

**THE METHODIST CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE
(MCZ) GENDER JUSTICE POLICY 2020**

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Preamble

Methodist Church in Zimbabwe Presiding Bishop

The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe believes in the Priesthood of all Believers as taught by John Wesley. This theological mandate compels us to treat all humanity as equally created in the image of God. We are also guided by the church and state relationship theology which stresses that the two are independent kingdoms and yet they save the same community; one for the earthly and the other heavenly. With this in mind, we have responded and made progress in line with the requirements and guidelines of the Zimbabwean Constitution and other statutes like the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and African Union Protocols and the United Nations Guidelines to achieve Gender Justice. As the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, we are moving in tandem with these developments and guidelines to achieve gender justice from a theological point of view which is inclusive of both men and women.

In our efforts to put the concept of Gender Justice into action as a Church, we have developed this Gender Justice Policy which has been well thought out and put together to guide in the dissemination of our gender justice objectives. The policy was received by our Conference which is the governing body of the Church in 2019. The aim of this policy is to guide the Church in the protection and promotion of the dignity of men and women who, being created in the image of God, are co-responsible stewards of creation. This can be achieved through equality and balanced power relations between men and women and the elimination of the institutional, cultural, religious and interpersonal systems of privilege and oppression that sustain discrimination.

As this Gender Justice Policy is disseminated throughout the Connexion, through the districts, circuits and societies, the aim is to enlighten our congregants and the communities they live in on the fact that we are all equal, created in the image of God. In this equality there is need for mutual respect, inclusivity, compassion as we seek to transform lives through a holistic approach grounded in scriptural principles.

May we use this policy at all levels of our Church to address men, women, girls and boys to enlighten them of our God given privilege to worship Him and be good stewards to each other at such a time as this.

Presiding Bishop

Revd Dr S. Zwana

Foreword from the General Secretary

Our Identity as the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe is that 'We are a Connected Oasis of Life, Peace, Justice and Hope.' As reflected in our MCZ Strategic Plan of 2017-2021, justice and hope can only come about where all God's children are treated with respect and honour. As a Church we do not live in isolation but are placed in a country with political, economic and social innuendoes that affect how we live our lives. Our Church should be a place of refuge, healing and comfort to its members. As we implement the four Strategic Pillars, gender justice should be taken across all these strategic pillars for us to be an effective Church.

As a Church, we anchor our mission in Scriptural Principles and not surprisingly, the Bible has a lot to say about the relationship between men and women! We recognize that the Bible originates from a culture of predominantly patriarchal societies and so is the culture in our country to date. In our strive for Gender Justice, even the Bible is a tool of liberation as many passages provide us with life-affirming perspectives and, on occasion, truly liberating perspectives of great theological insight that can be relevant in our own context. As we adapt and innovate in line with the dynamic culture we are in, let us uphold these affirmative words of Paul- *"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus"* - NIV (Galatians 3:28). We will, then, be able to live as men and women made in the image of God and re-made within the new humanity of Jesus Christ.

To implement gender justice across the MCZ Strategic Pillars, in particular, Pillar 2 the Social Justice Pillar, we need to educate and inform our Methodist Church Community on what Gender Justice is about. Are they aware when instances of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) occur in our church and in our community? In what ways do we empower individuals or groups? We seek to provide healing and relief to suffering as church and community. Using the Gender Justice Policy will help our Church to provide this support as we link with experts from within our Church through the Gender Desk and the Gender Justice Committee and those outside. Knowledge is power, let us make use of this policy to enlighten our church community.

General Secretary
Revd Dr J. Dube

Introduction to the Gender Policy

The quest for gender justice continues the world over with efforts being put in place through polices, statues and mandates to address this. Twenty-five years on post the Beijing Platform of Action, many countries including ours, are still struggling to meet the 50/50 representation in leadership and other spheres. Global and international bodies, such as the United Nations (UN), provide universal legal frameworks to regulate countries and groups of individuals to meet set goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals, 2015-2030. Zimbabwe also has the Constitution, the National Gender Policy and other statutes and bodies to address gender injustice. Amongst the Faith-Based Organisation (FBOS) and churches, the concept of justice interfaces with biblical and theological understandings making it even richer than in the circular world as it looks at both culture and religion to address gender injustices. This MCZ Gender Justice Policy has outlined practical ways to bring these concepts to the fore, to enable men and women in our church to understand and appreciate gender justice. This policy provides a critical approach to the context and intends to bring together the reality of human rights perspectives and theological concepts to address gender injustice in church and community.

The gender justice policy comes to us at a time when women continue to face challenges in church and society whilst both women and men continue to hear God's call for relationships based on justice. The MCZ's commitment to being inclusive, transparent, and enabling the full and equitable participation of women and men in church life and society, and in its decision-making processes, activities and programmes is commendable. These efforts are in line with the strides also being made in the country. God's grace liberates us, brings us together in Christ and enables us to live and work together for justice, peace and reconciliation.

Having access to information is key for engaging meaningfully in the process of finding gender-just solutions in our day to day lives. The Gender Policy therefore needs to be disseminated to all levels of our church so that men and women, boys and girls can take up the strategies outlined and put them into practice for the church to achieve its mandate. The work has begun, and the Gender Justice Committee set up to have oversight of this policy's implementation will do so with uttermost effort to safeguard that all of God's children enjoy the space, opportunities, human relations, and structures which ensure that justice is done and is upheld.

Commissioner Dr Nyepudzayi Mercy Nyangulu (PhD)
Chairperson - Gender Justice Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In line with the Zimbabwe National Gender Policy the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe (MCZ) seeks to address the shortcomings in the Church Structure and the emerging issues prevailing under the changing political, economic and social contexts at local, regional and global levels. At international and regional levels, some of the key developments post 2004 that set out new gender priorities include: (i) the 2005 Beijing+10 global review that made recommendations to areas that required special attention and action; (ii) the submission of the combined State Party CEDAW Report; (iii) the development of a national follow-up plan on Rio, and (iv) the 2008 SADC Protocol on Gender and Development that set out 28 substantive targets for achieving gender equality by 2015.

The key developments at national level include; the elaborate Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment [No. 20] Act 2013, constitutional provisions with a thrust on gender equality **with special reference to 'Section 17' on Gender Balance which mandates the Government to promote gender balance taking into cognisance full participation of women in political, social and economic spheres, as read with 'Section 56' which provides for the right to personal security. Violence against women has always been outlawed but now the prohibition has been elevated to a constitutional Bill of Rights. The Government now has a greater responsibility to ensure that women are protected from violence through appropriate laws like the Domestic Violence Act and institutions like the Zimbabwe Gender Commission.**

The MCZ is therefore making a deliberate effort to compliment the Government efforts in ensuring gender equality in all spheres of church life. As a church community, we are cognizant of the national economic development strategy which introduces a development paradigm emphasizing on gender responsive budgets and gender mainstreaming into economic activities and commits to advancing equal participation in productive sectors; the indigenization drive which motivated the development and implementation of the Indigenization and Empowerment Policy; the 2011 Broad Based Women's Economic Empowerment Framework (BBWEEF), a mechanism for women's economic empowerment applicable across all sectors and levels of society; and the Land Reform program implemented over the past 10 years from 2007.

The national developments stated above have implications on gender equality and make it imperative for the Church to move in tandem with national and international developments and the MCZ Gender Justice Policy is a prerequisite for the effective advancement of gender equality and equity.

This Gender Justice Policy therefore seeks to achieve:

- **A gender just church community where men and women enjoy equality and equity and participate as equal partners in the development process of the family, church, and country.**

- The policy's goal is "to eradicate gender discrimination and inequalities in all spheres of church life and development." The priority areas identified by the church are: raising awareness on Gender, Constitutional and Legal Rights; Gender and Economic Empowerment; Gender, Politics and Decision Making; Gender and Health; Gender, Education and Training; Gender Based Violence; Gender and Environment; and Gender, Media, and Information Communication Technologies (ICTs).
- The MCZ Gender Justice Policy is therefore underpinned by principles of gender justice, equality, integration, and inclusiveness.

The Methodist Church Gender Justice Policy

We, The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe therefore guided by the country's constitution, National Gender Policy, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches and Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's Strategic Plan, commit to promoting gender equality in all corporate and human resource policies, practices as outlined in the set of principles providing the basis for the Connexion to achieve gender justice. We do this by recognising, highlighting and acting against gender repression and power imbalances in church and society. Gender justice implies the protection and promotion of the dignity of women and men who, being created in the image of God, are co-responsible stewards of creation. Gender justice is expressed through equality and balanced power relations between women and men and the elimination of the institutional, cultural and interpersonal systems of privilege and oppression that sustain discrimination.

1. BACKGROUND

The quest for gender equity has evolved from advocacy, negotiation and consensus building, awareness rising on the importance of gender equity, to a point where gender considerations are an obligation in development programming and implementation. This Gender Justice Policy for the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe (MCZ) therefore provides a new framework for gender equality and equity. It outlines MCZ's vision for a gender-just Church and how the Church should strive towards this ideal. It details the overarching principles, priority areas, policy objectives and strategies. It also defines the institutional arrangements through which the policy will be implemented and a framework for monitoring and evaluating the progress and achievements of the policy.

The gender equality journey involves a process of change in which the endpoint must be different from the start. There is a significant body of learning from organisations that have, for several reasons, needed to change the way they operate or conduct their business to bring about gender equality. MCZ has seen the need to make this change at all its levels and in the way it does business hence the need for a Gender Justice Policy for the Church. Constitutionally, the recognition of gender justice in line with the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) and the National Gender Policy is spearheaded by the Ministry of Women and Youth Affairs. Theologically the Zimbabwe Council of Church (ZCC) is making strides in addressing gender disparities in the church. In line with this, the ecumenical body (ZCC), where MCZ is a member, has included Gender Justice as a strategic pillar in its Five-Year Strategic Plan. Other member churches like United Methodist Church and Evangelical Lutheran Church of Zimbabwe have embraced the theological call by ZCC and have taken the stance to be proactive in addressing gender justice. More importantly, gender justice is in line with human rights principles that are based mainly on Biblical standards hence the need to uphold it in Church and community.

2. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

2.1. Gender

The World Health Organization defines gender to mean the socially constructed characteristics of women and men such as norms, roles, and relationships of and between groups of women and men. These roles vary from society to society. Each society has its social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female, the relationships between women and men and girls and boys. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and learned through the socialisation processes and are context/time-specific and changeable. While most people are born either boy or girl as determined by their biological make up, they are taught appropriate norms and behaviours that distinguish them as male or female including how they should interact with others of the same or opposite sex within households, communities the church, and workplaces, through socialisation. In sociology, people make a distinction between sex and gender. Sex are the biological traits that societies use to assign people into the category of either male or female, whether it be through a focus on chromosomes, genitalia, or some other physical ascription. When people talk about the differences between men and women, they are often drawing on sex that is the rigid ideas of biology rather than gender. Gender is an understanding of how society shapes our understanding of those biological categories. Gender is more fluid – it may or may not depend upon biological traits. More specifically, it is a concept that describes how societies determine and manage sex categories; the cultural meanings attached to men and women's roles; and how individuals understand their identities including, but not limited to, being a man, woman or other gender differentiations.

2.2. Gender Equality

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men, girls and boys. Gender equality is achieved when the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are equally valued and favoured and do not give rise to different consequences that reinforce inequalities. Gender equality also refers to the state or condition that affords women and men equal enjoyment of human rights, socially valued goods, opportunities and resources, allowing both sexes the same opportunities and potential to contribute to, and benefit from, all spheres of society (economic, political, social, and cultural).

2.3. Gender Equity

This term refers to the justice and fairness in the treatment of women and men in order to eventually achieve gender equality, often requesting differential treatment of women and men (or specific measures) in order to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from sharing a level playing field. Gender equity can also be called gender balance which is a human resource issue. It is about the equal participation of women and men in all areas of work at all levels including senior positions in politics, church and society.

2.4. Gender Analysis

Gender analysis examines the relationship between females and males, their access to and control of resources, their roles, and the constraints they face relative to each other. To be more elaborate, gender analysis is the study of different roles and responsibilities of men and women; their differentiated access to resources and their priority needs to better understand and address gender inequalities (Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations 2010). In gender analysis, the gender gap is normally common and it refers to the difference in any area between women and men in terms of their levels of participation, access to resources, rights, power and influence, remuneration and benefits. Of relevance, related to women's work is the "gender pay gap", describing the difference between the average earnings of men and women (International Labour Organization 2007).

2.5. Gender Justice

Gender justice implies the protection and promotion of the dignity of women and men who, being created in the image of God, are co-responsible stewards of creation. Gender justice is expressed through equality and balanced power relations between women and men and the elimination of the institutional, cultural and interpersonal systems of privilege and oppression that sustain discrimination.

3. Rationale for a Gender Policy

The Gender Policy is driven by three pillars namely by theological, sociological and legal frameworks.

3.1. Theological Framework

Human history begins with God, thereby making him, theologically, the Founder and Maker of gender justice. In the creation story of (Genesis 1), after every stage of creation, the writer concludes by saying “God saw that it was good.” For example (Genesis 1:19-20), the story continues saying “and there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day. And God said, “...” On verse (26-28), God said, “*Let us make **man in our own image, after our likeness**, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.*” So God created man in His own image in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them and God blessed them and said be fruitful and multiply” (RSV). In this story, there are theological issues that inform this Gender Justice Policy. First, the word ‘man’, does not refer to ‘male’, but ‘humankind’. Second, humanity was created last so that it becomes clear that they did not help God during the creation process. Third, in all other creations, God instructed by word, “let there be... and it was so” (vs 3, 6, 9, 20, 24). In verse 26 the language changes to “let us make man” in the image and likeness of the Triune God, male and female were created out of nothing. Fourth, God blessed “them” and instructed them to be fruitful and multiply. From this theological background, it is evident that the biblical understanding of gender roles stems from the Genesis account of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden; **however, cultural justification is sometimes used to support unbiblical behaviours**. Lastly, the name ‘Adam’ given to man “male” in Genesis 2 comes from the Hebrew word ‘*Adama*’, meaning ‘mankind’. The word ‘man’ later changed meaning to refer to ‘male’. This became evident in the history of Israel where ‘humanity’ meant ‘male’ and ‘male’ was ‘humanity’.

The patriarchal tradition was reversed by Jesus’ mission which was oriented towards the oppressed and women formed part of this classless society. Jesus’ manifesto includes justice, equality and inclusiveness (Luke 4:16-20). Women were regarded as second-class citizens. Jesus’ regard for women was much different from that of his contemporaries. His approach to women was revolutionary for his era. For Jesus, women have an intrinsic value equal to that of men. Jesus said, “. . . at the beginning God made them **male and female**” (Matt. 19:4; cf. Gen. 1:27). Women are created in the image of God just as men are. Like men, they have self-awareness, personal freedom, a measure of self-determination, and personal responsibility for their actions. Jesus treated women not primarily as females but as human beings. He recognized women as fellow human beings. Jesus regularly addressed women directly while in public which was unusual for a man to do (John 4; Luke 7 Luke 7:12–13; 8:48; 11:27-28, 13:12. He also spoke freely with the woman who were accused, for example, with the woman taken before him for allegedly adulterous act (John 8:10–11. Jesus did not gloss over sin in the lives of the women he met. Their sin was not condoned but confronted. Each woman had the personal freedom and a measure of

self-determination to deal with the issues of sin, repentance, and forgiveness. Paul enhances Jesus' mission to the Church of Galatia (Gal 3:26-29) where he was teaching on the law and promise. *"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."* Paul brings men and women to the same table much as he destroyed the table of barrier between the Jews and the Greeks, the slaves and the masters. The Church, as the body of Christ, can be true to its calling to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission only if it strives, in its own life, to show this concern for justice, equality and inclusively.

3.2. Social Framework

Zimbabwe, like most African countries, is a patriarchal society where men have power and authority over women in all sectors of life, from home, society, economy, politics and religious spheres. Women are subordinated by culture or religion through socialization, resulting in inequality in opportunities, decision making, voice, access to and control of resources. Gender inequalities in society have manifested in different ways detrimental to society's development. Research has shown that issues like glass-ceiling, organizational policies and practices, patriarchal cultures, stereotyping, gender bias and discrimination against women and male hegemonic trappings have dominated life today. On one hand gender inequalities is more pronounced and it includes high levels of violence against women and girls in the home and in public spaces, high levels of child marriages coupled with teenage pregnancies and high maternal mortality rates, high levels of poverty among women and girls fuelling vulnerability to HIV infections, migration and breaking down of family units. On the other hand, men and boy children are also suffering gender violence in different forms as gender issues are being addressed with a femininity understanding thereby abusing the term gender to mean sexuality.

African society also looks at women with suspicion. Behaviours such as dominance and competence are common behaviours stereotypically expected from men while women should be kind, thoughtful and sensitive. Women at a tender age are taught to be respectful, emotionally oriented and reserved in their interaction with others. The division of labour has traditionally associated men with breadwinner positions and women with homemaker positions. Based on these social roles, women are typically described and expected to be more communal, relations-oriented and nurturing than men, whereas men are believed and expected to be more assertive and independent than women. Behaving otherwise is received with disdain among some women. The Gender Justice Policy is one of the ways in which the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe seeks to be true to this calling of bringing equality to all its members and all those who ascribe to the MCZ Christian Social Responsibility (CSR). Without progress in the situation of abuse, amongst males and females, there can be no true social development. Human rights are not worthy of the name if they exclude those on the margins of the society be, they male or female. Although in some selected cases men are victims of gender injustice, however, the struggle for women's equality who are the majority of the abused, is part of the struggle for a better world for all human beings, and all societies.

3.3. The Legal and Policy framework

The country has ratified most of the fundamental conventions designed to achieve gender justice across sectors. The Gender Justice Policy (GJP) is designed to translate and deliver on the provisions of an array of international, regional, and national provisions in tandem with the National Gender Policy stated below:

3.3.1 International Policy Framework

Zimbabwe is a signatory to a number of international conventions that provide for gender equality. These are the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1991); the Beijing Declaration on the Platform for Action (1995); the Convention on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR); the Equal Remuneration Convention; the Convention on Prohibition of Discrimination in Occupations, Convention on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour and the Convention on Economic, and Social and Cultural Rights (ECOSOC).

3.3. 2. Regional Policy Framework

In 2008, Zimbabwe ratified the protocol to the 2003 African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women. Zimbabwe is also signatory to the 2004 Solemn Declaration on Gender and Equality in Africa. In 1997 Zimbabwe ratified the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) Gender and Development Protocol and subsequently ratified the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development which was adopted by SADC in 2008. The protocol advocates for gender parity in all sectors and sets out 28 substantive targets for achieving gender equality by 2015. Zimbabwe also subscribes to the COMESA Gender Policy which fosters gender equality and equity at all levels of regional integration and cooperation.

3.3.3. National Legislative and Policy Framework

Zimbabwe has made significant strides in amending and enacting legislation and has passed out 17 pieces of legislation to advance the gender equality and equity objective. These include Matrimonial Causes Act (1987); Maintenance Act (1999); Administration of Estate Act (1997); Sexual Offences Act (2001), Education Act (2004), Labour Act, [Chapter 28:01]; Criminal Law Act (2006); Domestic Violence Act (2007). The 2004 Public Sector Gender Policy put in place gender focal points in all Ministries and parastatals and in 2012 dialogue was initiated to set up a Gender Commission. This has since been included in the 2013 Zimbabwe Constitution as one of the commissions.

3.3.4. Zimbabwe's Constitution

The Constitution of Zimbabwe promulgated in 2013 is widely acknowledged for its firm commitment to gender equality. The affirmative action provisions further assert the new Constitution's resolve for gender inequality redress. The Constitution reaffirms earlier commitments shown by the 2005 Constitutional Amendment N^o 17 which prohibited discrimination on the grounds of sex. Chapter 2 on National Objectives spells out gender balance as one of the objectives to guide the state, all institutions and agencies of Government. Throughout the statement of 26 national objectives, equality is emphasized and where appropriate women and girls are specifically mentioned. The Bill of Rights in Chapter 4 of the new Constitution recognises that men and women have a right to equal treatment, including right to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres. It accords to women the right to custody and guardianship, and makes void all laws, customs, cultural practices and traditions that infringe on the rights of women and girls. Certain sections are further elaborated to ensure certainty in the application of these rights. The policy and legislative framework and the prevailing social, economic and political developments provide a firm basis to pursue gender equality and equity defined in this Gender Justice Policy.

4. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS: METHODIST CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE

MCZ's ecclesiastical situational analysis has also influenced the formulation of this Gender Justice Policy. To begin with, the theology of one of the Methodist founders John Wesley whose views on women were contrary to the Eighteenth-Century world are central in the MCZ Gender Justice Policy. Wesley's tradition makes Methodism a different brand. Through his teaching and actions, Wesley was the first within his movement to authorize a woman to preach. In 1761, he granted a license to preach to Sarah Crosby and he later involved women in his ministry of preachers in a contested environment of the eighteenth-century Anglicanism. Wesley lived according to rules established by the only woman living in his time—Susanna Wesley, his mother. Women for Wesley were a special class of beings with spiritual sensitivity and with gifts for elevated conversation and correspondence. Throughout his life John Wesley was naturally attracted to women, and he attracted a wide range of women to him. Although he was disappointed in love, and more so in his marriage, nevertheless for spiritual comradeship, Wesley especially cherished contact with faithful women. Gender Justice in the Methodist Church is an awakening that has seen the Church put efforts and structures to ensure that it is not left behind the country's strides to gender equality. In 1977 two women, Revd Margaret James and Sheila Eades, were accepted as the first female candidates for the ministry since 1891, when Methodism was planted in Zimbabwe. This was the first move by MCZ to embrace gender equality in a patriarchal church of the colonial era. To date, MCZ has over 56 female ministers. This number includes the active ministers, supernumeraries, and students in training.

The Deed of Church Order and Standing Orders (Section 75:750-751:1-4) clearly states that “women who offer themselves for ministry shall do so under the same conditions as men in relation to candidature, training, probation, reception into full connexion, ordination, seniority, stationing, terms of service and retirement (2011:174-175). This statement expresses the church’s official stance on the gender equality of women and men in the ecclesiastical life of the MCZ. However, it is evident that women and men’s opportunities and experiences in the MCZ are unequal. This is also in spite of the fact that MCZ has inclusivity as one of the key values of its strategic plan. In the present Methodist tradition, women continue to be underrepresented in the leadership positions especially in more prestigious appointments and positions like that of superintendent ministers and/ or bishops.

Analysing the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe quantitatively, from 1977 to 2019, one woman was the Acting Presiding Bishop. The same woman was also the Secretary of Conference. One occupied the office of the District Chairperson now District Bishop. One woman was appointed District Bishop in the current structure in 2019. Two women were Connexional Lay Presidents in the history of the church. At the Connexional Office, one woman minister was the Tertiary Institutions National Chaplain. By 2019, only one woman was a Head of Department out of 8 positions. In 2018, there were 290 ministers who included supernumeraries with 128 circuits. Of these 116 were male superintendents compared to 12 females on the same position (MCZ Handbook 2018). In the 2019 Standing Committee out of 27 members, only 4 are women.

These gaps have brought the realisation that women need to be empowered to take up roles in the Church as ministers as well as lay leaders at society, circuit, district and connexional level. Participation at these levels should not just be in numbers but in meaningful contributions to the processes. Therefore, in spite of all these gender disparities, this Gender Justice Policy is not advocating for appointment basing on gender only, but on competence of either sex.

In light of the scenario above and the advocacy from women and men, both clergy and laity as well as prevailing national, regional and international standards, the Church has to move in tandem with the rest of the country. The anomaly in the representation of women in leadership positions as well as the need to ensure a gender sensitive MCZ, looking at issues with a gender lens at all levels, necessitated the development of the MCZ Gender policy and strategies for its implementation.

5. THE METHODIST CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE GENDER JUSTICE POLICY

Commitment to the Gender Justice Policy

The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe commits itself to promoting gender equality in all corporate and human resource policies, practices as outlined in the set of principles providing the basis for the Connexion to achieve gender justice. We do this by recognising, highlighting, and acting against gender repression and power imbalances in the church and society.

5.1. Gender Justice in the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe

The Gender Justice Policy is centred on our identity of a 'Connected Oasis of Life, Peace, Justice and Hope.'

Vision: A gender just, empowered and connected Christian community impacting society.

Core values: Integrity, transparency and accountability, commitment and professionalism, stewardship, inclusivity and compassion.

Mission: To transform lives through a holistic approach grounded in scriptural principles.

5.2. Goal

The MCZ Gender Justice Policy seeks to provide guidelines and tools that contribute to ensuring the attainment of gender justice in order to achieve inclusive and sustainable church societies and communities in Zimbabwe.

5.3. Purpose

The purpose of MCZ Gender Justice Policy is to serve as an instrument for the Connexion, including Districts, Circuits, Societies institutions, groups and organizations to achieve gender equality by implementing contextualised measures that promote gender justice.

The Policy seeks to:

Promote gender equality as an explicit human right as enshrined in the Constitution of Zimbabwe and international and regional human rights instruments that Zimbabwe is party to.

5.4. Objectives

- To ensure progress towards gender justice and sensitivity in all Church documents statutes and procedures at all levels.

- To ensure progress towards 50/50 representation of men and women in all the key positions of the Church from, society, circuit, district and connexional level including Synod and Conference.
- To provide both men and women access to equal opportunities and outcomes, including equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value and equal opportunity for participation in development projects.
- To remove barriers to the full and equal participation of women or men and girls and boys in the workforce and in the Church structures.
- To address issues of sexual harassment in the workplace and in the Church at all levels and set up mechanisms to address the same fairly and with equality.
- To address systemic and structural practices that create barriers to the realization of women and girls' rights and gender equality, including prevention and response to gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse in the church and in the home.
- To support the empowerment of women, men, girls, boys through provision of full and genuine access to all occupations and positions, including to leadership roles for women and men in the Church, workplace as well as in the development projects at all levels.
- To influence the elimination of discrimination on the basis of gender and sex, particularly in relation to family and caring responsibilities for both women and men as a key strategy toward ending poverty, conflict, human trafficking, suffering and gender inequality.
- To actively involve both male and female of all ages in promoting gender equality at all levels.
- To engage and coordinate with partners, governments, donors and civil society organizations to promote and support effective, creative and impactful ways to promote gender equality.
- To monitor, evaluate and institutionalize organizational learning regarding specific gender equality results.
- To ensure adequate funding to realise the MCZ gender equality commitments throughout the country.

The MCZ Gender Policy will be rolled out in line with the principles outlined in the Gender Strategic Plan below to the benefit of all MCZ Church members, both clergy and laity.

MCZ GENDER JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN

The MCZ Gender Justice Strategy is centred on the following:

1. **Vision:** A gender just, empowered and connected Christian community impacting society.
2. **Mission:** To transform lives through a holistic approach grounded in scriptural principles
3. **Core values:** Integrity, transparency and accountability, commitment and professionalism, stewardship, inclusivity and compassion equity and equality.
4. **Goal**
The MCZ Gender Justice Strategy seeks to provide guidelines and tools that contribute to ensuring the attainment of gender justice in order to achieve inclusive and sustainable church societies and communities in Zimbabwe.
5. **Purpose**
The purpose of MCZ Gender Justice Policy is to serve as an instrument for the Connexion, Districts, Circuits, Societies, institutions, groups and organizations to achieve gender equality by implementing contextualised measures that promote gender justice and dignity anchored on scripture in line with the MCZ strategic pillars.

Pillar 1

Improving Church Growth

- Capacity Development
- **Membership Growth**
- Nurture
- Evangelism
- Capacity Development

Pillar 2

Enhancing MCZ Social Responsibility

- Social Justice
- Community participation
- Education & Training
- Promoting Media Programmes

Pillar 3

Resourcing the Church for Sustainability

- Resource Optimisation

Pillar 4

Strengthening MCZ for Effective delivery

- Robust Governance Structure
- Effective structure
- Healthy Relationships
- Improve financial accountability

6. The strategy, guided by the MCZ Strategic Pillars seeks to achieve that:

The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe will implement, monitor, and evaluate this strategy in line with the gender policy. MCZ members and organisations will ensure that the strategy outlined as aligned to the MCZ strategic pillars are applied, monitored, adhered to, and reported on. Achieving gender equality requires the recognition that every strategy, programme and project affects men, women, girls and boys differently. The creation of result oriented, gender sensitive indicators of MCZs effectiveness in mainstreaming gender is imperative. Quantitative as well as qualitative time-defined gender impact indicators will be designed to determine the degree to which MCZ's policies programs and projects have succeeded in achieving results related to gender equality goals. The strategy identifies these four interconnected principles:

- Leadership and culture
- Accountability and inclusion
- Equality
- Mainstreaming flexible work looking at the needs of both men and women

6.1. Pillar 1: Improve Church Growth

- Capacity Development
- Membership growth and nurturing

a) Principle

1. Sensitisation and building capacity on gender equality to the leadership of the Church and Church organisations.
2. Promotion of continued organisational learning on gender awareness programmes to increase its efficiency and effectiveness of its work in the Church. Incorporate gender sensitive information in all church materials and literature
3. Nurturing of believers into true worshippers of God irrespective of gender, age, marital status, as well as social status.

b) Implementation strategy

- Consistent and active participation by all staff and church members as well as collaboration and effective linkages across departments, organisations and staff levels.
- Training organisations and HODs on gender issues for mainstreaming in their organisations.
- Gender focal persons will be appointed in all Districts with support from District Bishops to oversee implementation of the proposed strategies and the capacity to establish a common ground on gender equality issues raising awareness by staff at all levels.
- MCZ has an emphasis on gender mainstreaming and in order to ensure that programme and project design and implementation strategies respond to specific needs and potentials of women and men, gender analysis will be a guiding principle as well as a guiding tool.
- Monitor, evaluate and institutionalize organizational learning regarding specific gender equality results.
- Learning and development is key to ensuring our staff are skilled and resourced to integrate gender equality effectively. This includes formal training, seminars and an annual senior executive meeting to discuss progress and new opportunities.

6.2 Pillar 2: Enhancing MCZ Social Responsibility

- Social Justice
- Community participation

a) Principles

1. Promote gender equality as an explicit human right as enshrined in the Constitution of Zimbabwe and international and, regional human rights instruments that Zimbabwe is party to.
2. Remove barriers to the full and equal participation of men and women in the workforce and in Church.
3. Address systemic and structural practices that create barriers to the realisation of women and men's rights and gender equality: including prevention and response to gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse.
4. Zero tolerance for domestic violence and any forms of sexual and gender-based violence, which are against the values and the code of conduct for staff and congregants.
5. Influence the elimination of discrimination on the basis of gender and sex particularly in relation to family and caring responsibilities for both women and men as a key strategy toward ending poverty, conflict, human, and trafficking, suffering and gender inequality.

b) Implementation strategy

- Actively involve both male and female of all ages in promoting gender equality throughout the country.

- Engage and coordinate with Church organisations, congregants, communities, partners, governments, donors and civil society organizations to promote and support effective, creative and impactful ways to promote gender equality Develop and institute structures within the Church and community to address Gender Based Violence Develop a reporting and referral system on Gender Based Violence throughout the Connexion.
- Create a national gender hot line to be managed by the Gender Justice Officer
- Create suggestion boxes in the churches and workplaces that receive complaints and suggestions to address GBV, sexual harassment and exploitation managed by the stewards on duty weekly.

All MCZ work will be constantly monitored against gender indicators.

6.3. Pillar 3: Resourcing the Church for Sustainability

- Resource Mobilization and Optimisation

a) Principles

1. Ensure adequate funding to realise the MCZ gender equality commitments.
2. MCZ's commitment to gender equality and equity seen by its contribution towards the programmes.
3. Formulate work plans and budgets accordingly.

b) Mechanisms for Implementation

- Each MCZ organisation, office must assess, cost and budget funds for the implementation of the strategy, according to their organizational capacity and requirements.
- Adequate resources are allocated to gender equality work. Resource mobilisations for the strategy will be factored into all Church programmes at all levels.

6.4. Pillar 4: Strengthening MCZ for Effective delivery

- Robust Governance Structure
- Effective structure

a) Principles

1. Ensure progress towards equal representation of men and women in all Church committees at all levels.
2. Ensure progress towards 50/50 representation of women in all the key positions of the Church from society to connexional level including the three top executives and align the strategic plan to this strategy.

3. Provide both women and men access to equal opportunities and outcomes, including equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value and equal opportunity for participation in development projects.
4. Support the empowerment of women, and positions, including to leadership roles for women and men in the Church, workplace as well as in the development projects at all levels.

b) Mechanisms for Implementation

- MCZ will appropriately represent women on Boards, Committees and at Synods and Conference, supporting MCZ's target of a minimum of 40 percent women and 40 percent men on boards. The remaining 20 percent will be young women and men in equal proportion.
- Ongoing capacity strengthening on gender for all MCZ staff at all levels for effective governance.
- Incorporate gender and power analysis as a mandatory operational and/or design feature based on data disaggregated by sex, age and other relevant diversity factors such as region, social status, etc.
- Include relevant and feasible gender sensitive indicators for every stage of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- MCZ Gender Justice Committee, to track progress on gender equality in MCZ's work through appropriate reporting channels.
- Communicate MCZ's position on gender equality to international, national, and local stakeholders to promote and support effective, creative and impactful ways to promote gender equality.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation and Learning

To provide an institutional framework for the implementation as well as the monitoring and evaluation of the gender strategy and its impact.

7.1. Principles

1. Key organizational strategy planning, and programmes will be based on data disaggregated by sex, age and other relevant diversity factors such as gender, disability and ethnicity.
2. Include a gender dimension in all finance guidelines, instructions and policies.

3. Strengthen the capability of staff, including volunteers, to advance gender equality, through providing adequate resources and technical expertise.
4. Collaboration with local and regional bodies and with other ecumenical and development partners who can provide constructive strategies, insights and experiences is crucial.
5. MCZ is a member of ZCC, All Africa Council of Churches, World Methodist Council and World Council of Churches whose objectives are to strengthen the capacity of participating institutions, individually and collectively, to address and mainstream gender issues both at operations and institutional levels through exchange of information and data, sharing of best practices and lessons learnt and to strategize on joint activities.
6. The Gender Justice Office is responsible for the implementation of the gender strategy under the guidance of the Gender Justice Committee across the Church and its organizations.
7. The Heads of Departments at Connexional level and the District Bishops at District level, District Gender Coordinators, organisations and institutions are responsible for monitoring the implementation details in programming.

7.2. Mechanisms for Implementation

- Monitoring and Evaluation: What are the key issues, progress, and challenges for sharing with Church leaders and all levels?
- Measuring the commitment MCZ aims to have women and men each hold at least 40 per cent of Senior Executive Posts and this will be reviewed annually at Conference by 2025
- Management positions and Connexional level (HODs) ---40% by 2025 (the remaining 20 per cent can be women or men).
- MCZ Gender Desk be resourced.
- Every 5 years the strategy will be reviewed in line with the Deed of the Church Order and Standing Orders and the MCZ strategic plan
- At every review meeting MCZ will report on the progress on gender equality in respect of programme implementation and staffing.

8. Assumptions

The strategic plan will be effective with the following assumptions:

- a) That the Gender Desk will be allocated a budget from the MCZ for implementation of programme.
- b) Fund raising efforts are continued to raise additional funds for activities and projects.
- c) That the various organisations in the Church take up mainstreaming gender justice in their various structures.
- d) That the Church hierarchy takes up recommendations from the Gender Justice Committee and various organisations seriously and implements them.

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This can be used for training of Gender Justice

Some key terms and their meanings

Culture : The distinctive patterns of ideas, beliefs and norms which characterize the way of life and relations of a society or a group in society.

Gender analysis : The systematic gathering and examination of information on gender differences and social relations to identify, understand and redress inequities based on gender.

Gender discrimination : The systematic, unfavorable treatment of individuals based on their gender, which denies them rights, opportunities and resources.

Gender division of Labour : The socially determined ideas and practices which define what roles and activities are deemed opportunities or resources

Gender equality and equity : Denotes women having the same opportunities in life as men, including the ability to participate in the public sphere.

Gender equity : Denotes the equivalence in life outcomes for women and men, recognizing their different needs and interests, and requiring a redistribution of power and resources.

Gender mainstreaming : An organizational strategy to bring a gender perspective to all aspects of an institution's policy activities, through building gender capacity and accountability.

Gender needs : Shared and prioritized needs identified by women that arise from their common experiences as a gender.

Gender planning : The technical and political processes and procedures necessary to implement gender-sensitivity

Gender relations : Hierarchical relations of power between men and women that tend to disadvantage women

Gender training : Facilitated process of creating awareness and capacity on gender issues to bring about personal or organizational change for gender equality

Gender Violence : Any act or threat by men and male dominated institutions that inflicts physical, sexual, or psychological harm on a woman or girl because of their gender.

Intra-household : The dynamics of how different resources that are generated resource distribution within or which come into the household are accessed and controlled by its members.

Patriarchy Systemic : Societal structures that institutionalize male physical, social and economic power over women.

Sex and Gender : **Sex** refers to the biological characteristics that categorise someone as either female or male whereas **gender** refers to the socially determined ideas and practices of what is to be female or male.

Social justice Fairness and equity as a right for all in the outcomes of development, through processes of social transformation.

Women's empowerment : A “bottom up” process of transforming gender power relations, through individuals and groups developing awareness subordination and building their capacity to challenge it.

Culture and Patriarchy

Social Norms and Gender Norms

Norms in general are standards that define what is considered normal by a group of people. It could be in the family, community, faith community or even at the workplace. Gender norms are, therefore, standards that are considered to describe what is considered normal for males and females in a particular society. Gender norms refer to the assigned roles and responsibilities of women and men in any given society and research has found out that:

- Cultural and social norms often socialize males to be aggressive, powerful, unemotional, and controlling. This contributes to a social acceptance of men as dominant.
- Similarly, expectations of females are that they be passive, nurturing, submissive, and emotional. This reinforces women's roles as weak, powerless, and dependent on men.
- Son preference is a cultural and religious norm – The Patriarchs.
- The socialization of both men and women has resulted in an unequal balance of power, an unequal power relationship between women and men.
- In many societies, children learn that men are dominant, and that violence is an acceptable means of asserting power and resolving conflict.
- Women as mothers and mothers-in-law unknowingly perpetuate violence by socializing boys and girls to accept men's dominance and to meet their demands.
- Mothers and fathers teach their daughters to accept the subordinate roles that society assigns them.
- From these established points, it is apparent that as soon as children are born, they instantly begin lessons in gender differentiation and by the time they experience their adolescence, they are already well versed with their gender identity and know what society expects of them. This socialization has a bearing on how male and female adolescents will behave and act towards each other and those younger and older than them.
- Men or males that conform to these societal expectations are described as "real men" in most communities. And men or males, who do not meet these expectations are regarded in some communities as "men in the absence of real men or men among women!" Such males are not regarded as role models for young males. Some males are known to behave in a feminine way and such males are transgressing against gender norms and are therefore, understood as transgender meaning they cross gender and sex identities.
- Femininity is prescribed for females by most societies, meaning that while children are born females, society will train them to become feminine. The woman who conforms to the expected feminine traits will be celebrated in most societies as the "ideal woman." The perfect woman is celebrated and honoured, while gender non-conforming women are shamed and frowned down upon. Since most societies are patriarchal, this perfect woman is raised to be a woman who does not challenge the patriarchal structure of society, which gives power to men over women and children. This is the woman who will be celebrated.

In most societies, including Zimbabwe, the masculine is the norm and femininity is the opposite of the masculine. The most common norms for masculinity are:

Superior physical strength, firmness, fearlessness, decisiveness, an ability to protect the weak, to be principled, to control, to conquer, to take risks, to provide leadership, to be assertive, to enjoy a high social status, and to display versatility in martial arts. Also added to this list are: intelligence, bravery, sobriety, unemotionality, and an absence of smiles.

The feminine norms will largely be the opposite of these masculine norms:

- Caring for children
- Cooking
- Cleaning
- Looking after the sick
- Household chores
- Working in the garden and field

Harmful Practices include the following (Religious and Cultural)

- Child Marriages
- Forced Wife inheritance
- Dispossession of Estate
- Pledging of the girl child to appease avenging spirits
- *Kuzvarira*: (Girl child pledging for marriage)
- *Ukungenela* (Father-in-law sleeping with a daughter in law before the husband does)
- *Muroora* (daughter in law) duties that go beyond reason
- Young women not being allowed to prepare communion in some churches
- Single women and widows not being allowed to take up leadership roles in church
- Widow cleansing

Gender Based Violence (GBV) (Causes, & Effects)

Introductory questions for discussion

- Do men in your community beat up women? Do women in your community beat up men?
- Is Gender Based Violence between males and females common?
- Perpetrator is the person who causes violence either male or female.
- Survivor of violence is a person who has survived violence.

What is Gender Based Violence?

- Gender Based Violence (GBV): In general, gender-based violence refers to the violence that occurs between men and women, especially driven by the gender identities of the victim and the perpetrator.

- According to the UNFPA, “Gender-based violence is violence involving men and women, in which the female is usually the victim; and which is derived from unequal power relationships between men and women. Violence is directed specifically against a woman because she is a woman or affects women disproportionately. It includes, but is not limited to, physical, sexual, and psychological harm...It includes that violence which is perpetuated or condoned by the state.”
- Gender Based Violence is understood as “any act that results in or likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering of women because they are women or to men because of being men, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether occurring in public or in private life”. (based on article 1 and 2 of UN Assembly Declaration on the elimination of violence against women, 1993)

The Definition shows the following:

- Gender based violence can occur to women, men, girls, and boys.
- The acts are done due to someone’s sex (whether female or male).
- It causes harm physically, emotionally, economically, sexually.
- It can take place in public or private space.
- It can take place even in times of peace.
- It can take place in times of conflict.
- While there are cases of men who have suffered violence at the hands of women, and while these cases demand our attention, there is staggering evidence and statistics that the majority of cases of GBV are perpetrated by men on women.

Action Planning

1. Identify a gender focal person at your church who will be part of the Christian Social Responsibility Committee
2. Disseminate gender justice messages through preaching, teachings, Home Fellowship/ *Kokorodzano* meetings, Organisational groups such as Ruwadzano MCU. GCU, BCU WA, WF and others.
3. Can use suggestion boxes for reports at the church opened by the Stewards and the Gender Focal Person in attendance.
4. Get acquainted with the Referral Channel used in your area which includes the Police’s Victim Friendly Unit, local Health Centre, Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Women’s Affairs, the Courts. Also have contacts of NGOs working in the areas on GBV

prevention such as Musasa, Childline, ZWLA, and Justice for Children, as some issues need technical handling (e.g. rape).

5. Use the Church Toll free number for direct reports to the Gender Desk for urgent advice.

Some Bible passages that can be used for discussion and training on Gender Justice.

1. Genesis 1:26-28 (Story of creation)
2. Genesis 2:18- 24
3. Genesis 3:15-16 (the Fall of man)
4. Genesis 34:1-31 (Story of Dinah Jacob's daughter)
5. Exodus 15:20-12 (Miriam leads Israel)
6. Judges 2:16-18; 4:10-24; 5:1-31 (The story of Deborah)
7. Esther 4 (The story of Esther)
8. 2 Samuel 13 (The Rape of Tamar David's daughter)
9. Matthew 1:18-25 (The birth of Jesus)
10. Luke 18:1-18 (The Parable of the persistent widow)
11. Ephesians 4:3 -6; 5:21-33 (On submission)
12. John 4:4-42 (The woman at the well)
13. John 8:1-8 (The woman caught in adultery)
14. Acts 18:18-28 (Priscilla and Aquila teach Apollos)

Gender Justice Committee Members Responsible for Finalisation of Policy

Ex-Officio Members

Presiding Bishop: Revd S. Zwana

Mission Director: Revd B. Chinhara

MeDRA Director: Mrs J Vutoyi

Gender Justice Officer - Mrs L. Chikara Secretariat

Committee

Name	Background
Dr. Mercy Nyangulu	(Gender Expert) Chairperson
Rev. Joyce Chakanya	(Clergy) Vice-Chairperson
Mrs. Revai Makanje Albaek	Gender Legal Expert
Rev. Noleen Chinyerere	(Clergy) Vice-Secretary
Dr. Geoffrey Chada	Men's Fellowship
Mr. Maxwell Sibanda	Men's Christian Union
Ms. Janet. P. Duma	Youth
Mr. Nathaniel Mateko	Youth - Secretary
Mrs. Netty Musanhu	Gender - Legal Expert

Notes