Voices from the Hills vs. Words from the Missionary: Competing Rural Cultures in Southwestern Zimbabwe

Eliakim Sibanda, *University of Winnipeg*

Introduction

In the Matopo District of nineteenth-century colonial Zimbabwe, Brethren in Christ Church (BICC) missionaries brought with them a worldview that was in stark contrast to the traditional ways of the *Amandebele*, the indigenous African population. From 1890 to 1930, along with settler farmers, these missionaries established commercial farms. The colonial government aided the development of this agricultural system by passing laws which took most of the communal land out of the hands of the African population; in fact, the government's ordinances provided a legal framework for the most pernicious land grab. This led to punitive evictions of Amandebele, indeed, removal of indigenous people from their ancestral lands. For instance, the 1894 and 1898 Land Ordinances established reserves which assigned unproductive areas to Africans. The 1930 Land Apportionment Act and other Acts provided the legal basis for racial land segregation which guaranteed white

dominance over blacks (Moore, 2005, 152; Palmer, 1992, 8; Palmer, 1977, 194, 197, 205, 211). Comparing and contrasting the two groups' different perceptions or voices on the relationships between humans and the ecosystems (non-humans) provides examples of these discordant worldviews. This window allows glimpses into attitudes and actions of the indigenous population in contrast with those of these colonial visitors.

The comparison of the Amandebele and BICC missionaries' perspectives on the environment must necessarily be done within a context of colonial land and agricultural policy in Zimbabwe. This study demonstrates that missionaries' general attitude toward the environment led to environmental degradation, soil fertility depletion and reduction of biodiversity. They did so by using the plow, cutting trees, collecting firewood, using heavy wagons, harvesting thatching grass and making bricks for building at massive scale. This Western-centric approach competed with the Amandebele's traditional ways of protecting the ecosystem. Understanding the evolution of the different scholarly approaches to the study of environmental preservation over time in Zimbabwe provides the context for this exploration and is necessary for a better understanding of how environmental degradation has developed. This frame also provides the context to understand how the two approaches endeavored to promote or harm the harmony between humans and the ecology, and to what extent these views worked towards sustaining the symbiosis between the two.

Of late, environmental issues such as climate change, land degradation, air pollution and deforestation dominate world agendas in media, both print and television, as well as in scholarly literature across the globe. In the current post-colonial scholarly discourse on Zimbabwe, environmental issues have become a staple. Prior to this, scholars and researchers were lukewarm and then nonchalant about addressing environmental questions for most of the colonial period. Agreement exists on the need to address what is perceived to be an ecological crisis of environmental degradation. However, scholars remain divided on the causes of this ecosystemic destruction, and the degree of ecological damage. Its solutions remain areas of fierce contestation that have cascaded into public discourse. Three positions dominate the debate on solutions.

Scholars in the first position argue that a range of scientific research carried out from the colonial times to post-colonial Zimbabwe must engage in addressing these ecological matters. These studies help document disturbing trends in soil erosion, deforesta-

tion and decline in soil fertility. The group exemplifies the Western hegemonic scientific paradigm that has dominated all strategies of conserving the environment from colonial to post-colonial eras in Zimbabwe and, for that matter, in all Africa. Contemporary globalization in these periods helped the scientific paradigm to achieve dominance by marginalizing, disempowering and attempting to completely displace African indigeneity and knowledge constructs in academic institutions and public discourses. The BICC missionaries' view reflected many of the components of this first group.

The second group comprises those calling for the re-deployment of the pre-colonial African Knowledge Systems in an attempt to stave off environmental destruction. Traditional ways of conserving and protecting the ecosystem were, for the most part, marginalized in the colonial period as a way of attempting to disrupt the African Worldview in the service of a colonial agenda. In this study, the Amandebele at Matopo represents the indigenous views.

The third and last category of scholars represents the church. They promote different agendas depending on the period of time in which they operated. During the colonial period, the missionary church supported the western scientific model which the colonial state espoused. In that sense, these missionaries could be seen, as some scholars eloquently assert (Mackenzie, 1993, 46), to be in the service of the colonial state. Missionaries wittingly or unwittingly became purveyors of the colonial ideas among indigenous peoples. The missionaries were the ones who mostly dealt directly with the African population in promotion of a government policy of conservation.

A few questions immediately might be asked. To begin, why did the church need to adopt a state position, especially during the colonial times, instead of coming up with a stance based on some theologically sanctioned views? In the gaze of a scientific model, did they consider this secular position dealing with the ecosystem consistent with its sense of stewardship? Did these missionaries try to seek points of connection with the indigenous systems of knowledge or points of correspondence and connections with the indigenous populations? These and other pertinent queries inform the writing of this paper. They point to a critical aspect needed for the contextualization of this paper. The missionary church then, and the colonial church today in Zimbabwe and elsewhere in the world, found itself unprepared to work out its own articulated theological position on matters relating to the ecosystem.

Surprisingly, during the post-colonial era, literature of the Christian churches demonstrate a call to bring together the two

seemingly conflicting models – the scientific and traditional – to form new ways of conserving the environment (Mwambazambi, 2010, 54-64; Daneel, 2001, 90). Most of the literature, however, focuses on the causes of environmental degradation from the Malthusian and Neo-Malthusian assumptions about population explosion, traditional practices, poverty, past discriminatory regimes (Wekwete, 1995, 61), farm invasions, deforestation and colonialism. For example, scholars such as Bowyer-Bower blame environmental degradation on overpopulation. Other Zimbabwean scholars like the late economist Sam Moyo et al (1991) view the causes differently. They assert that colonialism was largely responsible for the destruction of environment. They argue that, during pre-colonial times, the population was small with no scarcity of land, and, consequently, no room for environmental abuse. The argument that colonialism largely accentuated environmental problems of ecological depletion is not unique to Zimbabwe. Writing in a different context and outside of Africa, Gary Paul Nabhan notes a direct connection between colonial conquest and ecological degradation. He opines that "[w]herever empires have spread to suppress the other cultures' languages and land traditions,…the loss of biodiversity has been dramatic" (Nabhan, 1997, 37). Terence Ranger, the well-known historian of African History and an activist, also blames colonial practices for suppressing the African voice with regard to environmental conservation. As a result, Ranger (1989) argues that the white settlers and local African residents of the area ended up talking past each other (218).

A close reading of Ranger's paper, and his book on the partly entitled *Voices from the Rocks* (1999, 3-4), clearly suggests that he disdains colonial notions of ecological conservation, and strongly disapproves of the tendency by the colonial state to attempt to completely silence the voices of the residents of the area. These scholars state that the reason for such abuse was colonial land use and natural resources driven by capitalist, anthropocentric utilitarianism. In this view, progress through the exploitation of natural resources was central along with the assumption that African traditional farming practices destroyed the environment. They consider human progress synonymous with civilization and based upon the Darwinian perspective of moving from the lower forms to higher forms. They believe indigenous people to be in the lower stages of social development as portrayed in Adam Smith's book, *The Wealth of Nations (*qtd in Bowden, 2011, 127).

Nature is conceived as instrumental to the fulfillment of human beings' progressive and developmental needs. This anthropocen-

tric perspective unwittingly led to the objectification of the ecosystem and the development of "a mechanistic Cartesian metaphysics which sees nature as a dead, inert machine, insensitive to abuse and exploitation by humans" (Eckersley, 1992, 45-46). Thus, critical to this study is an understanding of why the westerners (including the missionaries) exploited the environment through their scientific paradigm while simultaneously dismissing and denigrating traditional ways of preserving the environment.

Colonial governments, largely dismissive of indigenous land use, engaged in capitalist farming methods that destroyed land and polluted water in the relentless pursuit of monetary profit. Colonial environmentalist scholars argue that penetration of imperial and colonial capital helped trigger the environmental crisis with which former colonial countries are confronted today. Equally appalling to these scholars, colonialism engaged in predatory ways by replacing communal fields with market-oriented conservancy and expropriated land. They transferred the land to white settler ownership and replaced subsistence[1] farming with both market and tourism economies. Also, where the dominant science paradigm was entrenched, the African pre-colonial ecological patterns were quickly replaced and new relationships with the environment intrinsic to the new paradigm were established. Some measures that flowed out of this new science model were well-meaning. However, because these conservation measures taken by the state to prevent the degradation of the ecosystem were intertwined with practices of dispossession that exclusively targeted Africans, the state's interventions elicited political resistance from the African population. As the main target of these measures, the situations sometimes ended in their being forcibly removed or their cattle destocked.

While the scholarly discourses on environmental conservation issues in Zimbabwe are not necessarily new, discussion on the redeployment of traditional ways of environmental conservation is. Lately, scholars are calling for the restoration of African knowledge systems to their rightful, affirmative place in conservation and protection. Churchill (1996) aptly observes,

> Indiginist thinkers have advocated for the recovery and promotion of Traditional Indigenous Knowledge (TIK) system as an important process of decolonizing indigenous nations and their relationship with the settler governments, whether those strategies are applied to political and legal systems, governance, health or wellness education, or the environment (qtd in Mawere, 2013.).

The colonial project has not succeeded in completely eliminating African knowledge systems as they still are in practice in most of Africa.

This harking back to pre-colonial African ways of living, particularly the focus on their strategies of ecological conservation, has been done for two notable reasons. First, as Ngara et. al. (2013) observes, "there is a growing consensus that traditional institutions provide considerable protection of the ecosystems and biodiversity" (20). For the most part in the colonial period, local indigenous strategies of preserving and protecting the ecosystems were unceremoniously dismissed as primitive, and their worldviews deemed illogical, unintelligible and unscientific. As Alex-Ivar Berglund convincingly concludes with respect to Zulu thought-patterns and systems of thought, the Zulu worldview "is not only intelligible, but also logical." He further points out that the ideas are expressed "chiefly in rites, rituals and symbols" (Berglund, 1988, 13). This observation is important for the understanding of African conservancy of the ecology and is true of all indigenous peoples in Africa. Cultural taboos, rituals and symbols played a crucial role in the preservation of ecology and biodiversity in pre-colonial times. Berglund further challenges the impugning of symbols and rituals, and, by extension, taboos, which seems to have been the main source of their dismissal of indigenous societies as unscientific, by making a convincing argument,

> It may be true to state that symbols to a greater extent express thinking in societies where rational and scientific values have not yet a strong foothold. This is a quantitative distinction between symbolic expressions and scientific ones, not a qualitative comparison. It does not follow that a rich symbolic thinking is necessarily pre-scientific or a forerunner to rational expression. The need to express values in symbolically meaningful formulas is not of necessity a stepping-stone to science towards a rational science. Nor [*sic*] does this need indicate an inability to reason rationally and /or scientifically (Berglund, 1989, 18).

He perceptively concludes, "To express concepts by way of symbols is simply another way of expression. The symbols are vehicles whereby it is possible to voice thoughts, experiences and concepts, and to do so intelligibly….These are not inferior to rational and scientific approaches to life"(Berglund). The comparison of the worldviews through this ecological window begins with a probe into the voices of the Amandebele at Matopo.

Amandebele, Philosophy of the Land, Ecology and Ecological Harmony in Pre-Colonial Zimbabwe

The Amandebele were the dominant inhabitants of Matopo during the last part of the nineteenth century. The nucleus of Amandebele (Alexander, et. al., 2002, 28) was formed by a group that broke away from the nation of Amazulu in the late 1830s under its founder King Mzilikazi. On the way to Zimbabwe, they incorporated some ethnic groups like Sothos, Vendas, Tswanas and, once in Zimbabwe, some local groups including Swazis who had arrived in Zimbabwe earlier via Chibi, an area where the BICC missionaries tried to establish a church in the first decade of their arrival. The constitution of the Amandebele as a nation goes to show how the concept of nation or ethnicity is both fluid and slippery. Despite the multi-ethnic composition of the Amandebele, they still by and large share the same traditional worldview with the Zulus, which demonstrates the influence of their nucleus. The newly-founded Amandebele nation has kept the Zulu culture, including language, up to this day. They share the same traditional worldview with the Zulus.

Matopo lies in the western part of Zimbabwe. It is located in a semi-dry region of Africa. Zimbabwe has very little and unpredictable rain patterns. Of late, Zimbabwe has witnessed erratic temperature variations, including tropical cyclones, floods and recurrent drought. These extreme weather bouts partly have been attributed to human-induced global warming. The Matopo area is no exception. It has unreliable rainfall. However, "the presence of well-managed wetlands has saved the local communities from the debilitating effects of drought" (Ndlovu et. al., 2014; Davidson, 1915, 54). Clearly, Matopo's weather and water situation, that is, the environment, has drastically changed from when the BICC missionaries first arrived in 1898. H. Frances Davison, a prolific diarist, keen social observer and a BICC pioneer missionary, records her observations upon their arrival at Matopo in 1898. She excitedly pens:

> There, spread out before our eyes, was a beautiful rolling valley of rich, dark earth, well supplied with an abundance of fresh water. It was stated that the "sunny fountains" are rare in this part of Africa, and that was true. Here, however, in this beautiful valley, in the heart of Matopo Hills, are sparkling fountains of beautiful water, crystal clear, oozing from under the surface of the rocks, and flowing down the valley. Some contain delicate mosses and pretty water lilies, and surpass the Michigan lakes in transparency (Davidson, 1915, 55).

She describes the ecological situation that existed at the time of the arrival of the BICC pioneer missionaries among the Amandebele. This occurred immediately after the colonization of Zimbabwe. It can be reasonably concluded that the Amandebele inherited the near "Garden of Eden" ecosystemic environment from those who had occupied the land before them.

The Matopo area is one of the most important places in Zimbabwe partly because it is home to the Matopo hills. They are of religious significance to all the African people of Zimbabwe. The Amandebele, indeed, the whole of the Zimbabwean black population, held their traditional ceremonies during the time of drought, pandemic diseases, lean harvests and seeking direction of the *umdali* (creator) during times of war. After colonization, the Matopo hills became a spiritually important place for the white settlers and for the BICC missionaries as well. The BICC missionaries built their first church and had their farm located in the heart of Matopo. Terence Ranger aptly summarizes the significance of the Matopo Hills:

> The [Matopo] hills were the special heritage of the pre-Ndebele inhabitants of the area, the Banyubi, who had developed the agricultural and pastoral techniques which had made Matopos productive, and who had a particular connection with the Mwali or Mlimo cult [*sic*].This cult [*sic*], whose central shrines were situated in the hills, articulated an elaborate ecological philosophy and set of rules which came closer than anything else on the African side to a systematic counter to eco-science. For others the hills were central to the Ndebele cultural nationalism. For many decades this emphasis merged with another – the idea of the hills as the place where Cecil Rhodes had met and negotiated with the Ndebele, promising them undisturbed occupation of the land (1989, 233).

His words also accurately represent what is known to have been true of the Amandebele people. Ranger simply re-inscribes what was done by the Amandebele into the lives of Banyubi. This is important to point out because, in order for a comparison of Amandebele people and BICC missionaries to be made insightfully, it is important that facts be represented as close to what actually occurred. Contemporary scholar Dick Pitman adds to this conversation,

> For the white settlers, the hills were important, because Cecil Rhodes, the founder of colonial Southern Rhodesia, was buried there. As such, the hills were inextricably mingled with the history of the country, from its earliest known inhabitants to the advent of the colonial era. They

> created a water-shed that is vital to southern Matabeleland. The geology is unique, their flora and fauna of exceptional interest and their scenic beauty beyond question (qtd in Ranger, 1989, 218).

Indeed, Matopo Hills was where the sacred met with the scientific under conditions optimal for testing the effectiveness of each one of the two paradigms and the perspectives of their proponents.

The Amandebele knowledge system or belief/disbelief system was, among some of its members who, to some degree, have resisted total cooption by modernity, a complex system of dependent interrelations between religion, death and burials, law, medicine, politics, philosophy, psychology and ethics. As such, none of the elements of their indigenous knowledge system can be treated independently of the other. A holistic approach must be employed in all instances where one or more of these features are discussed. Land is one word that subsumes most of these elements.

The way land use is governed is an economic question and a critical aspect of the management of political affairs. In fact, the governance of land use is the most important political issue in most African societies (Boas, et. al., 2013, 7-8). The type of land tenure determines how populations relate to the land. The relationship of Amandebele with the land was immediate and direct. Their autochthonous ties to the land epitomized or expressed this affiliation. Autochthony etymologically means "emerging from the soil" (Boas and Dunn, 2013, 2). Thus, the identity of the Amandebele was implicated in the land, and, hence, they self-described as "*Abantwana benhlabathi*" (children of the soil), an expression that scholars like Ranger (1989, 233), Boas and Dunn erroneously wrote as "sons of the soil" (*Amadodana omhlabathi*). Based on this notion, the Amandebele considered themselves related to the soil/earth. Discourses around this term link identity, belonging and place. Autochthony discourses were used then, and continue to be used today, by people around the world to justify claims to a piece of land based on their historic link to it, although their meaning varies depending on the context within which they arise. Autochthonous relations to the land were pivotal for the Amandebele. They set the tone for how the people treated the land in terms of conservation. Thus, the Amandebele had a very sophisticated way of relating to the land based on it being treated as a mother with morals. This essentially meant a kinship-based relationship resulting in deep respect and gender neutrality. Such recognition inevitably meant that the land as an ecosystem and as inhabitable place was to be protected. In this reciprocal relationship, the ecosystem

in turn had an obligation to care about her children, protect and mete out justice as a mother. That perspective viewed the land as a moral agent. This metaphor, however, must be understood more relationally than in utilitarian terms.

How, then, did Amandebele relate to the land in ways that protected and respected the integrity of the land? Two related queries must be answered first: Who did they think the land belonged to? How did they conceptualize their traditional land tenure system? To the Amandebele, land belonged to the living, the unborn and the dead. This sense of ownership was shared by most Africans. The East African Royal Commission sums it up well when observing that land ownership in African societies "[r]esides not in the man alone but also in his ancestors, who played a very real part in his life and in his posterity whose interests had to be guarded just as well those living members of the family" (1955, 284). Julius Nyerere later adds that, "in Africa, land was always recognized as belonging to the community. Each individual within our community had a right to the use of the land, because he could not earn a living….But the African's right to land was simply the right to use it" (1968, 7).

Thus, individuals had usufruct rights to the land. This meant that land was neither absolutely owned nor could it be treated as a commodity. The community used the earth as a commons for farming, grazing, farming, fishing, fuel wood and construction materials, among other uses and responsibilities. The chief held the land in trust for the people under their jurisdiction and had a fiduciary obligation to allocate it among his/her people to be used for residential, farming and grazing purposes. The chief also ensured that everyone abided by the traditional mores and norms that maintained harmony between humans and non-humans. The keen awareness that land was a crucial source for people's survival, materially and spiritually, governed the allocation of land among the Amandebele. As Sibanda observes,

> From a spiritual vantage point, land was a medium of communication with *Amadlozi*/ancestors, who were viewed as mediators between the respective families and [creator]…the use of land became the social values of the community…[which,] instead of seeing land as merely a productive resource whose [main] purpose was [production, it] became centered on issues of social relations and worship of the [creator]. This view in turn inspired their ecological, demographic, social and production sense of responsibility. It was understood for instance, that misuse or abuse of land…was punishable by the [*umdali*/creator] first and

> foremost, and second by the chief/*induna* who served as a trustee of the land (Sibanda, 1998, 81).

He concludes, "The way Amandebele related with the land then, had civic, religious and environmental implications."

The Protection of Trees, Animals and Riparian Water Rights, Taboos (*amazilo*) and Totems (*izibongo* or family names)

Taboos and totems played a central part in the synergetic relationship between the Amandebele and the other elements of the ecosystems. In an article on "the influence of rituals and taboos on sustainable wetlands management" in the Matopo District, Christopher Ndlovu and Leonard Manjeru convincingly argue that rituals, taboos, and, by extension, totems, played a critical role in the lives of the Amandebele and among the Shona, the largest ethnic group in Zimbabwe. These actions, the scholars observe, protected the wetlands [*amaxapozi*] and also shaped the indigenous groups' "environmental ethics" (Ndlovu et. al., 2014, 1). Among the Amandebele, totemism played a critical role in policing daily activity as compared to the monitoring and surveillance by the chiefs whose authority was inconsistent and unevenly felt. Because of totemism's central role in the lives of the Amandebele, appreciation of how it works is a critical aspect of this study. According to Tumani M. Nyanjeka,

> The mutupo [isibongo] totemism principle focuses on fostering the primary relationships between animals and humans, animals and the deity, human and humans, deity and humans, nature and humans, the dead and the living. The mutopo principle attempts to enumerate the ideal mode of life which assures a sustainable future of all of existence. An analysis of the fundamental elements of the mutupo principle reveals that it is a principle which seeks to create a cosmology that takes the existence of non-human entities seriously (1996, 137-138).

Although Nyanjeka writes about the Shona people, the observation is equally true of the Amandebele. Broadly speaking, from a distance and irregularly, the chief ensured that community members adhered to their taboos (laws) and other traditional and cultural practices. However, on a daily basis, the protection of the land, trees, animals and water was done through cultural taboos and totemic practices whose violation the Amandebele believed elicited sanctions from the ancestors.

These practices were embedded in their indigenous knowledge systems. Alec J. C. Pongweni provides a good example of a sanction due to one such violation. He writes that "the totemic animal has a taboo attached to it…such that the totem bearer is forbidden to eat it. Infringement of this taboo has certain concomitant magical sanctions, such as loss of teeth…." (1996, 9). Two totemic actions were prohibited: the eating of the animal and killing it. For instance, in revered areas, the local community refrained from killing animals, cutting down trees and harvesting certain plants in the belief that the spirits would bring harm to them, their families or even the whole community. A person was normally prohibited from eating an animal bearing their totem. This rule applied to marriage choices as well as environmental actions. According to Amandebele beliefs, every person was related to animals bearing their totem.

Some taboos had nothing to do with totemism such as some practices that protected specific birds and trees. The rationale for protecting birds and trees in this category was to provide balance and biodiversity, thereby ensuring the survival of at-risk species in that community. For instance, one particular endangered tree was the *ichithamuzi* (philenoptera violacea). As far as is known, the philenoptera violacea did not serve medicinal, fence-building, kraal-erection, hut construction or firewood purposes. In fact, it was taboo to use this tree as firewood. Amandebele believed that if someone burned this firewood in her/his home, their home would break up due to the name of the tree. In Sindebele, the word literally meant *breaker of homes*. Due to these circumstances, it can be surmised that the Amandebele protected this tree for one primary reason: it was a rare and endangered species in their region. Secondly, and more importantly, they sought to preserve the vegetation's biodiversity.

Amandebele understood water to be a treasure inseparable with the land which needed to be equally protected from pollution. Like the land, they considered water community property that was not absolutely owned by individuals. Accordingly, nobody could make a private claim on it. People did not even require the king's permission to exercise their water rights. That was essentially the Amandebele customary practice extended to every member of the community. As such, Amandebele had both communal and riparian rights over water. Collective rights over the drinking water came with responsibilities attached to them. The community bore a collective responsibility over the common wells from which they fetched water for drinking and other domestic needs. That respon-

sibility entailed ensuring that water wells for drinking water were not polluted by throwing dirty objects into the well, in addition to keeping their domestic animals from drinking and muddying it. Each individual had to be careful not to draw an oversupply that went beyond each family's basic water needs. These were what were called the riparian rights to water.

Riparian water rights were related to the use of flowing water in rivers. Unlike western countries where riparian law means that only those who own land that leads to the bank of the river can have access to the river's water that flows through the property, no private ownership existed with the Amandebele. Among the Amandebele people, the wider community had access to the river's flowing water. According to their practice, villagers were prohibited to build their homesteads on river banks. Space between the homesteads or fields and the river was left for three vital reasons. To begin, this prohibition formed a safe corridor allowing wild animals to have unfettered access to the river and, for those in the river, to freely bask in the sun. This obviously recognized the need for co-existence and the fact that animals, humans and non-humans shared resources and space. Secondly, the corridor granted community members and their domesticated animals access to the river. Finally, the riparian policies reduced chances of the river being polluted. That exercise of riparian practice was related to the notion of usufruct which meant that, although the society did not own the water, they had the right to use it. Significantly, this linking of riparian rights to usufruct associated the use rights of water with ethics regulating environmental preservation and water-sharing by communities.

Thus, for the Amandebele, protections were either shrouded in taboos, totems, sacredness (animals not getting killed because they escaped into sacred forests) or in myths. These actions ultimately required that the societies took collective responsibility for protecting the ecosystem. There is now a broader and growing consensus among scholars that such practices, as part of indigenous knowledge systems, sustained local systems among the Amandebele for years and conserved biodiversity. These taboos played (and play) a critical role in the shaping of the ecological ethics in Amandebele culture. Even though the Amandebele people have been exposed to modern forces and global culture, they still live by the principles of this worldview which continues to include taboos, totemism and rituals. Their ideas have not remained static. Rather, they choose to preserve these critical aspects of their heritage which continue to protect the earth in their part of the world.

In summary, two observations emerge from this section's discussion. First, the significance of usufruct, which linked the use rights with ethics regulating both social equity and the protection of the ecosystem. Secondly, the practice of usufruct rights over the land, fiduciary relationships, use rights with the duty to protect and conserve land, water, trees and earth as well, formed the source of the Amandebele ecosystemic ethics.

BICC Missionaries and Their Perspective on Land Use

The BICC missionaries were purveyors of western ideas and values in Africa (Heisey, 1988, 12-15). Like all other missionaries to Africa (Gann, et al., 1975, 339), they brought and fostered technological change, preached the diffusion of new technological tools and introduced the western ways of ecological management, including agricultural transformation. The new tools they introduced included the plow which quickly became an idiom of progress in the region and radically transformed the agricultural technology. Their worldview differed markedly from the Amandebele.

Prior to the missionaries' arrival, Amandebele used a different technology essentially based on a different environmental ideology than that of settlers and missionaries (Ranger, 1999, 23-26). Planting mainly involved the broadcasting of seeds, and, occasionally, the use of sticks and hoes to *ukuqabanga* (making holes where they dropped a seed). Their agricultural methods and land use involved a system of plant rotation and allowing some sections of the land to lay fallow. The missionaries considered these practices archaic, wasteful and unscientific. Writing less than two decades after her arrival with her other missionary pioneers, Davidson (1915) asserts that when they first appeared, "very little land had ever been brought under cultivation" (222). She further states that there were few gardens. The BICC missionaries soon changed the landscape by advocating western ideas and technology for agricultural development. A report's observation about a trip to Durban, Natal (South Africa) by missionaries Jacob N. Engle and John Sheets confirms this connection between the BICC and the scientific model, "[T]he ride [to] Transvaal was pleasant [and] some farming is done but not on very scientific principles" (EV, XXIV, no. 5, March 7, 1910, 13).

The primary contribution the missionaries made to technological and agricultural change was their educational programs and the spread of literacy. At first missionaries funded the educational

programs, which they considered effective ways of evangelism. Later the government paid for the educational programs and missionaries provided teaching services. By accepting grants from the state, missionaries unwittingly put themselves at the service of the colonial government which used them to train Amandebele for menial but necessary jobs. The Amandebele "needed" a teaching in "the dignity of labor" and civilization (Davidson, 1915, 133). Typical of a majority of missionaries, Davidson's words leave the impression that Amandebele were lazy, subsisted merely as farmers and were starving. This was in sharp contrast with one of Davidson's earlier descriptions of the Amandebele,

> Their chief occupation is farming, and they grow corn, millet, sweet potatoes, peanuts, ground peas, melons, citrons, and pumpkins. Their favorite food seems to be porridge eaten with meat into the broth of which ground peanuts have been cooked. The generally have chickens, sheep, goats, or cattle, and often hunt or trap animals (198).

The missionaries seemed to consider western culture to be substantially Christian, which helped them wed their religion with that of the western, scientific worldview. Robert Handy observed that "missionaries portrayed Western civilization as resulting from ideas derived from the gospel" (Handy, 1971, 110). Practicing farming the western way was seen as a civilizing pursuit which also helped to eliminate polygyny, a sign of barbarism. The discussion about farming as a civilizing practice had audiences beyond the BCC missionaries. Davidson, reporting on what was said by "one of the officials," states that "the best way of doing away with polygamy is by producing civilizing ways of farming" (1915, 223). She did not explain how farming became a civilizing process. The difference in religion between the Amandebele and the missionaries cannot be taken lightly. This researcher conducted an interview with one of the retired missionaries that served the Amandebele in which that person states that the missionaries considered the Amandebele lifestyle backward, pagan and manifestly idolatrous. Further, they incorrectly described the Amandebele as animists.[2]

In 1898, at the conclusion of the war of resistance by the indigenous population, five missionaries representing the BICC arrived in Matopo to evangelize the Amandebele. Only one man among the group, Jesse Engle from rural America, was a farmer by profession. Like most of the missionary groups that preceded them, Engle, on behalf of the BICC, requested land from John Cecil Rhodes who, at the time, lived in South Africa. Rhodes had just

made peace with the Amandebele. They were still seething with discontent for the parceling out of their land and cattle piece-meal, and, according to Davidson, "had never been subdued by the English soldiers" (1915, 56) when she and her group arrived at Matopo. Accordingly, keen to pacify the Amandebele, Rhodes recommended to government officials in Zimbabwe that Engle and his team be given "a mission reservation of 3000 acres in the Matopo Hills" (51). He ends his letter with the observation that "missionaries are better than policemen and cheaper" (49). Davidson quickly adds that Rhodes was prompted to give them land out of his Christian motivation and desire that "missionary work and the Christianization of the natives was the only solution of the native problems" (49).

Obviously, Davidson erroneously believed that the calculating Cecil Rhodes was an honest man who negotiated with good intentions. What she could not see was that Rhodes was devious, calculating and pragmatic. The picture painted by Robin Palmer (1977) seems to be more accurate with respect to Rhodes' reasons for negotiating with the Amandebele. Robin notes, "By the middle of 1896, Rhodes recognized that it would require much time and money, and cost a great many white lives before the Ndebele 'rebels' could be driven from the virtually impregnable Matopos Hills." Consequently, "the leading Ndebele headmen made a peace treaty as between equals" (63). The land grants that Rhodes gave to churches fell within his much broader vision to develop the country to meet his selfish economic reasons to plunder the resources of the country for the benefit of his kith and kin. Rhodes' vision of resource extraction included the expropriation of indigenous people's land through mostly foul means.

The narration about how the BICC acquired land in the Matopos Hills is important for two basic reasons. First, it goes to show how quickly the BICC missionaries formed an alliance with the state and, thereby, became complicit in the use of derogatory language to form negative views about Africans. In so doing, they joined the broader white narrative that said they were "lazy, untrustworthy and savage." This response came immediately after an initial positive impression that Davidson (1915) had about the Amandebele whom she first described as generous and welcoming. She adds that "the majority of them are not black, but a chocolate brown and some have features resembling white people. They are generally large, well-informed and intelligent-looking." (56) She soon mysteriously turns negative: "They are more or less rude in manner, un-

couth in appearance…." Later she would describe the first group of twelve students as "savages" (67).[3]

Second, the story must be told to highlight the fact that the BICC missionaries, like the rest of the missionaries in the country, actively participated in the scramble that alienated land from the indigenous people. Palmer (1977) opines, "The missionaries also helped themselves liberally. By the turn of century different denominations had acquired…almost a third of a million acres, with the Catholics taking nearly half this amount" (36). The participation in the land grab showed the disregard that missionaries had for the African population who they ostensibly had come to serve. Indeed, the spirit of cooperation between the state and the churches was strong and secretive. The BICC collected taxes on behalf of the government and allowed the British South African Company to graze its cattle on recently looted land from the Amandebele (Davidson, 1915, 94). This position immediately set the missionaries on a collision course with Amandebele.

In addition to plows and harrows, missionaries quickly introduced and trained Africans to use oxen for draught, crop rotation (Sider, ed., 1989, 156), along with contour and farrow planting to stop soil erosion. They even introduced farming and dairy farming education as part of what they called the Industrial Plan (EV, February 1910, 13). The BICC missionaries taught and trained locals on agriculture, animal husbandry, stock breeding, dairy farming, and, after World War II, extensive use of fertilizers and pest control regimes. The majority of these practices eventually led to environmental degradation in the Matopo area. Due to problems with ants and other pests destroying vegetation and crops, the missionaries relied heavily on the use of pesticides after World War II. Those actions resulted in poisoned water along with dead fish and insects needed for the ecosystem (EV, September 1910, 12-13). Their extensive use of wagons contributed heavily to the creation of soil erosion and the killing of some plants. These vehicles, 18 feet long, "very strong and heavy [almost three tons]", some with iron wheels and drawn by 18 donkeys, were used for transport, especially to crisscross the country from Matopo or Mtshabezi (EV, 1937, 48). Large farms, such as a 3,000-acre one, were used to run hefty-sized herds of cattle that mitigated the demand for agriculture (EV, June 1908, 4-5). They also engaged in slash-and-burn clearing of brush for overnight camping to prevent mosquitoes and lions from attacking them (EV, September 1910, 12-13).

After Matopo, and within the first decade of their arrival, the BICC acquired a 6,000-acre farm at Mtshabezi established for the

same purpose as Matopo Mission farm. The indigenous residents from both areas had been evicted to make room for the park and farms. Harvey Frey, BICC missionary at Mtshabezi reports, "They had at the time of reporting, half a team of donkeys, a full team being 16; cows, sheep and goats, chickens for eggs and sale….Served the commercial goal of the farms. Mtshabezi had 6,000 acres of land" (EV, November 23, 1911, 13). The BICC also helped disseminate knowledge on high yield hybrid and transgenic maize, including the open-pollinated variety. While the introduction of hybrid maize increased production, these actions also had downsides. The crop needed more fertilizer than the indigenous corn and was not suitable in the most arid areas where Amandebele lived. Also, poor people could not afford to purchase sufficient fertilizer to see the crop to its harvest stage. With people shifting to this crop, drought-resistant indigenous crops were eliminated by substitution. Additionally, agriculture that mostly promoted one type of crop killed the biodiversity (EV, February 7, 1910). All these actions fed the western worldview that the colonial government and the BICC missionaries tried to force onto the Amandebele.

Perspective Contrasted and Implications for the Ecosystem

The contrast between the BICC missionaries' perspective on the land and its use could not have been starker when compared with that of the Amandebele. As shown, the two groups differed on reasons for owning land, land use and land tenure.

While the Amandebele based their understandings on their traditional worldview which was informed by their religion, the missionaries' views were derived from the Bible. They viewed land as something to be tamed and nurtured. J. R. Zook, chair of the missionary board of the BICC, aptly sums up their perspective on the land when he describes the land in Zimbabwe as "infested with wild, vicious animals which needed to be tamed" (Davidson, 1915, 6). The imagery conjured by the taming and nurturing of the land is reminiscent of the assignment given to humans by God in the Garden of Eden as portrayed in the book of Genesis. In fact, the chronology of the creation narrative, as related by one of the BICC's former missionaries in an interview, pertains to these views of the missionaries (Sibanda, 2016, Anonymous). After creating people in his image, God gave them dominion over creation. In the same interview, the former missionary asserts that the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden, which hitherto had pristine condi-

tions, introduced the problem of environmental degradation, a condition bedeviling ecology since then and necessitating rescue by humans. The Christian creation story seems to give humans a mandate to dominate the ecosystem. However, the Genesis rendition did not appear to grant humans unfettered power, but one proscribed by the responsibility as stewards.

Missionaries' reason for land ownership was purely utilitarian and capitalistic in nature. Their utilitarian reasons included the building of their residences, churches, schools and hospitals. Educational and medical services were meant to further serve their primary purpose, to proselytize Amandebele. This aspect of the pragmatic way of land use was not as controversial as the commercial one. The attribution of a capitalistic land use goal is contentious and contested. While the bulk of the literature (Davidson, 1915, 94; EV, September 1908, 3) seems to support this view, a few dissenting voices exist. They are persuasive but not convincing. Charles Arnold, the last missionary farm manager who oversaw all three BICC farms in Zimbabwe, offered a differing view in a telephonic interview with the author that sums up the position of the minority voices. Arnold asserts that the church farms were established "to provide locations for churches, schools and medical care facilities…but never as commercial farms" (Doug). Capitalistic farming meant that they put expansive land under cultivation with no regard to the protection of swamps, wetlands and protected vegetation (Ranger, 1999, 49-51) as Amadebele had done. In contrast with Amandebele who believed in communal land tenure, missionaries, like the settlers, practiced individual land ownership. To the Amadebele, land was for religious, socio-cultural and economic reasons.

The implications for the environment in terms of degradation and social justice are far reaching. Driven by the need to construct residential, hospital and school buildings along with the forces of capitalistic farming, missionaries cleared massive amounts of land on the farms through slash-and-burn and uprooting of trees. These actions contributed significantly to deforestation and loss of biodiversity. The introduction of the plow, an idiom of modernity to both missionaries and settlers, further increased the amount of land under cultivation. While the use of the plow arguably increased production, it simultaneously contributed to the causes of soil erosion and the reduced biodiversity. Kate B. Showers compares the two systems. Although she writes on the situation in Lesotho, her words pertain to Zimbabwe as well as to most of Africa. She observes,

> The traditional land use system involved a minimal disturbance of indigenous vegetation. A detailed set of rules had been codified which regulated the harvest of the trees, shrubs, and grasses, ensuring their conservation and preservation....When crops were planted the seed was broadcasted, mimicking the distribution of the natural plant cover; water was not channeled between rows of plants in the fields. The use of hoes and the practice of rotating minimized the extent to which the soil organic matter reserves were depleted, thus preserving soil structure. The rotation of fields from crops back to grassland also served to preserve the top soil (1989, 273).

Thus, contrary to the assertion by many scholars and missionaries in colonial Africa that the Amandebele ways of conservation were wasteful, destructive and unproductive, Showers' description shows the opposite. The Amandebele attitudes and actions toward the land were and are productive, environmentally friendly and offer much to the world. Despite the fact that Amandebele used sticks and hoes for planting, they fed themselves and traded their surplus produce. Ian Phimister supports this last claim. Writing of the period immediately after the 1896 to 1897 Risings, he states that the traditional ways of planting were used in Matabeleland, home of the Amandebele. He states that "at least one district planted a variety of crops considerably in excess of their own requirements, with the express intention to trading" (Palmer and Parsons, 1977, 256). Although not encouraging people to revert to the old ways of farming, his statement demonstrates that productivity and environmental conservation are compatible.

The second implication for this research pertains to the link of environment to social justice. With the introduction of colonialism, the access to land by Africans became restricted, contested and racialized. The white settlers alienated land from Africans to farmland and national parks. With the increase of the African population consigned to the reserves, land degradation and soil fertility depletion ensued. Concern over land deterioration moved the state to intervene by introducing conservation schemes which included destocking and forced land resettlements. The Land Act (1930), the National Reserve (1944) and the Land Husbandry Acts (1952) were all designed to reverse the perceived environmental impacts of African farming practices through land planning and regulation. The results of these Acts proved disastrous to the Amandebele.

Two things affected Amandebele most in terms of their sense of environmental ethics. First, communal land was surreptitiously transformed from common to private property. Missionaries exacerbated the situation by occupying land that once belonged to

Amandebele and by refusing to share farm land with them. In this sense, the missionary became a settler. In turn, land dispossession of Amandebele by both the missionary and the white settlers led to an inordinate and unjust burden on women in regard to farming commitments. While it is generally said that the introduction of the plow increased the participation of men in agriculture, this researcher's own work indicates that women assumed more agricultural responsibilities. Their male population was pushed away from their homes through labour migration and internal *isibhalo* (forced labour). Davidson (1915, 143-144) and the *Evangelical Visitor* (EV, Feb 21, 1910:12-13) observe that thousands of men left their homes to work, mostly in the mines. By the end of World War I, Amandebele women had assumed most of the agricultural tasks once performed by men. While this observation does not suggest that the pre-colonial Amandebele community was egalitarian and promoted equality between the two genders, almost-parity in sharing duties took place as compared with the time when colonialism embedded Amandebele identity.

The enclosure of farms by missionaries profoundly affected the environmental ethics of the Amandebele by denying them access to a geographic location where their identity was based. Their dislocation or removal from the land disturbed the Amandebele's anchors of memory, resulting in their sense of place, and consequently their place-based sense of communal identity, being uprooted. Additionally, the expulsion and subsequent fencing of commons prevented the Amandebele from practicing their traditional use rights such as visiting sacred sites. This disturbed and disrupted their sense of place and ruptured their biophysical connection to the land. Devon Pena convincingly argues that when people are removed from their landscapes, they lose their "habitat for rare plants used in local ethnobotany, a loss of the spiritual qualities of the land also takes place" (Pena, in Adamson, et al, 2002, 71). People's culture disappears or gets distorted. They find themselves having to redefine their relationship with the new environment where sometimes features that helped them to preserve the ecosystem – sacred trees, places, swamps, sites and rivers – are absent. After the missionaries fenced the 3,000 acre land and removed the Amandebele from the area, these indigenous inhabitants continued to exercise their historical rights over the land by collecting firewood, hunting, fishing, cutting thatching grass and gathering wild fruits. They gained access either by negotiating with missionaries or simply trespassing. Forced to live in crowded, arid places with soil whose fertility had been severely depleted and

with very few spiritual pillars to help them protect the environment, the Amandebele engaged in actions formerly anathema to them. Mostly out of necessity, they started to cut trees they would have considered sacred, killed animals that shared their own totems, and destroyed some riparian life zones. Above all, the forced removal of the Amandebele ruptured the memories they had embedded in their place over generations. Their link with environmental ethics was destroyed in the process.

Differences in worldviews or values may foster misunderstanding and conflict. Thus, disputes about environmental issues such as desirable land use or ownership may be exacerbated by underlying differences in the ways people think about nature, God and scientific knowledge or the relationship between humans and non-humans. Some people believe that their way of life is good and better than others. This kind of approach expresses itself as racism or ethnocentrism when people think of themselves as the standard bearers by which others are to be measured. The BICC missionaries found themselves in this position where they saw themselves as epitomes of what they perceived as western civilization with a Christian base. It is difficult to determine whether the basis of their rejections and dismissal of Amandebele culture was a result of ethnocentrism, racism or both. This researcher leans toward the belief that racism formed the rationale for their ethnocentrism.

Historically, missionaries had very little to no contact with the black Americans of their homeland before their first contact with Amandebele. Additionally, in the nineteenth century, very little discussion on the issue of racism, let alone that of slavery, took place (Wittlinger, 1978, 533). Wittlinger makes a compelling explanation about why missionaries might have acted in a racist manner toward Amandebele. He observes that, in the nineteenth century, Christians were "generally quiescent about social problems. They were more inclined to deplore the sinfulness of society than to concern themselves with social needs and social injustice" (1978, 532). He further points out that "well into the 20th century the BICC membership was…rural people who only incidentally contacted black Americans" (533). Anecdotal evidence indicates that the BICC in North America is still dogged by the same challenge. For instance, the denomination has failed to attract a multicultural membership in a country that is increasingly becoming diverse, inclusive and progressive. This observation is critical for this study. One might argue that the ethnocentric/racist stance in the nineteenth century made it easier for BICC missionaries to be dismissive of the Amandebele placed-based knowledge which

helped them to conserve the ecosystem. The indictment was specifically on the European land-use method which was promoted as a scientific way of farming but was generally criticized "as being far less suitable than indigenous practices for the conditions of semi-arid [areas]" (Grove, 1989, 165).

Conclusion

Clearly, while traditional or scientific technology, when used appropriately, can be an integral ingredient in assisting to keep a balanced harmony between humans and non-humans, the underlying human attitudes cannot be dismissed. They are a determinant factor and generally embedded in cultures and religions. As shown, the culture and religious systems of the two groups in this study were different, with the Amandebele considering themselves part of the ecosystem. They viewed and view the land as something to be respected. They, too, believed in raising crops for trade, but on a small scale. In fact, the Amandebele view of nature has factors in common with modern-day Deep Ecology in the West which promotes biocentrism and believes "that all things have an equal right to live and blossom" (Devall and Sessions, qtd in Luke, 2002, 180). More specifically, this newer system recognizes the equality of rights for every human, living or dead, on the planet. Amandebele share Deep Ecology's goal of the preservation of an environmental harmony and balance as well as the protection of the particularity of the diverse forms of beings within nature.

Several conclusions arise from this study. To begin, contrary to the assertion by many scholars and missionaries in colonial Africa, the indigenous knowledge system has valuable contributions to offer in preserving the ecosystem and biodiversity, especially through its wealth of norms, taboos and diverse cultural practices that have sustained local ecosystems across Africa for centuries. Secondly, human attitudes, more than technology, are critical in keeping a balanced harmony between humans and non-humans. Third, while the Christian notion of stewardship of the earth has promise in addressing a healthy relationship between humans and non-humans, it has not yet effectively explored the abuse of ecosystems. Christians must address the major concern raised by Deep Ecology which questions the privileging of humans and their place apart from the ecosystem. While the Amandebele seem to have had better attitudes toward the environment and had better ways of preserving the land, it would be naïve to invite the world to

revert to those pre-colonial ways. They were not perfect. However, their ideas were more inclusive and effective in maintaining a balance between humans and non-humans. The scientific model of production had some merits that drew people to its use. Consequently, this paper argues for an integration of the two paradigms, the traditional one based on the indigenous knowledge system and the dominant western scientific one, in order to create a system that will better protect and preserve the ecosystems of the earth.

References

Adamson, J., Evans, M. M., & Stein, R. (Eds.). (2002). *The environmental justice reader, politics, & pedagogy*. Tucson: University of Arizona.

Alexander, J., McGregor, J., & Ranger, T. (2002). *Violence & memory, one hundred years in the 'dark forests' of Matabeleland*. Oxford: James Currey.

Berglund, A. (1989). *Zulu thought-patterns and symbolism*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press edition.

Boas, M. & Dunn K. (1913). *Politics of African origin in Africa: Autochthony, citizenship and conflict.* London/New York: Zed Books.

Bowden, B. The thin ice of civilisation. (2011). *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political,* 36(2), 118–35.

Chaumba, J. et al. (2003). "New politics, new livelihoods: Agrarian change." *Zimbabwe: Review of African Political Economy,* (98), 585-608.

Cheruma, M. & Masaka, D. (2010). "Taboos as sources of Shona's environmental ethics." *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 12(7), 121-133.

"Definition of ecology." (n.d.). Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies. Retrieved from http://www.caryinstitute.org/discover-ecology/definition-ecology..

Davidson, H. F. (1915). *South and South Central Africa: A record of fifteen years' missionary labours among primitive peoples*. Elgin, IL: Brethren Publishing House.

Eckersley, R. (1992). *Environmentalism and political theory: Towards an ecocentric approach*. London: UCL Press.

Evangelical Visitor. (1908, June 15). XXII (12).

_____. (1908, September 15). XXII (18).

_____. (1910, February 7). XXIV (3).

_____. (1910, March 7). XXIV (5).

_____. (1910, September 5). XXIV (11).

_____. (1911, November 13). XXV (23).

_____. (1911, November 23). XXII (23).

_____. (1937, August 28 and 29). (L).

Frantz, F. (1961). *The wretched of the earth*. New York: Grove Press.

Gann, L. H. and Dugnan, P. (Eds.). (1975). *Colonialism in Africa, 1870-1960*. Vol. 4. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Heisey, N. (1988). "Of two minds: Ambivalence in the language of Brethren in Christ missionaries. Part 1: Africa." *Brethren in Christ History and Life*. XI(2): 95-132.

Grove, R. (1989). "Scottish missionaries, evangelical discourses and the origins of conservation thinking in southern Africa 1820-1900." *Journal of Southern*

African Studies, 15(2), 163-187. Johnstone, R. L. (1997). *Religion in society: A sociology of religion.* (5th ed.). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Mackenzie, C. G. (1993). "Demythologising the missionaries: A reassessment of the functions and relationships of Christian missionary education under colonialism." *Comparative Education*, 29(1), 45-66.

Masaka , D. (2011). "Zimbabwe land contestation and her politico-economic crises: A philosophical dialogue." *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 15(2), 331-347.

Marthinus, L. D. (2001). *African earthkeepers: Wholistic interfaith mission*. New York: Orbis.

Mawere, M. (2013). "Traditional environment conservation strategies in precolonial Africa: Lessons for Zimbabwe to forget or to carry forward into the future?" *Afro-Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(4.1). Retrieved from http://www.onlineresearchjournals.com/aajoss/art/105.pdf

Mbiti, J. (1969). *African religion and philosophy*. London: Heinemann.

Moore, D. S. (2005). *Suffering for territory, race, place, and power in Zimbabwe*.

Moyo, S., Robinson, P., Katerere, Y.,Stevenson, S.,and Gumbo, D. (1991). *Zimbabwe environmental dilemma: Balancing resource inequalities*. Harare: ZeroPress.

Mwambazambi, K. (2010). "Problems in Africa: A theological response." *Ethiopian Journal of Environmental Studies and Management*, 3(2), 54-64.

Nabhan, G. P. (1997a). "Epilogue: Restoring the sonorous landscape." In *Cultures of Habitat: On Nature, Culture and Story (*pp. 311-319). Washington D.C.: Counterpoint.

Nabhan, G. P. (1997b). "Let US now praise native crops: American cornucopia." In *Cultures of habitat: On nature, culture and story* (pp. 209-223). Washington D.C.: Counterpoint.

Ndlovu, C. & Manjeru, L.. (2014). "The influence of rituals and taboos on sustainable wetlands management: The case of Matobo District in Matabeleland South Province." *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 4(4). Retrieved from http://www.ijsrp.org/research-paper-0414/ijsrp-p2807.pdf.

Nyanjeka, T. M. (1996). "Shona women and the Mutupo principle." In Ruether, R. R. (Ed.). *Women healing earth: Third world women on ecology, feminism, and religion*. London: SCM Press.

Nyerere, J. K. (1968). *Ujamaa - Essays on socialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Palmer, R. H. (1977). *Land and racial domination in Rhodesia*. London: Heinemann Educational.

Palmer, R. & Birch, I. (1992). *Zimbabwe A Land Divided*. Cowley, Oxford: Oxfam Publishing.

Palmer, R. & Parsons, N. (Eds.). (1977). *The roots of rural poverty in central and southern Africa*. Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Pongweni, A. J. C. (1996). *Shona, praise, poetry as role negotiation: The battle of the clans and the sexes*. Gweru: Mambo Press.

Ranger, T. (1989). "Whose heritage? The case of the Matobo National Park." *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 15(2), 217-249.

Renias Ngara, R. & Mangizvo. R. V. (2013). "Indigenous knowledge systems and the conservation of natural resources in the Shangwe community in Gokwe District, Zimbabwe." *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 3 (1), 20-28.

Said, E. (1994). *Culture and imperialism*. New York: Vintage.
Showers, K. B. (1989). "Soil erosion in the kingdom of Lesotho: Origins and colonial response, 1830s-1850s." *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 15(2), 263-286.
Sibanda, E. (1998). *The Brethren in Christ in Southern Rhodesia, 1898-1980: A historical study of its contributions towards the promotion of human rights* (PhD dissertation). University of Denver/Iliff School of Theology, Denver.
_____. (2016, July 26). Interview with Charles Arnold by telephone.
_____. (2016, July 28). Interview with Anonymous by telephone.
Sider, E. M. (1989). *My story my song: Life stories by Brethren in Christ missionaries.* Nappanee, Indiana: Brethren in Christ World Missions.
Wa Thiong'o, N. (1986). *Decolonising the mind: The politics of language in African literature*. London: Heinemann.
Wekwete, N. N. (1995). "Population and the Environment in Zimbabwe: The Case of Rural Households." *Southern African Journal of Demography*, 5(1), 60-64.
White, L. (1967). "The historical roots of our ecologic crisis." *Science*, 155(3767), 1203-1207. Retrieved from http://science.sciencemag.org/content/155/3767/1203.
Wittlinger, C. O. (1978). *Quest for piety and obedience: The story of the Brethren in Christ.* Nappanee, Indiana: Evangel Press.

Notes

[1] I agree with Martin Chanock who finds the term 'subsistence farming' unhelpful in that it overlooks pre-colonial trading.

[2] For a sharp critique of Ronald L. Johnson's (1997) antiquated and essentialist idea of 'animism' see Axel-Ivar Berglund's (1989), whose more informed view I support.

[3] Although Nancy Heisey's (1988) article "Of Two Minds: Ambivalence in the Language of Brethren in Christ Missionaries. Part 1: Africa," seems to imply that over time missionaries' attitudes toward the local Amandebele became worse, which is expressed in separate church conferences, and complicity in the use of racist language used by the white settlers (37), she seems to questions the legitimacy of such changes. Heisey is very clear and convincing in stating that "although changes in attitudes have occurred over time, those ambivalent attitudes have persisted into the modern era, shaped by racism, Western cultural and political orientation, and an evangelical worldview" (15), and that "barriers which existed at the beginning between Africans and North American missionaries were not broken down" (36-37) in *Brethren in Christ History and Life*. XI (2): 95-132.