing and deliverance (Akerboom 2002:7) for many years. Thus, with the backing of the Supreme Pontiff, the Catholic Church can now effectively put the gospel of Jesus into practice by reviving the ministry of healing which for decades had been bristled with number of problems (Sibanda 1999:i). However, taking into cognizance of the fact that Bishops have been dragging their feet to appoint Diocesan exorcists as per Canon law requirement, it may take even longer for the Roman Catholic Church to appoint female exorcists.

6.2 Transformation of Fr. Urayai's healing ministry (1970)

This thesis has also established that in spite of its controversial character, the healing ministry of Fr. Urayai provided both the foundation and the context within which Fr. Urayai's healing ministry transformed into an ecumenical movement. Within the Roman Catholic cycles, the movement is popularly referred to as Super Roma.

Whilst unique in its own way, circumstances that surround the birth of Super Roma in 1970 to a greater extent mirror circumstances that often characterise the birth of religious movements on the African continent. As underlined by Daneel (1987:157-159), most leaders of new religious movements testify to some dramatic encounters with the supernatural or 'hierophany' (Eliade 1957:12). Such phenomena have been key characteristic features of the birth of almost all movements, from the oldest to the most recent.

6.2.1 The Birth of religious movements in Africa

Daneel (1987) traces the general factors that often characterize the birth of religious movements in Africa. Quoting from missiologists such as Sundkler (1961) and Balandier (1955) among others, Daneel (1987) noted that even though the birth and development of new religious movements in Africa is often a consequence of various interrelated factors, prophets mostly appear during times of crises and are usually divinely commissioned to undertake particular religious tasks.

In most cases, the divine commission is also accompanied by the healing ministry among other ministries. Daneel (1987:157) also observed that even in the prophetic movements, the first step towards the ministry is the experience of a divine call or vocation, in the form of a dream, a vision, prophetic revelation or physical transportation to heaven. The majority of prophetic bearers testify to dreams or visions which include direct encounters with God Himself or his emissaries, they themselves (prophets) appearing in some sort of official apparel associated with the ministry.

Whilst most prophetic bearers like Fr. Urayai claim to offer to their members concrete and clear answers to fundamental questions concerning the beyond, they also present their new and independent movements as alternatives to the institutional official denominations (Arinze 1991). Below are some few cases to demonstrate the extent to which the birth of Super Roma mirrors that of other movements on the African continent. The same cases may, perhaps assist in situating the Super Roma movement and demonstrate that in the past, secessions have also happened within the Roman Catholic Church in spite of its seemingly solid pyramidal structure.

6.2.1.1 Donna Beatrice (1700)

The movement of Donna Beatrice is recorded as one of the oldest religious movements on the African continent (Daneel 1987:46). When one traces circumstances that surrounded the birth of this first independent movement in the year 1700, a Congolese woman (Kimpa Vita) who was later renamed Donna Beatrice at her baptism claimed that she was overshadowed by the spirit of St Anthony. Abandoning the Roman Catholic Church, she started preaching against her mother Church accusing her of religious formalism and externalism. Like in the case of Fr. Urayai, Donna Beatrice's encounter with the divine and her subsequent preaching led to the formation of the very first recorded independent Church movement in Africa popularly referred to as the Antonite movement (Daneel 1987).

6.2.1.2 Kimbangu movement (1918)

The birth of the Kimbangu Movement in Zaire also shares a number of elements with that of Donna Beatrice and Super Roma. Daneel (1987) also records that during the 1918 flu epidemic, another Congolese citizen, a teacher by profession and Baptist evangelist by the name Simon Kimbangu also heard a voice calling him one night to a special mission. The mission, however, did not materialize until after three years when he performed a miraculous healing. Many more healing miracles were later recorded in his village (N'Kamba) and elsewhere. His new ministry culminated in the formation of the Simon Kimbangu Church, composed of members drawn from various denominations as is the current scenario in the Super Roma movement.

For a very long time, the Kimbangu Church stood as the largest independent church in Africa. However, for 37 years (1918 – 1955) the Kimbanguists, again like the Super Roma members, were not a separate entity. Against all deliberate efforts by the Belgian authorities to stamp out the movement, the Kimbanguists stood resolute. However, in 1956, the movement became an independent Church. They named themselves, The Church of Jesus Christ on Earth

through the prophet Simon Kimbangu. In December 1959, the Congolese government finally granted the Church of Kimbangu official recognition (Daneel 1987).

6.2.1.3 Gaudencia Aoko (1963)

In Kenya, the dream of a 20 year old Gaudencia Aoko after the death of her two lovely children led to the formation of the Maria Legio Church in 1963. The Church was formed among the Luo people and was the first recorded Roman Catholic breakaway in Kenya being championed by a woman. The breakaway was contrary to the claim that secessions hardly occur within the Roman Catholic Church. After the breakaway, Daneel (1987) underlines that Gaudencia gained a following of over 90 000 followers then.

6.2.1.4 Zimbabwean perspective on new religious movements

From a Zimbabwean perspective, similar cases of encounters with the hierophany also led to the birth of several religious movements. Daneel (1987) highlights that both Johanne Maranke and Samuel Mutendi dreamt of wheat sheaves which had greater merit than the other sheaves. Johanne is also said to have dreamt of himself as a Moses figure who led his followers through the fire. A number of apostolic churches still practice this ritual of walking through the fire in memory of their founder's dream.

Similarly, Reverends Mheke Zvakare Sengwayo, Paul Mwazha (Daneel 1987) Ezekiel Guti (Maxwell 2007) and Emmanuel Makandiwa⁵¹ among others claimed to have experienced some stereotyped vocational dreams and visions that like in the case of Fr. Urayai,

⁵¹ Having received his divine commission in 1995, Emmanuel Makandiwa broke away from the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) and established one of the biggest Pentecostal movements in Zimbabwe, the United Family International Church (UFIC) in 2008.

commissioned them to establish their own movements, independent from Caucasian-led Churches in organisation, leadership and religious expression.

To a greater extent, these leaders crafted their new movements in such a way that they represent a distinctive world view of their own, derived largely from, though not so identical with, the teachings of their former movements. Thus, a scan through events leading to the founding of Super Roma mirrors to a greater extent the underlying factors that often characterise the birth of most religious movements in Africa, namely addressing crises and divine commission among many others.

The commissioning of Father Augustine Urayai to a greater extent mirrors that of Donna Beatrice, Kimbangu, Marange and Mutendi among others. Whilst the order of exorcism that Fr. Urayai received at Chishawasha Seminary and his inaugural case of healing in 1969 could have both fanned his passion for exorcism, the exorcism of Angela Washaya, on the 12th of June 1970 was such a critical inaugural experience that transformed Fr. Urayai's entire healing ministry into a new religious movement. In fact, the experience marked the birth of Super Roma. Like the case of his predecessors, the same episode ordained and qualified Fr. Urayai to champion a new religious movement that presented itself as a serious contender for the title of true Christianity in Zimbabwe.

6.3 Super Roma's missionary strategy

This thesis has commended Super Roma's missionary strategy, namely to stay and reform from within. As noted by Daneel (1987) and Arinze (1991) the rise and spread of sects or new religious movements is a marked phenomenon in the religious history of our time. Scholars have estimated that new religious movements now number in the tens of thousand world-wide, with most in Asia and Africa. Whilst such movements vary greatly in origin, beliefs, size, means of recruitment, behaviour pattern, attitude toward the former Church, other

religious groups and society as underlined by Arinze (1991), these movements have one dominant characteristic feature and approach to reform and renewal, namely, ‘move out and reform’.

Unlike other new religious movements that employ the move out and reform strategy, the Super Roma movement has from 1970 to date settled for the opposite, namely, ‘stay and reform from within’ strategy and yet continues to be ‘independent’ in its organisation, leadership and religious expression. With its ecumenical character and organizational structure that is predominantly lay and circular, as compared to pyramidal since its foundation in 1970, Super Roma has continued to operate within the fringes of several mainline Churches, with a view to reforming the same from within, both theologically and morally.

Apart from standing as a new and unique missionary strategy as far as I can ascertain, Super Roma’s camouflaged system also challenges existing and potential new religious movements to re-think and revise their missionary strategies. For a long time, the traditional ‘move out and reform’ method has been an instrument of division as reflected by the number of new religious movements and independent Churches, particularly on the African continent. Hence, by not standing as a separate entity and also referring to its teachings simply as ‘extra-spiritual lessons’, Super Roma’s undercover reform method has been described as ‘user friendly’ (Emmanuel Mupure, Interview 27/08/2014). It also contradicts and challenges tradition.

The Super Roma undercover strategy is, however, controversial in a number of ways. Whilst on the one hand the method may transform the various denominations from within as per expectations, on the other hand, the same system may prove subversive. It may weaken the same mainline denominations as Super Roma members might fail to balance and marry smoothly the demands of Super Roma and those of their respective denominations.

6.3.1 Eucharistic intercommunion

Perhaps an equally unique and novel practice within the Super Roma movement is the practice of Eucharistic intercommunion. Ever since the Reformation that split the Western Church in the 16th century, a number of efforts have since been made by various new religious movements in Zimbabwe to try and foster ecumenism amongst the deeply divided ecclesiastical communities.

As underlined by Abrahams (2002), whilst great strides have since been made in critical areas such as common witnessing, inter-religious dialogue, common prayers, mixed marriages, ecumenism in faculties of theology, among other areas, one key element of ecumenism, namely, the common celebration of the Eucharist, has always remained very remote and a no go area. To a greater extent, the Roman Catholic authorities in particular have been accused of dragging their feet or taking a ‘distant and detached’ approach to the same practice (Akerboom 2002: 5).

Whilst Super Roma may stand in sharp opposition to the traditional Christian (particularly Catholic) view with regard to sharing the Eucharist with non-Catholics and norms governing the formation of public associations, it has made a breakthrough in the realization of the highest goal of ecumenism. To a greater extent, it has also succeeded in uniting the various denominations that for centuries had been separated by doctrine, history and practice. Whilst Super Roma’s breakthrough is of pinnacle importance in the history of Christianity in Zimbabwe in particular, it is also unique in the sense that, instead of starting from above, from popes and bishops as is always expected and canonically constituted, the breakthrough has started from below (Mudyiwa 2015).

In his 1994 preparatory letter to the new millennium, *Tertio millennio adveniente*, John Paul II underlined that ecumenism was not to be viewed as an appendix added to the Church's traditional activity but an organic part of her life and work. He called for an examination of conscience in regard to the schisms within the Church of the past millennium and called on the whole Church to put on the robe of penance and pray for a hasty end to schisms. He also appealed to the Roman Catholic to investigate her past, and if necessary, to admit her fault and pray for forgiveness (Akerboom 2002:10). Whilst the Supreme Pontiff noted some areas of potential unity and dialogue such as Scripture and tradition, the Lord's Supper, ecclesial ministry, Magisterium including papacy, he observed that there have been some cautious contacts of collaboration in such areas. As quoted by Akerboom (2002:11), the Roman Pontiff was, however, optimistic of a more perfect communion in the new millennium as he wrote:

From this basic but partial unity, it is now necessary to advance towards the visible unity which is required and which is manifested in a real and concrete way, so that the Churches may truly become a sign of that full communion in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church which will be expressed in the common celebration of the Eucharist.

Whilst Super Roma may be commended for its ecumenical efforts and desire to realize the dream of Pope John Paul II, judging from the basis of its proximity to the traditional Christian Church in terms of traditional practice, the movement has a number of potential areas that clash with accepted traditional Christian theology and practice. I discuss some of these below.

Thus, in the light of the above, the Roman Catholic position on Eucharistic intercommunion is very clear. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994:352) clearly stipulates that the Eucharist is properly the sacrament of those who are in full communion with the Roman Catholic Church. In this regard, Super Roma may be viewed as a movement that is moving away from both traditional Catholic theology and practice (Mudyiwa 2015).

More importantly, the fact that in the Super Roma movement, the Lord's Supper is currently

reserved for Roman Catholic trained priests and no other, may also have a negative impact and may ultimately act as one factor likely to limit and narrow down Super Roma prospects as the majority of Christians may question the ecumenical character of the movement. One other factor likely to impact negatively and impede Super Roma development is the movement's attitude towards African Independent Churches and Pentecostals. Preferential option for mainline Churches at the Eucharistic table may also make critics and liberals question Super Roma's commitment and willingness to commune.

However, commenting on ecumenism, Chisoniet *al.* (2002:3) quoting Buthelezi (2002), proposed the following suggestion:

Our faiths may be different but our actions and sense of spirituality as expressed in the reverence and acknowledgement of God are one and the same. Our actions of good will must express the underlying work of God who operates through us, irrespective of our different denominations. We are not seeking a fusion of these beliefs, but the constant coming together of actions of good will, which emanate from our shared spirituality.

6.4 The nickname Super Roma

One of the thesis' major findings is the origin of the name Super Roma. The name Super Roma seemed to have been undoubtedly racked in and derogatorily applied to Fr. Urayai's religious movement. Apparently, no official documents that belong to the same movement bear or reflect the name 'Super Roma'. The official documents of the movement bear the name Light of Life Christian Group, as has earlier been established. To refer to the Archangel Cherubim-led movement as Super Roma would, therefore, be a simplistic way of reading a rather complex phenomenon. With the ecumenical nature and character of the movement, it would, therefore, logically follow that it hypothetically be referred to as 'Super Anglican', 'Super Methodist' 'Super Salvation Army', or 'Super Baptist' (Anonymous, Interview 15/10/13).

The use of nicknames is, however, as old as Christianity itself. We learn from Acts 9:2 that ‘The Way’ was the first and oldest designation of the first Christians for themselves. In Acts 11:26, Luke placed the first use of the name Christians at Antioch in the first century as a nickname. The same name was later employed in the second century without question. Followers of Jesus themselves got used to the name even though there were other names which they themselves used or perhaps could have preferred.

Similarly, during the period of the Reformation, the name Methodists also started as a nickname. Algermissen (1945:840) underlines that because of the methodically arranged piety and way of life of followers of John Wesley (1703-1791), who in 1731 introduced fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays, were jokingly called Methodists by the Oxford University students.

In addition to that, the names Ndebele and Shona mostly started as nicknames. Moyana *et al.* (1992) underline that originally, the Mutapa people did not use the word Shona but Karanga. In fact, the word Shona was not in use until the 19th century when the Ndebele described the area where the Karanga lived as *entshonalanga*, meaning a place where the sun sets or a place to the west. The term Shona is now used to describe many related dialects in Zimbabwe, one of which is Karanga. It was also the Sotho people who lived in the Transvaal who first called Mzilikazi’s group of soldiers, ‘Ndebele’ meaning soldiers with long shields (Moyana *et al.* 1992). For this reason, the researcher finds no greater harm in using the name Super Roma.

However, it should be underlined that the continuous use of a nickname simply because pioneering academic works have also used the same name may stand as one key weakness of this study. Thus, Cox (1992:31) warns against the use of improper names or words:

Some words, although not wrong in themselves carry connotations which misrepresent the actual meaning for the believer. The phenomenologist, therefore, must be aware of the danger of creating names which prejudice his descriptions.

Since the name Super Roma is not universally accepted amongst the group to which it is applied, it is, therefore, advisable that future studies may stick to the official name, the Light of Life Christian Group. Since the name was popularized as a pejorative and a mockery, perhaps the use of the name in this research is one of the study's limitations.

6.5 Persecution of the Super Roma movement (1970-2016)

As a new religious movement with a distinctive world of its own, Super Roma was not immune or insulated from persecutions and challenges. The thesis has established that, whilst on the one hand challenges faced by Fr. Urayai as the protagonist of Super Roma were largely from his fellow black clergymen, on the other hand, challenges collectively faced by the Super Roma movement from the early 70s were caused by the clandestine nature of the movement's operation. Thus, to a greater extent, the Super Roma acolytes invited and continue to invite suspicion and trouble for themselves.

A quick survey of the birth of new religious movements (including Christianity) reveal that new religious movements of Christian derivation were always treated with suspicion by the mainline or traditional movements. Brockman and Pescantini (1991) observed that in the early stages of Christianity for example, followers of the new Christian movement invited trouble for themselves by worshipping in secret, behind locked doors.

When celebrating the Eucharist, for example, only the baptized could partake in the Eucharist or the Agape, as it was then called. The main part of Mass was celebrated privately. On important feasts, Brockman and Pescantini (1991) further noted that Mass would be celebrated in catacombs, which were chambers cut into the hills. All guests and those preparing for baptism could only partake in the first part of the Mass, until the end of the homily. With the start of the mystery as the Eucharist was called, they were invited to leave

(Brockman and Pescantini 1991:26). Consequently, such operations caused a lot of rumours and suspicion among the non-Christian or pagan community. Thus, Holy Mass was suspected of being a sexual orgy due to its clandestine character.

Those who partook of the same celebration were accused of cannibalism (Brockman and Pescantini 1991). Critics argued that participants ate the body of Christ and drank his blood. Thus, clandestine operations for both Christians and the Super Roma movement impacted negatively on societies around them. Thus, Kugwa's (2004) article accused Super Roma of holding night meetings and sometimes switching off lights in order to greet each other with a kiss. For operating secretly, Super Roma may remain under constant scrutiny.

In the long run, perpetual stigmatization and scrutiny may result in the movement failing to make a positive impact among its intended and prospective members. Perhaps there is need to move from a camouflaged strategy to a more open and public approach to evangelisation so that the movement's theology may benefit more people. 'No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house' (Matthew 5:16).

6.6 Super Roma theology

Perhaps the most pervasive impact of Super Roma on the Roman Catholic Church has been upon traditional theology. With Super Roma theology, we witness a theology breaking with the old Christian theology and world view. Taking into cognizance the fact that Super Roma's theology provides a fascinating anthology of the unofficial and unorthodox peripheral theology, it is proper to briefly highlight some critical areas of potential clash between Super Roma theology and accepted traditional Christian theology.

A quick glance at some key articles of faith within the Super Roma movement reveals that the theology of Super Roma to a greater extent is a re-surfacing of some age old theological

controversies, particularly of the early and middle ages. Super Roma's re-interpretation of concepts such as ecclesiastical authority, canonicity of the Scriptures, death and the life after and the Eucharist among others has since been regarded by Kugwa (2005) as not only highly controversial but also heretical. For that reason, the movement may be accused of trying to resuscitate a dying theology with its theology that is antithetical to accepted interdenominational theology.

6.6.1 Theology of ecclesiastical authority

Section 4.2.4 examined Super Roma's position with regard to ecclesiastical authority. The section highlighted that whilst Super Roma recognizes and respects ecclesiastical authority as chosen by God, the movement does not place the source from which divine truth could be derived wholly on mortal and sinful beings such as ecclesiastical human authority. In fact, it undermines, neutralizes and dilutes ecclesiastical authority. For them, only angels are infallible and the doctrine of papal infallibility as source of truth is critiqued. The movement teaches that Christ has no vicar on earth and as such the pope is not the Vicar of Christ. The office of the pope was also questioned during the period of the reformation and debates on the same issue resulted in denominational differences of far reaching consequences (Brockman and Pescantini 1991).

The Roman Catholic governing code (Canon 749), however, stipulates that in virtue of his office the Supreme Pontiff (Pope) is infallible in his teachings when, as chief Shepherd and Teacher of all Christ's faithful, with the duty of strengthening his brethren in the faith, he proclaims by definitive act a doctrine to be held concerning faith and morals. Canon 749 paragraph two further states that even bishops also possess infallibility when gathered together in an Ecumenical Council. Super Roma demystified the office of ecclesiastical authority so as to make popes, bishops and priests ordinary people who are not necessarily the ones who know all about faith and morals.

6.6.2 Canonicity of scriptures

One other area of potential clash between Super Roma and the Christian Churches, particularly the Roman Catholic Church, is the issue of the canon of Scriptures. Whilst the Holy Bible is at the centre of the Super Roma ecumenical movement, Super Roma strongly argues that some sections of the Bible were falsified and misrepresented by redactors to suit the needs of the already existing Roman Catholic structure and hierarchy then. For Super Roma, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity stands as the Mother of all falsified doctrines. Both Christ and the Holy Spirit or Holy Spirits (*Matenga*) as they are popularly referred to in Super Roma, were created and are, therefore, subordinate to God the Father and Creator. As also highlighted in Chapter four, Super Roma believes that both the creation story and the original sin were misrepresented, an assertion that seriously threatens Catholic traditional theology and position.

The Roman Catholic Church has, however, maintained a traditional position with regard to the sacred scripture. She insists that the inspired books teach the truth. She further stipulates through *Dei Verbum* (1965) that since, therefore, all that the inspired authors or sacred writers affirm should be regarded as affirmed by the Holy Spirit, we must acknowledge that the books of Scripture firmly, faithfully, and without error teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the sacred scriptures (DV 11). The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of tradition has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1994).

Whilst the Super Roma movement questions some sections of the Holy Bible, the movement does not call for the re-writing of the Bible like Banana (1993) who challenged scholars to seriously consider re-writing the bible so that God can be liberated from dogmas that make

Him the property of ethnic syndicates. Super Roma simply views the present canon of scripture as a suspect canon.

6.6.3 Doctrine of angels

Closely connected to canonicity of scriptures is Super Roma's doctrine of angels. The beginning of Super Roma as a new religious movement, initiated by Fr. Urayai, is apparently based on a communication by the "Archangel Cherubim" who spoke to Sylvester, a catechist of Fr. Urayai, and a 'deep-trance medium' (Mudyiwa 2015). In the interdenominationally accepted Christian tradition of 'angelology', the name "Cherubim" is a strange combination, since the word "Cherubim", which is plural in form, denotes the second of the nine orders of angels, not an individual angel. The Bible only makes mention of Cherubs who were tasked by God to guard Paradise after the expulsion of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:23-24). In the Pseudepigrapha, Porter (2001:17) ranks Suruel, Raphael, Raguel, Michael, Saraqael, Gabriel and Ramiel among the seven Archangels. Cherubim's primary function is to guard God's heavenly throne, together with seraphim and ophannim.

Traditional Christian theology does not subscribe to the doctrine of seven archangels. Jesus, Lucifer and Seraphim are not among the Archangels. Traditional Christian liturgy celebrates the Feast of only three archangels, who were venerated in the tradition of the Church, namely Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. Michael (Who is like God) was the archangel who fought against Satan and his apostate angels defending God's other faithful angels (Revelations 12:7-17). Gabriel (Strength of God) announced to Zechariah the forthcoming birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1: 5-25). The same archangel was also sent to Mary to announce the forthcoming birth of Jesus (Luke 1:26-38). Raphael (The medicine of God) is the archangel who took good care of Tobias on his journey and introduced himself as the healer (Tobit 12:14-15). Traditionally, the 29th of September has been reserved for the feast of these three archangels (Divine Office 1974).

Whilst the feast of the archangels is celebrated on the 29th of September, traditional Christian theology mentions the presence of angels throughout the history of salvation. The Roman Catholic Church believes in the existence of angels and venerates them. In fact, the 2nd of October is a special memorial for guardian angels (Divine Office 1974). The Roman Catholic Church, however, is aware of the dangers of an exaggerated cult paid to angels as reflected in Colossians 2:18. Saint Paul (Hebrews 1:4) also makes special emphasis on the superiority of Christ to all angels. Following the same logic, perhaps the Roman Catholic Church apparently saw the central role of angels within Super Roma as such an exaggeration at the expense of the unique and central role of Jesus Christ, that the Diocese of Masvingo suspended five active priests and two deacons and the Diocese of Gweru also suspended three nuns belonging to the Sisters of the Infant Jesus.

Thus, Super Roma's theology of angels may be controversial. Equally controversial and counter-productive is the belief that the Holy Spirit is subordinate to God and Christ. Equally heretical and unorthodox within Super Roma is the assertion that there is no one Holy Spirit but several Holy Spirits. By asserting that Jesus (*logos*) and the Holy Spirit(s) were created, the Super Roma movement concurs with Mornachian and subordinationistic ideas. The movement also sounds very Arian. Arius (260-336) dissociated the *Logos* with God and taught that Jesus is not God (Franzen 1969).

By denying Mary the title of Mother of God (*Theotokos*), Super Roma sounds Nestorian. Since 428 AD, Franzen (1969) notes that Nestorius concluded that Mary in Truth could not be called the 'bearer of God' (*Theotokos*), but merely had been the 'Christ-bearer' (*Christotokos*), the belief firmly held by the Super Roma movement. Thus in essence, Super Roma challenges the Catholic doctrine of the Holy Trinity, Christology and Mariology among others. These are regarded as key Roman Catholic articles of faith that should not be tampered with from a Catholic point of view. They are regarded as central mysteries of faith. In

particular, the faith of all Christians rests on the Trinity (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1994).

6.6.4 Death and life after

A cursory assessment of Super Roma theology of death and life after (section 4.2.6) reveals that the movement's theology clashes with the Roman Catholic Church in so many elements. Whilst both the Roman Catholic Church and Super Roma strongly believe in the concept of salvation and the immortality of the soul, they differ significantly on concepts such as the resurrection, judgement, re-incarnation, predestination, second coming of Christ and eternal punishment among other things.

Whilst the Roman Catholic Church believes in the resurrection of both body and soul, particular and general judgement, Super Roma subscribes only to particular judgement and resurrection of the soul. Whilst the former believes in both perpetual suffering in hell and the second coming of Christ, the latter believes in temporary suffering in hell and re-incarnation. Super Roma does not believe in predestination either.

On reincarnation, the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994:264) teaches:

Death is the end of man's earthly pilgrimage, of the time of grace and mercy which God offers him as to work out his earthly life in keeping with the divine plan, and to decide his ultimate destiny. When the single course of earthly life is completed, we shall not return to another. It is appointed for men to die once. Hence there is no reincarnation after death.

As underlined in earlier segments, whilst the Roman Catholic Church may deny the doctrine of reincarnation, Origen (ca 185-215), a Catholic theologian well versed in ecclesiastical literature had, as early as the first century taught that there is re-incarnation and restoration of things (*apocatastasis*) at the end of time. The same Origen had also championed the theory of the fall of angels and their subsequent imprisonment in bodies of clay. Thus, the story of the

fall of humanity which Super Roma links to the rebellion of angels is Origenistic in all its essentials.

The danger that is, however, attached to siding with Origen is that his theory was condemned by the Church. For a long time the Church had made his theology central to her teaching but the same theology was later relegated to the periphery (Sibanda 1999). Origen had a bitter dispute with his bishop Demetrius (c.189-233). He was later given a second place in the history of theology, labelled a heretic and later condemned. Consequently, the theology of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas overshadowed that of Origen (Sibanda 1999:38). However, Kung (1994:43) still regards Origen as a brilliant, much praised though highly controversial theologian.

Super Roma's belief in reincarnation is, however, a worrisome and puzzling development. Reincarnation, popularly known as the Wheel of Return that is set in motion by one's karma is accepted as a reality in the Hindu and Buddhist religions, as well as certain mystical sects in Judaism and Islam. When a movement that calls itself Christian believes in reincarnation, one wonders or questions whether the movement is still in Christianity or inter-religiously in Hinduism or Buddhism?

6.6.5 The Lord's Supper (Eucharist)

The assertion by Super Roma that there is only a symbolic and not a real representation of Jesus in the Eucharist to a greater extent is reflective of medieval thought. Franzen (1969:216) comments that as early as the 10th century a theologian by the name Berengar of Tours (d. 1088) denied the real presence of the body of Christ. He held that the bread and wine were mere symbols which were not changed in the consecration, but only received supernatural strength. When his doctrine was rejected in Rome in 1079, he, however, submitted to the decision and position of the Church.

The same was also true of the zealous Dutch reformer Tanchelm. He denied the Eucharist and was killed by the people in 1115. However, the remnants of his position remained with some Christians. Consequently, the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 decided that the consecration in Holy Mass effected a real change of essence, and termed this change 'transubstantiation.' As further underlined by Franzen (1969) in the 15th Century, the Council of Constance (1414/1418) tabulated some points of Eucharistic doctrine against John Wycliff who had also made the validity of the sacrament of the Eucharist dependent on the minister or priest.

Franzen (1969) further draws attention to Zwingli, from whom the Eucharist was merely a memorial of Christ's passion, while Martin Luther (1483-1546), like his Roman Catholic counterpart vehemently insisted upon the real presence of Christ. Luther denied other sacraments and asserted that there were only two valid ones that had a biblical foundation, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The same position was also accepted by John Calvin (1509-1564). Although Luther denied the (Catholic) change in the essence (transubstantiation), he explained the real presence which was physically impossible by appealing to God's ubiquity and omnipresence (Franzen 1969).

Regarding the Eucharist, Calvin taught a spiritual pneumatic presence of Christ at the moment of reception. He rejected Luther's real presence as being idolatrous and considered Zwingli's doctrine of the symbolical presence inadequate (Franzen 1969). By also denying the real presence of Christ and opting for a symbolic one, Super Roma sounds more like a right wing movement of Zwingli than of Luther and Calvin. For the Catholic Church, such a position is heretical.

The Church, however, consolidated her threatened position on the Eucharist at the Council of Trent (1545-1563). The Council of Trent clearly defined both the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and the concept of transubstantiation. The Catholic Church further consolidated

her position on the Eucharist by coming up with many other documents with the Second Vatican Council offering various other texts of Eucharistic doctrine. As a result, the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) calls the Eucharist by many names, namely, Eucharist, the Lord's Supper, Breaking of the Bread, the Eucharistic Assembly, the Memorial of the Lord's Passion and Resurrection, the Holy Sacrifice, the Holy and Divine Liturgy, Holy Communion, and finally Holy Mass (*Missio*).

Apart from denying the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, an equally controversial practice within the Super Roma movement is the issue of administering Holy Communion to non-Catholics. The practice critically challenges traditional Catholic practice. The Roman Catholic Church in particular, is particular about the practice of administering Holy Communion to members from other denominations. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) strongly teaches that with regard to ecclesial communities derived from the Reformation and separated from the Catholic Church, there is no intercommunion possible with the Catholic Church. According to the Catholic Church, these communities, like the Super Roma movement, have not preserved the proper reality of the Eucharistic mystery in its fullness, especially because of the absence of the sacrament of Holy Orders or ordination. And for that reason, ecclesial communities separated from the Catholic Church should be left to do their sacraments their own way.

However, Canon 844 has a provision for circumstances of intercommunion with such communities separated from the Catholic Church during the Reformation. The canon underlines that when in the Ordinary's judgement, a grave necessity arises, Catholic ministers may give the sacraments of Eucharist, Penance and Anointing of the Sick to other Christians not in full communion with the Catholic church, who ask for them of their own will, provided they give evidence of holding the Catholic faith regarding these sacraments, and possess the required dispositions. In the light of the above, it is therefore clear that Eucharistic

intercommunion within the Super Roma movement is far from meeting the requirements of the Catholic stipulations. Worse still, the Eucharistic intercommunion within Super Roma is devoid of any Bishop's approval and there may be no grave reasons to validate it as expected by the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1984).

In summation, Super Roma theology does not represent any breakthrough or ground breaking theology as claimed, but a re-surfacing and re-telling of heresies of the early and middle Ages. For that reason, the movement may be negotiating its way through a field of ecclesiastical landmines. Whilst it may be vital to listen to ancient theological voices speaking through contemporary men and women, the fact that the ancient voices were long silenced by the Roman Catholic Church may mean that no informed Christian theologian may be keen to listen to old music. Efforts to call back to life a dying and peripheral theology may, therefore, impact negatively on the entire Christian Church. For that reason again, the movement may be placed under constant ecclesiastical surveillance.

6.7 Negative publicity

Apart from a theology that is antithetical to accepted interdenominational Christian theology, negative publicity is one factor likely to slow down the pace and seriously affect Super Roma breakthrough. Negative publicity has also impacted negatively on the research process as a number of potential resource persons earmarked for interviews chickened out for fear of being stigmatized by their local religious authorities.

As already noted above, Super Roma is portrayed as a dissident and heretical sect whose main agenda is to compete and threaten the status quo of the Roman Catholic Church. For that reason, the movement may not just increase government scrutiny but also struggle to win proselytes simply because most people do not want to associate themselves with movements that are constantly under attack. Most people do not want to identify themselves with a person

or corporate that suffers damage to its public image or brand. It would probably need liberal Christians, revolutionaries and conscientious objectors to embrace such a controversial phenomenon.

It is also highly probable that when the Catholic Bishops of Zimbabwe took a stance on Super Roma, they depended heavily on information from the media, particularly the *Moto* magazine. The researcher also made use of the same information from the media to some extent, even though the information seemed one-sided and incriminatory about Super Roma.

Apart from the stigma associated with Super Roma that may impede its expansion, its outer form, especially the fact that it currently lacks the characteristics of a cultic religion or Church such as temples, altars or images, may also act as an obstacle in its missionary efforts especially among those who are quickly enticed by such. In addition, Super Roma's exclusive claim to be the custodians of the original teachings of Christ and a special gnosis might be keenly felt and could also be seen as offensive. Eventually, it may make some people sink into perverse and inescapable unbelief if not well initiated. Situations of multi-faiths often foster doubts about the truth and as a result some people may end up settling for what they seem to have in common or some kind of a natural religion based on universal moral principles.

6.8 Attitude towards traditional practices

Shoko (2006) underlines the point that one of the main criticisms of Super Roma was its stance on traditional rites like *Kurova Guva* as well as prohibitions of tobacco and snuff. The same was also echoed by Sibanda (1999) who stressed the point that Fr. Urayai regarded ancestral spirits as deceptive and coming from hell.

The early white missionaries also had a negative attitude towards African traditional practices. The attitude of the mission churches to the African traditional religion (ATR) is well

documented by Zhuwawo (1990) and Zvarevashe (2005) among others. The same was also addressed even more aggressively by Gundani (1994) in his article entitled, “*The Roman Catholic Church and the Kurova Guva Ritual in Zimbabwe.*”

The above, home-grown scholars do concur that generally all mission churches, including the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe, as in several parts of Africa, viewed African religion negatively. From the very first attempts by Fr. Gonzalo da Silveira to evangelize Zimbabwe as early as the 15th century, all the subsequent explorers, travelers and missionaries frowned at traditional culture and ranked it as superstition which was to be eradicated (Gundani 1994).

When the Jesuit missionaries began their work in Matabeleland in 1879, they were also convinced of the liberating power of the Scriptures. As a result they demanded not only a break with traditional systems, but also an abandonment of the African background. After the defeat of the Shona by the British South African Company in the 1896-7 *Chimurenga* war, Gundani (1994:127) reports that ‘most missions began to enforce regulations on Catholics at mission farms against Shona practices that included beer drinking, polygamy, ancestral veneration and traditional dancing.’

Austere measures were always taken against those found entertaining or being entertained by traditional practices. Such measures would include: expulsion from sacraments, prohibition from entering the church during mass or relegation to the back of the church when admitted. Punitive disciplinary measures taken against those found guilty also included eviction from the Mission Farms. Fr. H. Quinn evicted many families from Chishawasha Farm between 1930 and 1932 for not keeping the ban (Zhuwawo 1990:25).

Wherever such austere measures were taken against offenders, missionaries would always have either few converts or double dealing converts who would entertain both, turning to syncretistic religions thereby merging Christian and indigenous beliefs. The situation was

more or less the same wherever the missionaries went and tried to evangelise. They tried to uproot and destroy African traditional practices but they failed dismally. The same traditional practices persisted up to today, indicating that the case of the dynamic interaction between the gospel and culture in Zimbabwe is far from resolved (Gundani 1994).

Similarly, Super Roma may also face the same resistance. Its dominating attitude and perception of African traditional practices as 'satanic and pagan' may not provide a meaningful contribution for a theology of inculturation for the Church. As observed by Shoko (2006), it may also irritate the otherwise liberal Roman Catholics who strongly feel that their religious freedom is being challenged. Whilst some ATR die-hards may feel offended by an attack on their sacred religion and spirituality, some Christian hardliners and conservatives may also feel uncomfortable with such a complete overhaul of their tradition and as a result they may postpone or delay their membership to Super Roma. Worse still, they may embrace both and continue to double deal in times of crises. This African attitude and behaviour of 'double-dealing' was observed by Mbiti (1975:13) when he wrote:

Since African Religion belongs to the people, when Africans migrate in large numbers from one part of the continent to another, or from Africa to other continents, they take religion with them...Even if they are converted to another religion like Christianity or Islam, they do not completely abandon their traditional religion immediately: it remains with them for several generations and sometimes centuries.

Unlike Fr. Urayai who out rightly condemned the African traditional practices, Pope Paul VI (1964) is, however, positive about the African tradition:

The Church views with great respect the religious and moral value of the African tradition, not only because of their meaning, but also because she sees them as providential, as basis for spreading the Gospel message and beginning the establishment of a new society in Christ.

In a nutshell, three key factors are likely to hamper the spread of Super Roma. These are: unorthodox theology, negative publicity and negative attitude toward African traditional religion. Whilst Super Roma has had impact on the level of membership as shown on the

denominational representation chart (Appendix Two), most of its impact was, however, on the levels of theology and Christian practice where the movement challenged the status quo.

6.9 Factors likely to favour Super Roma development

The thesis has also established that in spite of the factors that are likely to disturb the expansion of Super Roma, given the milieu in which Super Roma was founded, the nature of its composition and its missionary strategy, it seems there may be more grounds to favour its expansion than those that are likely to impede it. These include: divine founder, spiritism, ecumenism, common theology and availability of priests and nuns.

6.9.1 Divine founder

Apart from exorcism that has already been discussed earlier, the fact that the Super Roma movement claims to have been founded by a divine founder (Archangel Cherubim) is one of the key factors likely to favour the development of the movement.

Eliade (1957) observed that the history of religions, from the most primitive to the most highly developed, is constituted by a great number of hierophanies, by manifestations of sacred realities. In such cases, humanity is confronted by some mysterious act, the manifestation of a wholly different order, a reality that does not belong to the physical order, the *Ganz andere*.

Like is the case in all religions of the world, encounters that involve hierophanies are often accepted without question. Also accepted as dogma are theological or moral reforms emanating from the same. In fact, leaders that claim to have been called and commissioned by the divine are often accepted without question, particularly when extraordinary powers like healing and deliverance are key characteristic elements of their mission.

6.9.2 Spiritism

Spiritism that characterized the first three decades of the Super Roma movement is one key factor also likely to favour its development. While there could be many and varied interpretations of spiritism, like necromancy and/or intercourse with evil spirits *inter alia*, the kind of spiritism here referred to is communication with the spirit world of God. Simply stated, it is communication with God's benevolent angels through human beings as instruments. Super Roma claims that such a communication has been its chief characteristic feature for 33 years.

Taking into cognizance of the fact that the life of the African Christian has always been founded on African traditional religion and spirituality, particularly the aspect of consulting mediums on anything that pertains to life in general, a shift to a more or less similar practice like Super Roma spiritism may not be too difficult or alien. In ATR, like in many other religions and cultures, 'people are prepared to die rather than disobey a code of correct behavior or reforms generally affirmed as having its source in an unquestioned and unquestionable authority' (Cox 1992:6). Any new knowledge that may come from diviners, mediums and seers, among others, is often accepted as it is because these are the people who get in touch with the spirit world (Mbiti 1975).

Irenaeus⁵² (ca 202), speaking from the standpoint of the entire Christian Church of his time, however, underlines the fact that those who deny or reject spirit communication would destroy the gift of the spirit, which in the latter days was poured out to mankind according to God's will. They would reject the gospel of St. John, in which Jesus promised to send the spirit to all believers (John 16:5-15). They would also reject not only the bible, but the doctrines of the spirit of prophesy.

⁵² Irenaeus is often referred to by the Catholic Church as Father of Dogmatic Theology.

Franzen (1969) confirms that Irenaeus was a representative of an ascetical group, strictly hostile to the flesh known as the Encratites⁵³, meaning abstainers. Thus following the same argument, Greber (1970) describes contemporary spiritism as continuing the tradition of early Christianity and a re-introduction of what was once a constituent part of early Christian thought. For Greber (1970), the elimination of spiritism from the Christian Church would not just result in theological errors of most varied and far-reaching consequences but also open doors to human caprice and lust for temporal power. Consequently Christianity would then become manmade and continue to split into countless creeds.

The Catholic position on spiritism is, however clear. The Catholic Church teaches that Spiritism consists in attempts to communicate with the spirits of the dead, or with other spirits, usually by the use of mediums and séances. Whilst spiritism is a common phenomenon in African traditional religions, the Church has in strongest terms forbidden its members to have anything to do with Spiritism arguing that Satan is old and skillful in deceit and can thus assume the appearance of the angel of light when in actual fact he is not. In addition, the Church also argues that there is no positive proof that a medium, seer or magician has been able to communicate with the spirits of the dead or any other spirit. Through the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994:499-500), the Church teaches that:

All practices of magic or sorcery, by which one attempts to tame occult powers so as to place them at one's service and have a supernatural power over others-Even if this were for the sake of restoring their health-are gravely contrary to the virtue of religion...Spiritism often implies divination or magical practices; the Church for her part warns the faithful against it.

Thus, in the light of the above quotation, the Roman Catholic Church categorically stipulates that no instrument of God speaks while in ecstasy.

⁵³ Encratites were an ascetic group which took a negative view of sex and marriage

Whilst we may not want to condemn every form of communication with the supernatural world, the fact that communication with the spirit world or angels is acknowledged by several and diverse sources is an indicator that Fr. Urayai may not have invented or fabricated the practice of Spiritism. He himself is undoubtedly convinced of the possibility of communicating with benevolent spirits today, and he still emphasises the fact that not even the most eloquent description of spiritism can replace personal experience (Fr. Urayai, Interview 30/08/94).

Following the same logic, the practice of spiritism appeals to natural reason and sounds logical. If spirit possession and mediumship is possible with ancestral spirits and many other spirits in the spiritual hierarchy of the Shona people, a phenomenon of that nature may also be possible with angels, especially if one takes into cognizance of the fact that both ancestral spirits and angels share the same spiritual nature.

Further, considering the fact that God dwells in unapproachable light (1 Timothy 6:16) and no mortal may see his face and live (Exodus 33:20), the possibility that in both Old and New Testaments God was approached and consulted through mediums or in some other manner (not directly) in all such cases makes a lot of sense. However, on these phenomena, more research is needed in order to unravel the interconnectedness between spirit manifestations in the Christian tradition, African traditional religions and other forms of spiritistic séances, particularly the Super Roma and Roman Catholic Charismatic phenomena.

6.9.3 Morals and spirituality

Apart from divine founder, spiritism and the practice of spiritism, strict morals may also favour the expansion of Super Roma to some extent. Just as strict morals and spirituality influenced the rapid spread of Christianity in the first century, so also is it likely to promote the development of Super Roma in Zimbabwe.

Though a number of factors could have facilitated the rapid spread of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire, it is also evident that the religious, social and political state of affairs in the empire at the time of the birth of Christianity was conducive for the success of the early Christians' mighty empire. Comby (1985) confirms this fact when he states that Christianity came at a time when there was 'religious unease' and people were in search of new self-understanding. The empire then was a world full of competing sects and ideologies and all these claimed to have answers to the problems of the day, be they religious, social, economic and political. Apart from Judaism, religious life comprised of many traditional religions such as Emperor Worship, Mithraism together with various philosophies such as Stoicism, Gnosticism and Oriental religions that had originated from the east. These, however, later lost their vitality and Christianity took advantage of that to go on the ascendancy.

Apart from loss of vitality by traditional religions, philosophers also had discredited traditional ways of making sense of life but had failed to give and provide a plausible or sensible alternative. As a result, the majority of people found themselves in both a moral and spiritual vacuum. Draine (1989) observed that during that time, people had to seize anything that could give them new hope in an uncertain world. When people such as slaves, soldiers and officials got tired of religions and philosophies that could not give conclusive answers to their problems in life, they lost interest in the Roman traditional way of life. Consequently, they began to look for new and better ways of understanding the meaning and purpose of life. They then sought for a deity that could bring consolation to the believer.

It was during this time of moral decadence that Christianity was born. Franzen (1969) confirms that during the birth of Christianity, there was a general decline of religious feeling and practice within the Roman Empire and Christianity came with its tight morals and won the hearts of many. Upon the advent of Christianity, it proved to be a religion capable of addressing people's needs of moral and spiritual elevation and of salvation. It also gave sense,

purpose and meaning to life and answered people's problems not only intellectually but practically.

As underlined in earlier segments, from the moment of its inception, Super Roma has taken an uncompromising stance on traditional practices such as ancestor veneration, *Kurova Guva*, beer drinking and smoking, among others. In addition to an uncompromising stance on traditional African practices and spirituality, Super Roma strictly observes the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount⁵⁴ (Matthew 5-7) The Sermon on the Mount summarizes the code of correct behaviour. Closely connected with observing the Ten Commandments are also values that give identity to each and every Super Roma member. Such values include: daily prayers and meditations, abstaining from practices such as divorce, polygamy and the use of family planning methods that counter God's Great Plan of Salvation. Perhaps Super Roma may concur with the Zimbabwe Registrar General, Tobaiwa Mudede who also lamented in the Herald of 15/07/2014 that the government must ban contraceptives (Herald Staff Reporter).

Whilst this code of correct behaviour and morals may find support from some conservative Christians, on the other hand, some liberal Christians, particularly feminists, may not be comfortable with some sections of the code. However, to a greater extent, the movement's moral code is a reflection of Jesus' ethical and social teaching and in that regard, the movement's missiological significance is clearly spelt out.

6.9.4 Ecumenism

Denominational representation within the Super Roma movement as shown on Appendix two reflects the fact that the movement is composed of members from the mainline Churches only. Whilst it is evident that Roman Catholics are in the majority, the fact that Independent Churches and other Pentecostal churches are not part of the movement is also clearly visible.

⁵⁴ The Sermon on the Mount provides the day to day living standards.

For that reason, some critics have regarded Super Roma ecumenism as exclusive (Anonymous, Interview, 12/12/2014).

As outlined earlier, Super Roma members continue to be full and active members of their respective denominations (as they claim to be) in spite of them also being full and active members of their movement. This strategy, perhaps indicates that the movement is not yet a church but a forum for ‘extra spiritual lessons’ (Super Roma Informant, Interview, 12/10/2013). Had it been that the ecumenical prayer group had an agenda of becoming a church, perhaps there was no need to be subordinate to the mainline denominations (particularly Roman Catholic), which it accuses of being in some degree of spiritual darkness and in need of redemption (Kugwa 2004:3). However, with its independent leadership, organisation and religious expression, the movement has all the essential properties of a church in its own right (Anonymous, Interview, 15/10/2015).

Whilst the Reformation by Luther (1484-1546) did not only shatter the unity and the common foundation of faith, but also divided religious thought into denominational thought, Super Roma’s idea of reformation and ecumenism to a greater extent aims at drawing Christians together once more and retain the unity of the early centuries in order to rediscover the common roots of all Christians. This also is in tune with the roots or etymological meaning of the word ‘reform.’ Super Roma ecumenical efforts are, therefore, a promising beginning.

6.9.5 Common theology

Closely connected with ecumenism is Super Roma’s common theology which is regarded by the movement as a special *gnosis*. Super Roma theology is regarded as ‘common’ not because it is a theology that is common to everybody. It is regarded as such simply because it is shared and accepted without question by all Super Roma members, regardless of denominational affiliation. However, the special *gnosis* remains particular to the Super Roma movement.

The special *gnosis* that is only reserved for members revolves around spirit creation of all things in heaven by God, pre-existence of humanity as angels in heaven, the fall of angels and God's entire economy of salvation, among other concepts. As earlier underlined in chapter four (4.2.5), Super Roma strongly links humanity on earth to the same fallen angels recorded in the book of Revelation Chapter 12. For Super Roma, the same fallen angels are currently participating (in bodily form) in God's great plan of salvation to effect their gradual ascent and repatriation back to heaven, their original home of bliss.

Thus, the fact that Christianity came into Zimbabwe as a divided Christianity is one factor that is likely to further the expansion of Super Roma with its common theology. Not only did Christianity come divided, to a greater extent, it also failed to offer conclusive answers to critical questions concerning the beyond. Apart from failing to come up with a logical and comprehensive creation account, the Christian Church, particularly the Catholic Church also mystified a number of fundamental areas and declared them 'no go areas.' As already highlighted in chapter four, some of the areas that have been declared so include the doctrine of the Papal infallibility, ecclesiastical authority and the Eucharist among others.

The different Protestant churches also have varying theologies in regard to the same concepts. Whilst some do not believe in Papal infallibility, others also reject the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Still others reject both the Apostles' and the Nicene creeds and still pose as serious contenders for the title of true Christianity. Such an adulterated and disfigured Christianity has ceased to exert an influence on mankind (Greber 1970). With the interdenominational nature of Super Roma and its one theology and the common celebration of the Eucharist, the movement may win the hearts of many Christians in an environment that

is searching not just for a universal and timeless theology but also for conclusive answers in regard to the origin, nature and destiny of humanity.

6.9.6 Availability of priests and nuns

The fact that in its organizational structure there is an office reserved for priests and nuns makes Super Roma religiously self-ministering.

The availability of priests and nuns in Super Roma helps stabilize the movement and address the spiritual needs of the same. Since most Christians are born and bred in Christian traditions, particularly the Roman Catholic Church that honours and respects priests as shepherds and teachers, the presence of such in the movement may contribute significantly to its credibility.

Critical questions have, however, been raised regarding the validity of sacraments celebrated by Super Roma priests, particularly the Eucharist. Some critics argue that the suspended Super Roma priests rendered themselves incapable of celebrating valid sacraments due to their current status. In Latin, the argument is called *ex opere operantis* (from the work of one doing the working). To explain further, the phrase states that the validity of the sacraments depends on the worthiness and holiness of the minister. The same argument was raised around 312 against priests and bishops who had cooperated in any way with the authorities during the persecution of Christians by Emperor Diocletian (284-305) (Brockman & Pescantini 1991).

Basing on the position of Augustine (ca 354-430), the Catholic Church opted for *ex opere operato* (from the work having been done). The position argues that the validity of the sacrament depends upon the holiness of God, the minister being a mere instrument of God's work (CCC 1994). It then logically follows that any minister (priest), even in a state of mortal sin, who speaks the formula of the sacrament with valid matter and with the intent of causing the sacrament to occur acts validly (CCC 1994). It is the office of the validly ordained priest,

not the personal character of the incumbent, that gives validity to the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. For that reason, when Super Roma priests celebrate the sacrament of the Eucharist, they do so validly because, as validly ordained ministers in their respective Dioceses, they act *ex opere operato*.

In a nutshell, the above segment has looked at factors that are likely to either favour or impede Super Roma development. From a close analysis of key findings, factors that are likely to favour Super Roma development appear to be more compelling than those likely to slow down its mileage.

6.10 Conclusion

Chapter five has concentrated on data analysis in order to highlight the impact of Super Roma on the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe. The Chapter has established that from as early as 1970 to the present, the impact of Super Roma on the Roman Catholic Church and vice versa has been tremendous. Whilst negative publicity and unorthodox theology may have tarnished the image and brand of Super Roma, factors such as divine founder, spiritism, strict morals, ecumenical composition, common theology, Eucharistic intercommunion, availability of priests and nuns among others are likely to promote its development. Even though Super Roma represents a theology that is breaking away from traditional Christian theology and an embodiment of the unofficial and unorthodox theology that has remained a peripheral theology for centuries, the movement still has some residue of traditional Christian theology.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The entire thesis has been an endeavour to investigate the impact of Super Roma's healing ministry on the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe with specific reference to Masvingo and Gweru Catholic Dioceses where the phenomenon is most pronounced. The impact of the healing ministry that dates back to the pre-independence era was assessed on three levels, namely, membership, practice and theology.

The study has covered six chapters. Whilst the first chapter is basically the general introduction and road map, the second Chapter introduced us to the healing ministry of the late Father Urayai. Its main purpose was to give background information to the man behind the formation of Super Roma, particularly his healing methodology and diagnosis. Whilst the Chapter established that Father Urayai had a God given gift of healing, it also established that he had a unique healing method that comprised of six main stages, namely, exhortation, blessing of water, drinking of holy water, tying the victim with cords, exorcism and counseling. Also of overriding importance in Father Urayai's healing ministry was his spectacular healing method of re-directing repented evil spirits to Paradise, a method that to a greater extent impacted negatively on Roman Catholic membership due to its lack of scriptural basis.

Even though a handful of some senior Roman Catholic priests viewed Father Urayai's entire healing ministry as more akin to traditional practices, to a greater extent, as a result of his ministry of deliverance, a number of Roman Catholics and non-Catholics found in his entire healing ministry a suitable alternative. Apart from being a self-propagating Church, with the introduction of the ministry of deliverance within the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe by Father Urayai, the Roman Catholic Church became self-reliant and self ministering. For this, he may be referred to as the Father of exorcism in Zimbabwe's Roman Catholic Church.

The third Chapter dwelt on the transformation of Father Urayai's healing ministry into an ecumenical movement. The main thrust of Chapter three was to explore the factors that contributed to the birth and development of the Super Roma movement. The Chapter established that while Father Urayai's healing ministry provided both the foundation and context within which Super Roma emerged, his divine appointment and commission to a greater extent mirrors the call and commission of most African prophets who had championed the formation of new religious movements before him.

The chapter went on to trace the development of Super from 1970 to 2016. Of particular importance in this chapter is the role played by angels (*Matenga*) in regulating and dictating the operations of the ecumenical movement. Whilst the third Chapter helps us compare and contrast the role of mediums in Super Roma and spirit possession in African traditional religion, the practice of spiritism has since been a subject of debate within the Roman Catholic Church as there is a thin line that separates or divides spirit possession in ATR and spiritistic séances in Super Roma. Understandably, the Roman Catholic Church has warned against any form of spiritism (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1994). To this effect, the need to further unravel the interconnections in spirit manifestations between these two remains highly critical and pre-requisite to ascertain whether Super Roma spiritism is a bridge over which African Christians in general or Zimbabwean Christians in particular are being brought back to heathenism or propelled towards a more universal and timeless practice that had remained in the periphery for centuries.

The fourth Chapter examined the theology and organizational structure of Super Roma, a structure that is representative of a circular rather than the common pyramidal system. Even though the theology of Super Roma, admittedly appears complex and controversial, the fact that it was born out of Fr. Urayai's personal experience and testimony, conclusive evaluation and analysis may, therefore, be far from over because nothing surpasses personal experience.

Admittedly also, Super Roma theology may have something to offer for theologians as it awakens theologians and Christians from the slumber of dogmatic patriotism and inspires the re-opening of theological debates and a reflection on bygone ecclesiastical records. It stimulates discussion, debates and theological reflection among contemporary theologians. More importantly, Super Roma's healing ministry and its traditional worldviews may also provide a meaningful contribution for a theology of inculturation and reform within the Roman Catholic Church. The movement's theology also provides theologians with some useful insights into possible areas of contact for ecumenical dialogue and invites theologians to further develop and critic the many and diverse themes presented by Super Roma in the continuum study of Christianity in Africa.

The fifth Chapter examined the various challenges of the Super Roma movement from 1970 to 2016. Whilst the movement experienced challenges both from within and from without, it were those challenges from without that left indelible scars on the public face of the Super Roma movement.

The last Chapter focused on assessing the impact of Super Roma on Christianity in Zimbabwe. From the key findings that have been realized in the last chapter, whilst the healing ministry of Super Roma had an immediate positive impact on Catholic membership as reflected by the denominational representation within the Super Roma movement, Super Roma theology, particularly the theology of ecclesiastical authority, canonicity of scriptures and Eucharist among other concepts had a tremendous negative impact on both Roman Catholic theology and practice.

Super Roma theology is reflective of a new reformation and a renaissance, not just within the Roman Catholic Church circles but the Christian Church at large. Over and above, it is one of the contemporary challenges to the Christian faith. A theology of that nature may create for Christianity in general and the Roman Catholic Church in particular, one of the greatest crises

of its entire time. However, considering the history of the Christian Church and what she has gone through, particularly during the Early and Middle Ages in terms of combating heresies to consolidate her threatened traditional position, Super Roma may forever remain merely a fringe element. Chances of Super Roma theology to get a niche in traditional Christian theology, may, therefore, remain rather remote.

Investigating the impact of Super Roma in Zimbabwe proved to be a taxing undertaking. Due to the unavailability of literature on the Super Roma movement per se, the researcher depended heavily on interviews. It is also vital to note that there were some reservations, particularly from the Roman Catholic responsible authorities who were not so generous with information regarding the Super Roma ecumenical movement. Some rank and file members of the Super Roma movement also maintained the same attitude, perhaps for fear of being victimized.

Upholding the nickname Super Roma instead of the official Light of Life throughout the thesis is also ranked among the study's key limitations. In addition to that, since Super Roma stands as an interdenominational movement that has since attained both historical and national magnitude, focusing only on the Catholic Church may also be viewed as a limitation. More still, since the Roman Catholic Church of Zimbabwe has a total of 8 Dioceses, to focus only on two dioceses may be regarded as yet another limitation of this study. Perhaps it is critical that future studies make an investigation of a wider geographical area in order to examine the impact of Super Roma at a national level. However, in spite of the said limitations, the researcher has managed to come out with useful and valuable data on the impact of the Super Roma movement in Zimbabwe.

Recommendations

In view of Super Roma's double-folded impact on traditional Christian theology and practice, there is a glaring need to make some recommendations.

The first recommendation relates to the practice of Eucharistic intercommunion. Perhaps the various Christian denominations that have been long separated during the Reformation should be urged once more to re-open the chapter of the possibility of Eucharistic intercommunion. Those who receive communion together are bearing witness that that they are one in faith (Abraham 2002:43).

Secondly, whilst the need for revival and renewal are critical for effective evangelisation in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular, it has always been the case that most (if not all) independent movements defected from their institutional official denominations and presented themselves as alternatives and separate entities. They defected from the old to establish the new. Consequently, they further divided the one body of Christ and fell into costly pastoral errors. Thus, new religious movements are once again called upon to review their reform strategies.

One other recommendation relates to Super Roma's theology of healing. Whilst Fr. Urayai is perhaps the best known Catholic exorcist in Zimbabwe as has been established, his theology of healing, particularly the concept of re-cycling of spirits may need further research. As earlier underlined, nowhere in the Bible did Jesus, who is the premier exorcist of all, his disciples or Fr. Urayai's contemporaries re-cycle evil spirits either to paradise or heaven as claimed by Fr. Urayai and the Super Roma movement.

In addition, the possibility of communicating with angels through human mediums is one other critical area that the researcher recommends for further study and examination. Not only

does Super Roma claim to have communicated with angels, the movement also claims that ‘spiritism’ has been one of the characteristic features of early Christianity before some power hungry ecclesiastical authorities later censored the practice and banned it. Hence, the need to revisit and further examine the theology and practice of early Christianity in order to verify or falsify the claim.

Lastly, another interesting development within Super Roma theology that may require further research is the mystery and mystique of the original sin. Super Roma has linked the original sin with the Fall of angels in the book of Revelations (12:7-17). Whilst theories of the original sin may be prevalent in the West and among reformers such as Martin Luther and Calvin, the fact that the same concept is not found in other religions such as Judaism, Hinduism and Islam among others, makes further research on this matter even more urgent and intriguing.

It is, therefore, the sincere hope of the researcher that, in spite of the study’s limitations, this work is going to help both Christians and non-Christians in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular to appreciate the dynamics of Christianity in Africa. As one of the pioneering studies on Super Roma, it is hoped that this work is going to arouse academic curiosity for further investigation and research with a view to establishing a more comprehensive study of the impact of Super Roma in Zimbabwe.

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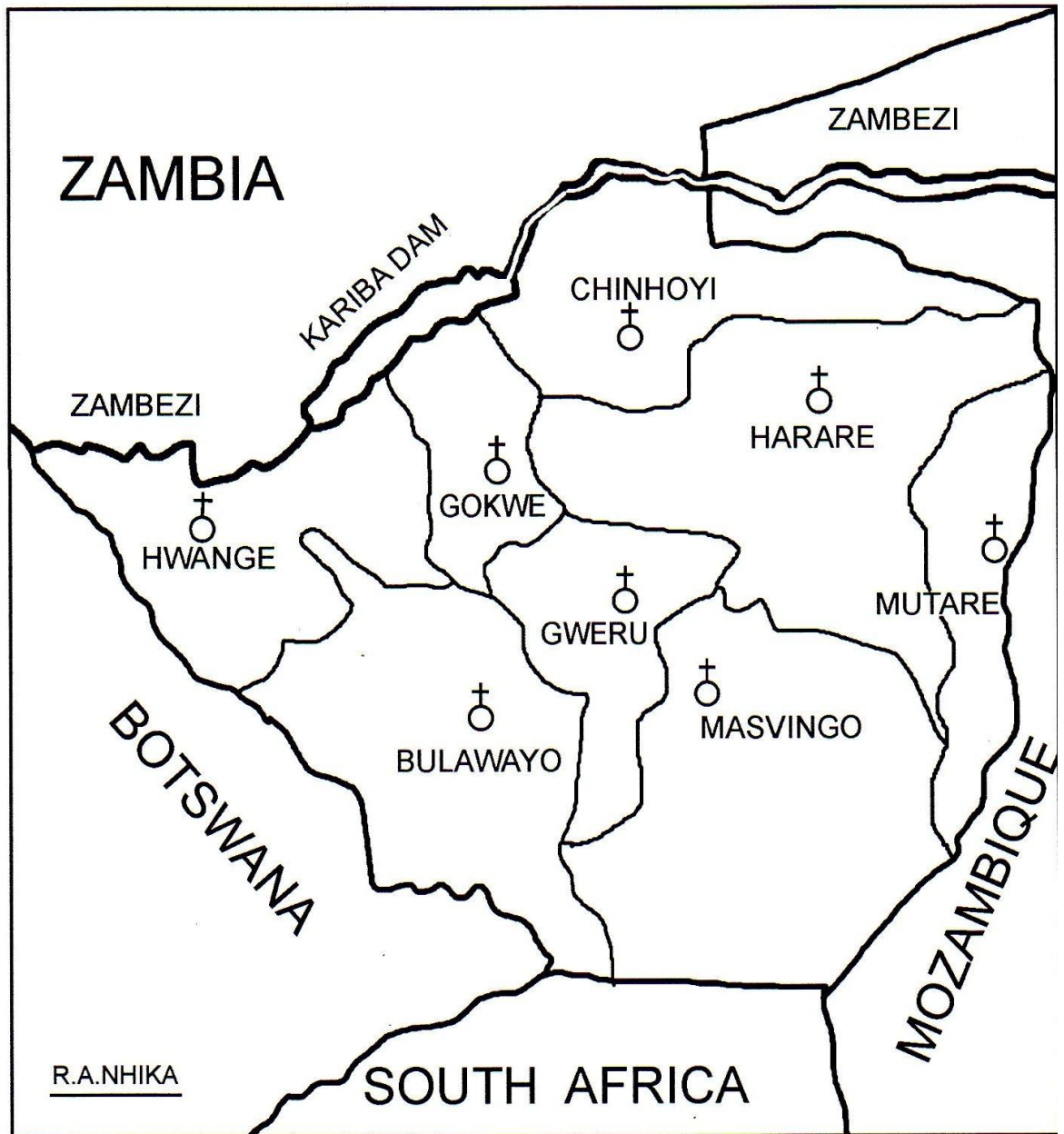
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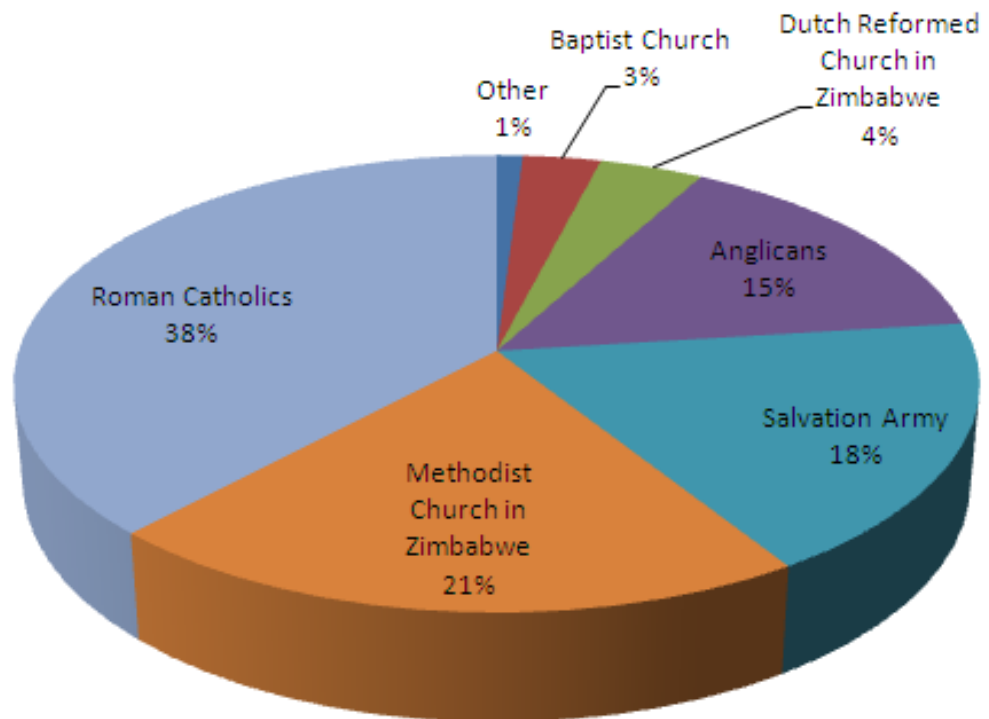
APPENDIX ONE

THE 8 DIOCESES OF ZIMBABWE



APPENDIX TWO

Denominational Representation in LLCG



APPENDIX THREE

STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

**TOPIC: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF SUPER ROMA'S HEALING
MINISTRY ON THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE: A CASE
STUDY OF GWERU AND MASVINGO DIOCESES (1964-2016).**

FOR MPhil THESIS

Date.....

Name of Interviewee.....

Date and place of Birth.....

Country.....

District.....

Profession/Carrier.....

Religion.....

Church/Denomination.....

Answer as judged suitable by you.

1. What is Super Roma and who is behind the formation of this phenomenon?
2. Are you a member of Super Roma? If so, when and why did you join it?
3. What are some of the factors that favoured the birth and development of Super Roma in pre and post colonial Zimbabwe?
4. What is the origin of the name Super Roma and what are its implications? Are you free to discuss Super Roma in public? If not, why?
5. Who was Father Augustine Urayai and who was his mentor?

6. To what extent did Father Urayai use his healing gift as a recruitment technique for both the Roman Catholic Church and Super Roma?
7. In what ways did Father Urayai's healing methodology differ from other faith and traditional healing practitioners?
8. What really attracted people to Father Urayai?
9. To what extent was Father Urayai shaped by both his African and Christian milieu? How did he balance himself between Christianity and African traditional religion?
10. Suppose you were invited to attend Super Roma sessions or in fact join the ecumenical movement, would you accept the invitation?
11. What are some of the teachings of Super Roma that you know?
12. Which are some of the values that Super Roma promote?
13. Which are some of the elements likely to hamper the development of Super Roma?
14. Are you a member of the Roman Catholic Church? If so, what has your diocese done to address the Super Roma phenomenon in your Diocese?
15. In your capacity as bishop/priest/nun/brother or lay faithful, what do you think is the impact of Super Roma on the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe?
16. Do you think the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC) is justified in dismissing Super Roma? What other recommendations do you give?
17. To what extent has Super Roma theology affected the traditional Roman Catholic theology? Underline some major areas of clash between Super Roma and the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe?
18. What is the missiological significance of Super Roma in the continuum of the study of Christianity in Africa?

19. In what ways can Super Roma be an instrument of ecumenism in post colonial Zimbabwe?

APPENDIX FOUR

STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

TOPIC: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF SUPER ROMA'S HEALING MINISTRY ON THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE: A CASE STUDY OF GWERU AND MASVINGO DIOCESES (1964-2016).

FOR MPHIL THESIS

Date...**15/10/2013**.....

Name of Interviewee.....**Anonymous**.....

Date and place of Birth.....**N/A**.....

Country.....**Zimbabwe**.....

District.....**Gutu**.....

Profession/Carrier.....**Businessman**.....

Religion.....**Christianity**.....

Church/Denomination.....**Roman Catholic**.....

Answer as judged suitable by you.

1 What is Super Roma and who is behind the formation of this phenomenon?

People say Super Roma is a Church formed by Father Urayai of the Roman Catholic Church but the church is said to be secret and acts clandestinely.

2 Are you a member of Super Roma? If so, when and why did you join it?

I am not Super Roma but I am a baptised Roman Catholic. I have no plans to join Super Roma as yet.

3 What are some of the factors that favoured the birth and development of Super Roma in pre and post colonial Zimbabwe?

I would like to believe that Father Urayai's healing ministry gave birth to the Super Roma Church. Members began as Father Urayai's secret admirers and then developed into a small church

- 4 What is the origin of the name Super Roma and what are its implications? Are you free to discuss Super Roma in public? If not, why?**

About the origin of the name, let me be honest with you, I don't know. Maybe members of the Super Roma movement see themselves as superior to other Roman Catholics but honestly, I don't know. At our parish people do not want to discuss Super Roma in public because some parishioners have already been implicated in the Super Roma saga.

- 5 Who was Father Augustine Urayai and who was his mentor?**

As I said already, Father Urayai is one of our Roman Catholic priests, one of the pioneers, I should say. About the mentor, I don't know but I think he was mentored at Chishawasha seminary

- 6 To what extent did Father Urayai use his healing gift as a recruitment technique for both the Roman Catholic Church and Super Roma?**

Most of those who joined Super Roma were sick at some point. However, others freely joined Super Roma.

- 7 In what ways did Father Urayai's healing methodology differ from other faith and traditional healing practitioners?**

I have never seen his methodology but those who have met him say that he forces demons to confess. I don't know whether other faith healers do the same or they simply drive demons out. Either way, the primary aim of exorcism is to cast evil spirits out. Methodologies don't really matter. What matters most is to free the victim.

- 8 What really attracted people to Father Urayai?**

I may not know what really attracted them but I think the fact that he was the first disposer of demons in the Roman Catholic Church, a number of people wanted to

receive healing services from a Catholic priest and not from practitioners in the African Independent Churches or Pentecostals.

9 To what extent was Father Urayai shaped by both his African and Christian milieu?

About the African milieu I don't know but as for the Christian, I think Fr. Urayai just copied what was being done by his counterparts in the Zion Church like Samuel Mutendi who was more or less his contemporary. Mutendi was famous for his healing ministry.

10 How did he balance himself between Christianity and African traditional religion?

In his sermons, Fr. Urayai always condemned the African traditional religion, accusing it of being satanic.

11 Suppose you were invited to attend Super Roma sessions or in fact join the ecumenical movement, would you accept the invitation?

I am so curious to know what really transpires in that movement but I don't want to pray clandestinely.

12 What are some of the teachings of Super Roma that you know?

Its all hearsay. People say Super Roma discourages its members from participating in all African traditional practices such as ancestral veneration, kurova guva, bringing back ceremony, beer drinking, smoking and they say they don't eat pork. They don't believe in the Holy trinity. I don't know whether they pray the Rosary or not.

13 Which are some of the values that Super Roma promote?

I don't know their values but someone told me that they encourage decent dressing for both males and females. No mini-skirts or see-through clothes for women. They also encourage short hair for women. They don't want to participate in politics.

14 Which are some of the elements likely to hamper the development of Super Roma?

African Christians love their tradition. So it is difficult for them to disconnect from traditional practices such as ancestral worship, beer drinking and kurova guva, among others. It is easy for people to double-deal than to break completely. So, Super Roma may face some resistance on that point.

15 Are you a member of the Roman Catholic Church? If so, what has your diocese done to address the Super Roma phenomenon in your Diocese?

I am a baptised Catholic. My Bishop has suspended all the priests who were directing the operations of this Church, seven of them. He has also called back a few seminarians who were suspected of having links with Super Roma. Over and above that, he has warned his sheep not to join Super Roma.

16 In your capacity as bishop/priest/nun/brother or lay faithful, what do you think is the impact of Super Roma on the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe?

N/A

17 Do you think the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC) is justified in dismissing Super Roma? What other recommendations do you give?

I am not a bishop but I think the ZCBC has its reasons for doing that. But I think we need to know more about Super Roma not just to rely on what we hear from our priests and other parishioners. It is difficult to know the truth about Super Roma because nothing is written down.

18 To what extent has Super Roma theology affected the traditional Roman Catholic theology? Underline some major areas of clash between Super Roma and the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe?

I may not be a theologian but if it is true that Super Roma does not believe in the Holy Trinity, it means its teachings contradict Roman Catholic theology.

19 What is the missiological significance of Super Roma in the continuum of the study of Christianity in Africa?

If Super Roma prays genuinely, then it means their efforts are within the parameters of the missionary mandate but if not, then there is no missiological significance. It is disconnected from Christ.

20 In what ways can Super Roma be an instrument of ecumenism in post colonial Zimbabwe?

People say Super Roma is inter-denominational but I am told they do not entertain members from African independent churches. People then question the movement's commitment to commune.