

Language as a Barrier to Cross-Cultural Evangelism in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

This historical study explored language as a barrier to cross-cultural evangelism in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. The article is based on the relevant literature review, Synod Acts and church committee minutes. It outlines the negative effect of using the Shona language, the Shona literature, the Bible, Hymn books, Catechism and the deployment of pastors and evangelists who are Shona speaking. The study was conducted through a review of primary sources and documents about evangelism outreaches in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. Hence, it was discovered that the church is failing to penetrate the gospel into other cultures because of using the Shona language as the medium of communication. The article details the importance of language inclusivity in order for the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe to penetrate all corners of the country with the gospel. The history of the church showed that the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe managed to penetrate Masvingo Province and part of Manicaland Province because of the use of the Shona language. This church is struggling to penetrate Matebeleland North, Matebeleland South and part of the Midlands provinces because of the language barrier. The study recommends that the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe improve on language inclusive, Bible and literature translations and training of personnel who fit well across all cultures in Zimbabwe.

Key words: Barrier, cross-culture, evangelism, language, Reformed Church in Zimbabwe.

INTRODUCTION

The main intention of this study was to explore how the Church of God's growth was accomplished by men and women who were committed to evangelism and church growth. Church growth across all cultures is God's will (Chilenje, 2007). The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe was founded by missionaries from the Dutch Reformed

Church Mission of the Cape in South Africa on the 9th of September 1891 at Morgenster Mission in the area of Chief Mugabe in Fort Victoria, currently known as Masvingo. The missionary team was under the leadership of Andrew Louw. Louw came with seven Sotho-speaking evangelists who dedicated their lives to spreading and expanding God's kingdom in Zimbabwe, which was by then known as Mashonaland or Southern

Rhodesia. The names of the seven evangelists were as follows: Micha Magato, Joshua Masoha, Lukas Mokoete, Jeremia Morudu, Petros Morudu, David Molea, and Izak Khumalo (Merwe, 1981).

According to Mutumburanzou (1999), the church spread across Masvingo Province, which is dominated by the Shona-speaking people. The church had its first presbytery in 1917 and its first Synod in 1952. This marked the transfer of responsibilities from the mission board in South Africa, to the young indigenous church in Zimbabwe. Baloyi (2016) concurs with Mutumburanzou (1999) that the church managed to spread all over Masvingo Province and Buhera District in Manicaland Province among the Shona-speaking people.

The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, hereafter referred to as RCZ, has been in existence for more than 132 years, but it is struggling to evangelize and grow in some of the provinces in the country because of the language barrier. The language which the church uses is *Shona/Karanga*, mainly for the people who hail from Masvingo Province. The use of Shona language and Shona church literature is a major hindrance for the RCZ to have an impact when doing evangelism across cultures.

This study focused on how the dominance of the Shona language in the RCZ acts as a barrier to the conversion of people who speak other languages in the country. Matthew (28:18-20) says, *‘Therefore go and make disciples of all nations ... to the end of the world’*. The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe should incorporate all languages

when doing evangelism, as opposed to the exclusive use of the Shona language (Shona Bibles, Shona Hymn books, Shona Catechism, Shona Constitution and Shona speaking pastors).

Obed (2001) argues in his book that ‘when doing evangelism and church planting, everything should be done in vernacular’. Effective evangelism is whereby everything is completely in the language which is well understood by the preacher and the recipient. Furthermore, Greenway (1999) states that when doing evangelism, it is important to train lay leaders to minister to the people within their homes and communities in their own language. Understanding language diversity when doing evangelism among people of other cultures is very important, for it guards against the language exclusivity.

The history of the RCZ notes the growth and expansion of the church during its pioneer stage. The missionaries managed to evangelize all over Masvingo Province and part of Manicaland Province because they were using local people to translate the gospel into their own language (Merwe, 1981). Evangelism must not be taken as a tribal issue because God is a God of the whole world and He knows and understands all languages. He is the God who fits well in all cultures across the globe.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to explore the monopoly or dominance of the Shona language as a barrier to cross-cultural evangelism in the RCZ. This barrier hinders effective evangelism and church growth. As a result, there is low conversion of people of

other cultures and languages. The church is perceived as the church for Masvingo people who are Shona-speaking people. Moreau et al. (2004) corroborate that Paul and Barnabas in their first missionary journey encountered the reality of communicating across cultural boundaries (Acts 14:8-20). In Lystra, they healed a man crippled from birth. The barrier in language led the residents of Lystra to start to organize a sacrifice in honour of Paul and Barnabas, mistaking them for Zeus and Hermes. When Paul and Barnabas heard it, they told the crowd that it was unacceptable for them to be honoured in such a manner. This did not go down well with the people of Lystra because they turned against Paul and Barnabas and they stoned Paul and left him to die. It is true that the treatment of Paul by the crowd was too extreme (Moreau et al., 2004). The truth is that there was a misunderstanding in communication due to cultural differences among Paul, Barnabas and Lycaonians. It is against this context that the research seeks to draw lessons for the church to consider the importance of the diversity of languages in doing cross-cultural evangelism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language

According to the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe (Section 6, p. 17), the following languages, namely Chewa, Barwe, English, Kalanga, Koisan, Nambya, Ndau, Ndebele, Shangani, Shona, Sign language, Sotho, Tonga, Tswana, Venda and Xhosa, are the officially recognized languages of Zimbabwe. The State and all institutions and agencies of the government at every level must ensure that all officially recognized

languages are treated equitably and take into account the language preference of people affected by governmental measures and communications. It is enshrined in the Constitution that the State must promote and advance the use of all languages used in Zimbabwe, including sign language, and must create conditions for the development of those languages (The Constitution of Zimbabwe Section 6.4, p. 17).

The word 'language' may be defined as, 'the ability to use speech to communicate or it is the speech of a particular nation or group of people' (Higgleton, 1995). However, in the Bible, it is indicated that God created Adam and Eve in his own likeness and from the very beginning he spoke to them, which shows that they were able to understand and communicate. According to Lieberman (1997), Adam had the ability to speak from the very day that he was brought into existence. This shows that Adam and Eve were created by God, with oral communication capabilities.

All languages here on earth, including those mentioned in the Constitution of Zimbabwe, originated from God as He is the Creator of everything; hence we conclude that there is no language which is superior or inferior to other languages because they are from one source.

Language plays a major role in evangelism if it is understood well. The controversy of the Gweru congregation in the RCZ is one of the eye-openers. Merwe (1981) notes that the Gweru congregation is one of the congregations which was handed over to the RCZ by the Reformed Church in Zambia. The controversy arose because of

the inscription in the church which was written by the Chewa-speaking people before the transfer of this church building to the RCZ. The inscription which was on the wall was a verse (John 3:16), *'For God so loved the world'*, but the challenge with the Shona-speaking people was to translate the verse from the Chewa language into their own language. In Chewa language the verse reads, *Mzimu anakonda dziko lapansi*. The RCZ Gweru Congregation demonstrated against the church council, saying such kind of words should not be on the walls of the church/temple of God; to them, it was an insult. Both youth and elders failed to reach a consensus, so the youth were given suspension from the church for one year and the matter was taken to the presbytery and later forwarded to the Synod assembly of 1996. The delegates at the Synod endorsed that the words should be erased from the wall within a period of one month (Synod Minutes, 1996). The whole church (RCZ) had seen this as an insult. This is so because the Shona language is dominating other languages in the country due to its larger population of speakers than others. These kinds of issues have a negative bearing on the growth of the church on issues of cross-cultural evangelism.

Cross Culture

The word 'culture' is a very broad concept because it takes into account issues that are linguistic, political, economic, social, psychological, religious, national, and cultural and etymological (Slot, 2000). Culture is a design of living, a way of thinking, feeling, and believing. It is a plan according to which a society adapts itself to

physical, social and surrounding environment.

Culture is a way of thinking and living whereby one picks up a set of attitudes, values, norms and beliefs that are taught and reinforced by other members in the group. This set of basic assumptions and solutions to the problems of the world is a shared system that is passed on from generation to generation to ensure survival. A culture consists of unwritten and written principles and laws that guide how an individual interacts with the outside world. Members of a culture can be identified by the fact that they share values and norms. They may be united by religion, by geography, by race or ethnicity.

Cross-cultural communication, thus, refers to the communication between people who have differences in any one of the following: styles of working, age, nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, among others. Cross-cultural communication can also refer to the attempts that are made to exchange, negotiate and mediate cultural differences by means of language, gestures and body language. It is how people belonging to different cultures communicate with each other. Cross-cultural communication is a cycle of making and dividing importance between people from different cultures. Listening to other people and allowing them to recount their specific manner and own words, we do not have the opportunity to judge people.

According to Rheenen (1996), if the church is evangelising in cross-cultural communities, she must be in a position to

participate in the lifestyles of the local people among whom she ministers, that is, speaking their language, sharing their struggles and strengths. This is supported by Moreau et al., (2004) who note that cross-cultural communication is a tricky business if it is not handled well; it can end up with the breakdown of the relationship between the preacher and the recipient.

Christ claims that although He has sent us into the world, we are not to be loyal to, or fond of, it. In order to effectively share the gospel with people from various cultural backgrounds, we must clearly comprehend what this implies. People, things, and ideas that are presented by cultures beckon to us to ally with them. In order to effectively share the gospel, we must learn how to impact culture with God's kingdom rather than allow the world to dilute God's kingdom in our own life. We frequently refer to the specific environment we inhabit in as having a culture (Sieberhagen, 2020). The context in which it is used affects how it is defined. Niebuhr's (1951) assertion that culture "comprises language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organization, inherited artifacts, technical processes, and values" is taken into consideration in the context of this article. Given that we are thinking about how the gospel interacts with every facet of culture, a broad definition like this one is necessary. Cross-cultural evangelism must go beyond the surface and deep into all levels of culture so that when a people are converted, it transforms all element of their lives regardless of the culture (Niebuhr, 1951).

God as Cross-cultural Evangelist

The best example of cross-cultural evangelism was given by Jesus when He decided to become a baby. In taking on the limits of human nature, the Creator assumed the role of the created thing, as opposed to simply bursting into the cosmos and occupying it violently. Jesus took on the form of a helpless infant Jew, learning the language and customs from His parents before studying with the rabbis and instructors. The greatest model to follow is provided by the Incarnation for the cross-cultural evangelist. In order to become fully human, Jesus, who is God, voluntarily gave up His rights as God. As a result, He agreed to be constrained by all that was inherent in human nature. He was able to seamlessly blend into His people's culture thanks to this voluntarily loss of rights, which helped Him to share God's love for all people (Beougher & Dorset, 2017).

Beougher and Dorset (2017) claim that in order for the church to better succeed in cross-cultural evangelism, one must leave her home and go across considerable distances to reach a people who are distinctly different from her in terms of culture and language. Most individuals would agree that the only authentic missionary approach to evangelism is cross-cultural evangelism. If not for Jesus' example (who serves as the role model for everyone who wants to engage in cross-cultural evangelism), the undertaking would be all but impossible.

The RCZ must strive to be a model for Jesus Christ, who, while being the Son of God, adopted a human body. It was via this strategy that God was able to win over a wide variety of individuals from various cultural

backgrounds for His kingdom. To reach out to all individuals across all civilizations, like Christ did, the RCZ must smoothly merge all cultures. This calls for the use of language that is comprehensible and accessible by individuals from all backgrounds.

Gospel Crossing Cultures

The gospel is universal and unconstrained by circumstance, according to Varner (2017). The message of the Bible, which is that Jesus came to live among us, died for our sins, and rose again so that we can have life, is one that never changes. People's comprehension and application of the gospel have, nevertheless, been enriched by several cultural artifacts. People should develop the ability to present the gospel only from the perspective of the Bible, rather than from the perspective of a culturally skewed perception of the gospel.

Church Meetings and Minutes

In church meetings such as church council, presbyteries, synodical committee meetings and Synod, the language used is the Shona language in all these sessions. The minutes and reports are compiled and produced in the Shona language. Almost everything in the RCZ literature shows that documents are compiled in Shona (Munyai WaShe, October 1981).

The RCZ is composed of men, women, youths, prayer warriors, couples, widows and single mothers as leagues in each congregation in the whole church. The groups meet at congregational, presbyteries and at the national level as a way of fellowshiping and witnessing the good news

to the believers and non-believers. During church conferences, the use of the Shona language dominates the centre stage even though there will be people from all provinces in the country. As a result of all this dominance of one language, people in other provinces are referring to the RCZ as the church of Masvingo people; they say in Shona, *'Kereke yaMavhitori/Masvingo* (Munyai WaShe, January, 1990).

Literature

As has previously been mentioned in this study, the majority of church literature is written in Shona. The hymn book, liturgical books, Catechism, Leagues Constitutions, and the RCZ Church Constitution (RCZ Bhuku yoMurairo, 2017) are all written in the Shona language regardless of other people from different places. Through the evangelism which was revived in 1995, the Church managed to evangelize areas such as Binga where people speak Tonga (Synod Minutes, 2008 & 2018), Chikombedzi where they speak Shangaan (Synod Minutes, 2016) Beit-Bridge where they speak Venda and Shangaan (Synod Minutes, 2010), and in Checheche in Chipinge where they speak Ndaou and Shangaan (Synod Minutes, 2012).

As stated in Section 6.3b of the Zimbabwean Constitution (p. 17), all institutions and agencies of government at all levels are required to consider the language preferences of those who will be impacted by decisions or communications made by them. Literature in indigenous languages is very important and necessary in every institution if that institution wants to remain relevant.

Evangelism

Ferguson (1988) defines evangelism from the original setting in which the word was used. He argues that it comes from a Greek word (*euangelizesthai*) which means to announce the good news. Therefore, evangelism is to share or announce the good news. Evangelism is to spread good news; that Jesus Christ died for people's sins and was raised from the dead according to the Word of God. Evangelism is communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ with the immediate intent of converting the hearer to have faith in Christ, and by reading the Word of God in their own language so that they can become a mature believer (Cocoris, 1984). Evangelism includes obedience to Christ, incorporation into his Church and responsible service into the world (Ferguson, 1988). Bediako (1992) states that when doing evangelism and church planting in other cultures everything should be in local language or within their own culture. True evangelism is whereby everything is completely in the language which is well understood by the preacher and the recipients.

Evangelism is the heart of the church's mission. As Armstrong (1979) states, it is not something the church does, but it is the true image of the church. This entails that evangelism is concerned with not only believers but non-believers as well and it is a continuing responsibility. The nature of the true church is to be evangelistic in its entity. Bosch (2012) notes that evangelism is the total activity of the church and it involves witnessing what God has done, is still doing and will be doing in people's lives. Therefore, evangelism is announcing that God, Creator and Lord of the universe, has personally intervened in human history and

has done so supremely through the person and ministry of Jesus Christ.

Evangelism is always an invitation and the one who evangelizes is a witness not a judge (Bosch, 2012). The issue of language when evangelising should be taken into consideration. True and authentic evangelism is always contextual. Being contextual means that evangelism must not separate people from the context views and values. People must not convert to a predominant culture but they must be converted to Jesus Christ of the gospels (Bosch, 2012). According to Munikwa (2011), in the RCZ the word 'evangelism' is used for reaching out to the lost souls and backsliders with the Gospel of Christ, with the aim of bringing them back to the Kingdom of Christ. This is done in different places, as already stated in preceding paragraphs. In his thesis, Munikwa (2011) argues that evangelism is the proclamation of the Gospel of salvation in Christ to those who do not believe in Him and call them to conversion, inviting them to become living and responsible members of the body of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The researcher can conclude that evangelism is one of the dimensions and activities of the church's goal to witness by word and deed in light of a particular condition and context, without converting one from his or her culture. Every individual and society must come to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord in order to commit to God's plan of bringing everything in one's culture under the authority of Christ. This is the goal of evangelism. The language used to

witness must not be more prevalent than the language used to share the gospel.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a literature review approach using primary sources such as Acts of the Synod, which can also be referred as minutes of previous Synods. Synod Minutes from 2008 to 2018, Church Magazine called *Munyai WaShe* and the RCZ *Bhuku yoMurairo* (Church Constitution) were consulted. Secondary sources such as literature sources about evangelism were investigated thoroughly. The author spent much of his time consulting different sources at Murray Theological College to obtain information on the research topic.

FINDINGS

The purpose of this article was to explore the use of the Shona language in the RCZ as the barrier to cross-cultural evangelism. The research acknowledges that Munikwa (2011) wrote much about intercultural missions among the Tonga people in the Binga District, Matebeleland North. The study unveiled the following key dimensions: the use of the Shona language when doing evangelism across-cultures, the use of Shona literature such as Bibles, hymn books, Catechism and Church constitution, and church meetings and minutes also held and written in the Shona language.

Shona Language

The use of the Shona language is dominating other languages in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe and other

congregations in South Africa, Australia, and the United Kingdom. We note that the Constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment (No. 20) Act 2013) states that the state and all institutions and agencies of government at every level must ensure that all officially recognized languages are treated equally and the State must promote and advance the use of all languages used in Zimbabwe, including sign language, and must create conditions for the development of the languages.

The Synod (RCZ Synod Minutes, 2018) deliberated on the request from one of the presbyteries in Matebeleland region to make available other language versions of the Book of Catechism Church Constitution such as English, Tonga, Ndebele, Shangaan, Venda and Ndau. The recommendation was adopted but up to the time of this research, the resolution was yet to be implemented.

The study also found out that the pastors called to do cross-cultural evangelism are from Masvingo Province, where the RCZ is being referred to as the Church for people from Masvingo Province because worship services are conducted in the Shona (Karanga) language. People from other cultures are shunning being associated with the RCZ because of marginalization of their languages.

The majority of congregants and pastors in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe are from Masvingo Province and, as a result of this, the Shona (Karanga) language is becoming a major barrier in doing cross cultural evangelism.

Use of Literature in the Shona Language

The church literature in the RCZ is written in the Shona language. The hymn book, Catechism, Church constitution and meeting minutes are all in Shona. The author is of the view that the church must think outside the box and move with the mantra of the president of Zimbabwe's Second Republic who always claims that no person and no place must be left behind. By adopting this mantra, it means the RCZ would produce literature in the language of the people they are witnessing to. The church must involve local people where they witness to produce literature for the church in their language. This is one of the strategies which were used by the missionaries when they were evangelizing among the Shona people. The RCZ must value literature as an important tool for evangelism in cross-cultural places. The church embarked on evangelism in places such as Binga in Matabeleland North, Chasvingo near Chitulipasi in Beitbridge, Chikombedzi in Chiredzi and Checheche in Chipinge, but up to now, the reviewed literature shows that the RCZ is still using the Shona books even though people in these places use different languages other than Shona.

Church Meetings and Minutes

The researcher felt that the church was not doing justice to some of the people they witness to because the church business, such as meetings, is conducted in Shona. Shona is used as the medium of communication in both meetings and minutes. However we are now living in a global village and in the world of research, making it difficult to access literature on the RCZ for those who want to do research

because most of the documents are written in the Shona language. The minutes of the RCZ must be written in English so that they are readily available to people of other languages. Shona language is confined to certain places in the country and it is impossible to use it as a medium of communication in a country with more than sixteen languages, including sign language, as explicitly stated in the constitution of the country.

The RCZ must take into consideration that what is stated in the Government of Zimbabwe (2013), Section 6, p. 17 is also applicable to churches, including the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe and her diaspora congregations. The RCZ's literature sources are not easily accessed by people who do not understand Shona as their first or second language. It is true that in Zimbabwe, English language is recognized as the official language because it is one of the major languages understood by people living in different parts of the country.

This study aimed to identify the barriers that the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe created between itself and the other languages in the nation by using Shona as its primary language. When the Church engages in cross-cultural evangelism, it is not with the intention of introducing others to an alternative theistic conception of God but rather to the person of Jesus.

DISCUSSION

The main objective of the article was to examine how Shona language in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe serves as a barrier to cross-cultural evangelism. The

results of this study have shown that the Shona language, the Shona literature, including the Shona church constitution, and the use of the Shona language in church meetings is one of the greatest barriers to evangelism in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. Literature review shows that some of the churches that embrace language diversity are expanding well in all provinces of the country and across the globe. This is evident in the ZAOGA FIF where praise and worship, especially in urban centres within Zimbabwe, use a range of languages alongside Shona and English, with songs sung in African languages from across the southern part of the continent, in particular Nyanja, Tonga, Venda, Sotho and Tswana. This is very attractive, especially to the youth, who like the sense of transnational connection and influence (Biri, 2014). The ZAOGA FIF is evangelizing well across cultures worldwide because they have embraced well the use of different languages in the church and this is very admirable to people of different cultures.

Biri (2014) avers that a sense of transnational Pentecostal religious community has, thus, developed alongside the circulation of essentialist notions of national cultural difference hinging on derogatory stereotypes of foreigners, while elevating the moral supremacy of Zimbabwean nationhood.

Literature also shows that the RCZ's evangelism was, and is still centred, on one ethnic group of people. Munikwa (2013) argues that the DRC's mission work concentrated on one ethnic group, thus creating an ethnic or tribal Church. This was,

and still is, a problem, as RCZ members in all the provinces are, basically, *Karanga* people. Viewed historically, the DRC missionaries in Zimbabwe were influenced by the South African situation. The goal of the study was to determine the best way to handle the language barrier problem in the RCZ. It is true that the RCZ must be sensitive in doing cross-cultural evangelism through developing sufficient sensitivity to cultural differences in the country and other countries.

Literature shows that churches expand through cross cultural evangelism because of their emphasis on embracing of language diversity through training of local pastors, literature translations and use of a language which is understood by people of different cultures (Biri, 2014). The Great Commission is a dictate which the church has no choice but to fulfil. In this contemporary day, the devil is using every strategy to fight against and attack the church so as to deter it from proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. Issues such as starvation, pestilences, poverty, political instability, ethnic violence, religious extremism, and anti-gospel ideology are part of modern-day strategies of the devil against the church (Merwe, 1981; Mutumburanzou, 1999; Ogunewu, 2018). The more people can identify their own cultural traditions, develop an understanding of the culture they are entering, and learn to express the core message of the gospel, the more they can convey the gospel in a way that makes sense in a particular context. To contextualize the gospel is to assist individuals in viewing reality through the prism of their own worldview (Varner, 2017 and Bollon, 2021). To ensure that the gospel

message is kept in front and centre and is not obscured, people must learn that communication should build bridges rather than walls between ideas.

No amount of emphasis can be placed on how important it is to follow Jesus. God behaved in a way that all of humanity could easily comprehend when He decided to connect with His people. He adopted us as his people. God and His love for us are concepts that no human being can ever fully grasp, yet Christ provided the world with a concrete example of God's love via the act of being incarnate. Christ gladly accepted our human limitations and challenges so that He might more thoroughly convey His message to us. Anyone who wants to succeed in cross-cultural ministry must take on Christ's attitude of selflessness and voluntarily set aside preconceived assumptions about culture and individual rights (Beougher & Dorset, 2017). Language diversity must be the vehicle for spreading the gospel to ensure that the RCZ achieves its target of evangelism across cultures.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore how language can be a barrier to evangelism to cross cultural evangelism in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. It can be deduced that the use of the Shona language is one of the greatest barriers that hinder church growth across cultures. The use of the Shona literature across Zimbabwe in the RCZ is another stumbling block for the growth of RCZ across cultures. The lack of literature which is user-friendly across cultures is a cause of concern for the expansion of the church across cultures and globally. In light

of this, the RCZ is recommended to be appropriately inclusive when it comes to matters involving linguistic variety, the translation of literature into other languages, and the use of the official language in church gatherings, conferences, and the publication of church records like committee minutes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The author suggests the following to prevent the use of the Shona language as a barrier to cross-cultural evangelism in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe based on the foundation of the judgments outlined in this article:

- Evangelism knows no boundary, so the church (RCZ) should be prepared to live among people of different cultures and languages. Willingness to teach and preach the gospel which is relevant to the people whom you are witnessing to. Adjustment to other cultures and languages could help the RCZ to make the gospel they are preaching relevant to other cultures through language diversity. People must not do evangelism with a culture but within a culture. The main objective of evangelism must focus on communicating Christ in such a way that people of other cultures will understand, repent and believe in the gospel not culture. For the RCZ to effectively evangelize across cultures, it is required that it adopt the rules of linguistic variety and inclusivity.

- Bible and literature translation is one of the major assignments for the RCZ in order for her to win the hearts of people when doing cross-cultural evangelism. People want to read, sing hymns and psalms to the Lord in their own languages. It is through this very personal language and through the mother tongue that the Spirit of the Lord speaks to convey the divine message in the hearts of his own people. God speaks to people not in sacred languages but in their own languages. Translations of church literature in many local languages will create a likelihood that the bearers of the Word, hear it in their own languages will make them feel to be part and company of God's chariot. Translation of all church books and literature will make people to comprehend the Word according to their culture not a foreign culture.
- Training of local leadership is vital because it helps the church to grow faster than ever expected. Training of local evangelists and pastors who are competent and committed will help the new believers to be taught the Word of God in their own language. Evangelism is not about offering relief services to people like what non-governmental organisations are doing, but it is about holistic development. Posting of evangelists and pastors from Masvingo Province to other provinces of different cultures is like offering relief services to these areas. The RCZ, through its Evangelism desk, should identify gifted people from these evangelised areas and train them as evangelists and pastors to shepherd within their own cultures using their own languages.
- English language as an official language in Zimbabwe, must be used as a medium of communication in church meetings and national conferences as a way of accommodating people of other cultures who do not understand the Shona language. Church literature and minutes should be written in English to accommodate all people. No person or place should be left behind.

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Acronyms

RCZ- Reformed Church in Zimbabwe

DRC- Dutch Reformed Church

ZAOGA- FIF - Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa – Forward in Faith