**Title**

Sin and Sovereignty: Relations of Moral Responsibility and Human Freedom among Urban Baptists in Zimbabwe

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Sin and Sovereignty: Relations of Moral Responsibility and Human Freedom among
Urban Baptists in Zimbabwe

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of
Philosophy

in

Anthropology

by

Leanne Judith Williams Green

Committee in charge:

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2019

The Dissertation of Leanne Judith Williams Green is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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University of California San Diego

2019

iii

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## LIST OF FIGURES

A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE AND NAMING

As I explain in the introduction, the groups of people described in this dissertation speak a combination of ChiShona, part of the Bantu language family, and English. "ChiShona" as a language, and "vaShona" as an identifiable group of people are both difficult terms, in part because they are the result of complex historical and political processes. Bourdillon (2004, 7) argues that this nomenclature is fairly new, and Mazarire contends that "the term was not in use before the nineteenth century…no one thought of themselves as "Shona" (2009, 2).

Still, what people most often call "Shona" is certainly the most frequently used vernacular in the country (see also Jones 2012). Shona as a language includes a variety of regional dialects. The register spoken in major cities is often a mixture of "standard" Shona, city slang, and English.

Throughout the dissertation, in all instances of recorded speech, I transcribe in the original language. As will become apparent, in many religious contexts in the Baptist network, people choose to utilize English. In cases where they use (the town variety of) Shona, I have recorded the Shona words with English translation. A number of key terms-identifiable because they are italicized the first time they appear- are loan words from English that are utilized in Shona speech as well.

I use pseudonyms for people and churches throughout this dissertation. Black Zimbabweans regularly use teknonymy in address. Some of the pseudonyms I have chosen will reflect this usage. Instead of the standard "Amai" (mother) I will use the more colloquial "Mai." Where I speak of "Mai Danai," she is called so because her first born child is named Danai. In other cases, I use Mai in the English sense of "Mrs," also in

common usage. This is intended to reflect the variety of possible address forms. In Harare, it is also common in both Shona and English to use the prefix "Mr." and "Mrs." Black Zimbabweans utilize both "English" and "Shona" or Ndebele names, and I utilize a variety in my choice for pseudonym.

Many place names were changed when Zimbabwe gained independence, including that of the nation itself. I refer to the colonial and territorial entity that existed prior to independence as "Southern Rhodesia" or "colonial Zimbabwe" interchangeably.

Finally, I also refer in a number of instances to currencies. "USD" is used to indicated currency in United States Dollars.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'd like to thank a great number of people here, some of whom I can name directly and others whom I cannot.

I am grateful to the members of my dissertation committee who have been willing to offer their comments and feedback on my work. In that regard, I appreciated the time and willingness of John Evans, Steven Parish, and Aftab Jassal. Also, Jonathan Friedman helpfully worked with me through my candidacy exams.

Matthew Engelke has kindly been interested in my work from early on. His insights as a Zimbabweanist and scholar of religion, and also his written work, have been very important to my project. I appreciate particularly his invitation to present to the Anthropology of Africa seminar at the London School of Economics, and to that group for their productive feedback on chapter five.

Rupert Stasch served on my committee at an earlier point, and his work and feedback have continued to be influential for my thinking. My approach to a number of themes and theories within anthropology have been shaped in important ways by his approaches, and I am grateful that he has been willing to share them.

Nancy Postero agreed to serve as my dissertation chair somewhat later in the game but was already an important teaching mentor prior to that point. She has been a continuing encouragement and inspiration, prompting me to think about power and its working out in new ways. I am grateful to have been counted among her students.

In the Department of Anthropology at UCSD, Nikki Gee has been an absolutely vital support to so many graduate students. Her patience, expertise, and genuine

expressions of interest in my research have made the bureaucratic journey much more doable. Thank you, Nikki.

GCF at UCSD have been the kind of fun and supportive friends I did not expect in graduate school. Liz Waters and Hannah Robbins have been a pleasure to know these years, and I am grateful that their family invited me to be part of their lives. Hannah Robbins, with characteristic acumen, is one of the most astute cultural commentators I know, and I have spent many wonderful afternoons learning from her and laughing with her. Laura Hendrickson and Madeleine also welcomed me into their lives, both in San Diego and in Cambridge, and I am grateful to know their sweet spirits.

A variety of people have provided feedback on various drafts of the work that appears here. Several cohorts of the dissertation writing workshop at UCSD have read, commiserated, and provided feedback and solidarity, among then Aida Ribot, Ellen Kozelka, Sohaib Khan, Kiri Hagerman, Kathleen Bennallack, Erica Fontana, Michael Berman, and Mikael Fauvelle. Sowparnika Balaswaminathan and Haleema Welji read, wrote, taught and traveled through the program with me. Members of the Christianities reading group at Cambridge University, and participants of the Cambridge University

Social Anthropology Society (CUSAS), listened to core aspects of my argument, and pushed on all the right areas of weakness or interest. I am particularly grateful to Amy Binning and Corinna Howland for the invitation to present, and for making Cambridge such a wonderful place to visit.

I am grateful to J. Derrick Lemons, and participants of the Atlanta Center for Theologically Engaged Anthropology conference for helpful workshop interactions. Similarly, thanks to the Anthropology of Christianity Working group at the University of Edinburgh for listening to a paper and for the conversation that followed. I am appreciative to Naomi Haynes, Norm Zhu and Silas for inviting and hosting me. Julian Sommerschuh also read and, characteristically, outlined aspects of my argument for me more clearly than I had been able to articulate.

Brian Howell introduced me to Cultural Anthropology and did so with characteristic enthusiasm and theoretical sophistication. His seminars were a delight, and a wonderful intellectual challenge. He has continued to offer his friendship, advice and support as I've gone through graduate school, and I thank him for it.

Joel Robbins accepted me to be his student, and his mentorship has been profound. I have learnt from him that scholars can be enduringly curious, generous with their time, humble in their knowledge, and also ready to laugh. Reading his work is a continual reminder of why I love anthropology in the first place.

In Zimbabwe, the Women's University in Africa was a kind institutional host, and Professor Charles Nherera was vitally important for making my research plausible. I also

Williams' continual care for others has touched me profoundly, and I'm glad to count a new brother who also cares for her.

My parents, unafraid of such an "impractical" degree, encouraged my interest in cultural anthropology. It is from them that I learned the value of watching, listening and participating in the lives of people and in contexts where I might at first feel uncomfortable and disoriented. I have watched them do this with humility my entire living memory, all with the goal of knowing people on their own terms. Thanks for making this dissertation happen.

Finally, to Tristan, who was my support throughout fieldwork and these many days and hours of writing. Thanks for reading and listening so many times to what is in these pages. All of this is better with you.

VITA

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## PUBLICATIONS
**Book Chapters**
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**Journal Articles**
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2018            Review of *On Knowing Humanity: Insights from theology for anthropology*. London and New York: Routledge. Edited by Eloise Meneses and David Bronkema. Anthrocybib: The Anthropology of Christianity Bibliography Blog. https://www.blogs.hss.ed.ac.uk/anthrocybib/2018/01/07/knowing-humanity-book-review/

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## INVITED TALKS

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Cambridge University Social Anthropology Society (CUSAS)
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| 2018 | *Human responsibility and Original Sin: Moral freedom in the lives of urban Baptists in Zimbabwe*. February 22. Anthropology of Christianity Working Group University of Edinburgh, UK. |
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## CONFERENCE ACTIVITY
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| 2012 | Assistant Organizer. Comparative Christianities Conference. UC San Diego. April 28 |
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| 2018 | **Leanne Williams Green** and Julian Sommerschuh. *The ethics of two sovereigns: Christians between God and the State*. American Anthropological Association Annual Meetings. San Jose, CA. November 14-18. |
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| 2018 *sovereignty.* | *Zimbabwean Baptist Christians and responsibility under* <br><br> American Anthropological Association Annual Meetings. San Jose, CA. November 16. |
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| 2018 | *Sovereigns earthly and divine*. Anthropology Graduate Student Association (AGSA) Symposium. UC San Diego. May 11. |
| 2017 | *God's "sovereignty" and human depravity: how Baptists in Zimbabwe articulate hopefulness by moral living*. American Anthropological Meetings. Washington DC. November 29. |

| 2017 | Lobola *and the* White Wedding *when things are "tight": Baptist Christians in Zimbabwe negotiate two cultural institutions of marriage.* African Studies Association Annual Meetings. Chicago. November 18. |
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| 2017 | *Divine action and human responsibility: Urban Baptists in Zimbabwe negotiate sin and responsibility.* Center for Theologically Engaged Anthropology Mini-Conference. Atlanta. September 18. |
| 2013 | *Doctrinal dis-ease: Thinking Weber on religion, value and class in urban Zimbabwe.* Society for the Anthropology of Religion Meetings. Pasadena, CA. April 14. |
| 2012 | *Boundary-drawing, Christian self-hood and social change: What does a focus on morality offer the student of culture?* CARD Conference. School of Intercultural Studies, Fuller Theological Seminary. Pasadena, CA. April 14. |
| 2011 | *Space and religion as transnational meeting point.* Symposium on Africa and the African Diaspora, UC San Diego. May 27. |
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| 2010 | *Space, symbols and Shona Christianity.* African Studies MRG Dissertation Proposal Workshop, UC Irvine. Irvine, CA. October 1. |

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

| 2015-2017 | Dissertation Fieldwork Research<br>Harare, Zimbabwe |
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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Sin and Sovereignty: Relations of Moral Responsibility and Human Freedom among
Urban Baptists in Zimbabwe

by

Leanne Judith Williams Green

Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

University of California San Diego, 2019

Professor Nancy Postero, Chair
Professor Joel Robbins, Co-Chair

A group of Baptist Christians living in Zimbabwe's capital city, Harare, are particularly concerned with issues of moral responsibility. These urban Christians frequently raise and evaluate possible courses of action in the face of what they perceive as ethical dilemmas - about paying bribes in order to navigate bureaucracy, about fulfilling obligations to family without compromising personal moral autonomy, about individual choices like drinking alcohol or large structural issues like their culpability as citizens in

the political and economic upheavals of recent decades. In these circumstances where it is difficult to know the outcome of one's actions, Baptists in Harare believe strongly in the limits of their own capacity to act in morally good ways, and they also affirm that God controls everything in the world. If Zimbabwean Baptists affirm both of these realities- which they term "sinfulness" and "sovereignty" respectively- how do they come to make morality such a central part of their everyday lives?

Throughout this dissertation, my argument is that Baptists in Harare take themselves to be morally responsible, despite being limited in choice, and that they assess and assert a relational view of human freedom as moral autonomy. The ideas about human moral responsibility and the divine-human relation to which these Christians are committed reveal their unique view of human freedom. Notions of freedom are an important element characterizing their particular type of Baptist Christianity. But this freedom is not characterized in classically liberal terms as being about choice or the capacity to act. Instead, this freedom must be understood relative to commitments to moral responsibility that arise *first* for Baptists in Harare.

In recent anthropological discussions of ethics, one presumption has been that a person must be free in order to be held morally responsible. In this dissertation, I challenge the presumed relation between freedom and responsibility by presenting a view of freedom based not on agency, but rather on conceptions of the human will and the relations in which a person exists. My argument contributes to explorations of the nature of freedom diversely conceived, and its relation to responsibility and models of moral personhood.

**Introduction**

A group of middle-class Christians living in Zimbabwe's capital city, Harare, are particularly concerned with issues of moral responsibility. How and why this has come to be the case for believers who attend Fairside Baptist Church is the focus of this dissertation. I start first, however, with a cup of tea.

One morning, Andy had pushed through the swinging doors into the makeshift office of Tinovimba- an affiliated NGO housed in the basement halls of the church I call Fairside Baptist[1]. Several workers had their notebooks and phones set up on the central table, facing each other. They were calculating amounts given to the savings groups they facilitated in various communities in the area. A little light filtered in from the ground-level windows. Andy had come in to the room with two mugs and a spoon, seeking the electric kettle and some water. He knew the Tinovimba office would not have the nicer instant coffee grounds that he sometimes begged off the pastor, but he thought that here he might be able to get some advice.

I followed Andy into the office, having found him washing the mugs in the large trough sink in the church's mop room. One mug was for Solomon, whom Andy had instructed to sit in the church foyer. "Solomon is very inebriated today," he announced to the middle-aged church staffers in the Tinovimba office. When he had earlier walked into the foyer where Solomon was, it had "wreaked," he reported, making a face and recoiling.

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[1] All names of places and of people are pseudonyms, unless otherwise indicated.

Tall and slim, Andy had an edgy look, dressed mostly in black with his stovepipe jeans fitting loosely. He had a coy smile that emerged even, or most often, when he was frustrated and trying to get his point across. Like many his age in the congregation, Andy had studied for a bachelor's degree in South Africa, before returning to find no available work in his hometown, Harare. He volunteered in the social care ministry of the church, catching a *kombi*[2] into town when he could find the bus fare and walking the eight kilometer distance when he could not.

Alongside other volunteers, Andy chose to spend his days listening to the stories of those who came to the church seeking assistance. The church was prepared to provide this assistance, offering sacks of maize and beans or clothing items in return for small chores carried out in the church, if the request-maker was physically capable, or to accompany people to hospital to help them acquire medication.

Andy started to boil the water, addressing the two NGO office workers as he did so, "what do I say to him?"

The two NGO workers- Chenjerai and Auntie Chido- were moving around the room, one struggling with a broken stapler, and the other with head in the cupboard, looking for additional staples.

Like Andy, I regularly found myself in this little office, listening to these two give advice or reflect on current politics or church issues. Auntie Chido coached Andy, saying that while he could tell Solomon the gospel- the truth that God could save people- it was

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[2] *Kombis* are the privately owned 15-seater commuter omnibuses that constitute one of the main modes of public transportation that zig-zag across the city.

not he who would do the convicting. Chenjerai agreed, helping to finish her sentence, "It is the Holy Spirit."

Solomon needed to know that he could not keep coming to Fairside, looking for help, when he was perpetually drunk. But they explained that Andy's task was not to condemn Solomon. Auntie Chido concluded that Andy should "tell him the truth in love."

Andy was at the tea tray, where the kettle was heating up, sighing, "Christians always say that like it's easy, but it's not."

Auntie Ruth, from another social ministry down the hall, poked her head through the swinging double doors, also with tea mug in hand. She eyed the tea tray in the corner, asking sheepishly, "do you have some tea…and some sugar?"

As she looked to refill the kettle, she stopped short: "don't you use borehole[3] water?"

Auntie Chido looked up from the excel spreadsheets on her laptop and indicated that they did not. Auntie Ruth then launched into a long commentary on the dangers of contaminated drinking water, a common issue in Harare. Though the city government claimed that water from municipal taps was safely potable, many residents' own experience suggested otherwise. The hundred-year-old pipes were crumbling, leaking chemicals into the water and easily transferring contaminants into the stream trickling out of household taps. And that was if there was running municipal water at all.

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[3] Boreholes are deep holes drilled to access groundwater, providing some of the more reliable sources of potable water.

Those in the office began a discussion of the variety of ways they tried to source drinkable water. At Chenjerai's house in the outer reaches of Harare's suburbs, where city utilities barely extended, they used a gravity-fed water filtration system, made of a carbon filter and two buckets. The church used to give out similar filtration systems. Though the system effectively trapped physical impurities like particles and sediment, it did not remove chemical impurities. Sounding resigned, Chenjerai explained how even bottled water was not reliable, since many of the bottling companies also relied solely on physical filtration systems.

Auntie Chido used a similar filter, but the water she was filtering was borehole water to begin with. As she said so, she began looking for a newspaper article about water purification that she had seen recently, and which she offered to read aloud. In the article, a University of Zimbabwe professor explained that filtration does not solve the issue of chemicals in the water and that even purification tablets added to treat it could combine with impurities to create something carcinogenic. By this point, Auntie Ruth had already left with her tea. Her voice trailed away as she pushed through the doors, saying that she drank municipal water at home anyway, and that, regardless of one's water source, "we are all poisoning ourselves!"

Later that morning, as Chenjerai and I tried to exit the stiff glass doors in the front of the church to run an errand, we were stopped short by the vision of Andy, arm around Solomon under the small verandah, heads bowed, praying.

Auntie Ruth's dilemma about tea and drinking water, and Andy's dilemma about care and evangelism, together reveal a preliminary claim of my argument in this dissertation: that Fairside Baptist believers experience their individual moral lives and the challenges of living in contemporary Zimbabwe as entailing considerable limitations and also particular responsibilities. In Solomon, Andy saw the moral struggle faced by humans each day, coming back again and again for both emotional and physical support, but still regularly returning to alcohol. Andy faced a struggle too: he felt a moral responsibility to help Solomon know the truth of the Christian gospel and also the truth of the harm he was doing to himself and his family. Andy desired to – and, indeed, does- care for Solomon, while recognizing the limits of his ability to either break Solomon's addiction, or to bring about his spiritual redemption. Since Andy could not force Solomon to take the one thing he thought most important for him to receive, he resorted to making him a cup of tea.

But even the making of the cup of tea posed a problem. The group in the office realized that despite their water filtration systems, and even if they purchased bottled water, they were likely being "poisoned" by the chemicals. They could try all sorts of strategies for obtaining healthy and safe drinking water, but perpetually bumped up against the boundaries of what they could achieve, both for lack of knowledge and for lack of control over chemicals or infrastructure. The physical challenges of obtaining drinkable water are mirrored in Andy's dilemma and frustrations about what he could or could not do on Solomon's behalf. In both of the issues at hand- obtaining safe water and sharing Christian truth with a struggling alcoholic- these Christians see themselves as moral agents who are also limited in their capacity to bring about desired change.

In what follows, I consider not only how people think about limitations, but also how people think about moral responsibility in relation to these limits and in light of divine work in the world, in a context that continually frustrates efforts to plan or to predict outcomes. For Baptist Christians at Fairside, one source of limitation is the moral autonomy that Solomon possesses, over which Andy does not have control, either with regards to addiction or salvation. Sin is a second significant limitation. Baptists in Harare believe strongly in human sinfulness. It is this sinful nature that means that they are substantially limited in their own capacity to act morally. They also live in a context of great uncertainty- where even water is not trustworthy- and still affirm strongly God's control over everything that happens- his sovereignty.

Despite these limitations, uncertainties, and divine control, Fairsiders and other members of a Baptist network in Harare are particularly concerned with debating how they can live morally good lives. These urban Christians frequently raise and evaluate possible courses of action in the face of what they perceive as ethical dilemmas. These dilemmas are situated at the intersection of human limitations and moral responsibility- about paying bribes in order to navigate bureaucracy, about fulfilling obligations to family without compromising personal moral autonomy, about individual choices like drinking alcohol or large structural issues like their culpability as citizens in the political and economic upheavals of recent decades. These challenges are particularly acute because of this setting of substantial unpredictability in which they live, when they cannot know with much certainty what will be the outcome of their actions. As Auntie Ruth emphasizes, despite every effort to purify it, they could be poisoned by the very water they drink.

Yet they debate moral issues because they take themselves to be held morally responsible. If, in these circumstances where it is difficult to know the outcome of one's actions, Baptists in Harare believe so strongly that God controls everything, and that their capacity to act morally has been corrupted, how do they come to make morality such a central part of their everyday lives?

Throughout this dissertation, my argument is that Fairside Baptists take themselves to be morally responsible, despite being limited in choice, and that they assess and assert a relational view of human freedom as moral autonomy. The ideas about human moral responsibility and the divine-human relation to which Fairside believers are committed reveal their unique view of human freedom. While these Christians in Harare do take seriously their own limitations as humans, as well as the limitations of the world around them, notions of freedom are an important element characterizing their particular type of Christianity. But this freedom is not characterized in classically liberal terms as being about choice or the capacity to act. Instead, this freedom must be understood relative to commitments to moral responsibility that arise *first* for Baptists in Harare.

In order to make this argument, it is important to understand two important theological concepts for these Baptists: human sinfulness and divine sovereignty, both of which set the limits and also the terms of freedom. In part, Baptists in Harare understand what is going on around them socially and historically through these two notions. I introduce sinfulness and sovereignty in the context of discussing who this group of Baptists are. I begin by laying out the Baptist topography in Zimbabwe and explaining the Baptist "distinctives" to which Fairside Baptists are committed.

**Baptists in Harare**

While a high percentage of Zimbabweans identify as Christians[4], Baptists represent a small proportion of this number. Philip Jenkins' *The Next Christendom* (2002) charted the massive shift of Christianity into a global religion that is increasingly non-Western and non-White, but Baptist Christianity is notably absent from the discussion, an absence that Jenkins himself remarked on after publication of the volume (Jenkins 2017). While Baptists are still the largest Protestant group in the United States, a movement of critical mass towards the "Global South" has not occurred in the same way that, say, Pentecostal shifts have. Outside of the US, Jenkins remarks that Baptists have a "marginal presence" (2017, 61). While Africa has a professed Christian population of close to half a billion, the Baptist World Alliance- the worldwide collective organization of Baptists- counts just over 18 million members there[5].

While a number of historical, colonial, religious and cultural factors may account for the stark absence of Baptist influence on the continent, my purpose for highlighting these numbers here is to suggest that the small network of Baptist churches on which I focus stands out from the numerous and influential Pentecostal, Methodist, African Initiated, and Apostolic churches flourishing in urban centers across Zimbabwe. The Baptist network is part of a much broader evangelical arena in Zimbabwe, and also distinct from it in some important ways. By evangelical, I refer to the distinguishing features of a conversion 'born again' experience that leads to a personal relationship with Christ as

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[2] The Pew Global Religious Futures measured 87% of Zimbabwe's population as professing Christians in 2010. Of these, 67% were Protestants. http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries/zimbabwe

[5] Baptist World Alliance Statistics, bwanet.org

savior, and a commitment to the authority of the Bible, in Zimbabwe marked particularly by membership in the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, or EFZ[6].

The Baptist Union of Zimbabwe, to which Fairside belongs, shares a place in the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe alongside larger groups like the transnational movement Zimbabwe Assemblies of God, Africa (ZAOGA), which grew out of the Apostolic Faith Mission. These groups have historical resonances with the considerable number of *vapastori* (apostolic) churches in Zimbabwe[7] (Engelke 2007; Maxwell 2006a), all of whom are influenced by Pentecostalism. Baptists in Harare maintain an ambivalent attitude towards these groups: they recognize some shared elements of belief and applaud various kinds of cooperation, but remain sceptical of "prophetic" ministries and elaborate religious displays.

The congregants on which my discussion focuses attend a mid-sized church in Zimbabwe's capital city. The church I call Fairside Baptist sits along a crowded city intersection, with windows barricaded by burglar bars and glass front doors that remain locked even during office hours. Throughout the week, however, one can stop by and find many church members passing through, engaged in church business or just looking for a place to sit and talk for a while.

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[6] The more mainline denominations belong to the other dominant church alliance: the Zimbabwe Council of Churches. This includes Methodists, Anglicans and Lutherans. Membership is not generally shared between the Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the ERZ; generally, churches belong to one or the other (Mukonyora 2008).

[7] Vapastori refers to a collection of Southern African churches who follow a prophetic leader. They are not members of the EFZ, although for example, Mukonyora (2008) has included them under a broad umbrella of 'evangelical.'

Figure 1: Looking out onto the street from Fairside Baptist

With some 500 attendees, the congregation meets in two different services on Sunday and countless times again throughout the week in smaller groups. Cosmopolitan and multilingual, English is frequently the language of choice for congregants, intermixed sporadically with Shona. Many members are well educated, working in managerial, financial or health industries. Some members run their own home businesses, and some had travelled and lived in other countries. Many are also looking for jobs and struggling to support extended families, to pay school fees for their children and to keep their homes running.

Fairside Baptist is one of the older churches in the Baptist Union of Zimbabwe (BUZ), which began in the 1930s as an outgrowth of Baptist work in South Africa. The BUZ has six churches within its Harare region. In 2016, during my ethnographic tenure, the BUZ held its 60th annual general meeting. In addition to the BUZ, four other Baptist denominations in Zimbabwe are also registered as part of the worldwide Baptist body- the

Baptist World Alliance- with the BUZ representing a relatively small proportion of the Baptist churches in Zimbabwe[8].

Despite its relative size, Fairside remains an influential church in Harare. The religious practice in this congregation centers on textually based study, and members eschew the elaborate displays of religious neighbours and conduct services with highly structured timetables. An attitude of restraint characterizes their meetings, which climax in an expository sermon. The text-based focus of the church, and the religious and educational aspirations of the congregation, mean that attendees are highly conversant in theological issues and are invested in debating these issues as an aspect of their social and devotional lives. Fairside stands out not only in terms of its size relative to many other Christian religious groups in the country, but also because of the relative wealth and status of its members, which I discuss in chapter one, and for the energy they devote to a specific set of theological concerns, which I introduce below and discuss at length in chapters two and three.

**Specifics of Baptist Doctrine in Harare**

For Fairside Baptists, the relation between responsibility and freedom is an ethical and religious negotiation set against the notions of sin and sovereignty. Sinfulness and divine sovereignty are theologically dense concepts that are taught in the doctrine of the

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[8] The BUZ accounts for only 68 churches and 5,000 members out of the 678 churches and 73,000 members listed for all Baptist denominations in Zimbabwe. "68 churches" was a sad statistic that I heard lamented by one pastor, in comparison to the growth of other Baptist denominations in the region (www.bwanet.org).

church and inform the way that Baptists in the Harare network perform religious practice and also interpret the world around them.

The average Fairside church-goer is cognizant of doctrine as a distinguishing feature of their church. At the very first Fairside youth meeting I attended, before the formal program began, I spoke with three young men as they readied the room for the gathering. They later became important friends and interlocutors. One of their first questions to me was about "my doctrine." In part, they wanted to know if I was Baptist, but they also asked specifically that I identify myself in relation to doctrinal positions. "What a curious question," I wrote in my fieldnotes at the time. In this question, the concern over doctrine points to a tension at the very heart of my argument about how Baptists in Harare think about moral responsibility. This tension is between moral authority and moral autonomy. One reason why this question appears as striking is that the formulation "my doctrine" marries authority and autonomy is a surprising way, as it suggests that doctrine- a set of affirmations belonging to a tradition or community- could be possessed by an individual in some way.

This tension is also evident in the "distinctives" that, as I later learned, Fairsiders must affirm in order to be members of the church. The church deacons told me that the actual number of members at Fairside is around 200, meaning that more than 50% of the regular attendees did not become members. Still, a substantial portion had made a choice to affirm these distinctives, which I describe below.

In the Baptist Union, the process of acquiring membership is a formal one, and the institutional division of each congregation into members and non-members is significant

for the organization of the church itself. While in other types of Christianity, the member/non-member division signals access to salvation, or lack thereof, or determines participation in two key Christians rituals- "eucharist" or "communion", and baptism- in the Baptist church membership is a matter of belonging, authority, and voting power. Membership confers the right to participate in institutional decision-making, service and "ministry" activities in the church, and makes a person accountable to the elected church leadership. This accountability means that should a member consistently refuse to comply with particular biblical injunctions, by virtue of membership the participant has agreed to allow the church to take disciplinary measures. Submission to the authority of the church body and the church leaders is one of the important reasons why church leaders at Fairside emphasize the significance of *voluntary* membership.

When I asked young people why they became members, they cited their desire to participate in Church leadership activities- like the praise and worship band that played music and sang during Sunday morning services, or various youth leadership roles. To become a member, Fairside church goers attend a series of classes led by two church leaders. One of the meetings that I attended focused particularly on a printed document of the "Historic Baptist Distinctives," derived from the Baptist World Alliance. The distinctives spelled out "Baptists" as an acrostic:

> **B**ible, the sole authority in faith and practice
> **A**utonomy and Interdependence of the local church
> **P**riesthood of believers
> **T**wo Offices- Pastors/Elders and Deacons
> **I**ndividual soul liberty and responsibility
> **S**eparation of Church and State
> **T**wo ordinances:
>> Believer's Baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper

Saved, Baptized and Serving Members

These eight distinctives represent a relation of two dimensions: authority and autonomy. The tensions between these relations is an enduring Baptist problem, as Howell (2008) shows for the Southern Baptists he studied in the Philippines. The Bible is one of the primary sources of authority. At the church level, authority is given to those permitted to teach the Bible to the whole congregation[9]. The Sunday sermons are the climax of the service, and women's gatherings, youth events, and children's programs all prioritize teaching in their activities. The preaching pulpit at Fairside is reserved for male leaders trained and gifted to teach and of proven commitment to the church. The vast majority of the preaching is done by only two men. Women and younger people do teach in various other contexts in the church, but the key difference is the degree of authority given to the teaching elders and pastors who occupy the pulpit.

The second dimension is included explicitly in the pamphlet, which describes "autonomy" as relating to two features:

1. "the quality or state of being self-governing, especially the right of self-government"
2. "self-directing freedom and especially moral independence"

The authority of church leaders, church body collective, and the Bible exists in tension with the authority of the individual Christian- acknowledged as the "priesthood of all believers." This is closer to autonomy in the second-sense given above.

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[9] Teaching is a primary activity for Fairside Baptists, and the two main 'offices' evidence this fact: while deacons are church leaders who serve the congregation in practical affairs, pastors and elders perform some silimar roles but are distinguished from deacons because of their teaching capacity.

Each believer has a degree of authority to read the Bible and discern its meaning for their own lives, an authority given them through the power of the Holy Spirit who acts as Christ's representative in the individual life of a believer. In the same way that membership must be voluntary, preachers also encourage hearers of the sermons to read the Bible and verify the truth of the teaching for themselves. This authority gives each Christian a "moral independence" as well as a responsibility. Many of the discussions that follow are focused on how Fairside Baptists assert this moral independence while allowing their responsibility to God and to others to shape them.

The "right to self-government" refers also to the atomization of each congregation and the democratic processes by which they elect leaders who will govern them. Baptist ideology renders an autonomy not only to the individual believer, but also to the "local" church. The "Baptist distinctives" that are shared among BUZ churches means that the various churches identify with one another, give dues to the denomination, meet on an annual basis, and participate in shared projects. Technically and constitutionally, however, stand-alone congregations have the authority of religious freedom[10].

Baptist Christianity is particularly suited to an exploration of issues around human freedom because of the centrality of this idea to Baptist identity. As historian of the Baptist Church Leonard puts it, "Baptists are among the most outspoken advocates of religious liberty in modern Protestant history" (2003, 157). This fact puts related concerns between freedom and responsibility at the center of religious practice for the Baptists on which this dissertation focuses. It is my contention that Baptist ideas about the relation between moral

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[10] Indeed, the demand for this institutional autonomy was one of the historic motivators for the founding of the earliest Baptist churches and movements in Europe (Leonard 2003).

responsibility and freedom are particularly compelling for this group of Christians in Harare because of the way that this relation speaks to the uncertainties in which they currently live.

**Pushing "Reset" on the Crisis in Zimbabwe**

Cruising down one of Harare's main roads into the suburbs one afternoon, the Pastor's pick-up truck was full of young people: four women across the back bench, and six young men seated in the truck bed. A twenty-something rider in the front seat wanted the pastor to explain what was going on some 600 kilometers away in Beitbridge, the border town with South Africa. Cross-border traders had rioted there, setting a warehouse on fire in protest over the Zimbabwean government's new policies around imports and taxation. The group began to discuss the WhatsApp messages[11] that had been circulating about possible collective action on later that month to protest the taxes levied on traders and a new list of banned imports- the government's supposed attempt to foster local manufacturing.

The conversation wandered closer to home as we passed an area where police frequently set up roadblocks, checking motorists for compliance with a range of exacting regulations. They joked that ZRP stood not for "Zimbabwe Republic Police" but "Zimbabwe Roadblock police." Police officers were often the objects of derision, known

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[11] WhatsApp is a messaging service operating over IP through a smartphone application. Mobile phone service providers in Zimbabwe make "WhatsApp bundles" available, which allows a user to purchase small amounts of internet data to utilize WhatsApp. This works out to be substantially cheaper than regular phone text messaging, so people rely heavily on the app to communicate or for entertainment.

for being corrupt and violent, extracting bribes and abusing what authority they had. But this time, there was a tone of compassion as the truck passengers spoke about them: the police had not been paid their wages for some time, and now the government was talking of paying them only USD 100- around a quarter of their salary[12]- or disbursing the payment as groceries rather than money. One young woman spoke up about how unfair that was, given that to withdraw the USD 100 would cost you USD 5 in bank fees. Plus, the banks were regularly running out of cash to dispense, leaving bank customers without access to their own money. Setting up a roadblock and pocketing the small fines they imposed on passing motorists was one of the few means police officers had available for obtaining a little money.

The conversation wove back and forth between these situations: the civil servants who had gone unpaid, the police putting up more and more roadblocks in an attempt to live off the bribes they extracted from equally cash-strapped motorists, the potential for further unrest at the border conduit where many consumer items were imported daily, and the persistent problem of trying to find hard cash. Someone in the backseat sighed, saying they wish they could press "reset" on this country.

The desire to "reset" Zimbabwe points to the senses of possibility and potential recognized by residents of the nation's capital. Situated up on a plateau where the weather is more temperate- cooler and wetter- than the surrounding zones, the area around Harare

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[12] Though I do not have official documentation, my interlocutors told me that average, low level civil servants (including police officers and teachers) made a salary of US$300-$400 per month, and I saw news reports that indicated this was an accurate number. http://Newsday.co.zw/2016/10/council-employees-counted-among-top-earners

had been resident to a number of groups circulating through the region before the Pioneer column made its arrival in the late 19th century (Mazarire 2009). The city's altitude means it is mostly absent of malaria-carrying mosquitos and of the tsetse fly that devastates livestock holdings (Bourdillon 2004[1976], 6). One pastor cited a ranking to me that declared Harare had the best climate of any capital city in the world.

Along with the weather, other residents told me of the once-glorious infrastructure crowning this capital city. A young woman said the downtown streets had been so clean that as a child in the summer heat she could remove her shoes and walk around barefoot. This same young woman described Zimbabwe's peak "development" as being around 1997, a trajectory articulated by many other Zimbabweans, political analysts, and historians (Raftopolous and Mlambo 2009; Raftopolous and Phimister 2004; Mlambo 2009). The nation has been in decline ever since, the narrative goes. Now, despite still boasting a number of tall, glass fronted buildings in its upscale areas, next door the city rubbish piles up, uncollected, and residents regard the streets they navigate daily as volatile and dangerous, where one is liable to be the victim of crime or accident.

This sense of downward trajectory, dipping into deep economic and political crisis in 2008, has much deeper roots in a particular politicized history. Indeed, the social and political conditions that make drinkable water hard to find are the product of a history that itself has been hotly contested. This history has been another source of uncertainty, and an important tool of ethnic, political and racialized power (Ranger 2004; Mazarire 2009; Jones 2012). Politico-economic and social dynamics imposed by a colonial administration for a century and a half, followed by a white minority government, the guerilla war for

liberation, and the efforts of the ruling party in the postcolonial era have all contributed to two particular elements of the nation's history that are pertinent for my discussion. The first has to do with the growth of a black middle-class during these various periods, and the second relates to the conditions that created economic turmoil post-1997, including the ruling party's approach to land redistribution.

During the colonial era, the work of the British South Africa Company, and later of a self-governing British colony, alongside missionaries from a range of churches, set to exploit the rich mineral resources and agricultural potential already evident in the region, expropriating land, forcing black residents into unproductive areas, and instituting political and social hierarchies in favor of white settlers (Barnes 1999; Schmidt 1992; Shutt 2015; Yoshikuni 2007). An early revolt in the late nineteenth century was quashed, and taxation and forced labor were imposed. Despite these policies, there was growth of a black middle-class throughout the first half of the 20th century.

Just as many former British colonies were achieving national independence in the 1960s and 70s, a white minority political rulership in Rhodesia separated itself from the British empire and instituted a Universal Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965. The apartheid-like conditions characterizing UDI and unwillingness to grant majority rule (rejecting "one man, one vote") meant that Rhodesia came under international sanction. In turn, the UDI government focused on developing a self-sufficient economy, including a state supported agricultural system, with land and commercial industry held, still, in the hands of the small white population (Mtisi, Nyakudya and Barnes 2009, 129).

The oppressiveness of UDI on the black majority led to a lengthy guerilla war for liberation (see Bhebe and Ranger 1996; Lan 1985; Ranger 1985). The fighting extended more than a decade, until an agreement was finally reached between the liberation fighters and the Rhodesian minority government in 1979. While there seemed to be a promise of some kind of racial reconciliation, and some settlement between the class, ethnic and political rivalries within the liberation movement itself, these divisions in fact cracked and exposed further schisms in the post-independence period.

Immediately following independence, there was very quick growth in economic and social services, including introduction of minimum wages, emphasis on universal education, and attempts to expand the black middle class (Muzondidya 2009, 167-168), alongside improvements in water access and sanitation in rural areas. But this growth was fast and proved difficult to support. Alongside economic expansion, simmering political tensions between the various fronts within the ruling government led to the Gukurahundi massacre, in which an elite paramilitary government force slaughtered large numbers of predominantly ethnic Ndebele Zimbabweans in the west of the country (Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe 1997).

The decade of the 1990s saw not only drought and downturn in agricultural production, but also the introductions of IMF/World Bank Structural Adjustment Programs (Muzondidya 188). Wages decreased in relation to increasing cost of goods, and unemployment rates rose. An era of land appropriations also began. By the decade's end began the era known as the "crisis." The economic restructuring and agricultural decline played a role in reaching the crisis point, but so did the strategies opted for by the ruling

party, ZANU-PF (Raftopolous 2009, 202). Pushing back, civil society groups, including the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, raised issues of workers' rights and human rights, and concerns about the increasingly authoritarian approach of the state, while issues of land ownership and distribution continued to play a major role (Dorman 2002). In response, the ruling party sought greater control of the judiciary, the press, and to put an effective ban on many of the kinds of public actions that had mobilized the opposition (Raftopolous 2009, 214).

The rising opposition pushed the reigning ZANU-PF into closer alliance with "war veterans," those who had fought in the liberation struggle (Muzondidya 2009, 210). This alliance motivated the beginning of land seizures in which large, mostly white-owned and commercial farms were occupied – sometimes violently- and production activities disrupted or halted altogether, in what was terms the Fast Track Land Reform program[13]. By the end of 2008, a country once serving as an important exporter of food to the region now itself needed food aid for some 5 million people (217).

For many people, the slide into crisis has been felt as an economic one. Productivity and exports have rapidly declined, and hyperinflation climbed until it hit a record-breaking 79.6 *billion* percent in late 2008 (Hanke and Kwok 2009). This in turn lead to "dollarization," the adoption of a multi-currency economy dominated by the US

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[13]There had been previous farm occupations, but these new ones were unprecedented because of the more extensive role of the state in supporting them, and because they involved more youth members of ZANU(PF) as well as people from urban centers and communal lands, identified as "war veteran These younger urbanites were conceptualized as war veterans precisely because of their role in the so-called Fast Track Land Reform, which president and ZANU (PF) leader Mugabe referred to as "the Third Chimurenga." The First Chimurenga (or "struggle") refers to the uprising of 1896-7 against foreign settler encroachment. The War for Liberation in the 1960s and 1970s is the Second Chimurenga, which drew inspiration from the earlier resistance to settler land seizures and extraction. As the "Third Chimurenga," the farm occupations that began in the 1990s were thus cast in a chain of liberatory efforts.

dollar. These changes have all contributed to mass unemployment, growth in black

markets and in informal labor. As the informal sector grew to compensate for the massive

loss in real wages and inflation rates, the government instituted "Operation

Murambatsvina[14]" (Vambe 2008). During this campaign, the government quite literally

bulldozed the homes of huge numbers of the urban population, also destroying many

livelihoods based on informal home businesses.

The country reached breaking point in 2008, when the ruling party lost its

parliamentary majority in elections, resulting in both political confusion and violence. This

was also the era of hyperinflation, and by the end of the year, a cholera outbreak spread

rapidly. By this point, the outbreak became a "humanitarian crisis [that] effectively

signaled the loss of the state's capacity to provide basic services for its citizens"

(Raftopolous 2009, 226).


**Temporalities of Urban Postcolonial Africa**

Loss of these basic services is now a regular feature of life in Harare, and lack of

safe drinking water does make residents feel as though they are regularly being

"poisoned." While this narrative of decline into confusion and economic disaster has been

termed again and again the Zimbabwean "crisis" (Raftopolous 2009), others have

challenged the terms of this characterization. In an interview about her own work on this

issue, Janet Roitman has argued that we consider more carefully the concept of "crisis" in

our application of the term (qtd in Schapira 2014). Jeremy Jones has claimed that to think

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[14] "Murambatsvina" is variously glossed as "clean up the filth" (Harris 2008) or "restore order" Tibaijuka (2005).

in terms of "crisis" presumes that people living through various upheavals operate with a coherent framework for interpreting these events. To refer to "crisis" creates a bracket in which a new, legible space-time is generated. In fact, he shows, people's experience during Zimbabwe's period of hyperinflation entailed no such coherence: conditions of hyperinflation fully "undermined" any real spatiotemporal connections that might hold together in some way (Jones 2012, 21). An important way that it did so was by wrenching apart their experiences of time and space, creating a spatiotemporal "fragmentation." Instead, "[p]eople were compelled to put different spaces and times together *on their own, on the fly,* and in ways that they themselves acknowledged were not quite *proper* (morally or procedurally)" (31, emphasis in the original).

In his challenge to the term "crisis," what Jones identifies is the kinds of economic, social and politic uncertainties of life visible in other postcolonial sub-Saharan African cities as well. Scholars writing about these contexts have theorized the kinds of temporalities created by these conditions, and the subjectivities produced as a result. They have highlighted three main ways in which uncertainty characterizes these contexts. In the first instance, they show how uncertainty generates new modes of temporality (Guyer 1997; Jones 2010; Mbembe and Roitman 1995; Piot 2010). Mbembe and Roitman[15] (1995) claim that this temporality is one of "contemporaneousness" or the "present moment" (323). A key characteristic of this contemporaneousness is the presence of activity without the sense that such action is generating any kind of future. Postcolonial subjects in these contexts feel themselves to be outside of the progression of history, personally and

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[15] In some ways, my earlier citation of Roitman on "anti-crisis" (2013) is a revision or reconsideration of the argument she made with Mbembe. See Schapira 2014.

23

collectively (Jones 2010; Mbembe and Roitman 1995). Still, people keep moving, hustling

for some "marginal gains" (Guyer 1997), all while trying to keep the utilities on. The result

is a kind of "frantic stasis" (Jones 2010, 289).

This temporal fragmentation, where times are simultaneously suspended and also

generating intense forms of activity, play host to a distinctly African crisis of

representation. This is the second characteristic of postcolonial uncertainty that is relevant

for my discussion. There is an instability of representation because signs and their

signifiers have been wrenched apart, and float freely, available for appropriation and

attachment to other signs. Put another way, residents of the postcolony cannot rely on the

fact that what they see will mean what it once used to mean, or that any kind of stable

meaning can be discerned. Fakes abound: scams, cons, copies, imitations of commodities

and identities (cf Piot 2010). In Zimbabwe, this phenomenon was heightened during the

period of hyperinflation, when money could not be considered at "face value," but was

continually reckoned against a constantly moving scale of value, radically differential by

official or black-market rates. The skepticism and cynicism about reliable signs and

meanings generated by the hyperinflationary years of 2007 and 2008 persist into the

present.

Both spatio-temporal fragmentation and a crisis of representation, thirdly, produce

particular kinds of postcolonial subjectivities. These subjectivities are, of course, also

*inter*subjectivities, as Werbner (2002) argues in his introduction to a volume on the topic.

In exploring what might be distinct about African postcolonial subjectivities, scholars have

sought to challenge the individualism and ideas about autonomy that can get smuggled into

the notion of subjectivity (Stoller 2002, 225), and have argued for the construction of these subjectivities as self-conscious and "as simultaneously about subjection to power, moral agency, and being the subject of one's own experience" (Lambek 2002, 25).

The conditions in which these subjectivities develop are importantly ones of uncertainty. Regnant unpredictability makes it difficult to make clear connections between a set of occurrences and a given outcome: once familiar lines of causality have been unsettled- another casualty of the representational uncertainty- while altering the kinds of temporality that subjects are engaging. If causality cannot be clearly attributed to an agent, or an agent does not presume that they can predict the outcomes of their own actions, how to think about living a moral life? Rather than setting aside morality as an implausible consideration under the current conditions, Baptists in Harare privilege morality as a major site of activity. The argument that I make in the following chapters addresses how and why this is the case.

**Ethical Times**

In describing this disconnect between action and causality, and an attendant lack of predictable outcomes as a pervasive temporal feature of post-colonial African cities, I have also started to show how this uncertainty bears on morality. The relationship between time, morality, and uncertainty will be key to the argument that I make about how Zimbabwean Baptists reckon human freedom and moral responsibility. Baptists in Harare find this temporal uncertainty to be comprehensible in terms of the concept of sinfulness, but they still continually struggle to assess their responsibility within it.

A number of authors have drawn this connection between temporality and morality, some taking inspiration from Jane Guyer's (2007) influential article on the absence of the "near future" in certain contemporary cultural patterns. She makes a compelling case that some existing cultural discourses eclipse what she calls the "near future" in favor of orienting towards the present and towards a distant future. She identifies commonalities between conservative evangelicalism and also monetized economics in this respect. For evangelicalism, she claims that Christians think about the "near future as a kind of hiatus, whose intelligibility is explicitly in abeyance" (2007, 414). With both monetarism and evangelical dispensationalism, there is a "comparable downplaying or rejection of durational human reasoning" (414). The times of the near futures then act as "domains of individual and collective life that have been released from answerability to a more distant past and future" (416).

In both cases, there is an unknowability about the near future, and a rejection of the possibility of assessment and reasoning available for thinking about it. The uncertainty that I have been describing of postcolonial contexts entails a similar kind of unknowability, and a similar lack of means for collective modes of planning or interpretation. Guyer claims that this is not only a feature of the general uncertainty of life, but more specifically it is an "emerging chronotope"- Bakhtin's notion of a particular space-time- which has a "historical specificity" (2007, 418). Historical specificity means that the erasure of the near future is not an inevitable orientation for evangelical Christianity; Matthew Engelke shows how a UK- based Christian think-tank, *Theos*, promotes precisely a "thinking [that] attends

to the near future" because it also advocates for a kind of "pragmatism" (2013, 144). I examine a similar approach and its relation to politics in chapter five.

While Guyer makes no claims of causality for the two parallel cases she explores-conservative evangelicalism and contemporary economic practices of monetarism- I suggest that it is no accident that the two together provide such a vivid example of the evacuation of the "near future." Indeed, in my ethnographic case, it is economic disruption *and* a form of conservative Protestantism that *together* generate particular cultural approaches to dealing with the uncertainty and presentism they entail. In Harare, the logics of a particular economy- one shaped by a history of hyperinflation- and of Baptist religious outlook do not merely share parallel treatments of time, but for Baptists in the city the two logics are mutually supportive of one another. Both temporalities presume a degree of uncertainty.

Scholars engaging in conversations in the Anthropology of Christianity have paid heed to issues of temporality in their analyses. They have done so particularly in terms of discussions around rupture and continuity (Chua 2012; Daswani 2013; Engelke 2010; Meyer 1998[16]; Robbins 2007) and also studied the content of eschatological theology for the way it shapes people's views of contemporary geopolitics (Webster 2013, see also Robbins 2004). Rather than considerations of rupture or of eschatology, I instead engage issues of temporality for the kinds of subjective experiences that they produce for my interlocutors, particularly living through situations of radical uncertainty. In doing so, I bring together discussion in the anthropological study of ethics with theorists who have

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[16] While this piece is often read as a strict rupture argument, it is important to note that Meyer herself does not see her argument in this light.

tried to characterize what life is like in the uncertainty of postcolonial sub-Saharan Africa.

I argue that postcolonial temporalities of uncertainty are the conditions in which a Baptist logic of human sinfulness and divine sovereignty produce the relation between moral responsibility and human freedom to which my interlocutors adhere, and with which they navigate their everyday worlds. Having characterized these temporalities and laid out some basics of Baptist belief, I turn now to the question of moral responsibility, and then of freedom.

**Taking Responsibility for the Uncertain Future**

The uncertain "near future" that can entail a "rejection" of human reasoning has particular bearing on issues of responsibility. How can one act morally in a context where one cannot predict the outcome of one's actions? What can one be held responsible for when meanings and values themselves are destabilized? Indeed, Jones' interlocutors in the chaos of 2008 Zimbabwe took their situation to be one in which normal rules – about time, space, value, and morality- *could not* apply.

Such an argument- that unstable times invite a concomitant moral instability- would lend credence to Joel Robbins' observations regarding types of ethics as they relate to social life. The two possible types he describes are divisions borrowed from a distinctly European moral philosophy: that of deontological and consequentialist ethics. In a deontological model, to act morally one complies with a set of rules, and to do so relieves one of any "moral guilt" for the consequences of one's actions (Robbins 2010; cf Fassin 2012). This style of moral reasoning is often presumed to be duty-based. In a

28

consequentialist model, the moral agent is held responsible for the outcome of their actions, as part of the ethical consideration of their moral culpability. A consequentialist ethics "assesses conducts according to their consequences rather than their conformity with preexisting rules or their resulting from a specific disposition of the agent" (Fassin 2012, 8).

Robbins suggests that these different approaches are responsive to the social circumstances in which they are embedded:

> Consequentialist moral reasoning, for example, only works where people have a sense that the social world they inhabit is relatively predictable, such that the probable consequences of an action appear relatively easy to gauge with certainty. Where such conditions do not hold, deontological approaches make much more sense - even in situations in which one cannot control the consequences of one's actions, one can control whether or not they conform to a rule or set of rules (2010, 125).

If this surmise about the relation between types of ethics and social order holds, then it would be no surprise that Baptists living in Harare adhere to more deontological forms of ethics. In the face of substantial unpredictability, one would expect that they emphasize responsibility for action in the moment, according to a set of normative moral rules, rather than attributing moral guilt or praise for the *consequences* of that action. But, in fact, these Christians in Harare do not feel entirely confident that they are in control of their actions *or* of the consequences. And, indeed, in particular ways they are held responsible for both. As I've laid out above, the moral autonomy- the freedom of conscience- attributed to each believer gives them resources to navigate areas where ethical reflection rather than rule-following is the primary goal.

Thus a distinction between a deontological ethics and a consequentialist one does not get us very far in trying to understand how Baptists in Harare reckon their moral responsibilities. In *Politics as a Vocation*, Weber (2004) offers another distinction between ethical stances that comes closer to showing the ways that these Baptists determine what it is that they can be held responsible for. Weber's distinction is between what he terms an "ethics of conviction" and an "ethics of responsibility." The former, which he calls an "absolutist ethic," "simply refuses to *inquire* about 'consequences'" (83, emphasis in the original). This is an ethic of pure intention. He puts the explanation of the ethics of conviction "in religious terms: 'A Christian does what is right and leaves the outcome to God.'" (83). The ethics of responsibility, unlike the absolutist "ethics of conviction," demands that the actor "answer for the (foreseeable) *consequences* of [her] action" (83). Each of these ethics also presumes something about the nature of humans themselves. He claims that those who are committed to an ethics of conviction presume that "if an action performed out of pure conviction has evil consequences, then the responsibility must lie not with the agent but with the world, the stupidity of men- or the will of God who created them thus" (84). By contrast, according to an ethic of responsibility, "a man reckons with exactly those average human failings" (84). An ethic of conviction rests responsibility for bad consequences on something in the world- an error *or* God's determination- while an ethic of responsibility presumes some degree of human inadequacy.

Baptists in Harare presume both of these realities: that there is error in the world at large, and also that humans are deeply morally inadequate. As I will show, in their moral debates it is clear that the deliberative process of discerning how to act well, regardless of

consequences which one cannot control, is the primary imperative. At the same time, they also take humans to be morally degraded, and not altogether capable of achieving real goodness. How can we reconcile this idea that my Baptist interlocutors appear both to be strong deontologists- which perhaps goes along with their circumstances of unpredictability as well as their Baptist belief - and the fact that they also presume and conduct themselves in the world based on the idea that humans are not good, in the expectation of "average human failings?" In Weber's account, these two traits seem to be at odds.

Weber rejects the ethics of conviction as an "inevitable failure", saying that someone who lives by it is unable to conceive of how disordered the world in fact is: "The man who embraces an ethics of conviction is unable to tolerate the ethical irrationality of the world" (85). He counts *karma*, original sin, predestination and the idea of God's hiddenness or unknowability as all being responses to this "experience of the irrationality of the universe" (86).

In the end, he sees the "mature" adult as one who recognizes both of these ethics. In explaining this maturity, Weber resorts to lines attributed to Martin Luther. While under trial for heresy at the Diet of Worms, Luther declared, "Here I stand, I can do no other" (qtd. in Weber 2004). Owens and Strong, in their introduction to Weber's *Vocation Lectures*, summarize Luther's stance as presuming "[n]othing guarantees that this position will be the right one- it is nonetheless that for which one assumes responsibility" (2004, xlv). Luther is operating based on his conscience, while also accepting responsibility for that which he cannot yet know. Where "he stands" is where one's values meet the messy

reality of the world (Owens and Strong 2004, vlii). What this account of ethics does is similar to my goal in this dissertation: to show how Baptists in Harare take account of contemporary circumstances in Zimbabwe in ways that reveal human culpability, holding people accountable for moral action, while also believing that the outcomes for which humans are responsible are not fully discernible.

**Moral Responsibility and Freedom**

How do these elements of responsibility relate to freedom? One answer comes from Paul Fauconnet, student of Durkheim, who shows how freedom, and not just "the social," has a role to play in issues of moral responsibility. Describing her own translation of the work of Fauconnet on the subject, Guyer starts by highlighting, as I noted above, the relation between morality and temporality. She points out that responsibility is not just an exercise of discernment directed at the past, considered in "retrospect or with an immediate future referent" (Guyer 2014, 402). Rather, responsibility is also considered "prospectively, toward a complex near future with respect to imagined but varying temporal durations, social spans, and uncontrollable contingencies" (402). Responsibility thus possesses a particular kind of future orientation, and an orientation to uncertainty.

This temporal character of responsibility also opens up the possibility of freedom. According to Fauconnet's argument, we recognize some sense of human liberty because we have "*belief in the moral value and efficacy of effort*" (2014[1920], 412, emphasis in the original). The moral efforts enacted are not purely an outcome of the person's will. John Kelly summarizes this claim by saying: "all beings are qualified to become

responsible but that responsibility of a subject does not flow from properties inherent to a subject. Responsibility flows from the situation a subject engages" (Kelly 2014, 424).

In this account, ethical action is not then a "constraint" but instead has "a reciprocal, reflexive effect on the self" (Guyer 2014, 400). Many have blamed Durkheim for a conflation of the social and the moral that makes identifying the latter an analytical challenge for the anthropologist. While Durkheimian in many ways, this approach to responsibility also makes important space for liberty of the subject. These features of ethical action, of responsibility, then "plac[e] the sentiment of responsibility as a *precondition* to the sentiment of liberty, rather than as *a result of* it" (400, emphasis in the original).

In her translation of the appendix to Fauconnet's thesis, the relationship between responsibility and freedom is posited in the order that I will argue is the case for Zimbabwean Baptists:

> Responsibility- if our theory is right- is engendered in conditions that are precisely some of those of which we affirm the existence when we declare than [*sic*] men possess free will. In sum, liberty would not be, as people say, the precondition of responsibility but much rather, the consequence. It is not because man is free because his volitions are logically indeterminate that he is responsible. It is because he is responsible that he believes himself to be free (Fauconnet 2014[1920], 415).

As the main argument of my own dissertation shows, responsibility can be, and for Fairside Baptists *is*, prior to freedom, and the two "interpenetrate rather than emanat[e] from autonomy as the reference point" (402). This order of relation between responsibility and freedom also brings us back to time. Guyer points out that this kind of responsibility is an alternative to thinking about responsibility as accountability for immediate causes and

events, or for the long-term fulfillment of a role. It is a kind of responsibility more akin to the Lutherian moment drawn on by Weber, where the subject takes responsibility for a range of unknowable future possibilities.

**Freedom in Virtue Ethics**

Another approach to the study of ethics, which I have not yet addressed, has been highly influential for recent studies in anthropology, particularly those focused on religion, and bears on our discussion of freedom.

The deontological ethics I have already discussed is taken to be predominantly social and external to the subject. This strain is traced to Durkheim, and ultimately influenced by Kant. The other strain I have introduced is a consequentialist ethics, akin to Weber's "ethics of responsibility," which Fassin (2012, 9) has argued is particularly significant for the way that it highlights the relation between the moral and the political.

The third strain of philosophical influence in contemporary discussions of ethics in anthropology, to which a vibrant literature now contributes, is virtue ethics, which has been dominated by the seminal work of Alasdair MacIntyre (1984), also drawing heavily from the work of Foucault, and inspired by Aristotle. Virtue ethics is focused on the subject, and often on cultivation of the self. I highlight virtue ethics for the way that it offers a consideration of human freedom that is an alternative to liberal approaches.

One influential liberal formation of freedom has been that of Isaiah Berlin (2002 [1969]), who outlines a negative and positive freedom. Negative freedom refers to the absence of constraints on one's action, not as a "mere incapacity" on one's own part, but

rather by lack of "interference" from other persons or institutions. "Positive" liberty is about the pursuit of self-realization and freedom to act in line with one's own will and with one's true self. Saba Mahmood's work powerfully challenges these kinds of liberal notions of freedom, arguing for "uncoupling the notion of self-realization from that of the autonomous will" (2005, 14). Her interlocutors in the "piety movement" in Egypt find their self-realization in attitudes and relations to power that are not comprehensible within these liberal notions of freedom, dependent as the latter are on the presumed desirability of exercising an autonomous will, and the assumption that this is the end goal and true expression of freedom. Mahmood also make important connections between these implications about freedom and about agency, challenging us to think of agency not only in terms of resistance or within the "structure-agency" binary. Instead, she introduces an "ethical agency," directed at self-cultivation, but *not* a quality or possession of the individual. This kind of agency belongs to "historically contingent discursive traditions" (32).

One careful critique of Mahmood is that it is not entirely clear whether she argues that her pious Muslim interlocutors are seeking freedom, but a freedom of a different kind than a liberally determined one, or whether freedom is not at all a value that they are trying to achieve, being concerned with something else entirely. As Laidlaw points out, the liberal freedom she challenges is itself diverse in its forms (2014, 142-143). Instead, Laidlaw proffers "reflective freedom" as different than both of Berlin's accounts, to augment the virtue ethics accounts of Mahmood and also Charles Hirschkind (2006). Akin to Foucaultian theories, this reflective freedom is a self-conscious practice of evaluation,

though the forms taken by that this evaluation and the desired values may be radically various, and are not only rooted in autonomous individuals: "tied as it is to the reality of consciousness and the constitution of the subject through socially instituted practices and relations of power and mutual recognition, reflective freedom is a precondition for ethical life in general" (Laidlaw 2014, 177).

The freedom of Baptists in Harare is indeed like a kind of "reflective freedom" in which believers actively evaluate their desires, values, and actions. But because I also argue that they take human moral responsibility to be prior to human freedom, their freedom itself must be conditioned by the way that this responsibility is reckoned. Taking inspiration from Laidlaw, I also base my ethnographic claim on my readings of the contemporary theology that influences my Baptist interlocutors. Theology offers a significantly different, if complementary, way of approaching this question. What I suggest is that Baptists at Fairside are navigating the presumed responsibility that they already bear for sin in the world, and also the responsibility they have towards the divine. In this regard, their responsibility appears not merely as a set of rules, but as a negotiation based on the relation they have with God. The consequences of how they act for their relation to God is of great importance in how they assess moral culpability, a topic which I address at length in the chapters that follow.

**A Note on Language, Race, Method and the Ethnographer**

Church members tell me that Fairside is "multicultural;" by this term they generally mean that attendees are not only black Zimbabweans and Shona or Ndebele speakers, but

are also white Zimbabweans, and second or first-generation migrants from Mozambique, Malawi, Botswana or other countries in the region. The term "multicultural" is most often used to explain why they choose to conduct much of their church business in English, in recognition of the fact that some in their community are not native Shona speakers[17]. Of course, the vast majority are speakers of Shona, but I came to learn that many Fairsiders spend much of their time in spaces where they use English or a combination of the two languages. Sometimes the result is a particular kind of "town Shona," or "Shonglish," both being slang-heavy hybrids. One interlocutor described this phenomenon of language use in terms of "multi-ethnic comfort," particularly characteristic of the cosmopolitan nature of the environment. As a result, many of the events and interactions that I describe here occurred in a mixture of English and "Shonglish."

I spent a total of 15 months in Harare, predominantly between 2015 and 2017, with two short trips before that. Conducting urban fieldwork presents particular challenges in terms of identifying one's interlocutors, or the phenomenon one is trying to investigate. I first came into contact with the network which became the focus of this dissertation at a week-long youth event- described in chapter six. It was hosted predominantly by four churches. Spanning out from this particular event, I was invited by participants to visit homes, institutions, and social gatherings. As I followed interlocutors to these various places, I came to realize that they formed a more-or-less informal series of "hubs" in a network. I would arrive at one of these spaces to find two or more other people that I had met previously at other connected hubs. These hubs are mostly Baptists-affiliated, but the

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[17] When I surveyed member of the Church on their "first language," a number of respondents who indicated "Shona" also penciled in that English was their preferred language.

network does not map directly onto the BUZ network of churches. While there are a few official institutional links, the connections are made mostly through personal histories, doctrinal similarities, and neighbourhood ties.

In addition to the four churches, I also spent regular time at the NGO hosted at Fairside Baptist, the affiliated non-denominational bible college, women's fitness and exercise groups hosted at churches in the network, a large private Christian school which was home to one of the churches, and many private homes. I attended church staff meetings and participated in the savings round among Fairside staff members, and participated in adult women's, young ladies, youth, and community neighbourhood Bible study groups. Fairside Baptist is a particularly busy hub within the network, so I spent considerable time there, following formal church staff and volunteers in their ministry tasks, as well as chatting with the dozens of people who passed through the church doors on a daily basis. I attended the regular funerals, wakes, weddings, and parties that make up community life. I did not become a church member, though my interlocutors recognized me as a member of their community based on some shared beliefs.

I lived in two different family homes during my stay, the residents belonging to two different churches within the network. One family was black Zimbabwean, and Shona-speaking, though their teen and young adult children speak mostly English. In the other home, the parents were white Zimbabwean, but the large household was rotating and mixed. Both houses were in adjacent neighborhoods, and I learned a great deal from going through daily life with both families.

The racial dynamics in Zimbabwe are exceedingly complex, particularly among this particular class position. In the following chapter, I will show how the history of neighbourhood desegregation and the inclusion of black elites in previously white-only institutions following independence has shaped current social dynamics. At a pedestrian level, the history of desegregation meant that I was the only white person resident in one of the neighbourhoods in which I lived- a lower end middle-class suburb- while one neighbourhood over, there were considerably more white people in larger, more secluded houses. As white-owned farms were occupied, and the farmers removed with increasing urgency after 2000, the demographics of the city suburbs changed again[18]. While a large number of these white families emigrated, some moved out of their rural homes to the city, joining the urban Baptist churches. I knew of one white couple who drove past their former farm, now occupied by others, on the way to church each week.

In this middle-class context, the young people have grown up in desegregated schools, studying and playing sports together, all are comfortable in English, and interracial couples are not uncommon. Fairside Baptist itself has no more than about 20 regular white attendees- most of whom are white Zimbabweans. Some of them speak Shona, others do not. There are also several attendees or families who are Indian Zimbabweans, colored[19], or recent migrants from other parts of Africa. One other major church in the network is, remarkably, almost 50 percent white and 50 percent black.

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[18] See Hughes (2010) and Suzuki (2017) for explorations of the dynamics for contemporary whites Zimbabweans, particularly with regards to land. McDermott-Hughes argues that white Zimbabweans chose engagement with land and territory, particularly through farming and later through conservation, as the way to generate a sense of belonging. This allowed them to avoid real engagements with black Zimbabweans at all- and to escape the implications of both white privilege and also political ramifications. The changing political landscape has altered this dynamic now.

[19] This is a recognized racial and also ethnic designation.

Another is almost exclusively white, and another is slightly more white than black. A final church in the network is almost exclusively black. The week-long youth event I first attended has twice as many black attendees as white. A number of the churches have both white and black pastors on staff. Fairside church's own 1979 memoir records this history of racial dynamics:

> The church has served, mainly, the white section of the population although her doors have always been open to people of all colours and none has ever been denied entry. However, it was not until 1980 that the first application for church membership was received from an African and he was gladly accepted into membership. Since that time, the number of Africans in membership has increased steadily and a truly multi-racial church community is developing[20].

Only in 1981 did the church appoint its first black Zimbabwean to serve as one of the pastors. Today, racial dynamics are addressed directly but tentatively in these church contexts among the generation who lived prior to independence, and among those born after it is often shrouded in humor. Racial privileges are apparent, but, as in many other once-white institutions, class positions is often the more explicit social divider[21].

**Outline of the Dissertation**

In part one, I situate my interlocutors in terms of their middle-class identities and in terms of gendered responsibilities. I argue that their class position has a moral dimension and is cultivated as much in aesthetic, aspirational, and value terms as economic ones. Not only is their middle-class consciousness available to them as a site moral of critique, their

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[20] I do not provide a citation for this quote because of issues of anonymity.
[21] On one occasion, some close church friends, trying to obtain answers from a retailer on behalf of a church ministry effort and failing to be taken seriously on the phone, asked me to call in and "use my privilege." They knew I could receive better treatment as a white sounding English speaker

class position also translates moral responsibilities into particular gendered forms. This section offers an introduction to the kinds of activities in which Fairside churchgoers are engaging on a daily basis, as they attempt to fulfil their moral responsibilities and also to maintain their class lifestyles.

In part two, I claim that issues of morality determine how my interlocutors understand themselves in their contemporary urban social, political, and economic context. To understand how they conceive of the historical circumstances in which they find themselves as a community, it is necessary to understand how they think about sin. I describe how residents of Harare are experiencing the unpredictability of their contemporary politico-economic situation as a particular kind of postcolonial temporality. I argue that Zimbabwean Baptists understand this situation as being a product of sinfulness. Attempting to distinguish between these types of sin is important for the ways that they try to reckon human responsibility in times of upheaval.

Chapter four asks what effect the sinful human condition has on the relation between moral responsibility and human freedom. I argue that Fairside Baptists are held morally responsible prior to any form of action or decision, and thus possess an alternate kind of freedom rooted in the divine human relation, rather than in liberal notions of freedom as the capacity to act or choose unimpeded. This chapter is the center of the dissertation in two ways: both because it is the middle chapter, and because in it I make my key argument that moral responsibility does not require human freedom, but that moral responsibility precedes it.

After building to this point about freedom, I explore some of the contours of this relation between freedom and responsibility in cultural and political issues. In part three, chapters five and six turn to a discussion of the kinds of authority that demand moral responsibility on the part of Baptists in Harare, and according to which they must also assert or protect their freedom in the terms of moral autonomy and in light of divine sovereignty.

In all of the chapters, I show how Fairside Baptists are assessing their moral responsibilities, whether in relation to kinds of moral authority or to their ideas about freedom and autonomy. Rather than inhibiting their capacity to attribute and to take moral responsibility, ideas about sin and sovereignty are ways that Zimbabwean Baptists make sense of their postcolonial context and express a distinct vision of their human freedom.

**Part I:**

**Being Middle-Class and Moral in Postcolonial Harare**

Experiences of middle-classness intersect with morality in the lives of Fairside Baptists. I begin this section by showing what it is like to be middle-class in contemporary Harare, particularly in the face of challenges to everyday patterns of living brought about by political and economic changes. Members of this Baptist network in Zimbabwe are conscious of their class position, describe it in terms of bodily comportment and worship styles, and also make it available as a site of moral critique. I show how gendered responsibilities are the site of pedagogical instruction into being middle-class and Baptist in Harare.

My goal is to give a sense the way that aspects of gender and class shape everyday concerns for members of this group, in part by recounting the histories that have created the conditions for these experiences.

# Chapter 1:
## Middle-Class Baptists in a "tight" Zimbabwe

Fairside Baptists are decidedly middle-class. Though this category of "middle-class" is not a stable one ethnographically or theoretically, exploring the nature of class consciousness among Baptists in Harare provides insight into the kinds of aspirations, values and everyday activities that occupy this group. The economic upheavals of the last decade have meant that Zimbabwean urbanites have had to find creative new ways to accomplish everyday tasks, from obtaining cash and petrol, to keeping the electricity running. In this chapter, my first goal is to show what middle-class life in contemporary Harare is like, including how the resources, assets and priorities that members of the middle-class possess shape the way they face these everyday challenges. My second goal is to show how Baptists experience and reflect on their middle-class identity. I argue that there are historical, economic and aesthetic contours to their class position that are mutually supported by the kinds of neighborhoods, worship styles, and strategies that this group of Christians undertakes in order to deal with situations that perpetually confound their efforts to live solidly middle-class lives.

Alongside education and material resources, matters of aspiration, taste, and bodily comportment are identifying features of Zimbabwean middle-class lifestyles. Bourdieu's (1984) landmark tome on the French bourgeoisie argued that everyday choices of "taste" feed symbolic reinforcements of class status. There is also a moral dimension to this middle-classness among Baptists, incorporating not only aesthetic and symbolic judgements, but ethical ones: while Fairside Baptists have levels of education, resources,

and consumption patterns that are symbolic of their middle-class positions, their middle-classness is also available as the object of ethical reflection and critique. These reflections deal with issues of styles and modes of comportment, as well as concerns about material wealth. Class consciousness also entails positively valued practices, including an emphasis on pedagogy, biblical study, and knowledge of theology. The history of urban patterns of segregation in Harare and the emergence of a black middle class during the colonial period contextualize these particular class markers.

Omri Elisha's (2011) insightful examination of the "anxieties" surrounding middle-class identities at evangelical megachurches in the southern United States illuminate contrasts and similarities with middle-class Baptists in Harare. Elisha claims that "reflexive critiques of middle-class identity are pervasive in evangelical culture" in the United States (121). His interlocutors perceive "moral pitfalls of consumerism, self-indulgence, and complacency that they fear go along with the so-called middle class lifestyle" (122). By contrast, at Fairside middle-classness and upward social mobility does not generate the same kinds of ambivalence or degree of self-critique as among Christians in Knoxville's suburban churches. Instead, middle-class statuses place Christians in positions to benefit others in material ways. In an environment where social equality is not necessarily the most desirable mode of organization, social mobility is seen as profitable to extended families who rely on the salaried professionals in their network for support.

**Profession, Education, Neighborhood**

While my argument is about middle-class identities constituted from shared values, aesthetics, and responsibilities, forms of cultural and real capital make a middle-class identity possible. Thus, I first give an overview of the socio-economic situation of congregation members in order to show the kinds of shared education, professions, and neighborhoods that shape who these Baptists are.

The physical space of the city has played an important role in distinguishing the class-based differences in people's experience of everyday life in Zimbabwe. The postcolonial city of Harare is recognized by residents as divided into "high density" and "low density" areas[22]. High density areas of the city are those once ear-marked as the segregated colonial townships (distinguished from the "white settler city") or crowded "low-income housing" areas of the postcolonial infrastructure (Potts 2010, 84). Low density areas are made up of larger, walled housing plots often inclusive of several buildings and substantial gardens. In Zimbabwe, middle-class identities are predominantly urban, low density identities.

Much of the church does shares similar levels of education, salary, housing location, and profession. The results of a short, written survey that I conducted at the end of 2016 among Fairside attendees revealed some of these shared demographic features[23]. 79% said that they lived in low density suburbs. Another 12% lived in an area of the city

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[22] While occasionally "mid density" areas are recognized, for the most part people simply differentiate between low and high density areas because there is no clear way of distinguishing between low and mid density areas.

[23] I gave out 203 surveys and received 120 completed or partially completed surveys back. Average attendance at the church in 2011 was around 400 per Sunday, and I estimate slightly fewer than this by 2016.

that, though considered densely populated, is an upper class and expensive neighborhood near the Central Business District. Less than 5% listed high density or rural areas as their place of residence.

The attendees are well-educated. A third have a graduate degree or post-undergraduate qualifications. More than half have a bachelor's degree or above. While post-independence Zimbabwe has had very high rates of literacy and education nationwide, the levels of education at Fairside are noteworthy. Many of the young people in the church have received or are receiving tertiary education, in Zimbabwe or overseas, but many who graduate are unemployed and seeking work. About of a third of the congregation are students.

In terms of vocation, 70% are professionals of some kind.[24] Professionals include those in administration, human resources, science and medicine, and other specialist fields. Other attendees have worked in various professions but now make their living through piece-meal projects and investments. Nearly half have an average income of more than USD800 per month[25], and many others report making between 300 and 400 per month[26]. While difficult to obtain numbers on the average income of the population at large, GDP per capita in 2016 was USD 1272, averaged to only USD 106 per month (World Bank).

Despite their high levels of education and comparatively high income, I refer to the class position of most attendees at Fairside as "middle-class." As Nancy Postero points out

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[24] 30% said they were students, (of 81 responses), 14% worked in education, and 68% were professionals, including 6 engineers, 9 people working in the finance sector, and 11 in various managerial positions.
[25] Whether this amount refers to individual or household income is not specified.
[26] 96 of the 121 who submitted survey responses were willing to indicate average monthly income (in USD). 45% said they had a monthly income of over 800 dollars

in her discussion of a "new indigenous middle class" in Bolivia (2017, 146), people's identification with, or claims to, class position is also tied to their own perceptions of their political and economic power as well as their sense of social belonging (148). For Fairsiders, their own identifications as middle-class particularly distinguishes them from the political and economic elite, a characterization which I explore next.

**Class-Consciousness at Fairside**

Church goers in Harare's Baptist network are conscious of their middle-class position, which manifests in material display of status, education and literacy, bodily comportment, and patterns of speech that distinguish them from rural peasants, tenuous working-class urbanites, and the political elite. These elements of class position, as I'll show ethnographically, are not reducible to socioeconomic statuses or wealth accumulation. In contrasting what he calls "styles" of "localism" and "cosmopolitanism" in urban Zambia, James Ferguson (1999, 104-105) shows how these two styles can be mischaracterized as "urban" versus "rural" when in fact both are distinctly urban and coexist within the same "society." Werbner (2004) makes a similar point about the nature of cosmopolitanism as neither urban nor rural in Botswana. Rather than being sets of "norms," the styles have a performative nature: neither is a "set of opinions; [rather] it is a capability, a performative competence" (Ferguson 1999, 104). As performative, these styles are not a representation of a pre-existing core identity, nor fully reducible to sets of values. I suggest that thinking of the class features identified below as "styles" helps us to see how church-goers have "cultivated" (101) them as "publicly exhibited signs" (105)

indexing a particular class-conscious identity, rather than a purely cultivated urban sensibility.

I gained particular insight into how churches in the Baptists network viewed one another in class terms while riding in the four wheeled drive of a prominent leader in the network. Maneuvering her large vehicle through city streets filled with the warm November sun, Mai Nyorondo compared Baptist churches from under her small-brimmed straw hat. She described Fairside as a distinctly "cosmopolitan" church, composed mostly of rich and upper-class people. A regular attender at a different Baptist church, her perspective was that other urban and suburban Baptist churches in the network possessed a greater mixture of lower and middle-class people among their congregants than did Fairside.

Making our way towards a suburban shopping center, the bright sun was momentarily dispersed by the flowering trees that lined the street. I asked about her own church, Ridgedale Baptist, located in a low density suburban area. She told me that many more attendees at Ridgedale were working class. "We're more relaxed," she said of the worship style at Ridgedale, not following the stuffy "English" style of Fairside. She illustrated how she felt about the "stuffy" style by holding her arms up tight to her chest and clenching a little, straining her face. Describing Ridgedale, she explained "*We* have reclaimed our Africanness."

In seeing her own church as more African, Mai Nyorondo was talking about more than just the more frequent use of Shona at Ridgedale. She was also associating the "Englishness" of Fairside with "upper-classness." Others at Fairside had also told me that

the church was "Anglicized." "Englishness" here stands as a proxy for rigid service structure, punctuality, restrained bodily comportment, and, of course, the use of English language.

Fairside hosts two Sunday morning services and both often start within a minute or two of the designated time. The order of service schedule that is circulated to participants in advance is also arranged down to the minute. For fifteen minutes prior to the service start, a worship band of between half a dozen and a dozen musicians and singers, in color coordinated attire, welcome attendees finding their seats in long wooden pews on the ground floor or balcony. A male elder begins the service, welcoming people, and reading an opening passage from the Bible. The worship team, or occasionally an acapella choir, leads the congregation in several songs. When the service begins, the main doors are closed while the leader is speaking. Anyone who arrives late is helped to a seat by designated ushers once the singing begins. The music usually includes several contemporary English choruses and one or two Shona or Ndebele choruses or hymns. A time for greeting visitors follows, and then announcements are made by the service leader. Offering plates are passed through all of the pews to collect tithes while an additional song is sung. The leader also offers a public prayer, usually including a confession, a series of thankful expressions for God's goodness, and a number of requests on behalf of the country and of members of the congregation. At this point, children are prayed for, and then asked to stand and exit the building to go to another part of the church for age-specific teaching. The service leader reads the Bible passage on which the sermon will be based, usually next in the sequence through which the church is progressing, before sitting down.

At this point, one of the two pastors preaches a sermon of about a half hour length. The service closes with an additional prayer and singing. While the final song is sung, the preacher will move to the back of the sanctuary to greet each attendee as they leave. This forms a kind of bottle-neck, as the only exit out of the church, and no one can be in too big a hurry to leave.

When I visited Ridgedale, by contrast, the service did not have a discreet beginning point, but simply transitioned from the morning adult bible study, which people had joined as they arrived over the course of an hour, into the main meeting. Ridgedale is also more willing to incorporate elements of Pentecostal worship practice- including dramatic instrumental music and many repetitions of the same verse- which avoids the "stuffiness" described by Mai Nyorondo with regards to Fairside. As will become clear in later chapters, a conscious and perceived reclamation of "Shona culture" is promoted by white and black leadership at Fairside, and so an "Anglicization" of church services should not be read as a rejection of "Shona culture." Rather, to Fairsiders "Anglicization" indicates an embrace of "multiculturalism" through use of a shared language (English)[27], and signals an orderliness mirrored in the organization of middle-class neighborhoods and educational institutions. This orderliness is taken to be the spiritually appropriate form of worship.

Though Mai Nyorondo characterized Fairside as having a congregation of a generally higher socioeconomic status, in fact many at Ridgedale are also professionals, and the church is located in a solidly middle-class suburban area[28]. What is at play in these

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[27] While most of the congregation does speak Shona either fluently or conversationally, English is taken to be the most widely accessible linguistic medium.

[28] Of course, churches like Ridgedale and Fairside stand out from the vast majority of the population for the considerable resources which their congregants wield. That being said, there are a substantial number of

characterizations is not reducible solely to wealth differentials but, as I proposed above, more akin to the cultural styles outlined by Ferguson (1999). Fairside and Ridgedale share substantially similar theologies and moral values, while expressing distinct congregational styles that they can identify in terms of differing class positions.

Like Mai Nyorondo, a church deacon at Fairside also tied bodily comportment and the aesthetic of church services to the class composition of the church. Mr. Mahlangu explained that the social status of the particular people present at a meeting would set the tone. I had heard high profile women at the Baptist denominational meetings describe how gatherings with men entailed quiet, restrained sitting, whereas their own gender-specific meetings were more likely to be filled with ebullient dancing and singing. I mentioned this to Mr. Mahlangu, querying whether the types of comportment that he was identifying were a feature of gender. He said men could behave in similarly gregarious ways, suggesting this phenomenon was not in fact a matter of gender. What determined bodily comportment in these situations was, instead, the status of others in the room. A person who behaved animatedly in other contexts - loud and free to move their body around - might, in the presence of people of a perceived higher class position, sit quietly, with arms crossed.

But Mr. Mahlangu's view of Fairside's class position was based on more than aesthetic appearances. In fact, his discussion had begun by way of explaining the church's pedagogical style. He spoke to me one morning as I emerged from the first Sunday morning service, during which a group of young people had given a report to the church on a recent youth event. Stationed by the front door, Mr. Mahlangu was ready to greet late

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other much more populous Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Harare and other city centers that make the buildings and amenities of Fairside look strikingly modest.

arrivals to the second service. Seeking company as he waited, he struck up a conversation by asking about my experience of the youth event. I commented on the intellectual sophistication and complexity of the teaching that young people were receiving. Mr. Mahlangu affirmed that the teaching was "up there," explaining that both of the pastors at Fairside are particularly teaching-focused. Neither relies on humorous stories to amuse their congregations, sticking closely to the Bible texts instead. I had found that these sermons were, indeed, often sophisticated arguments, involving a series of supporting claims that relied on hermeneutical analysis. He then added that Fairside Baptist as a church is "high class."

Curious about the quick pivot from pedagogy to class position, I asked about how Mr. Mahlangu understood class to be part of the dynamic. He directed my attention to the cars around us- there were a handful of BMWs and Mercedes Benzes parked in the tiny lot and on the street just in front. He was pointing not so much to the fact that everyone in the church could own a BMW[29], but rather that this wealth was visible to passersby. Unlike prosperity gospel preachers for whom this kind of display would represent God's blessing and the faith of the believing car-owners (Haynes 2017; van Wyk 2014), the deacon saw this display of wealth as troubling.

Mr. Mahlangu critiqued members of the "high class" in Harare, with which he had identified the church, as those that build a perimeter around themselves, cut off from the masses. He connected the image to people's houses: the ubiquitous 'Durawall' was a solid

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[29] The purchase price of cars in Zimbabwe is substantially lower than a comparable vehicle in the US. A BMW less than ten years old might go for under US$5000. This is in part because of taxation rates, but also because of low demand and high maintenance and fuel costs.

concrete barrier surrounding many homes in the low-density neighborhoods (See Maxwell 2005, for another use of the Durawall metaphor). As a child in the late 1980s, I had lived in similar neighborhoods in Harare, where at the time the property border for many houses had merely been a thick hedge. Now all of these homes were closed off by high walls and, often, electrified wires above. Mr. Mahlangu criticized the visibility of fancy cars, and the attempts to create separation with literal and figurative walls, as negative displays of class position. At the same time, he affirmed as positive the church's emphasis on teaching, which he also characterized as being a feature of class.

As I'll discuss below, modes of bodily comportment and self-presentation identified by Mai Nyondoro and Mr. Mahlangu indexed the kinds of education one received and the neighborhoods in which one lived. One woman in her twenties used noise to explain to me how she was different as a result of having grown up in a low density (suburban) neighborhood. Had she grown up in the high density where her grandfather lived, she probably would have been a much louder person, she observed. Across high density spaces – the former colonial townships- sound moved more easily: people gathered outside, music blasted loudly out of open doors and from cars parked on side-streets. The closely packed shacks allowed neighbors to shout to one another in conversation, even when out of sight. Instead, her tolerance level for noise had been trained according to low density neighborhood levels, where space is divided more clearly, and privacy is more highly prized. This was a feature distinguishing her from her cousins in the High-Density neighborhood, though not necessarily a positive one.

Despite maintaining an ordered and structured aesthetic, including attempts to control sound and space, members of the middle class in the Baptist network in Harare have a sense that they have lost the security of a middle-class lifestyle. At a community group meeting on one occasion, a young man described his distress when visiting a high density area on business and seeing children playing in open sewer pits. It was not uncommon for these kinds of conversations to turn quickly to the status of the nation as a whole. One listener, reflecting on the current state of Zimbabwe, waxed poetic, pointing out that there was clearly a top and a bottom to society. But, she said, "the middle class: is it really there? …Where are *we*?" In a monologue extending some minutes, this woman could identify a "we" that represented the middle class, but openly questioned whether the material circumstances allowed for such a class position to remain a possibility.

One other interlocutor described Zimbabwe's current social organization to me as two concentric circles. In the center of the circle he placed the true elites- those with access to political power. Around them was a strong boundary distinguishing them from the rest of the population and supported by the military, whose structural position was akin to those behind the Durawall described by Mr. Mahlangu. While this interlocutor would clearly place himself in the middle or upper class in the country, he saw this middle class as unable to access the real sources of power and defined the elite as those who could benefit from high-level corruption. As a result, he divided the population into only two categories: ruling party associates, and everyone else.

The idea of a missing middle-class, and the image of the concentric circles, certainly reflects a thread in some literature about sub-Saharan Africa, which outlines a

distinct elite political class- operating by a "politics of the belly" (Bayart 2009)- separated from the poor and disenfranchised masses. In the body of the dissertation, I show how the group on which this study focuses, though members of a black elite in Zimbabwe, remain outside and excluded from the privileges of this retreated political elite[30].

Despite this exclusion from the political elite, much scholarly writing about then-Rhodesia has shown that a distinct Zimbabwean middle class began to emerge during the colonial period, in part as a result of access to mission education, but also through choices of consumption (Burke 1996), language use (Weiss 1994), and new models of labor and of family life (Burke 1996; Ranger 1995; West 2002). Beyond, and indeed, apart from wealth, Michael West claims that members of the middle-class in colonial Zimbabwe were held together by "unity of purpose: its members had interests, aspirations, and ideas that set them apart from other social classes, and they were conscious of these differences" (West 2002, 2). The distinctions that they cultivated are significant and resonate with many of the contemporary experiences of Fairside Baptist church-goers.

The partial picture provided by survey responses and the metacommentary offered by Fairside Baptists reveal some of the resources and cultural capital that they possess, while also indicating the characteristics that they identify as related to their own class position. The middle-class expectations of Fairside Baptists have been fostered by the historical development of class distinctives in Zimbabwe, which are related in important ways to the country's political and economic history. These patterns have deep historical

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[30] The sequestering of an elite group is also suggested by Raftopolous (2009) who cites Dansereau as saying that the ruling party took to a strategy of supporting an "economic elite" that was close to them, while preventing this support from extending to anyone outside this tight circle (203).

roots. Before I continue a broad history of the political economy of class changes in urban

Zimbabwe, I first exemplify some of these changes through a brief life history of one

middle-class Harare resident who was part of the Baptist network.


**Education among Generations: Rural to Urban Lives**

Many of the middle-aged members of the Baptist network grew up in rural areas

and are now urbanites[31]. TD is one such middle-class Christian, and his life trajectory

bears some of the distinguishing features of many of his generation, including how they

experienced changes in class status throughout the colonial era and then in the era since

independence. Below, I trace a few aspects of TD's life history as a way of showing how

he experienced this move along the social ladder. Born in the 1950s, TD's father had

married his older brother's wife- at that time a common pattern when a brother died. His

father then took a younger wife as well. As a polygamist, his father had a large number of

children, eight of them older than TD. A rural peasant with twenty-one children, who also

took to drinking, he could not afford school fees for each child. As was the case for many

African families, one child was chosen to receive an education, in the hopes that as a wage

earner this person would later be able to help support the family at large (Weiss 1994, 34;

see also Tsitsi Dsambarenga for a fictional account in "Nervous Conditions" 1988). TD

received a number of merits for academic achievements at primary school, and also

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[31] While I recognize Ferguson's (1999) critique of the linear rural to urban migratory trajectory as a larger
social analytic, I make my claims about a limited population, and about their own self-representation
regarding their own life histories. The move to urban living marks a specific kind of irreversible shift in their
own class position. Though older middle-class urbanites often built homes in rural areas and some then seek
to retire there, the changes that they associated with the move to the city remain with them.

performed well in sports. He was one of only two children in a class of forty who was eligible to pass on to high school and school inspectors approached his father to ensure that TD's education continued. Of course, TD told me, this was a racially-tiered educational system, so all of his achievements were "second class." The minister who signed all his school certificates was specifically the "Minister for African Education." At this point in time, white Zimbabweans and Africans had separate marriage licenses, schools, and suburbs. TD would not have been able to live in the neighborhood in which he owns his current house.

Despite having eight older siblings, TD's academic achievements paved the way for him to attend a Presbyterian boarding high school. The institution did not supply him with a bursary- a scholarship to attend- but he and three other boys earned their room, board, and tuition by working in the school gardens. During their school holidays they would remain to plant and tend beans, maize, carrots, and other vegetables so that when the rest of the school returned they could harvest food for residents to eat. Like most people living in low density areas, TD still maintains a vegetable garden from which his household eats.

TD later continued his high school education at an Anglican school, living with his uncle to do so. However, he could only complete the first of the three school terms. For second term, he left the school but still studied three subjects on his own, borrowing notes from school friends during the holidays to study. Someone at the University of Zimbabwe found out that he had been studying at home and allowed him to sit his O-level

examinations[32] in the third term. He passed two of the three exams, but still needed an additional exam pass in order to meet the University admission requirements.

Instead of attending University, he went to work as a clerk in a city bank to support some of his many siblings, paying some of their school fees. He stayed at the major bank for a year just prior to national independence (1978-79). TD said that his father was so proud of his job that he bragged to people as if the son actually owned the money he was handling at the bank.

As the liberation war ramped up, TD left his employment because of the pressures he was experiencing to join the fighting. He refused to be conscripted to fight "against his own kith and kin," as he put it. He struggled with the fact that loyalists on either side of the fight could consider him a sell-out. In the rural areas people knew that he had a job, and by this time many urban working environments were already mixed-race, which could draw suspicion of allegiances to white settlers. He had colleagues that died fighting in the war. He told me that if he had been asked to fight for the liberation front at that time, he probably would have done so. Instead, he left the bank. By contrast, a friend working at the same bank had stayed there and is now a major player in the corporation. As a woman, she was not at risk of conscription[33]. The war had halted his own possible advancement on the work ladder. He told me that, given the opportunity, he would still be a banker.

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[32] In the UK-based educational system, O-levels are the first of two sets of standardized subject exams taken near the end of secondary school (high school). The second set are A-levels. Not all students move onto A-levels after completing O-levels.

[33] Even so, many women were important actors in the liberation war, in fighting or in other roles. The very nature of their involvement remains somewhat disputed. Some of the controversy on this issue has centered on the award-winning film *Flame* (1996), which tells the fictional story of a young woman who joins ZANLA- the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army, and explores the experiences of female guerilla fighters.

Instead, after the end of UDI, he was sent to study Public Administration, in part because there was a significant need for educated people to fulfill civil service jobs. There were many gaps left by white workers who had quit with the instatement of the new majority government. He recalled how those with O-level credentials were readily hired in the civil service. He worked for nine years as a police officer, rising to superintendent. This position was the equivalent of overseeing five police stations. He has a series of certificates that show his various credentials, achieved over many years and in different places.

As a young professional, he lived in a small flat downtown with his wife, then later managed to buy a house for their growing family in one of the low density suburbs. Finally, they moved into their current home in a solidly middle-class, predominantly black, low density area. In the intervening years, TD had received a scholarship to pursue a higher degree overseas, and later returned to work in industry, and on the boards of various companies- both public and private. He has worked informally on translations for various publishing groups, been a church leader, and raised a family.

Early in their marriage, his wife had studied for accountancy certification, and they had together begun a home-business. The wife ran the business now, and this helped to keep the family afloat when TD was unemployed for a number of years, as industry and business crumbled and then collapsed. One of the wife's customers was a private school, which helped them to continue to provide a good education for their children when economic conditions deteriorated and many of similar position could not afford to send their children to private schools. For a time, TD worked in South Africa, and by then several of their children had left home. The remaining teenage child and TD's wife moved

into the "cottage"[34] on their property, renting out the larger house, piling all their furniture into a corner, and living in two small rooms. They recalled this time as particularly sad, describing how cold it had been during the months that they lived in the cottage, through major electricity and water cuts, and with their family split up and living in different places. Eventually, their fortunes reversed, and they once more took over residence of the larger home.

Many of TD's generation grew up in very rural circumstances and received mission educations that allowed them entrance into the civil service. They also became the ones on whom extended families began to rely. This "intergenerational [social] mobility" proved particularly important (West 2002, 59). Those who had received some mission schooling or converted to Christianity had a distinct social advantage, as what West terms "inherited cultural capital" provided new forms of social mobility. This kind of cultural capital was "more of a Christian, bourgeois achievement-oriented background" than strictly financial or based on traditional forms of authority (59). TD's generation was the turning point in this regard, and this is the generation that are the current leaders at Fairside, shaping the aesthetic expectations and values of the church in the process.

Beyond visible status symbols and the resources that allowed for middle and upper-class residents to separate themselves from the vulnerable and publicly exposed people in high density neighborhoods, education has acted as a major channel for accessing and

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[34] Most homes in low density areas have a smaller one or two-bedroom building on their property. Historically, these were ramshackle servants' quarters where African domestic workers were permitted to live on the property of their employer, particularly during the era of residential segregation (see Yoshikuni 2007). Sometimes domestic workers still reside in similar cottages, but often cottages are built on properties in low density areas in order to be rented for additional income. Many young couples or small families now rent these cottages.

cultivating distinctions. This was particularly true in the colonial period, shaping the life courses and tastes of the middle-aged generations at Fairside. Education is what gave TD entrance into the civil service, and ultimately, into a middle-class lifestyle. For the children of this generation, the types of education distinguish them further. A pair of sisters described to me how each of their siblings spoke a slightly different style of English, dependent upon which school they attended. The school they attended was in turn dependent on how well their family was faring economically at the point at which each was ready to attend high school. Schools ranged from elite and private, to exclusive, foreign-based curriculum. How one spoke English illustrated whether one had attended an exclusive British boarding school or a (still high achieving) international school.

The children born to parents of TD's generation have been raised as middle-class urbanites, attending school alongside white children and speaking English as comfortably as Shona or the other languages of their parents. These children grew up as "born frees" (*mabornfree*, sing.), those who have lived in Zimbabwe and never Southern Rhodesia, and often only known city-life. I heard TD and other male leaders of his generation discuss how they culturally navigated the urban identities of their children. They would joke that while they themselves had herded animals in the countryside as boys, their own children would not last more than an hour in the "bush." While at home in the suburbs, TD drank his tea from a cup and saucer and kept abreast of international news- patterns and tastes familiar to his children. When he visited his wife's village homestead, he continued to observe particular forms of mother-in-law avoidance - including clapping on his knees, and subsequently avoiding her company- which made his own children uneasy. He was very

conscious of the vast differences between his own childhood and that of his children, and he, like other fathers and also pastors in the Baptists network, had spent considerable time reflecting on how to balance rural cultural expectations placed on young urbanites with the realities of social change and a focus on education and social advancement.

Yet TDs story, like those of his generation who achieved middle class status but without reaching the exclusive echelons of the political elite, is not a linear trajectory of progress (cf Ferguson 1999). It parallels in important ways the rise and fall in fortunes of a professional, Christian, black middle-class who have the aspirations and tastes of their class position but struggle with finding the resources to live in ways reflecting these tastes and aspirations. The importance of educational and professional achievement in TDs life history also reveals important non-gendered middle-class pursuits which appear in tension with the gendered responsibilities for women at Fairside, described in the next chapter.

**Spatial and Historical Developments of a Zimbabwean Middle-Class**

Scholars of colonial Zimbabwe have written about the domestic ideals (Ranger 1995; West 2002), manners (Shutt 2015), consumption patterns (Burke 1996), and gender relations (Ranger 1995) of a developing black middle class. Though the colonial administration's policies of restricting freehold tenure of houses and land by black Africans, segregation of urban spaces by law, and maintenance of separate educational systems for Africans and Europeans attempted to suppress or frustrate its growth, a class of mission-educated clergy, teachers, and civil servants began to develop (West 2002).

In this section, I show that the emergence of a Zimbabwean middle-class during the colonial era meant social distinctions between black Africans developed in a context of deep racial segregation, much of which centered on organization of city spaces. The history of colonial urban racial and class relations bears on my larger argument in two ways. Firstly, Baptist Union Christianity is most closely associated with urban centers. Secondly, the aspiring black middle class in the colonial era saw residential patterns as not only material indications of their class position but as an important avenue to realizing particular *moral* values. They appealed to these values as a way to lobby the white settler administration for better housing in the "Locations" to which they had been segregated. A similar argument follows for the growth of the consumer economy: consumption of particular goods were not only material markers of status, but also pointed to moral values like cleanliness, care or thrift.

Across most of Zimbabwe, the identity of the middle-class is a particularly urban one. So, too, Baptist Union Christianity in Zimbabwe began as an urban affair. While the North American-based Baptist Convention was conducting their church evangelism at mission stations along the railway lines at rural outposts, the Baptist Union of South Africa, Fairside's mother denomination, sent their missionaries to the city. Though the Baptist Union in Zimbabwe (BUZ) now includes a number of small rural churches, the growth of the BUZ has been from the city outwards.

The urbaneness of both Baptist Union Christianity in Zimbabwe, and of middle-class lifestyles, has been shaped by the nature of Harare's complex history as a city. The capital city established on the plateau began as white settler spread from the already

industrialized cities of South Africa's Cape Colony. Founded as Salisbury at the very

beginning of the 20th century, it was along social and economic, rather than strictly racial

lines, that a division between two types of emerging bourgeoisie- government officials and

political elites versus business owners- was reflected in the physical landscape of the

capital (Yoshikuni 2007, 3,12). With its expansion, new black free hold renters moved into

the city, and white residents began to fear growth of the African population[35] (Yoshikuni

2007, 16). From this point on, white settler efforts and colonial policies focused on

addressing the simultaneous need for African urban labor, and fear of African urban

presence. As Salisbury industrialized and the population of black residents grew, it adopted

the South African pattern of "Native Residential Locations." The 1908 Native Urban

Locations Ordinance was intended to curtail the presence of freely-moving black residents

in order to maintain a morally white city and did so by making African residence outside

of designated Locations a crime (Yoshikuni 2007, 20, 29). Placed outside of the urban

center, these Locations operated as a pool of black labor forces. In-house domestic African

servants were permitted to live in the city proper only if they were resident with their

employers (Yoskikuni 2007, 19), and all Africans were required to carry pass-books for

travel through urban areas. A workforce of urban migrants could supply labor to the

growing city, while their status as migrants meant that residence patterns could be carefully

contained and controlled (Potts 2010, 75).

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[35] In other areas of Southern Rhodesia, colonial officials tried hard to deter whole families from migrating to cities, fearing such a large African population in one place. Instead, they worked to allow men to serve as migratory laborers in cities, leaving their families in rural areas to continue agricultural production.

Potts (2010) and Burke (1996) argue that the ideal sought by the colonial administration was always to keep Africans as peasants, with West (2002) suggesting that visions of African "traditional" life as essentially rural allowed white settlers to maintain a particular hierarchy of colonial power. But the demand for workers subverted these ideals: "the administration needed black labour as policemen, tax collectors, clerks and messengers, while farmers and miners needed labourers- and, later, manufacturers needed factory hands- while white households demanded servants" (Weiss 1994, 35, see also Schmidt 1992). Where missions provided education – though under the authority of the colonial administration – Africans could enter these occupations, and it was these rising elites who later led the nationalist movement (Weiss 1994, 35, West 2002, Raftopolous and Mlambo 2009), even as the colonial administration tried adamantly to stall the development of an African middle class, so scholars like West (2002) argue.

In the period after WWII- like South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria- Southern Rhodesia's secondary industry and consumer market began to flourish (Burke 1996, 114; Mlambo 2009). Unlike the countries around it, however, this industry and consumer growth coincided not with national independence but instead with continued white minority rule. Legal racial segregation was still the order of the day, and the labor and residence patterns of black populations were strictly controlled. The commodities integral to this consumer market, and the nature of the subjects and "subjectivities" (Burke 1996) cultivated through it, came about in a context where black populations did not have the same kinds of political, economic, or social freedoms that either their black counterparts in neighboring countries, or white populations in the same country, possessed.

Not only did the diversification and growth of the economy by the 1950s mean increased availability of consumptive goods for class display, it also entailed the need for a larger residential- rather than seasonal migratory- urban labor force to support this growth (Mlambo 2009, 82). There was an increasing visibility of a growing black elite wanting "a respectable bourgeois culture of domesticity" (Mlambo 2009, 94). These black elites sought "spatial respectability" in terms of housing and a way for married couples to distinguish themselves from migrant workers, single men or those in transitory domestic relations (94). The Land Apportionment Act, passed in 1930, had continued the earlier prohibition on Africans living and doing business within urban areas. After World War II, the emerging African middle-class began lobbying heavily for accommodations that would allow African families to escape the squalid environment of the Native Location as well as what they saw as unsuitable conditions for pursuing the fulfilment of bourgeoise (Christian) domestic values (Pickard-Cambridge 1988; Weiss 1994). They sought alternative housing where they would be protected from the dirtiness and perceived moral degradation of the Locations, which included beer-drinking, prostitution and cramped quarters. Initially very resistant, the municipal and federal government eventually began to allow long-lease stands[36] for Africans in the major cities. By 1964 middle class Africans were able to remove themselves from working class areas of the "old townships," making possible the lifestyles and social differentiations that they were trying to create: beyond distinctions in "living arrangements and home life," "the development of community consciousness and the tendency of middle-class blacks to publicly emphasize the

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[36] The term used to describe a plot of land.

distinctions between themselves and other Africans demonstrate that the gap between the African elite and the African masses was cultural as well as material" (West 2002, 118).

Like residential segregation, consumption patterns and lifestyle choices have both played key roles in attempts to maintain racial and class-based distinctions in Zimbabwe's social history. As mentioned above, there was a post-war expansion in production of items for mass consumption (Burke 1996, 92). Timothy Burke's work shows that as purchase and use of a range of household goods- clothing, hats, toiletries, cleaning products- increased among Africans, white settlers made "attempts to segregate the realm of consumption" (1996, 100). They feared the loss of aspects of their own status and privilege if Africans started to consume similarly to them, or if they (as Africans skillfully did) appropriated goods or fashions according to their own needs or aesthetics.

These efforts to curtail consumption go along with the kinds of "racial etiquette" that marked the colonial period in Zimbabwe. Alison Shutt (2015) has written extensively about the way this racial etiquette allowed white settlers to demand particular kinds of mannered behavior of black Africans, while denying them cultural recognition. Attempts by white settlers to prevent any consumptive display became most apparent in the long-standing legal restrictions on Africans drinking "European liquor"[37]- being limited to consumption of African brewed "traditional" beer- preventing Africans from speaking English, and various "demands for public gestures of deferences" to white settlers (Burke 1996, 101, also Shutt 2015), including restricting African use of sidewalks (Shutt 2015).

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[37] This became one of the means by which white liberals in favor of racial partnership showed their defiance of a racist state- by offering European liquor for African elite consumption at their multi-racial parties (Raftopolous and Mlambo, Ranger 1995).

At the same time, it was expected that with education and 'civilizing,' black Africans would develop new consumer needs/desires. These terms were themselves racially inflected, implying that black Africans were turning "desires" into "needs" in extravagant ways. In efforts of the rising African middle-class to gain recognition – culturally, socially and politically- "commodities were singular and intense symbolic battlegrounds" for trying to wrest some recognition from white settlers (Burke 1996, 184). "Fashionable consumption" was also an important way that African elites sought to distinguish themselves from the "African masses" (184).

Once national independence was achieved, the black middle-class had access to neighborhoods and to schools which had been the previous purview of whites only, and they bought houses in these areas and sent their children to once white-exclusive schools (Cumming 1993; Pickard-Cambridge 1988). The new government of Zimbabwe promoted the "development of a black middle class" as one of the means through which it sought to upturn the political economy of the colonial period and to promote new economic growth (Muzondidya 2009, 167)[38]. So despite facing a number of challenges post-independence, in 1980s Harare most residents lived in "planned" plots where they had reliable water and electricity access. Most also had formal employment and even though wages were generally low, the amounts usually covered necessities, rent, transportation, and even left

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[38] Muzondidya cites a report from 1989 on "black advancement in the private sector," nearly 10 years after majority rule was achieved. The numbers showed that "senior management" was still substantially white, though there was a large number of black Africans moving holding positions in "junior management."

some money to send home to rural areas. They also had access to state-sponsored

education and healthcare.[39]

But from 1997 onwards, the economic prospects for the nation went into decline.

Urban Zimbabweans began to rely heavily on sources of support other than wage-labor,

including rural resources. This move coincided with a rapid growth in the importance of

remittances from family or friends living elsewhere, which also reveals the dissolution of

middle-class security. Bracking and Sachikonye's (2008) surveys in 2005 revealed that

78% of households in one low density neighborhood in which many Fairside churchgoers

live, Mabelreign, were receiving remittances[40] from friends or family members elsewhere.

Significantly, while both high density area and low density area households had high rates

of dependence on remittances (8), it was residents of the mid-level low density areas that

seemed to have suffered the most substantial hit to their resources and lifestyles. As

Bracking and Sachikonye conclude: "the data as it stands suggests that it is the middle

class incomes of the richer suburbs of Harare that have collapsed, an observation which

stands complimentary to the shrinking of the formal and professional sectors" (9). As

Jones claims for the years around 2007 and 2008, "hyperinflation…decimated the

productive middle class and installed a class of wheeler-dealers in its place" (Jones 2012,

12).

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[39] Epworth is the only area in the Harare region that appeared more like the "unplanned settlements found all over urban Africa." Still, because of the wider expanse across which the settlement spreads, it has not become a slum because it is much less densely populated (Potts 2010, 84).
[40] This compared with 53% in Highfield, Harare's oldest High-Density Area.

This pattern of reliance on external sources remained evident to me during fieldwork in 2015-2017. Despite the fact that many households in low density areas received a larger proportion of remittances as money, the survey found that many also received substantial quantities of "luxury goods," including cars, jewelry, TVs, and other electronics. Parents rely on their adult children overseas to help them buy cars, and younger siblings depend on older siblings who have migrated to send "pocket money" to support living expenses, or to return for visits with clothing and money for school fees. This reliance on remittance shows not only how the economic security of the middle-class has collapsed, but also how Zimbabweans deal with their "tight" situation.

## "Making a Plan": Putting Middle Class Resources to Work

Things were indeed "tight" when I arrived in Zimbabwe at the end of 2015. People regularly used this English word to describe when they had no money, or no cash, or no time. It's a telling metaphor, highlighting the squeeze felt when one is facing a difficult situation, not merely because of a lack of resources, but particularly because of demands on those resources from landlords, schools, or desperate relatives. The financial tightness people often lament is tied to pressure and expectation on social, familial, and institutional fronts. The English word "tight" was often accompanied by a Shona phrase: "zvakaoma[41]," people would say to one another, shaking their heads, and sometimes including the English translation: "it's difficult." "Zvakaoma" is what one says when a wife loses her husband and also what one says when trying to find spare parts for a foreign vehicle.

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[41] The root of the phrase "zvakaoma" can also mean dry or hard.

In addition to the tightening economy and shortages of goods, Zimbabwe had been in drought when I arrived in 2015. The rains came very late that year, and people were holding their breaths through what should have been the start of the rainy season-December and into January, waiting to plant their crops until nature was ready to water them. The first time it rained, I was caught out in the open. After disembarking from the *kombi* I had managed to catch, along with a cluster of dripping uniformed schoolkids, I could see why the streets had seemed deserted. Everyone had taken shelter under the grocery store verandas. The bus stop closest to my home in a typical low density neighborhood was at the crossroads on a main road, a hub flanked by two grocery stores, two petrol stations, and countless vendors hawking everything from phone chargers to potatoes. But now all of those usually buying, selling, and commuting were instead under the veranda, perched on the arms of the grocery carts, everyone staring out in the same direction at the downpour. Half of the grocery store staff stood at the front door by the fruit and newspapers, one of them with a mop, making futile efforts to control the tracking-in of water and mud on the well-polished concrete at the entrance.

In transit by foot, I had felt the breeze pick up for a while, as the air cooled, and darkened. It felt so fresh after the suffocating heat of the previous weeks. People selling vegetables and packaged snacks at each corner of the street where I walked started to secure sheets or tarps over their tables and makeshift displays, made of planks and cardboard boxes. They knew to leave or seek shelter quickly. Then it began to pound with rain- huge fat drops. Everyone had been carrying big umbrellas for days, waiting and hoping, while the sky remained dry and the ground parched. While we anticipated, I had

grown skeptical. Then it began to rain, and, without umbrella, I was stuck trying to stay dry underneath the branches of one of the many large trees that line streets in the old suburbs. The person sharing my overhang was a girl who only stood there long enough to open her umbrella and then run away. I began to realize why no one else relied on a rain coat, as my own was soaked through in minutes.

Leaving the kombi at my bus stop, I now tried to cross the wet street, but I could not find the planks and concrete blocks that usually served as little bridges over the drainage ditches along the road: they had either fallen or the flow of the water was high enough to have covered them. In the parking lot, the water hit my mid-shin. Turning the corner past the grocery store, the overhang in front of the butchers and the hardware store was again lined with people, as was the underside of the mechanic's garage. "Does everyone just wait until it stops raining before they go home? It could rain for hours!" I found myself thinking, "Doesn't anyone have places they need to be?" As people regularly reminded me in an uncomfortable cliché, "There's no hurry in Africa."

Walking the 10 minutes towards home, I passed almost no one on the road. Where to walk when the dusty path, pounded down by hundreds of feet, has turned into a flowing stream? Usually, everywhere I could imagine placing a foot, someone had already done so before me, thousands of times, creating a multitude of pedestrian paths that crisscrossed the neighborhood. Now all the tracks were flooded. I could hear the vendors and the shoe cobbler inside the tent kiosk at the corner cross-street where they sold eggs, bread, credits for mobile phones in tiny denominations, and where they would even mend a pair of shoes or the occasional lawn mower. I saw no customers.

The typical low density houses I passed were guarded by sturdy concrete walls and gates, but usually there were people to greet: gardeners tidying front driveways, commuters walking to catch a kombi, or women with blankets spread under trees waiting for these commuters to buy a piece of fruit or some of their vegetables. Right now, though, it was only me.

By the time I was turning the key in the pedestrian door of our heavy, black metal gate, the rain was already starting to let up and I could see a little blue in the sky. Having by now realized that most everyone would seek shelter to wait out afternoon rainstorms, walking into the front garden I had expected a light reprimand from my host parents- Baba and Amai- about getting so soaked. Baba was eating *maputi*- the working-class snack of maize kernels popped under pressure into a chewy popcorn - from a little plastic bag on the front porch. Disregarding his usual formalities, he was laughing and giddy like a schoolboy. "I thank God!" He said "I'm so pleased. It's so wonderful. My crops! We thank God! Are you one to dance in the rain?" He asked me. He told me he had done so, indicating his beige, water-friendly rubber clogs.

He also pointed to the containers that we had placed outside earlier, waiting for the skies to fill them with water for watering and flushing. "All of them are full!" he cried, showing me. The drain at the front of the driveway was not quite functioning, so he noted that we would need to wait for it to clear before driving the cars through it. My host mother, Amai, stuck her head out from the front door, repeating "*Tinotenda Mwari*. We thank God[42]," in her more composed manner.

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[42] These two phrases are translations of one another. My interlocutors regularly repeat these kinds of phrases in English and Shona for emphasis. The same is true of "tight" and "zvakaoma."

As I ended my fieldnotes for the day: "Now it's 6:45pm…and the power went out an hour ago…The crickets are out, and the rain has stopped."

The rain that came pouring through in late 2015 offered a little reprieve to the tightness. Baba's delighted response broke through his often serious demeanor and showed just how desperate for rain the city's residents had been. People told me how the climate went in cycles, and they had always expected one dry year in every ten. But it had been very dry for several years now. Almost everyone I knew, whether businessperson, accountant, teacher, pastor, unemployed, or rural farmworker, grew food to eat. In the rural areas, hunger was creeping in. No rain meant less food for people to eat and to sell. In both rural and urban areas maize took first priority, but in the household where I lived, like many others, we also planted groundnuts, beans, okra (*nderere*), tomatoes, green peppers, various leafy greens to make the staple relish dish, and Amai's prized chili plant (*piri piri*). There were a couple of mango trees near the compost pile, and a bushy mulberry tree on the opposite side by the woodpile- a favorite hideout for snakes. Only those who were very well-off irrigated their plants, and even in urban areas the water system was unreliable. Besides, my host parents expressed, it did not seem right to pay for water for one's plants. Though it provided some reprieve, the little rain that came did not resolve the other sources of tightness.

My final fieldnote describes another contributor to the tightness: electricity. The city practiced load-shedding, where power would be routed to one part of Harare and cut off in others. Initially the city had published a schedule, I was told, but now people learned the patterns as if by muscle memory, and in their own neighborhoods could anticipate

when power would likely go out and return in cycles during the week. Our household had not utilized the deep freezer for many months, but when a down turn in industry meant several large factories in the city were closed, more electricity became available for private use and we started to freeze meat again. That is, until someone stole copper elements from the transformer in the neighborhood, and we lost several frozen chickens.

Faced with increasingly "tight" situations, middle-class urbanites have dealt with challenges to their lifestyles from failing city infrastructure and shrinking opportunities in the industrial sector. From 1997 to 2008, residents of Harare began to experience the unsteadying and subsequent free-fall of their economic stability, evident in uncertain access to utilities and compounded by the drought. While the middle-class has often managed to retain their assets- the houses they own and the cars they have bought- increasing water and utility cuts mean they can no longer run their washing machines and that they cannot prepare for times of scarcity by storing extras in their freezers. Fuel shortages mean they struggle to drive their cars, and many have either lost their jobs or end up working without being paid for long stretches of time. Lack of hard cash makes paying school fees an enormous challenge. Wage-earning urbanites frequently have rural ties and family members at their homesteads to whom they send or deliver groceries and supplies on a monthly basis, and often also pay school fees for nieces and nephews, stretching resources increasingly thin.

Morreira (2015) describes how during the particularly difficult era of hyperinflation from 2007-2008, wealthier urbanites sought to maintain their "lifestyles" by a variety of self-help strategies. Because they did not see themselves as being able to hold the Harare

municipality responsible for suppling water, electricity or security, they relied on a discourse of "self-sufficiency" (286) which, she points out, did not mean individual autonomy, but instead involved whole "networks" of connections across racial lines, with neighbors and colleagues. Morreira sees these strategies as being class-distinctive, rather than racially determined. Black and white middle-class neighbors shared resources and formed various kinds of cooperatives.

She examines these approaches in terms of the "make a plan" attitude, which she traces to 1970 then-Rhodesia, when global sanctions imposed during UDI (the era of white minority government) limited access to goods and services. In the face of these limitations, the Rhodesian state under Ian Smith promoted an image of self-reliance and "resourcefulness" (Morreira 2015, 285). According to Morreira, this phrase "make a plan" re-emerged in the 2000s, as a part of the "English-speaking Zimbabwean lexicon" in ways that cut across race and political distinctions. The phrase is used as "a means of speaking about the innovation required to deal with the stresses and unpredictability of daily life" (285). She also likens it to the strategies of "*kukiya-kiya*" which "entered the Shona lexicon at the same moment in time" (285, see the introduction of this dissertation, and also Jones 2010, for a more elaborate theorization of kukiya-kiya). I would suggest that the attitude is also characteristic of a more long-standing gendered ideal in Shona communities, where the ingenuity, thrift and entrepreneurial skills of women in their households are praised, as I describe in the next chapter. This affinity between a Rhodesian phrase and a Shona cultural ideal is one reason for the potency and frequency of "making a plan" in contemporary Zimbabwe.

While the use of middle-class networks was less pronounced once the most immediate crisis of 2008 had passed, I saw many of the same life-style maintenance strategies at play during my fieldwork. In some ways, the middle classes were "stuck" with their assets, unusable in the standard way because of infrastructure limitations or shortages. Instead they modified these assets to fit the circumstances with which they were now presented.

In the two households where I lived during my fieldwork, a variety of different strategies allowed for people to maintain aspects of their lifestyle through some creative engineering. Each morning, we would charge a series of solar powered torches and lanterns in the sun on the patio, and then at night would place these next to beds, in case the power should go out overnight. In another house, a car battery in the pantry was charged by an inverter while there was municipal electricity, which then served as a generator when the electricity went out, powering low-energy LED lights installed along the upper walls of the home to light rooms and hallways. Many kitchens have an additional gas oven that sits alongside their electric one. Car batteries can be used to power TVs and fridges, though often power outages mean going without the luxury of nightly TV viewing. Some households have generators, but when fuel shortages are in effect, these become less helpful. In our mid-level neighborhood, a few neighbors did own them, and the hum of a generator is a constant and familiar anthem in the otherwise complete silence of a power outage.

To deal with water cuts, many households sink boreholes. Boreholes provide drinkable water but are very expensive to drill. As such, they are one of the resources that even many middle-class people do not have the capacity to fund. Most white families have

boreholes, but many middle-class black Africans do not. Instead, they often have access to other institutions or neighbors willing to share. In one place where I lived, we transported drinking water in large plastic jugs from the boreholes at a local private school. Living in a neighborhood where many others also had a variety of ways to access water meant that scarcity was less of an issue and we did not have to wait in line to use the taps. Having a car meant we could transport larger amounts of borehole water with ease. In the house, water for washing and bathing was drawn from the municipal taps while they were running and stored in large tubs in the kitchen and bathroom for use when the taps were not. During the rainy season, we collected rainwater in barrels, used to flush the toilets or water the plants. Lack of running water did not mean cold bathing, however. While some people installed gravity-fed hot water geysers, our household used the electric kettle to boil water for the bathtub when the municipal taps were not feeding our hot water heater. Unlike many families, we did not have to wash our clothes by hand, but did have to wait until we had simultaneous running water *and* electricity in order to power the washing machine[43]. All of these strategies are intended to address the difficulties of living in the current political and economic climate in Harare. But they are also strategies particularly characteristic of the middle-class, who have some resources and assets available for meeting their tight situation.

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[43] Many of these strategies are not exclusive to low density areas. Those living in townships or high-density areas may have some similar patterns, but the difference is that they lack many of the assets and expectations of the low density residents. Residents of high densities are sometimes reliant on wells, which are not as deep as boreholes and the water is not always potable. Scarcity of supply means that residents of high densities may have to queue for hours to access few boreholes, which are often too shallow and run dry. Solar powered electronics are also in use in high densities, particularly because houses in these areas almost never have access to grid-power, and many cook on more hazardous paraffin or wood fires.

**Conclusion**

The ability to make a plan is a valued skill in Harare, a statement of resilience in the face of climatic, political and economic tightness. Economic and political changes since 1997 have frustrated the continual efforts of this middle-class to put their professional, material, and educational credentials into service in maintaining their lifestyles. During the post-colonial period, this class strata has watched their access to resources and opportunities rise and fall in cycles because of changing political policy. As a result, they have been substantially deprived of the real political power that they see as characteristic of true elites. These experiences have not, however, eroded their middle-class consciousness. I have shown how modification efforts and creative workarounds generate a meta-level awareness among urban residents about their make a plan attitude, and the creativity, industriousness, and skill represented in it.

Fairside Baptists, like the other middle-class residents of Harare, are navigating some tight situations. They do so in practical ways- collecting rainwater, charging solar panels, relying on neighborhood networks- while also reflecting on the non-material aspects of their class position. But middle-classness at Fairside involves some additional kinds of class consciousness in religious and moral terms. Baptists in Harare perform self-critiques of class by way of reflections on wealth and material display, and they assess modes of bodily comportment in worship practices- loud and expressive or quiet and restrained- as symbolic of class position. In the next chapter, I show how some of the responsibilities represented in these values become gendered in the religious discourses of

80

middle-class Zimbabweans and are treated as sites of pedagogical reflection and

instruction.

# Chapter 2:

## The Proverbs 31 Woman and Gendered Pedagogies of Moral Responsibility

A wife of noble character who can find?
She is worth far more than rubies.
Her husband has full confidence in her
and lacks nothing of value.
She brings him good, not harm,
all the days of her life.
She selects wool and flax
and works with eager hands.
She is like the merchant ships,
bringing her food from afar.
She gets up while it is still night;
she provides food for her family
and portions for her female servants.
She considers a field and buys it;
out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.
She sets about her work vigorously;
her arms are strong for her tasks.
She sees that her trading is profitable,
and her lamp does not go out at night.
In her hand she holds the distaff
and grasps the spindle with her fingers.
She opens her arms to the poor
and extends her hands to the needy.
When it snows, she has no fear for her household;
for all of them are clothed in scarlet.
She makes coverings for her bed;
she is clothed in fine linen and purple.
Her husband is respected at the city gate,
where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.
She makes linen garments and sells them,
and supplies the merchants with sashes.
She is clothed with strength and dignity;
she can laugh at the days to come.
She speaks with wisdom,
and faithful instruction is on her tongue.
She watches over the affairs of her household
and does not eat the bread of idleness.
Her children arise and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her:
"Many women do noble things,
but you surpass them all."
Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.
Honor her for all that her hands have done,
and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.
*Proverbs 31: 10-31, New International Version*

In the previous chapter I showed that Fairside Baptists are middle class urbanites who are conscious of their class position and, like other residents of low density suburbs in Harare, are finding middle class ways to get by when things are "tight." In this chapter I begin to examine how these class-based concerns affect the kinds of moral responsibilities that this group of Christians prioritizes. In later chapters, my focus becomes the ethical dilemmas that each Christian must navigate according to his or her own conscience. Before exploring these moral quandaries, however, I show first how Fairside Baptists think about moral responsibility in those areas which are the site of moral focus but which they *do not* reckon as the site of substantial ethical dilemma. Since my larger argument is that for Baptists in Harare moral responsibility is the basis for human freedom, I show here that moral responsibility need not be about choice between competing values. In this case the forms of moral autonomy asserted are a site of cultural attention that require pedagogical instruction (Reinhardt 2014), rather than moral debate.

The case that I discuss relates to Fairside women's view of their gendered responsibilities. Fairside women value thrift, entrepreneurial creativity, and the capacity to lead a household by developing particular skills- everything from handicraft to accounting- and to perform these skills in ways that contribute to their community. They see their gendered middle-class responsibilities outlined and modelled in the Bible, particularly in the figure of the "Proverbs 31 woman," a woman head of household described in the Old Testament book of Proverbs. The Proverbs 31 woman possesses skills and engages in activities in two domains often reckoned to be at odds in contemporary industrialized society- the domestic sphere and the market sphere, or home and work. Instead of being at

odds, Fairside Baptist women understand their responsibility to practice thrift and diligence in service of others, and to run their household in ways that encompass domestic activities *and* their professional lives, business activities and paid labor.

While there may at first appear to be a tension between pursuit of professional careers that support their middle-class lifestyles and particular forms of domestic attentions, or "homecraft," I suggest that this tension is merely a practical, and not a moral one. The presumption that home and work spheres entail competing values is based on cultural ideas about the post-industrial organization of social life, and thus is historically and culturally specific. For Zimbabwean Baptists, this division is undermined on two fronts. Firstly, I claim that the convergence of Shona women's household and market labor (both paid and unpaid) accompanying the introduction of a colonial capitalist economy has meant that, historically, their gendered responsibilities have encompassed both of these arenas simultaneously. Secondly, women at Fairside also find clear examples in the Bible of women who are praised for achieving both domestic and market production and reproduction. As a result, while some activities in the "work" or "home" realm might compete for a woman's *time*, there is no major *value* conflict at play to become the focus of moral debates. Instead, the skills and attributes of a working woman are the focus of moral instruction.

In what follows, I first show that a changing political economy in colonial Rhodesia produced new divisions of labor, but that even as women entered the capitalist economy, they did not operate according to a home/work divide. I also demonstrate that particular skills of "homecraft" have been part of fostering a middle-class household since

84

this period. "Homecraft" was promoted in gendered prayer and evangelism groups in ways that incorporated moral, practical, and social instruction. Contemporary urban Baptists conceive of these skills in homecraft as complementary to the values and responsibilities that make a woman a business leader or entrepreneur.

I explore the issue of gendered and class-based responsibilities by discussing a workshop for young women in which the practice of middle-class virtues was taught rather than debated. These virtues combine two major gendered pursuits of middle-class values, the first being care for family and community by way of thrift, hospitality, and industriousness, and the second being a responsibility for the household.

## Changes in Household Production and Consumption in Colonial Zimbabwe

Scholars writing about various parts of the postcolony have remarked on the ways in which gender becomes a site of particular anxieties over ideals about modernity (Chatterjee 1993), domesticity, and social reproduction. Writing about Southern Rhodesia, a number of important scholarly works have examined gendered processes of urbanization in the country (Barnes 1999; Burke 1996; Jeater 1993; Ranger 1995; Schmidt 1992; Shutt 2015; West 2002) by looking at business and land ownership, the creation of various women's organizations, and women's roles in their families and churches. Each of these areas generated key cultural and social changes in the colonial era. Burke (1996), Barnes (1999) and West (2002) show how efforts aimed at "generating new subjectivities" (Burke 1996, 193) among Africans on the part of white colonists focused particularly on women. Women were viewed by missionaries and by white settlers as the pedagogical linchpin for

producing civilizing domestic forces. At the same time, African men also saw women as a site for reproducing "'traditional' consumption" and of "maintaining and extending their patriarchal control over the feminine" (Burke 1996, 193-4). Marketing and economic conglomerates viewed women as powerful forces in the purchase of commodities and targeted their advertising as such.

While being the target of later colonial and post-war promotions of, or anxieties about, modernization, women in precolonial Shona society played both "major *productive* and *reproductive* roles" (Schmidt 1992, 6, emphasis added). At the end of the 19th century, what Gaitskell argues for South Africa applies to the case described by Schmidt for Eastern Zimbabwe: "there was no such thing as a black housewife. Rural women had always been productive workers and continued to be involved in cultivation, helped in childcare and some domestic chores by children" (Gaitsekll 1983, 243).

As the colonial administration gradually squeezed the resources and upturned the social structures of African households at the close of the 19th century, women's labor practices were altered substantially (Schmidt 1992). Because of the existing divisions of labor and production, the work of Shona women became a way to fend off a full reliance on wage labor as a capitalist economy was imposed. The unpaid labor of women in farming activities meant that black African peasants could undersell white settler farms- who had to pay their workers, even if unreasonable low wages- in touting their produce to local buyers. Women also brewed and sold beer to mine workers for profit. Both of these strategies became ways that local peasant economies posed a threat to settler agriculture. The colonial state introduced policies to eliminate this threat. While initially possible to

resist the pull into wage labor because of the money that peasant women managed to earn, eventually the increasing need for African labor by the white settlers, who ran mines and farms, overtook African households. The earnings of African male wage laborers became more vital, as the colonial administration passed agricultural legislations that favored European farmers and devastated African production. At the same time, the work load for women increased as they remained to care for households while men became migrant laborers. Tasks once the prerogative of men were left to women, on top of their existing responsibilities.

This change in the political economy also entailed another restructuring of household organization and labor patterns. Shona women in the pre-colonial era were operating within a strongly patriarchal order but one in which they found ways to navigate. With the advent of the colonial era, Schmidt (1992) argues that there was introduction of new African and European forms of patriarchy in which women were increasingly disenfranchised. Previous cultural means for women to achieve social standing- including brewing beer, serving as spirit mediums, midwives or cultural educators- were outlawed or undermined by both colonial and missionary efforts. Regulating female sexuality and supporting African male authorities, who in turn also relied on control of female labor and reproductive power, served the colonial administration's quest of securing African male labor (121). It benefited both African and European male interests to support one another's patriarchies, while the burden of maintaining household production and reproduction of households fell almost exclusively on women.

At the same time that male African elders and the colonial administration were regulating the labor and sexuality of women, Schmidt argues it was missionaries who came to manage the ideological realm. Through education and life at mission stations, women in particular were taught a European nuclear family household model; they were instructed "that it was their duty to stay at home, cooking and cleaning, raising healthy Christian children, and respecting and obeying their husbands" (122). At the same time, the very educational skills in which they were trained gave them resources to utilize for their own economic empowerment. Black African women receiving this training also found means of upward social mobility, entering professions as nurses, teachers, tailors or domestic servants, and marrying educated civil servants, teachers or clergy.

But this social mobility did not result in an all-out "female emancipation" (Schmidt 1992, 122). While Christian, European, middle-class domestic arrangements included education for women, it also entailed a new form of patriarchy, Schmidt claims, even if one in which women were being skilled in ways that gave them an entrance into the capitalist economy alternative to the peasant option. This is one reason why gender is so key to discussions of the black middle-class in colonial and contemporary Zimbabwe. As Schmidt puts it:

> Christian women and girls were at the forefront of those who resisted old forms of patriarchal authority and created alternative life styles in emerging new environments. However, the price for membership in this new elite was high. In exchange for their privileged social and economic status, mission women and girls were forced to accept European values and behavioral codes that circumscribed their options outside the domestic sphere (123).

The web of class, gender, and labor intertwined in these new domestic ideologies.

Terrence Ranger's profile of the elite Samkange family challenges some of these claims made by Schmidt about the role of Christian African women in middle-class educational, professional, religious, and household domains. He shows how Thompson Samkange, and his wife Grace, both of whom were educated leaders in the Methodist church, took as a goal "making class by remaking gender relations" (1995, 32). As a "model progressive family man" (32), Thompson advocated that both women and men receive an education, and he and Grace both supported their younger siblings, own children, and many other boys and girls from their social networks, through schooling. Thompson emphasized that female education should lead women into various professions- a view in which Ranger says he was the minority in African Christian contexts at the time- and he also sought to have sufficient female representation in the national organization of evangelists. In their own household, Thompson and Grace's sons and daughters both learned and shared responsibility for the same household and farming tasks- the boys cooked and cleaned house just as the girls worked the land (37).

Contra-Schmidt, rather than losing all avenues towards female social status and replacing an African patriarchy with a European one, Ranger claims that Grace and other African women gained substantial authority in the community through their leadership in church women's groups. As I describe below, the most prominent of these, the Ruwadzano[44], grew out of the Methodist Church, in which Thompson was a minister and Grace a respected wife. It was she who led the Ruwadzano, where "[t]he rules of the movement spelt out Christian gender transformation" (40). Ranger claims that the African

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[44] Similar groups were also called "Musangano" (meeting).

women's prayer groups, including Ruwadzano, "legitimated female evangelical authority" (40). While this authority was initially almost exclusive to white women as the figureheads, black African women began to gain increasing power as they lobbied to self-organize and to run their own clubs. Law (2011) also argues that homecraft clubs offered women a new public role. Rather than a simple substitution of one form of patriarchy for another, the example of the Samakanges shows how new forms of gender relations and divisions of labor in the family coincided with the adoption of particular Christian ideals that did not altogether undermine traditional African family dynamics, and that also provided women some new sites in which to assert themselves. The Samkange's still sought to fulfill various responsibilities to extended kin networks along "traditional" Shona lines- like supporting their own younger siblings- while they sought to create a new model of the middle-class "progressive."

As this example should make clear, despite the racial power dynamics involved in missionary and colonial social structures, which often stripped black women and men of social dignity (Shutt 2015), the domestic ideals that were being advocated were not imposed wholesale upon black African women (Jeater 1993; West 2002), and neither was the "moral discourse" about women and sexuality that was promoted by colonists in the era before the war (Jeater 1993). Instead, ideas about male and female gender roles were taken on and "internalized" (73) as vital avenues for becoming the wives and mothers of emerging, black, nuclear, middle-class families. Jeater argues that it was colonial occupation that brought about the creation of a "moral realm" to begin with. Where once the power of lineage perpetuation and membership in the patriline would have been the

regulating terms for social and sexual reproduction, colonial and missionary efforts together began to order gender ideals through discourses and disciplines that were cast in the terms of "morality." Thus gender relations became a "moral" concern rather than a matter of reproductive or kin responsibilities, of "obligations to the lineage" (Jeater 1993, 29). By the 1930s, both white settlers and black Africans were trafficking in these new gendered discourses around morality.

While the colonial state was regulating particular labor and family relations, Barnes (1999), like Jeater and West, shows how women were also generating their own ideologies of family life, "energetically developed to define and elaborate acceptable hierarchical structures in urban African society" (55). One important avenue in which they performed this ideological "work" was in "church and women's clubs," to which I turn next.

**Ruwadzano, the Homecraft Movement and Forms of Social Distinction**

Women's clubs and unions remain important avenues of gendered social solidarity in contemporary Harare- whether business societies, prayer unions, philanthropic and welfare organizations, church or exercise clubs. Perhaps the most important forerunner of all of these is the now wide-spread Methodist Church institution termed "Ruwadzano."

These weekly meetings had begun as women's "prayer unions," which provided a space not only for religious fellowship but for women to support one another in regular family and household tasks (West 2002). In offering a space of gendered solidarity, Ruwadzano was also where women could pursue what West calls the "bourgeois domestic ideal" (68). Initially, these efforts were lodged squarely within religious contexts.

Increasingly alienated from their extended social networks of kin in rural areas, similar women's groups that were started in a variety of churches provided these women with spaces for religious, moral, and practical support. The new clubs concerned not only sewing, gardening, and hygiene, but dealt in moral formation, and the women involved talked explicitly about how they would serve God in these ways.

As they grew in the 1920s and 30s, Schmidt describes these groups as having a mostly "evangelistic" purpose, but their "secondary purpose of 'civilization' and 'welfare work' was only slightly less important" (1992, 145). A particular kind of domestic sphere was promoted as the most effective means for propagating the news of the Christian gospel, and the groups were seen as an avenue for change in their community: "The urban clubs for African women certainly facilitated display of middle-class-like domestic splendor, but they were not isolated from the troubles of their times, and members also organized themselves to take up local issues and to reach out (again, a notion reinforcing hierarchy) to their less-privileged sisters" (Barnes 1999, 152).

Springing from the Ruwadzano, after World War II a broader "homecraft" movement began. Homecraft clubs sprouted up in both cities and the rural areas, organized by the wives of the rising male elite. These groups proved so popular that national organizations came into being, and a wildly popular Radio Homecraft Club even promoted homecraft by airwave (Burke 59; West 77). These groups not only focused on a range of domestic crafts- from jam making to child rearing- but also, again, on moral formation[45].

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[45] Though I do not deal with the issue extensively here, racial dynamics had a significant impact on the trajectory of these clubs. White settler wives often maintained some control over the clubs and played, alternatively, ceremonial or pedagogical roles, even in those clubs started by black African women. Eventually, as multiracial politics became more popular among black and white liberal elites in Southern

The rise of these clubs also coincided with a boom in items available for consumption, and both hygiene and cosmetics- but particularly soap- became a major focus of advertising and colonial administrative efforts (Burke 1996). Private commercial enterprise targeted domestic middle-class ideologies through campaigns that turned the "civilizing" process towards consumption (126), also in conjunction with the efforts of homecraft clubs. As Burke argues, the broader homecraft movement, "continu[ed] the process by which colonial discourses about African bodies became disciplines governing African subjectivity" (60). Thus, skills of "homecraft" have long been a feature of middle-class identities for rising black elites, coinciding with religious efforts, welfare concerns, consumption patterns, and colonial notions of hygiene and healthy families (see also Law 2011).

Even as these clubs grew over several decades, already by the 1930s, what Gaitskell calls the "implausibility of domestic ideology" (1983, 252) was apparent. There was a persistent tension within the promotion of these discourses about nuclear-family domestic ideals: maintaining a household income that allowed for certain values to be achieved required that wives and mothers go to work. These mothers could not afford to stay at home fulfilling only domestic obligations to cleanliness, morality, and the instruction of children. Instead, women aspiring to create a particular kind of home needed also to take on income-generating activities.

As is the case at Fairside, gendered responsibilities and class distinctions accompanied one another in colonial Zimbabwe. Just as education and new ideologies of

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Rhodesia, there were significant fissures in the largest women's clubs- often at the national level- over desegregation and the possibilities of black female leadership.

93

family life were altering the household dynamics for middle-class African women, new kinds of social hierarchy were also emerging in the segregated colonial Locations (Barnes 1999, 35). The major qualification for a morally respectable woman in the urban Location was official marriage (26). Official marriage- as opposed to transitory relations- called *mapoto*[46] in which a woman might perform domestic and sexual duties for a man in return for housing and subsistence, but without necessarily intending a long term relationship- provided not only moral and religious standing in the community, but also gave access to one of the most coveted of urban resources: housing. Housing was the main way that a woman could begin to accumulate wealth from her earnings, which often came through informal means.

By the end of World War II, more black women were being recruited into the formal labor force from urban locations- including into tobacco processing and as domestic workers in white settler households (Barnes 36). A variety of reports commissioned on the status of urban African households in colonial Southern Rhodesian African after World War II showed that women, as in the early colonial situation described by Schmidt, were important contributors to the income and survival of urban African families.[47]

In addition to homecraft achievements and women's club leadership, women in colonial Zimbabwe found other ways of distinguishing themselves. As she traces the role of urban women in colonial era Zimbabwe, Barnes argues that particular forms of social

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[46] "Mapoto" being a reference to "pots" used for cooking, glossed by Barnes as "temporary marriage" or "informal marriage" (78). These relationships "of the cooking pot" (see Jeater 1993: 178)– are marriages in which no lobola is paid and in which a woman lives in partnership with a man on her own terms, providing some domestic services for him but also able to leave at will, taking with her own property and sometimes some of his.

[47] Though Barnes does note that there were some discrepancies on this front among the report writers.

distinction were important for their role in reproducing cultural life in urban townships (1999, xxxvi, 22). In the previous chapter, I showed that policies of the white settler administration sought to organize city spaces along racial lines. Barnes points out that black African urban communities created internal social hierarchies that were "very distinctly and consciously stratified" and where "a certain kind of differentiation was a social goal" (1999, 22). (see Naomi Haynes 2017 for a robust discussion of hierarchical social relations in peri-urban Zambia and their value for contemporary residents).

This social hierarchy was not fully describable in terms of Marxist class distinctions. Rather than use capitalist class terms, then, Barnes captures the gendered social hierarchy by describing women who are "well-known" (1999, xxvi). A woman who was "well-known" in the Location "lived properly" because of particular resources and benefits which she maintained. She had elevated social status, community esteem, and maybe even a bit of money (23). The advantage of a husband was important because official marriage provided legal access to land and to some city resources (27) that would allow her to gain the position of being "well known." Barnes' (1999) discussion shows how the elite class position of particular women was tied to standards of living as well as to resources and social respect.

Well-known women and the social distinction that they generated were important for helping create the "means to the construction of a reproducible, proper community" (22). Even as old social ties were completely disrupted by the colonial political economy, urban women sought to reproduce culture while creating new social networks. A female-

oriented social hierarchy was valued in the Location context, both for reasons of patronage relations but also because of its capacity to reproduce cultural forms.

The position of a "well known" woman finds its postcolonial, Christian counterpart in the kinds of attributes pursued by women in contemporary Harare. Family gender roles promoted by conservative Christians, particularly by those in the Baptist network, emphasize creativity, thrift, household management, and community contribution. Industriousness is promoted in conferences, club meetings and discussions, and women regularly share resources and ideas. Fairside Baptist has adopted aspects of Ruwadzano by holding monthly meetings for adult women, generally including those who are either married or have reached middle-age. The meetings include practical advice giving- for example, on issues like dental health or help for young mothers- as well as testimony, teaching, singing and prayer[48]. Similar meetings provide opportunities for women to be supportive of business efforts undertaken by one another, relying on each other as suppliers and customers of cleaning supplies, eggs, fashion items like jewelry ordered from South Africa, and services like custom-made bed linens. Women often prefer to obtain these items from one another rather than from a shop or grocery store, even if there is not a substantial price difference, citing their desire to support one another's entrepreneurial efforts.

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[48] "Ruwadzano" inspired meetings are not exclusively church service style meetings. I was a member of one of several local womens' aerobics groups that shared attributes with a Ruwadzano. Though part of a larger international Christian exercise organization, the Harare groups that I attended also provided women a space to pray together, to share health, cooking, fashion and nutrition tips, and to promote or purchase products from one another.

The history I have laid out shows several important precedences to the way gendered responsibilities among Baptist women at Fairside incorporates both bourgeois domestic ideology and also women's professional and business pursuits. I have shown that Shona female productive contributions to the household- both in the domestic sphere and in the economic sphere- and ideals of a Christian middle-class domesticity have for a long time been simultaneously at play. What makes these gendered responsibilities distinctive at Fairside is the particular moral valence that they take on and the larger discourse of Baptist moral responsibility in which they are embedded. In the pedagogical context I describe below, workshop teachers attempt to recapture interest in homecraft, while encouraging young women to pursue the kinds of responsibilities that will allow them to contribute to their family lives- morally, ideologically, religiously, and materially.

**A Thrifty Woman**

The Ruwadzano style meeting provides opportunity for women at Fairside to emphasize the thrift, creativity, hard work, and skill that are all elements of their gendered moral responsibility to their community. The class distinctions identified by Fairside Baptist church-goers are produced in part through sets of gendered religious and cultural ideologies.

Several women in the Baptist network are viewed as exemplars of these values. Most of these women are married and have children. While people recognize that not everyone will marry, and they affirm the unmarried people that are serving in the church, most everyone aspires to be married. One middle-class elder's wife, with whom I spent

97

considerable time, is one of these married exemplars. She cultivates opportunities to contribute (or substantially constitute) the household income. In addition to a seasonal (white collar) home business, she also keeps busy participating in two different network marketing schemes. She is particularly adept at fulfilling the needs and desires of the household for as little money as possible. We shopped together for household items at city wholesale suppliers, travelling to multiple locations seeking out the best prices for meat and non-perishables. The cost of shopping at wholesalers rather than suburban supermarkets entails navigating traffic, paying for parking, and loss in time: check-out queues might sometimes be an hour long. The congested downtown streets are also dotted with dozens of tiny kiosks, many selling the very same items- soaps, toilet paper, tea, sugar, powdered milk- for only a few cents difference in price. On one trip, this elder's wife moved through half a dozen of these tiny shops, weighing prices at various locations, and tracking back through crowded sidewalks to return to those places where she had found the best prices for individual items. She made similar excursions to purchase pots and pans or other kitchen items as gifts for women in the church who were getting married.

On other occasions I helped some of the young women at Fairside to purchase food for youth events. Looking for chicken and beef, we went to three different factory meat stores and to six other butchers seeking both good prices and fresh products. As we shopped, one youth leader told me she was often given this task of finding the best possible food for the best deal. Her mother joked that she was "stingy," but I knew that her own mother was also thrifty, and that others in her community- whether the youth group or her work colleagues- relied on this skill, which I heard called the ability to "stretch a dollar."

In both of these cases, the ideal is not merely finding the cheapest item, but rather value for money. The product has to meet standards of middle-class taste and presentability, acquired for the lowest price. The skills required to achieve this *value* - thrift, industry, and creativity- were taught explicitly in the context of a Young Women's event, hosted at the countryside home of a couple in the Baptist network.

**The Proverbs 31 Woman**

The Young Women's group at Fairside welcomes anyone from late high school into middle age, the main qualification being that the woman is unmarried. Most participants are in their twenties and thirties, and they host a range of events which appeal to their demographic, including camp retreats, movie and discussion gatherings, and talks from professional leaders in the church. They use all of these forums to discuss serious topics, including how to be a modest woman (while also being fashionable), how to prepare for the future, or how to make God-honoring decisions.

The Wise Woman Workshop was a day long event. The context for the workshop felt utterly tranquil, very different from the home and neighborhood environments in which most of the attendees lived. Nestled in the mountains outside the city, the owners had built a functioning estate able to host small business or church events. The meeting room was a round building perched above a valley, and for the duration of the morning the curtains fluttered fresh air into the cream-colored space, producing beautiful acoustics for the Shona choruses that commenced the workshop. The dozen or so young women, along with

the couple of female church leaders who had accompanied us as advisors, felt small in the expanse of the room.

The husband of the couple running the workshop, Mr. Chitepo, was a leader in the Baptist church and was also a successful businessman, having built a large company from the ground up. He and his wife, like so many of their generation of middle and upper-class Zimbabweans, had trained and worked as school teachers before getting married. Later, he and his business partner had started a company from scratch, persisting through many lean years and drawing no salary until the company was off the ground. This experience was an important example of the kinds of values that Baptist Christians should pursue, but they took a very specific gendered form in the workshop teaching.

The entire workshop focused on becoming a "Wise Woman." Mrs. Chitepo taught the group about the famed "Proverbs 31 woman," described in the wisdom literature of the Old Testament as a "noble woman" who is valuable to her husband, family and community, because she is hardworking and business-minded, cares for the poor, fears God, and is honored. Many of the attributes that characterize the Proverbs 31 woman are shared by exemplary women in the Baptist network.

In teaching about the Proverbs 31 woman, Mrs. Chitepo- one of the wealthier women in the church- sought not merely to valorize a particular form of domestic science. Instead, she turned forms of conspicuous consumption on their head: she reinvigorated the value of thrift, convincing young women to aspire to recycling and creativity, rather than to lifestyles of pure consumption. The workshop taught thriftiness, explained how to support

others with this thrift, and, finally, highlighted the ways in which a woman needed to be responsible for her household. She also emphasized the importance of prayer throughout.

The young women in the group recognized Mrs. Chitepo as a woman who exemplified these values. She instructed the young women to be proactive about preparing for the future and utilized a pattern of teaching common to women's meetings in Zimbabwe, in which she used her own life story as a positive teaching illustration. As a child, Mrs. Chitepo's parents had forced her to tend the garden, so she learned to plant vegetables. Later, she had sought out older women in her life and, assisting them in their homes, had learned how to set a table, to cook dinner, to sew and to do the family finances. She made the group laugh by describing her exasperation in learning to knit, particularly when she realized how long each row would need to be to accommodate the arms of the intended sweater-wearer. She explained that the household skill of knitting is valued not only as a form of thrift and industry, but as a form of care. While purchasing an item for a parent or loved one is easy, it lacks the personal touch of something handmade. Mr. Chitepo chimed in to tell the story of a fellow teacher whose wife had knit him a jersey. On completion, the jersey had been wearable, but somewhat misshapen. Even so, the husband could say, "this jersey is a product of love."

As acts of care, skills in handicraft could extend blessings to those beyond one's own family. These skills need not only contribute to one's own household, but could benefit one's church community, the poor, and ultimately the city. Creativity and industriousness could turn minimal resources into a gift for others. Mrs. Chitepo had sewn all her children's clothes, and then had begun making bridesmaids dresses for other people

almost every weekend. She explained that no one should turn up empty handed to a bridal shower or to a "bring and share" event (a potluck) for lack of resources. One need not spend any money but can recycle and remake something with the work of one's own hands. She contrasted the image of a skilled, creative woman to that of someone who has almost unlimited resources and so simply purchases everything and ends up with a "junkyard of expensive things." A wise woman will instead work with her own hands to create her home. Together, skill and care could ultimately produce glory for God, in part through philanthropy.

In addition to the tasks, skills, and passions that could be used to benefit others, moral and practical control of oneself and one's household were primary concerns. This meant being responsible for learning and for teaching. One could fall prey to a series of things competing for control over oneself: money, social media, lack of skill. Finances were a key part of her discussion. Problems with finances could come between oneself and one's spouse, so cultivating a good marriage meant reading books and learning about money management so that one did not become a wife who ran up debt on her husband's credit card. In order to "walk freely," in charge of one's own moral and practical life, one cannot owe someone money. In the same way, social media, including WhatsApp, could have the power to control a woman of any age, and one should be able to resist it.

To accompany Mrs. Chitepo's teaching about the skills and values that a wise woman should cultivate, Mr. Chitepo had developed a set of self-assessment tools that he called "The Seven Petals of a Wise Woman." On the documents that were circulated, the

seven petals were organized into the shape of a complete flower, printed in bright colors on glossy paper- an uncommon luxury in resource-strapped Zimbabwe. The petals read:

> "Joyful life and generous in society"
> "Solid love relationship with God"
> "Love family and other people"
> "Healthy and adorable personal upkeep"
> (which emphasized exercising, eating well, and laughter)
> "Knowledgeable, up to date and prudent,"
> "Prioritized focus and diligence in all work"
> "Talented, skilled and innovative."

The petals included a Bible verse that helped to support or explain the point that it represented. Each attendee was provided with a similarly colorful self-evaluation form and sent out into the garden to reflect and to evaluate themselves with regards to the features on each of the petals. We tallied our self-evaluation scores on an anonymous sheet, and later in the day were presented with a power-point summary of the aggregate scores in bar charts for each category. Mr. Chitepo walked us through these results, encouraging us to continue periodic self-evaluations.

Because Mrs. Chitepo described the Proverbs 31 woman as practical- a "doer," she intended to teach these values of thrift and industry not only by using her own testimony to exemplify them, but to show us attendees some of the practical outcomes. We followed Mrs. Chitepo across the estate to where she had an extensive garden nursery. Several gardeners were working with many varieties of plants and flowers. She was carefully coordinating the things that were being grown. At tea time, rather than supermarket biscuits, we were served small squares of chocolate cake that her own daughter had learned to bake. In a tent on the side lawn there was a display of handicrafts that Mrs. Chitepo had made as gifts or decorations. Quilt patches and stuffing were also laid out on the tables.

She challenged us to take some of these supplies and to sew a stuffed toy ball that we could then take as a group to donate to needy children. Attendees selected pieces of material, and, some weeks later, led by Mrs. Chitepo, we did indeed go on a visit to a state-run foster care and orphanage where we spent a half day distributing the toys we had made and socializing with the residents.

Finally, beyond thrift and being a benefactor to one's community, Mrs. Chitepo and another attending church leader, Mai Danai, both emphasized that a wife should learn how to be in moral and practical control of her household, like the Proverbs 31 woman. In their discussion, both female leaders anticipated that every young person present at the workshop would, when married, eventually have a domestic servant. This expectation is based not simply on the financial position of these middle-class women, nor on the fact that labor is cheap in contemporary Zimbabwe. Rather, as the work of Barnes (1999) cited above shows, that these social hierarchies will produce divisions of labor are anticipated as part of urban social life. The two leaders taught that, though these women were expected to employ people to perform domestic labor, it was important that a wife not rely on a maid or gardener to run the household.

In concluding remarks, Mai Danai pointed out that the generation of young women before her were well educated, and sophisticated- able, for example, to drive a car at an early age, a sign of their accomplishment and privilege. But, she interjected, there were things that they needed to know "in terms of working at home." She cited stories of grown women who did not know how to perform simple household chores. She warned them that they might hire a maid who is from a rural environment and will not know how to clean a

tiled floor, having only lived in a hut. Someone will need to instruct her. At this point, the

daughter of Mai Danai, a young lady in attendance, had clearly grown embarrassed by her

mother's speech. Mai Danai's perspective highlighted class differentiation too explicitly-

by describing a female head of household instructing a rural employee- engendering her

daughter's discomfort. At the same time, Mai Danai also struck upon a problematic felt

deeply by young attendees at the workshop.

The discussions among some of the young ladies, squeezed into a sedan on our

return ride, reintroduced this problematic of differential skills between their own

generation and that of their parents. They did indeed desire the values taught by Mr. and

Mrs. Chitepo, and they were inspired by Mrs. Chitepo's accomplishments. A fellow

passenger only just out of high school showed us how she had modified her own jeans by

adding fashionable "tears" in the fabric across the knees. Riders in the cramped back seat

admired her handiwork. Others reflected on the values of discipline and private prayer that

were taught alongside these handicraft skills. One woman pointed out that she sleeps late

on weekends but she does get up at five am to read her Bible and pray- to do "her

devotions"- before going back to sleep. "If I don't do my devotions then I'm a wreck" she

said, and others in the car murmured their affirmation and agreement.

Despite recognizing some ways in which they achieved the diligence and hard

work of a Wise Woman, the six women in the car lamented the loss of many of these skills

of homecraft among their generation. Their own mothers sewed and worked industriously.

One woman in her forties brought up several times how her mother was accomplished at

the skills that Mrs. Chitepo had advocated, including knitting and crocheting. She herself

had been taught to knit. But "you just forget," she said. "At least I can bake a few things," she consoled herself, adding that she tried to bake something every Sunday to take to her own church.[49] Another rider pointed out that her own mother was a tailor, and that her mother had in turn learned the trade from *her* mother. Though this young woman was a salaried professional, and her mother formally unemployed and struggling to make ends meet, the fact that she was not trained in the same sewing skills as her mother made her "feel bad."

As we pulled out of the gates of the estate, someone else in the car reflected on these laments of the group. While their mothers had fostered skills of handicraft, the young women in the car had been told that it was "education" that would allow them to "rule everyone," as they put it, climbing and securing a stable position in the social ladder. The driver and owner of the car, herself a young, employed professional, said, when it came to homecraft, they had simply been too busy at school.

The car discussion revealed the desire of these young women to cultivate the kind of domestic handicraft skills they had seen modelled and displayed that day. Anywhere between ages 18 and 40, these women, all unmarried, all educated, saw these skills as gendered responsibilities for their class position, while recognizing that they had grown up in an era when education seemed to be in competition with the cultivation of these skills in the household domain.

However, more than just knitting, gardening and baking, the values pursued in both homecraft and professional life were the same: thrift, industriousness, creativity, and

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[49] This woman attended Young Women's meetings at Fairside but was an official member of a different church and was alluding to a weekly event at her own church.

diligence. Young Fairside women had been taught to pursue education, as a means to maintain the middle-class standards which their parents had attempted to secure. No one expressed worry that this focus on their education and career was self-serving or materialistic. Indeed, several of these riders were using their salaries to support their unemployed parents or siblings. The values aspired to in both homecraft and education were, in fact, similar; the tension between education and sewing skills was a practical problem of *time* rather than a moral conflict of *values*.

In another of many discussions during a car ride, a mixed-gender group of twenty-somethings from Fairside reflected on their imagined future family lives. Squashed on the jump seats in the rear of the rickety church four wheeled drive, I heard this group weigh the domestic arrangements of some of the church teachers in the Baptist network. A few church members had found ways to allow their wives to be stay-at-home mothers. A couple of people in the car thought this would allow the family to better achieve certain Baptist values, like allowing the husband to lead the family and the wife to provide care for their children and community. But not one of the four or five young women in the car agreed that it was possible or desirable for them, as a future wife and mother, to refrain from going to work outside of their home. They were adamant that in the current economic situation, their paid work would be vital in sustaining the household economically and, based on their education, they were going to be professional women.

In other conversations, I heard Baptist young people struggle with the fairly likely prospect that the woman in a marriage might in fact be the one formally employed, not her husband, or that she might be earning a higher salary than him. It was not an uncommon

107

arrangement and was in fact a frequent topic in public discourse. As in TDs case (from chapter one), men who had been employed- whether in blue collar work at factories or in highly professional capacities in business- had been losing their jobs as the economy plunged. Some women managed to stay employed, while others started their own profit-generating enterprises. One father, in a family I knew well, had been comfortably employed by a government department. When things got tough in 2008, his wife started cooking *sadza*- the staple food- and carrying buckets of it down the street to sell to hungry workers, who themselves were struggling to acquire foodstuffs. This family was a middle-class family in a low density area, cultivating a bourgeois domestic ideal, making it surprising for the wife to take on this kind of task. However, it made gendered sense to the family that the wife would participate in production however she could- performing a low-level but entrepreneurial role in this case.

In the second car conversation I described, the female passengers did not presume that working outside of the home would be in competition with Baptist values of care for family. They certainly did not take being a "stay at home mom" as a plausible ideal towards which they should strive. Neither was this strictly a case of work versus home life. As I've shown, these spheres have never been clearly delineated for Shona women, and the business activities they generate often also emerge from the household itself: kiosks for selling eggs, cooking oil or bread in their front garden, renting rooms to lodgers, or various freelance home business activities. Even women engaged in professional employment that takes them outside of the immediate domestic sphere did not see these activities as in competition with, but rather as supportive of, domestic ones. They thought that a woman

should be proud of her capacity to provide for her family in practical ways- like the Proverbs 31 woman.

For the young women, regretting the loss of "homecraft," employment is a possible way to achieve the necessary provisions for their families. In urban Zimbabwean life, skills in household management and community contribution are still valued as forms of gendered responsibility. Pursuits intended to support a middle-class lifestyle, like education and professional employment, can appear as competition for skills in homecraft. At the same time, it was clear that through education and employment and also through homecraft Fairside women could work towards similar ends and, so long as it did not result in conspicuous display, they could be distinguished- like the "well known" women of the colonial Location- for their ability to creatively and diligently hold a household together through economic crisis.

**Conclusion**

Kate Law (2011) points out that though much historical literature on the Homecraft movement has highlighted its political role- both in terms of racial politics and as a way to bolster the colonial grip on Rhodesia- she argues that one of the more significant outcomes of the movement was that it provided a public role for women, working, seemingly paradoxically, through a promotion of domesticity. It also created an environment in colonial Zimbabwe in which black and white women frequently interacted, even as ideals about women's roles and domesticity themselves were changing. The practice of "homecraft" was part of the process by which black women in colonial Rhodesia sought to

emulate and produce domestic ideals of household that befitted Christians and the middle-class family lifestyle that was emerging at that time. In urban Zimbabwean life, the gendered values of household management and community contribution are still valued as forms of gendered responsibility and can be achieved both in homecraft and in professional work. The way Gaitskell describes this fact for a much earlier decade still rings true: "Family life is and has long been for black [African] women, something to struggle *for,* rather than against" (1983, 254).

For Baptists in contemporary Harare, this interest in homecraft shows the gendered intersection between domesticity, class, and moral responsibility. In this case, the moral responsibilities entailed are not under contention as sites of debate but are the focus of pedagogical training. The Proverbs 31 woman is valorized in this training for her thriftiness, but also for her entrepreneurial skill in running a household and performing business transactions in tandem. The Proverbs 31 woman exemplifies a woman who is a decision maker with a range of economic activities as well as domestic responsibilities within her purview of control.

The marriage of the vision of the Proverbs 31 woman in both domestic and market spheres is perhaps best exemplified by the fact that Fairside's young women's group later hosted an event that sought to explore these gendered values further. At a weekend retreat in the Southern part of Zimbabwe, the young women sported matching hot pink t-shirts that they had designed and printed, which read "Proverbs 31 woman" across the front. The two invited speakers for the weekend also reveal something of these values: one, a very well-educated Bible teacher and leader of a local mission group, and the other, a business

woman and scientist from Fairside who had a national profile. In choosing these two speakers, they showed that values of professional advancement were not at odds with Christian values, and that evangelism, Bible study and contribution to one's own household were all activities to be undertaken in support of one another.

Education and profession are pursued as a way to uphold middle class styles, while gendered virtues of thrift and industry through skills of homecraft continue to be viewed as ways to benefit one's own household and the others to which an elite black woman in contemporary Zimbabwe sees herself as responsible- her church, her community, God. This is, I argue, the appeal of the Proverbs 31 woman. The Proverbs 31 woman is not portrayed as a meek wife who is restricted to kitchen duties and acting only under instruction of her husband. She does fulfill many domestic chores. But the Proverbs 31 woman does more: she buys and sells a field, plants a vineyard with her earnings, trades profitably, makes and sells clothes, cares for a wealth of people in her own household and beyond, and in doing so brings her husband public honor. The Proverbs 31 woman is the exemplar of the "domestic ideal" turned upside-down: she shows a commitment to care of home and family that accords her not only domestic authority, but also entrepreneurial license and a responsible kind of autonomy.

In referring to the Proverbs 31 woman as an "exemplar," there might be a temptation to read her as a specifically "moral exemplar" as Joel Robbins has described for "big men" in Melanesia, borrowing an argument from Kenelm Burridge. According to this argument, the big man "is like a magnifying mirror in which others see their own moral predicaments enlarged, clarified and in various ways dealt with" (Robbins 2007: 27). But

in many ways the Proverbs 31 woman is not the embodiment of a paradox between two competing moral values. For Fairsiders, the Proverbs 31 woman is a model of a series of fully complementary pursuits.

Mrs. Chitepo taught these domestic and gendered class ideals- thriftiness, productiveness, perseverance, creativity, and initiative- while rejecting the materialism, laziness, or excessive displays that could characterize hospitality and household consumption of the black elite. These go beyond care for children or husband, entailing responsibilities for social reproduction of morality at large, and for individual responsibility to God.

The embarrassment of Mai Danai's daughter in the closing portions of the Proverbs 31 workshop is reminiscent of the critiques of class display articulated by Mai Nyondoro and Mr. Mahlangu, which I noted in chapter one. Baptist notions of autonomy- which I explore at length in the chapters that follow- demand a recognition of the freedom of others that leaves no room for conspicuous displays of hierarchies of wealth. At the same time, in the era of economic decline, many of these skills of homecraft have begun to re-emerge as desirable rather than as outdated, in part because handicraft would allow middle-classers to make or acquire items that they can no longer afford, while deterring them from the kind of lavish forms of display that Baptist Christians in Harare critique. Ultimately, homecraft and professional pursuits together provide avenues for the expression of a set of gendered moral responsibilities that are taught among Fairsiders. Next, I begin to examine those instances where moral responsibility produces ethical dilemmas for this group of Christians, and how they understand these dilemmas in terms of sinfulness and freedom.

**Part II:**

**The Nature of Sin, Freedom and Moral Responsibility**

Residents of Zimbabwe are living through significant postcolonial uncertainty of a distinctly sub-Saharan African kind. In this section, I address the relation between postcolonial uncertainty and ideas about sinfulness to which Baptists in Harare adhere. Drawing from certain forms of Protestant theology, I make the case that these Baptists understand the uncertainty of their context through notions of sinfulness, and that this sinfulness also in turn makes it difficult for them to discern God's work in the world. They engage in various kinds of moral debate as a way to assert their moral autonomy and to accept moral responsibility in the face of upheaval.

In both chapters in this section, I talk specifically about the concept of "original sin." Belief in original sin on the part of Fairsiders brings about two eventualities: it makes it difficult for them to determine what they can hold people accountable for, and it also means that they are held morally responsible prior to any kind of action or choice. I show how these two eventualities have important implications for the relation between moral responsibility and human freedom.

**Chapter 3:**

**Original Sin: Assessing Human Action in a Context of Uncertainty**

 "We'll make a plan," residents of Harare repeat regularly, with a sigh or wry smile. This "make a plan" approach appeared in my discussion in Part I because of how it represents the strategies people undertake to maintain class-specific lifestyles in difficult circumstances. Like many inhabitants of sub-Saharan Africa, Christians in Zimbabwe face existentially unpredictable circumstances on a national scale and in their daily lives. Indeed, persistent uncertainty has shaped social life in many similar postcolonial contexts (Bayart 2009; Guyer 1997; Mbembe and Roitman 1995). When Zimbabweans "make a plan," they find a way to contend with the uncertain situations in which they live, managing to create alternative pathways when the anticipated processes or patterns are challenged.

While middle-class Baptists in Harare utilize creative workarounds during periods of scarcity or lapses in utilities, during the fifteen months of my ethnographic fieldwork in Zimbabwe I heard these same Christians express dissatisfaction with the "make a plan" attitude. They denounce this approach for allowing the government to shirk its responsibility for social and economic upheaval, with civilians bearing the cost. Perhaps more so, they lament how this attitude excludes any expectation of God's action, placing the possibility of change squarely on human shoulders. Believers affirm that God is sovereign: the final authority and governing agent in all circumstances. But they struggle to make sense of the relation between their own actions, God's intervention in human time and space, and the context of political and economic upheaval in which they live. Even as they scramble to keep their households running, they also want some way to acknowledge

114

God's participation. In a later chapter I take up the implications of God's sovereignty in greater detail. Here, my discussion is concerned with Baptist ideas about human action in a context of postcolonial uncertainty.

How do my Baptist interlocutors assess the causes of this uncertainty and the role that their own action plays in it? I argue that a Baptist view of human nature in terms of sinfulness is an important way that Fairside Christians in Harare understand the apparent disorder in which they see themselves living on a daily basis. Because sin pervades all earthly creatures and structures, it is no surprise that chaos ensues. Yet Baptists in Harare struggle to determine what role human action plays under these conditions. The theological concept of "original sin" to which they adhere makes it difficult to distinguish between circumstances that are a result of one's own choices, and those over which one does not have control. The collapse of these two possible lines of attributing causality challenges the importance Baptists attribute to the issue of human responsibility. Human sinfulness does make individuals culpable for their actions- even actions that they did not choose- but there are also circumstances that are the results of general evil in the world. What does this distinction mean for the way that Harare Baptists approach the setting of instability in which they live?

First, I will explain the ways in which uncertainty characterizes the contemporary situation in Harare, and how residents of the city respond to it. Next, I will address how Fairside Baptists conceive of the causes of this uncertainty in terms of sinfulness, and what that explanation entails for their struggle with assigning human responsibility in a setting of economic and political upheaval.

**Agency, Freedom and Theological Alternatives**

The problem of reckoning human action in the world bears directly on a theological controversy brewing at Fairside, which came to a head during my fieldwork in 2015 and 2016. The controversy centers on the role played by God and that played by oneself in the process of salvation. Some contend that God is the only real agent in the salvation process. Others argue that while God does the saving in the course of conversion, a person has to take responsibility for actively receiving that salvation. Though the immediate disagreement among church members centers on conceptions of salvation, it has more far reaching implications. Congregants disagree more broadly about the activities and outcomes human beings can be held responsible for, and that which only God could do. While these controversies have a long provenance, particularly in reformed theology, they have pragmatic consequences for those living in a nation characterized by political and economic upheaval.

Those at Fairside who de-emphasize the human role in salvation can be seen as aligning with "New Calvinism," a Christian movement promoted in the influential writing and teaching of figures like John Piper, John MacArthur and theologians like R.C. Sproul[50]. Those who favor New Calvinist teachings and a reformed approach highlight God's work and downplay the ability of individuals to make any real choice in the process of their redemption. Church leaders who reject New Calvinism's teachings do so based on

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[50] Little social scientific work exists on this movement but see Hansen (2006). Chow (2014) also includes a discussion of how a rising influence of Calvinism in urban China addresses concerns that are distinct from the kind of New Calvinism I describe here.

what they call the "historical Baptist tradition" of the church, which instead emphasizes

individual choice and the necessary human will to receive salvation extended by Christ.

Similar doctrinal disagreements have plagued Baptist denominations since they began (cf

Benedict 2002; Wallace 1982),[51] and there is evidence that different churches within the

Baptist network in Harare lean different ways on the matter. I argue that this disagreement

comes to the fore for Hararean Baptists at Fairside at a moment when the stakes for

reckoning human responsibility and God's action in the world are much higher because of

contemporary insecurities.

In exploring these disagreements about human responsibility, I contribute to

anthropological conversations by challenging the ways in which "agency" has been used to

examine human action in the world. James Laidlaw (2014) has critiqued anthropological

notions of agency for relying on presupposed liberal political and modern visions of human

capacity to bring about change. These approaches delimit the potential existence of a vast

array of other kinds of agents, and locate agency, reductively, in the predetermined ability

and motivation of the individual to act.

I turn, instead, to theological discussions that inform the actions and orientations of

Baptists in Harare regarding ideas about human choice and human sinfulness. Drawing

from the work of contemporary reformed theologians enriches my anthropological

consideration of how seemingly exclusive visions of God's sovereignty and human

responsibility can operate in relation to one another. By "sovereignty," I refer to an

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[51] Oftentimes this disagreement has taken the form of a discussion on predestination, that is, the degree to
    which God has predetermined those humans who will be saved, thus downplaying the role of humans
    in their own salvation.

important notion for my interlocutors, who reckon a major attribute of God to be his ultimate control over everything that happens in the world and in their own lives.

I draw from theological concepts and articulations of human personhood to offer an alternative to the social scientific category of "agency." In doing so, I contribute to emerging conversations about a "theologically engaged anthropology." Recently, some scholars have advocated for this kind of engagement between anthropology and theology (Banner 2013; Lemons 2018; Meneses and Bronkema 2017; Robbins 2013a), one possible goal of which being to unsettle or extend some of the existing architecture of each discipline. As Joel Robbins points out in a chapter of *Theologically Engaged Anthropology*, one site of convergence between the concerns of the two disciplines is what he calls the "matter of human incompleteness" (2018, 23). For anthropology, human individuals remain irreducibly social, and in theology, humans are cast as limited in and of themselves. This shared operating assumption between the disciplines highlights a key point of struggle for the case that I describe here: the way in which human capacity is conceived and evaluated in theological and cultural terms. I employ a "transformative" framework, which seeks to engage the two fields in a way that allows for new theoretical perspectives to emerge (Lemons 2018). I do so to explore questions about the relation between human and divine activity as they play out in the Fairside congregation and in a postcolonial context.

## Fairside Baptist in Context

Behind the brick face of Fairside Baptist Church, believers are debating these questions about the nature of divine and human action while navigating a tumultuous

socio-economic climate. As noted above, when I arrived in 2015, the country had been in drought for years and unemployment rates were high[52]. For the employed, salary disbursements were frequently late. The dependence on foreign currency for everyday circulation eventually led to a cash crisis. Zimbabwe adopted a multi-currency economy in 2008 after astronomical hyperinflation had made local currency useless[53] and people began to rely heavily on the US dollar. Then in 2015, mass exports of USD cash by wealthy individuals and foreign companies created a hard currency shortage. The cash crisis meant many people spent long hours standing in bank lines to receive only small withdrawal amounts. Government and companies tried to increase the availability of electronic payments, but regular power cuts, unreliable internet access, and commercial industry hunger for cash to pay their own vendors, made swiping and transfers an unreliable option. The whole city remained a little on edge for many months.

The developing cash crisis was only one feature of the unpredictability and disruptions that Zimbabweans had come to expect. Earlier, I introduced some of the discussions about uncertainty in the literature on postcolonial sub-Saharan Africa, with which I contextualize the sense of instability that characterized life in Harare during my fieldwork. As I pointed out in the Introduction, Janet Roitman and Achille Mbembe (1995) argue that crisis and uncertainty are not only political economic phenomenon in these cases, but, more potently, produce particular subjectivities. One way in which the uncertainty manifests for the subject is an inability to predict the regulated outcome of

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[52] By some estimates, in the 70 to 80% range. See: africacheck.org/reports/is-zimbabwes-unemployment-rate-4-60-or-95-why-the-data-is-unreliable

[53] See Hammar et al. (2010) and Jones (2010).

one's own actions. Possible forms of engagement with the world and with others are unsettled, because a "profoundly provisional and revisable character of things is at the origin of the proliferation of criteria for efficacious action" (Roitman and Mbembe 1995, 343). These new modes of subjectivity and conditions of unpredictability generate a "corrosion of long-standing conceptions of causality and responsibility" (344). For Zimbabweans, this delinking of previously presumed chains between what one does and the outcome produced, or what one sees and what is actually there, has shaped time itself (cf Jones 2012).

The nature of these temporal experiences became apparent to me when I arrived in Harare in December of 2015, and by the coming January, I heard a raft of complaints about *January disease*. That year, salary disbursement dates for civil servants[54], in particular, had been postponed beyond the expensive Christmas holiday season and into January, when rent, school fees and other bills came due. As schools began again, people scrambled for money to pay for tuition, and to buy uniforms and supplies. School fees remain one of the major sources of financial stress for families. People felt the crunch – it was *tight* - and waited as the promised dates for salary disbursement were continually pushed back. Harareans daily speculated about when the money would arrive in their accounts.

During this time, people spoke laughingly and painfully of January disease: a metaphorical complaint set upon people when the first of the year signals bills due. I learned of January disease through jokes, as people circulated messages that mockingly

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[54] "Civil servants" includes public school teachers, members of the armed forces, police officers, and various state employees. The massive state bureaucracy means that "employment costs" accounted for almost 80% of the State's operating budget between January and September 2015 (2016 National Budget Statement).

turned their financial woes into exercises of character-building: "Blessed are those who finish their December salary in December, for they shall know the true meaning of endurance in January," the joke went. Or they would decry, "it's still January? How many months does this month have?!" Residents of Harare felt as if many months had been crammed into a single one, and they were desperate for January to end, in hopes that they would be paid in the coming month.

A phenomenon like January disease exhibits aspects of the temporal dimension of postcolonial uncertainty. The idea that January has multiple months suggests both a suspension and an elongation of time: time lagged as people waited for salaries to be paid, while they themselves remained suspended in a moment of debt. During the worst months of hyperinflation in 2008, Jones' interlocutors in the market stalls of Harare likened the situation to a cassette tape on "pause" (2010, 289). At the same time, these same interlocutors, like the money traders in Guyer's account (1997), were surrounded by perpetual movement and activity, efforts directed at generating some subsistence. My own interlocutors in 2015 continued to work without pay, as bills continued to come due, but the salaries that they had worked for, and were promised, had been paused.

**Postcolonial Uncertainty as Spatio-Temporal Fragmentation**

The make a plan approach puts these simultaneous temporalities to use by generating new everyday practices for survival. Jones (2010; 2012), writing about strategies taken up by Harareans from 2000 onwards, describes what he calls the "*kukiya-kiya* economy*,*" an urban logic which can encompass a whole range of schemes involving

"an exploitation of whatever resources are at hand" (2010, 286). Akin to hustling, kukiya-kiya can entail everything from developing patron-client relations, to offering oneself as a intermediary in various transactions, to various types of theft and fraud (290).

No longer the purview of marginalized urban young men, this logic became mainstream as a widely shared approach to everyday living in hyperinflation Zimbabwe, Jones argues and aspects of its broad appeal persist in post-hyperinflation Zimbabwe. Jones shows that kukiya-kiya is about more than a set of practices to "make do," to survive; it is "a reorientation to matter taken to be enduring in time and space" and thus an issue of spatio-temporal orders (2010, 293). His argument is that the economic and political upheaval had, by 2008, generated a "fragmentation of the material ground for spatiotemporal concord or unity" (2012, 224). Because capital and money are key means through which time and space are "coordinat[ed] and "regulat[ed]" in the contemporary era (14), something like hyperinflation "undermined the *material* economic and social bases for shared time, and equally, the material basis for plausible projections above the fray of everyday action" (2012, 172). No longer could people depend on shared constructions of time and space in which what one did in the current moment would produce a predictable outcome in the next.

This "fragmentation" has specific consequences for how residents of Harare think about their actions: not only as unpredictable, particularly with regard to outcome, but also as existing outside of the normal order of things. As Jones concludes "Ultimately, *kukiya-kiya* orients economic action to the specific space-time of suspension, where the universalizing pretence of 'rules' is not negated, but merely set aside." This is when people

say, "we would have liked to have done otherwise, but…" (2010, 294), suggesting that moral expectations, too, are put to one side. Rather than conceiving of their worlds in terms of massive rupture and entrance into a completely new order, they conceive of it in terms of a deferral of the usual order- of the time, space, and social rules that accompany it.

During my fieldwork, I saw how residents of Harare responded to this persistent instability, even after the end of the hyperinflationary era and the advent of dollarization. They discerned particular signs of uncertainty in the minor fluctuations in commodity prices, government restrictions on imports, increase in the presence of foreign currency, or temporary fuel shortages. They made recourse to strategies of preparation that they had used before, recalling their lives in 2008. For Fairside Baptists, however, this spatio-temporal upset does not produce suspension of the moral order. Even as they emphasized that they could not know nor predict what was coming next, they still prioritized moral action.

This persistent concern with morality shows that in addition to generating new modes of simultaneous temporal suspension and extension, the context of uncertainty has implications for how people conceive of their own responsibilities. It produces what Mbembe and Roitman term a "do-it-yourself bureaucracy," (1995, 346) in which citizens still draw on state-run and municipal institutional networks and authority, all while being the suppliers of the resources themselves. In other parts of the continent, the authors describe schools where students provide the chalk and desks for classrooms, and hospitals where the patient brings the surgical supplies and pay the doctors and nurses an additional private fee to perform the necessary duties. In Zimbabwe, this means when you report a

crime, police officers will only investigate if you can go to the station and provide transportation for them. Or it might entail crowdsourcing for a new fuse for the municipal power box in your neighborhood when, as happened near my house, the copper parts from the transformer are scavenged by enterprising locals for their resale value, cutting power supply for several blocks. Shannon Morreira (2015) describes how people in such circumstances "make a plan" by, for instance, having the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) provide residents in the neighborhood with the key to their local transformer box, in part, because the company did not trust their own employees. These cases not only upturn anticipated authority structures, but also refigure possible courses of action and of responsibility. How to reckon responsibility for law enforcement when you have the means of transportation and the police officer does not, or when it is a resident who controls access to the local municipal power supply rather than the utilities employee? As Mbembe and Roitman put it, "these now common practices destabilize the references once considered intrinsic to the constitution of order and hierarchy" (343).

**Postcolonial Uncertainty as Crisis of Representation**

Across sub-Saharan Africa, strategies for economic survival which rely on the destabilizing of presumed orders of responsibility are not only a response to the fragmentation of time and space. They play on a crisis of representation that also constitutes the postcolonial milieu of uncertainty, where meaning has become detached from signs, making the symbols of life difficult to discern and to interpret. Distinctively African in particular ways, this crisis of representation makes it impossible to know if

124

something is real or fake, persisting as it does in a perpetual chimera that produces the condition for people to hustle for a profit. Departing from an ideology of linear progress that gives the sense of movement always towards something better, in hyperinflationary Zimbabwe, "'real' progress had been replaced by an ever depreciating facsimile" (Jones 2012, 162).

A similar process has unfolded across the continent: Residents of urban Togo, according to Charles Piot (2010), say that when they make a purchase, they often do not or cannot know if the thing they are buying is "real" or a fake. This is true not only for commodities, but identities, documents, and interactions (79), elements of what he terms, citing Hibbou (1999), "cultures of duplicity and identity fabrication" (78).

This duplicity and uncertainty about representation does not mean that people are completely stymied. Instead, while residents of postcolonial contexts on the continent bemoan the absence of "normal" or once-anticipated modes of representation and response, this uncertainty, much like that of the kukiya-kiya economy, also generates new kinds of possibility. In one case, Piot (2010) examines the "visa lottery"- a US program by which residents of countries with historically low levels of migration to the US can apply for visas, the opportunity to do so being based on selection in a lottery system. He likens playing the "visa lotto" to a variety of productive frauds, in which people work the system to create some value for themselves. He calls people's approach to playing the visa lotto "an act of conjury, an attempt to generate something of value (an identity, a proxy citizenship) out of nothing- a conjury that seems emblematic of the neoliberal moment more broadly'" (79).

Where this "crisis of representation" takes the form of 419 scams[55] (Marshall 2009) and playing the visa lottery in West Africa, in Zimbabwe these concerns about representation and value circulate particularly around the materiality of cash. While 2015 did not entail the record-breaking hyperinflation of 2007, the significant rise in inflation rates did once again open up value and meaning to negotiation, and brought with it a renewed skepticism. The situation reminded people of what they could not trust. This became particularly apparent with the launch of new "bond notes." At the height of the cash crisis, residents of Harare were dreading the promised introduction of these bond notes, a pseudo-currency intended to ease the cash circulation problem. Supposedly backed by a substantial African Export Import Bank loan, the bond notes were to help generate liquidity and greater circulation in the economy.

For months prior to their roll-out, the bond note launch faced a series of delays, as rumors circulated that various foreign companies were refusing to provide the necessary printing services. While the notes were intended to alleviate the cash shortage, the prospect of a non-currency system too easily called to mind the "bearer's cheques"- temporary notes issued as a stop gap measure- that had preceded the 2008 hyperinflationary crisis[56], which was also associated with empty supermarket shelves, no utilities, election violence, and cholera outbreaks.

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[55] "419" scams were so termed because they were breaches of article 419 of the criminal code in Nigeria. They played on the kinds of "falsification and fraud" made possibly by banking system changes (Marshall 2009, 186).

[56] These fears were fueled by the fact that, to my surprise, the bond note design was remarkably similar the old Zimdollar.

While the government insisted that the new bond note would be pegged to the US dollar, meaning a one to one value, users of the currencies knew better. Not long after the notes went into circulation, I commented to a middle-aged lady, member of the household where I was living, that I had finally come across a bond note that day, and she shook her head, discouraged. She affirmed that many people trying to withdraw cash from their bank accounts had been given bond notes in lieu of US dollars. I suggested that at least they were just small notes- single denominations. She said, skeptically, that was how bearers cheques had also started- first as five dollars, then ten, then one hundred. Eventually one found oneself using one hundred billion to buy a loaf of bread. "They have no value," she concluded, "we have no faith in them."

Then she pulled out her phone to illustrate with a video that was circulating on social media. Through crude digital effects, the video shows an animated bond note and US $1 note speaking to one another. The bond note addresses the USD note respectfully as an elder, saying "*Mudhara, takafanana*": "Sir, we are the same." The USD note rejects this claim, asking how they could be the same if the bond note could not be exchanged for use outside of Zimbabwe. The bond note replies, that his "father" told him it was so- referring by name to the governor of the Royal Bank of Zimbabwe, John Mangudya. All the while, the bond note is periodically sneezing, and with each sneeze duplicating itself. In the end, the conversation is happening between a single USD note, and some sixteen bond notes filling the left side of the screen, still insisting that the two of them are the same, as the USD note grows increasingly disgusted.

People circulated a range of similar memes, knowing that the joke was ultimately on them. Even as the government insisted that the value of the bond note to the US dollar was one to one, any consumer knew that paying in bond notes was going to cost them. A US dollar had significantly more purchasing power. Retailers set different prices based on whether the buyer paid by transfer through mobile phone "ecash" accounts, bond notes, or in hard US cash. Black market exchanges facilitated a discrepancy between official rates and actual rates. Zimbabweans could see themselves headed for a hyperinflationary situation once more. Fairside Baptists regularly ask themselves what it means to be a Christian in this context.

**Getting Bond Notes "Roman style"**

As the new pseudo-currency was introduced in late November, bond notes were on the mind of a group of black and white Zimbabwean women gathered for Bible study at the local theological college. The group was studying a section of a New Testament gospel, a narrative passage where Jesus has been crucified and the mood among his followers in Jerusalem is despondent. The passage describes, in particular, two walkers on a road outside the town. A woman in the study group spoke up to ask why the two walkers were described as being discouraged. The group leader explained that though perhaps not expecting Jesus to be the "savior of the world," they had probably still been relying on him "politically," hopeful that he might address the Roman occupation. With Jesus' death, his first century followers' hopes had been dashed. The leader summarized her answer by saying they were depressed because they were "probably getting bond notes Roman style."

On a day when it was difficult for the group to think of much else besides the cash crisis, the study leader made striking parallels between the hope that residents of Harare had felt for the possibility of change, particularly with increasingly outspoken citizen demands being made of the government (discussed more in chapter five), and that of the first century followers of Jesus. Instead of the changes they had hoped for, they were getting the bond note and Harareans were now facing circumstances too similar to pre-hyperinflation, signaling the potential for goods shortages and increasing chaos.

The study leader confessed, "I need to repent of all my ZESA [Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Association] and my bond [notes]!" Indications of uncertainty in the present- "my ZESA and my bond"- were reminders to the women that they could get caught up in the realities of the current age. In shorthand, she was confessing that she was fearful and ill-tempered about the spiraling economy and the unreliable utilities, instead of remaining focused on evidences of God's control. She was pointing out that her own fears had overtaken her trust in God. She emphasized that the situation in the Scripture passage- socially, politically, and culturally- was not worse than the current situation with bond notes.

In the ensuing discussion, the introduction of bond notes and the unpredictability of electricity supply were both taken to represent their everyday fears and lack of hope. In their study, these women tried to encourage one another to live according to a reality that was not dependent on the current politico-economic situation, nor on the fear created by bond notes. The leader spoke again, "bond notes- are they eternal?" Someone responded,

in partial jest, "You might be surprised…" This joke generated laughter but indicated an uneasy expectation that the circumstances would continue to worsen.

Even as the study participants tried to encourage one another to attend to an alternative reality predicated on trust in God, they could not eliminate the problems that they feared. As one participant pointed out, the next day she would still wake up needing to go to the bank, anticipating hours of queueing for a cash withdrawal and potentially leaving empty-handed. This participant was a white woman who in many ways would have likely had better access to resources like foreign currency[57]. This time, such was not the case.

The fact that living according to a belief in God's ultimate control did not remove Christians from the immediate crisis came up in most conversations which Baptists had on the subject. At early morning meetings in the cool, tiled foyer of Fairside, church staff also discussed what it meant to be Christians in the current upheaval. Much as the bible study group had been talking of a different "reality" which should orient their lives, the church staff reminded one another that there was a kingdom in which God ruled- partially on earth and partially extraterrestrial- which meant that they could trust his ultimate control. Even if the "world falls apart," which they hoped it did not, the existence of God's kingdom should minimize their concerns in some way. Worries about "bond notes and all the like" were temporary, whereas God's lasting sovereignty was an eternal reality.

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[57] This is because white Zimbabweans generally have more wealth and many also keep citizenship in countries other than Zimbabwe.

As the staff group studied a Scripture passage about trust in God one morning, a young female staffer was determined to have the group address the fact of living everyday uncertainty, saying, a little hesitantly:

> I don't know whether it's in line [with what we're studying.] But for me I'm in so much confusion as to how do you live in this world where everything seems to be so wrong. Even if you do right, but everything around you is not right….We are in this world…how then do you live…especially in this whole turmoil that is going on?

Of course, for members of the church staff, too, the existence of God's kingdom did not mean that bond notes ceased to be very much a part of everyone's daily reality of acquiring food stuff, finding cash to pay school fees, and running a household with no running water or electricity. Indeed, most of this same group of staffers formed a "grocery club" to protect themselves against anticipated future shortages and price hikes. With each member contributing an agreed amount of money each month, the group then purchased necessities in bulk, to be stored and distributed when they decided it was needed.

Fairsiders knew that, while believing in God's kingdom, they did not serve God in an "ideal" but rather an "unideal" environment, as one bible studier said. Among bible study participants and church staff workers, the introduction of bond notes in the context of cash crisis instigated a series of reflections around how to live with uncertainty in a context where one also *should* possess a certainty in God's control.

I address this aspect of certainty more extensively in the context of sovereignty in the final chapter. For now, I dwell on *un*certainty because the problem of an uncertain reality was a longer standing issue than merely the consequences of a new bond note. The bond note highlighted existing concerns not only about the unpredictability of a declining

economy, but also the unreliability and instability of reality itself. As I laid out above, this was not only a material crisis, but a "crisis of representation." Signs were becoming unmoored from meanings, and the capacity to trust one's own discernment was failing. The mechanisms for planning and evaluating human actions in the world were coming apart.

The instability of currency value is just one example, though perhaps the most extreme, of the deep suspicion that has become necessary in Zimbabwe when undertaking even everyday tasks like riding a *kombi* van or making a supermarket purchase. Zimbabweans cannot trust "face value," knowing that representation and sign are constantly shifting. How do Baptists in Harare think about this uncertainty? To what do they attribute the crisis, and how do they reckon their role within it?

**Theological Literacy and Baptist Views of Sin**

An important lens through which Baptists in Harare conceive of the uncertainty pressing on their everyday lives is through ideas about sinfulness. For Fairsiders, sinfulness is conceived both in theological terms, and as a practical moral issue. As I showed in the chapter one, one aspect of the class position of many attendees at Fairside is an emphasis on teaching and study[58]. Many of them also possess a high degree of theological literacy, and theological matters are a frequent point of discussion.

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[58] Of course, the particular contours of their religious belief are not reducible to class position. Many of the nation's richest and most powerful figures attend Apostolic or Pentecostal- not Baptist- churches, where thousands gather on a weekly basis for televised services with large bands, elaborate decorations and lengthy presentations. By contrast, the praise band and simple flowers of Fairside seem relatively staid and cerebral. Thus the theological concerns that preoccupy Fairside Baptists are not purely a product of power or privilege; other meaningful patterns distinguish these Baptists' religious lives, in part, their ideas about human action and involvement in the political and economic upheaval.

The presence and availability of theological discussions in the religious lives of Fairside Baptist believers is a part of what distinguishes it from other churches in Zimbabwe's religious field. As opposed to popular prophecy or healing, the climax of the Sunday meetings at this church is a sermon based on interpretation of the biblical text. The sermons are highly expository. The centrality of text is mirrored in religious practice at the individual level; personal Bible study is encouraged, with a number of lay members undergoing intensive exam-based Bible training hosted by the church or taking courses at the local theological college. This emphasis on study and teaching is shared with many other Baptist churches historically and worldwide, as are particular perspectives on "sin."

In this context of economic upheaval, members of Fairside Baptist regularly talk about sin. They talk about the general consequences of sin, and of how sin is a struggle in their everyday lives. They affirm that humans have a strong propensity to act, and indeed be, evil. This sinfulness is a general feature of a corrupted and failing world, and not only an individual breach of moral codes[59].

As Fairside church-goers discuss the topic in prayer meetings, small fellowship groups and even social gatherings, believers lay out for themselves the characteristics of sin. One Sunday afternoon while we waited for meat to barbecue at the Pastor's house, a social conversation developed into a group debate. The issue at hand was selecting a marriage partner, yet the discussion swiftly turned to sin. An advocate of the "New Calvinism" teachings, Ezekiel- mostly known as "Zeke"- had a degree from a foreign

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[59] For a robust discussion of Christian notions of sin and sinfulness in a different cultural context, see Robbins (2004).

university but had struggled to find a job. He took classes at the theological college whenever he could and volunteered regularly at the church. Speaking to the group, he characterized sin as a feature of life that persisted even after Christian salvation. Zeke explained:

> No one…will be perfect in terms of sinless [even after becoming a Christian]. Some will continue to sin. But the whole point is staying in the word of God, reading the scripture, growing in our walk. We will sin less…People will sin less but you will be aware more of sin in your life.

According to Zeke, believers have a spiritual responsibility to participate in devotional practices that address sin, producing an increasing awareness of one's own state of sinfulness. He concluded that with the growing awareness, God's "extending grace"- a divine action - would become part of a believer's life.

This vision of personal sinfulness and how to deal with it is a frequent focus of prayer and fellowship groups within the church. Yet, even if congregants agree that sin is a continual part of a Christians' life, the manner of sin's effect on people and on the world remains less clearly outlined. What is the connection between a Christian's own moral failings, and bad happenings in the world which one did not directly cause?

I ask this question because it was posed during a designated prayer time at Fairside's weekly young adult meeting. Every Friday, twenty or so young people gather in the church basement to spend several hours singing, listening to teaching, discussing issues, and socializing. This particular night, Chris was leading the prayer portion of the evening. In his mid-twenties, Chris worked for a local NGO and in his spare time juggled entrepreneurial projects. Unlike many in the young adult group, he had managed to secure full-time employment and was living in a small apartment alone.

134

Chris, confessing that he had encountered a few work challenges that week, asked everyone to spend a few moments reflecting on their week and any difficulties that they had faced. Sherman, an older member possessing both levity and gentle humor, raised his hand and pointed out that this week the only thing he could think about was obtaining cash. Prior to the introduction of the bond notes, this particular week the gathering momentum of cash shortages had just struck home as banks began to limit withdrawals, foreign debit cards were cut off and bank queues grew.

Chris responded indirectly by reminding the group that worrying does not change things, and that one's focus should remain on God. But Sherman interjected, asking if there was a difference between "just worrying" and actually being in some kind of "trouble."

Sherman was in his late thirties and had left church work to focus on his family's farm. He was known in the group for his willingness to play devil's advocate during discussion. This time, though, the questions were not merely hypothetical: he was running a business and had no cash to pay vendors or workers.

In their response to Sherman, group members focused on the nature of trust in God. One speaker pointed out that sometimes "the trouble [that you face] comes out of your sin," explaining that difficulties you might be facing could be the consequences of bad choices that you have made. In such cases, he conceded, maybe it is harder to trust God. Unsatisfied, Sherman rejected their responses as too simplified and insistently reiterated his point:

> Actually, in this case trouble is not just a consequence of one's sin. Like for example with the cash shortages. You might be [on your way somewhere] and the landlord is screaming about his rent, you have bills unpaid, the [utility] service is going to be cut [off]. You have employees to pay and you

can't give them any money because the bank is only giving you a hundred bucks and you are trying to fork out, say, 2500, you know. So that's trouble, and it's general. It's not about your sin but it's about the circumstances that you find yourself in.

Sherman wanted to delineate clearly the line between direct consequences for sin and just difficult circumstances that produce "trouble" for you. The group was not able to make this distinction so clearly. Instead, Chris soon closed the conversation with a prayer:

I pray… that regardless of the things that we are facing in this nation…*the things that we have both imposed on ourselves* and *the things that have just happened*, I pray…that you [God] may be with us…you may just strengthen us. Help us; give us wisdom that we may see all the resources that you have given… for us to actually survive in this age when things are hard.

While praying, Chris acknowledged Sherman's distinction between cases related to sin: "the things that we have…imposed on ourselves" or what Sherman called "consequence," and "things that have just happened"- the "trouble" which a person did not cause but had to face. This trouble was a feature of the uncertainty I described above.

Still, Chris' prayer downplayed this difference by making the solution to both cases the same: make requests of God. These requests *did not* involve asking God to give people access to cash, nor asking that the political regime might change. Rather, the requests were for personal and relational assistance, so that people could "see all the resources" they had with which to face the situation.

Chris found satisfaction in affirming God's assistance, whatever the reason for the bad circumstances. For Sherman, collapsing consequences and circumstances under one general banner was problematic. Both men share the securities of having full-time employment and accommodation, but Sherman bears the much greater responsibility of leading a family business and of multiple employees. There was more at stake for Sherman

in the matter of differentiating between consequences of bad action and merely bad circumstances.

The outcome of the discussion was an emphasis on God's control of resources and situations. Zeke, above, described personal sinful acts, but also highlighted God's intervention in human efforts through "extending grace." God, as sovereign, maintains control of all circumstances also makes resources available to people. The Baptist commitment to a theological notion of sovereignty makes possible the collapse of different situations- consequences of sin and just difficult circumstances- into a request for God's help.

**Theology in the lives of Urban Zimbabwean Baptists**

Anthropologically speaking, one way to consider how Zimbabwean Baptists reckon responsibility and outcomes would be to draw on theories of ethics,[60] which I do more substantially in the next chapter. In this case, instead, I analyze the relation between human action and uncertainty in the accounts of Harare Baptists by turning explicitly to the theological categories that they themselves use, which resonate with those outlined in more formal theology. There is an evident relation between what these Baptists feel they *can* do, what they think they *should* do, and the role played by an active and omniscient God. These relations in turn reveal the inadequacy of a category like "agency" to explore the distinctions between these relations. Theories of agency allow us to consider how people

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[60] For example, see Robbins (2010), Daswani (2013).

might act in the world, but not what they think of that action nor what they themselves believe about their own capacities or responsibilities.

As suggested above, one theological category key to understanding these relations is that of human sinfulness. Urban Baptists in Harare have a complex and well-developed view of sinfulness. Though relations of human and divine action might be concerns shared across various theological traditions, as Baptists debating reformed issues, the terms in which Fairside believers address these concerns derive from distinctly Augustinian conversations about sin. They claim a Protestant heritage proudly and are concerned with how Baptist teachings about human responsibility play out in their understanding of spiritual salvation. As indicated above, however, a division arose within the congregation around the role that contemporary reformed theology should play in their perspective of human responsibility.

The work of contemporary Calvinist writers offers insight into the kinds of reformed theology over which Fairsiders debated. More than an explanation of the content of debates about reformed theology among Fairsiders, however, my primary motivation for drawing from these works is that Christian theological thinking on human and divine action illuminates tensions around sinfulness and responsibility as Baptists in Harare address them. As Howell (2018) points out, for a conversation between anthropology and theology to ensue, the anthropologist must confront the matter of "which theology." The language and categories that Hararean Baptists use derive from specific theological genealogies. I have chosen to draw from the work of reformed theologian TF Torrance's *Calvin's Doctrine of Man* (1957), and from certain contemporary Augustinian views of

original sin (Couenhoven 2013; Jacobs 2008; McFarland 2010) to argue that the theological systems employed by Zimbabwean Baptists are tied to their conceptions of human sinfulness and divine sovereignty as they deal with the "trouble" that they experience on a daily basis.

While some at Fairside Baptist are reading works directly in this reformed heritage, like the writings and sermons of Jonathan Edwards and other Puritans, most are reliant on contemporary interpreters of these works. There are significant resonances in contemporary interpretations of these writings which illustrate aspects of Zimbabwean Baptist self- understandings that are not well reflected in social scientific work on similar subjects. The recurrences of similar conflicts about degrees of human responsibility throughout history within Protestant non-conforming groups in England (Benedict 2002), and among Southern Baptists in the United States, suggests that there is a theological tension internal to this strain of reformed Protestantism. Understanding one aspect of these internal theological tensions (between human and divine action, or human sinfulness and divine sovereignty) by looking at contemporary interpreters of this theological genealogy can help us to understand how or why the concerns re-emerge as salient for a specific group. Akin to Reinhardt's (2015) "contrapuntal" approach to Continental philosophy and the concerns of his Ghanaian Pentecostal interlocutors, I do not seek to apply theological works wholesale to the ethnographic case. Rather, I show how theories of human nature in current readings from this theological genealogy have resonance in the disagreements among Baptists in Harare. Contemporary writings provide resources to understand aspects of urban Zimbabwean Baptist theological interests, while the situatedness of these

139

believers reveals how theological concerns intersect with the ideational and material aspects of their lives.

**Fallenness and Original Sin**

Original sin is important for understanding how Fairside Baptists assume responsibility and attribute it to others. In an Augustinian characterization of sin, original sin plays a key role. Moser summarizes original sin as an "inherited defective state prior to one's free decisions" (2010, 137). This "inherited" aspect of original sin makes humans responsible for sins over which they have no control (Couenhoven 2013; McFarland 2010). This particular doctrine was crystalized in the debates between St Augustine and his interlocutors in the early 5th century and has been reiterated and refined by generations of church leaders and theologians since. The doctrine posits a primordial sin, when the biblical Adam disobeyed God. The disobedience entailed in this so-called "Fall" reveals the way sin is understood subsequently: as a rejection of God and his will. The urban Baptists I have studied and described above are both heirs to this Christian tradition that affirms original sin as a core doctrine, and also participate in contemporary discussions on how original sin should be understood.

Augustine talks about original sin as a kind of disease. In reflecting on this characterization, Alan Jacobs points out that our picture of disease is quite conceptually distinct from how we view those things we have willfully done: "Disease, we tend to agree, happens to us; sin is what we do" (2008, xiii). And yet, he says, "it is just this simple and familiar distinction that Augustine…denies" (xiii). In a sense, Augustine's approach cannot make allowance for a division of the kind made by Sherman- between the

trouble of consequence and that of mere circumstance. Augustine's description of sin as "disease" makes all people *capable* of sin, and *culpable* for it.

Though not regularly invoking the phrase, congregants at Fairside recognize the concept of original sin and its effects in their individual experiences and in their relation to others in a difficult postcolonial context. Because original sin is part of everyone's nature, regardless of their choices or actions, it becomes difficult for Baptists in Harare to determine how and for what they will hold people responsible. Since they possess the same sinful nature as everyone else, it is difficult for them to see others as more culpable than themselves based on individual acts committed.

An example helps to illuminate these kinds of responsibility for sin. Daneel (2001) describes how a theological position taken by a group of African Initiated churches in Zimbabwe towards ecological destruction and preservation makes certain forms of culpability insistently collective. Those working as "Earthkeepers" and tree planters in the movement possess a notion of "ecological sins." These can include specific, individual acts like felling trees for firewood without replanting, or farming in ways that cause soil erosion. But Daneel also shows how the churches involved in the movement have an idea of the general ecological sinfulness of humanity and of their destructive actions towards the earth:

> An intriguing aspect of the AAEC [Association of African Earthkeeping Churches] perception of ecological sin is that there is no attempt to avoid communal guilt by setting up Satan or evil as a kind of objective force outside humankind the real source of destruction which exonerates humans from guilt. Instead, the overriding concern with [the sin of environmental destruction] reflects recognition of a serious flaw in humans, in their relations to both the creator, the life-giving Spirit, and creation. (2001, 238)

141

The implications of both aspects of "ecological sins" means that there can be both individual and collective responsibility attributed in terms of "sin." For Fairside Baptists, original sin is not so much collective sin, as the recognition that all humans possess their own culpability, manifest not only in individual actions but also in broader acts of human destruction.

Original sin also points to a larger consequence of the Fall, which bears on how Baptists in Harare see the relation between human action and accountability. The effects of the Fall include not only the introduction of original sin, a culpability inherited prior to choice, but also a general sinfulness that pervades the world, including human structures and institutions and also all of nature. Fairsiders talk about sin as being a struggle people experience, but also a state in which humans operate - a background against which the world plays out.

Because sin is in the world, these Christians expect that things will go wrong. While people will participate in acts of sin on a scale that ranges from major governmental corruption to single injuries inflicted on one another, a more fundamental sin taints everything even prior to these actions. Baptists in Harare certainly recognize the connections between political and historical events and the current situation. But if you ask a congregant at Fairside Baptist about why they cannot trust their political leaders, or how the economy has reached its current instability, or why the municipal water system keeps failing, they are likely to talk about living in a sinful world. They anticipate that the sinfulness of the world will, of course, shape the outcome of many processes. This general state of sinfulness is how they characterize the kinds of uncertainty and disruption that they face on a daily basis; the modes of subjectivity, representational instability, and temporal

142

uncertainty typifying the postcolony are comprehensible to them in terms of sin and fallenness. In the utter helplessness that Sherman expressed in the face of a screaming landlord, begging employees, and power cuts, his lack of culpable choice in the situation did not absolve him from the effects of sin.

It became apparent in conversations like that between Chris and Sherman, in prayers, in teaching and sermons that I heard, that the people around me took their own sinfulness, their responsibility to act, and God's action in the world to be comprehensible only in terms of one another. People sin individually and bear the consequences, and also suffer at the hands of larger forces beyond their control. Original sin forces the collapse of responsibility for the two types- consequence as opposed to bad circumstances- into general notions of human culpability. When I heard church goers at Fairside Baptist denounce the corruption of local city bureaucrats and national leaders, their condemnation would frequently dissolve into a recognition of their own sinfulness. Though situations caused by individual's sins and those resulting from broader social issues are distinguishable from one another, there was not a clear way to divide the attribution of responsibility along these lines. Whether affirming or rejecting the teachings of New Calvinism, it remains difficult for Baptists at Fairside to maintain the distinction between consequences for individual wrongdoing and the problem of an evil world, and so both collapsed under the banner of human sinfulness.

**Sinfulness and Indiscernibility**

Even as Baptists in Harare reckon the confusion and unpredictability they see around them as features of original sin, they remain committed to humility in their own ability to know what is actually going on. The world as cast by original sin and the nature of humans as it articulates with the uncertainty of postcolonial contexts, crystalizes for Baptists in Harare through their ideas about indiscernibility. One of the teachers of the weekly basement gathering of young people regularly tells the group "God is good. You don't know good." By this he means to instill a degree of skepticism about their ability to judge what they see and experience in the world. Just as they should be skeptical of the origins or authenticity of a commodity they purchased on the street, they should be wary about claims that humans could know or fully explain the world. The teacher produces a sharp contrast between who God is, and what they, as humans, can see or understand. Sinfulness has an effect on this aspect of their human capacity, partially obscuring any view of God's activity.

This is a final way in which the postcolonial uncertainty I've been describing- of instability in monetary value, of the unreliability of regular city resources and utilities, of shortages of cash, of temporal fragmentation- is legible within Baptist visions of the world in which they live. Just as residents of Harare take the disorder around them to be a product of original sin and of a general fallenness, sin in turn clouds their own human capacity to see God's action. They are not left without resources to attempt to address this lack. They study the Bible and learn theology, and benefit from the aid of the Holy Spirit as an internal guide, as ways to be more prepared to discern divine goodness in the world.

Still, they are taught to be cautious of anyone or anything that claims to be able to explain the contemporary circumstances too clearly based on his or her own skill- rather than the Bible, which is accessible to anyone- since they know all humans bear the limitations of original sin.

One final point about agency is in order. Webb Keane's argument that "the concept of agency that runs through the moral narrative of modernity is largely one in which self-awareness is a condition for freedom" (2007, 53) is best illustrated in the ways that Calvinist missionaries in Sumba, Indonesia were particularly concerned to circumscribe those beings or things in the world to which agency could be attributed, and those to which it could not. Keane argues that these efforts of discernment, based on a particular "semiotic ideology"- presumptions about the operation and meaning of words and things in the world- actually give back to the human agent a capacity for self-disciplining and for self-reflection, stripped as it might seem to be by Calvinist predestination (52-58). One important outcome of the Fairside emphasis on sinfulness is that though these Baptists do practice "reflective freedom" that appears to offer the kind of agency that Keane highlights, they continually underscore the fact that their own ability to interpret actions, including their own, is clouded. This places severe limits on the self-transformation that Keane sees as so paradoxically agentive for Calvinists.

For those at Fairside, in a sinful world, governments are corrupt, greedy and irresponsible, and the circumstances in which people find themselves stem from a general sinfulness which they cannot control, and which they struggle to address in these terms. As persons, individuals also participate actively in sinning daily, and are responsible for

addressing that sin. All of these activities take place within the purview of God's control over everything that happens. At the same time, human sinfulness limits human capacity to distinguish God's action in the world in clear terms, and God's alterity casts this action in a form not anticipatable. Theological study and debate have come to be privileged in the life of believers at Fairside Baptist, mobilizing ideas about God's sovereignty and human sinfulness as the primary means with which all of these concerns are to be engaged.

Zimbabwean Baptists are struggling with the nature of human persons, doctrinally and in the terms of contemporary, postcolonial life. Contributors to the volume Theologically Engaged Anthropology (Lemons 2018) show that historically "theological" debates might be readily recognized as anthropological ones. Even more so, McGrath demonstrates how a disagreement between Augustine and an interlocutor, a "theological dispute" about one of the issues at stake here for Zimbabwean Baptists, is "more fundamentally a debate about culturally regnant conceptions of human nature" (2018 3)[61].

**Conclusion**

Baptist believers in Harare are negotiating a collapse of responsibility for individual bad actions and of various difficult experiences into one overarching vision of sinfulness cast against God's sovereignty[62]. Hararean Baptists see this situation- the

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[61] As an anonymous reviewer of this argument, in its article form, pointed out, Saint Augustine himself was also from the African continent, and living in the 'failing state' of Rome. The context in which his influential theology was developed bears interesting parallels with some of the current political situation in Zimbabwe. I thank the reviewer for pointing out this interesting connection.

[62] China Scherz sees a similar kind of affirmation play out in how Catholic sisters in Uganda understand their own action: they 'feel they are working within God's divine plan [but] they do not see themselves as able to bring about social change without divine intervention. They believe that only God can complete and perfect their imperfect works, which are always broken and always partial, as they believe themselves to be' (2014:133). While the ethnographic similarities between these Catholic nuns and Zimbabwean Baptists are striking, the theological imperative for Zimbabweans is different.

146

tragedies which befall them, their own sinfulness, and their expectations of God- as operating together. Theological ideas about sin do not just explain what Fairside believers affirm about the relation between human and divine action. Their theological disagreements and discussions are responsive to their postcolonial context. As writers about postcolonial contexts have shown, the deep uncertainty produced, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, has transformative effects on its residents. Baptists in Harare ask what role God's action plays in problems of cash circulation and the upheaval of authority structures. Sin and sinfulness cloud their ability to see divine authority play out in the world, as they strive to trust God.

The context of uncertainty is legible to them in terms of sin- both the state of original sin by which each person is held responsible, a general fallenness in the world, and also the consequences of individual sinful acts. When attempting to distinguish between these two kinds of sin in order to reckon responsibility, they struggle to differentiate in ways that allow them to hold others accountable for individual sins committed. In part, this is because of the shared nature of sinfulness, but also because it bears on the matter of individual moral autonomy. It is the relationship between responsibility and human freedom which I take up next, revealed in Baptist struggles to live morally in Harare.

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# Chapter 4:

## "Grey Areas": Moral Responsibility and Alternative Visions of Freedom

**The relation between freedom and responsibility**

Having established that Fairsiders take sinfulness as the framework for understanding the uncertainty and unpredictability of the current situation, I also suggested that their ideas about human action had ramifications for the way that they think about human freedom. If the economic instability, social unpredictability, and political uncertainty around them is legible in terms of human sinfulness, what does that mean for moral responsibility? By considering the relationship between views of human sinfulness and those of human freedom, I lay the groundwork for my arguments about how moral responsibility is a way that Fairside Baptists engage with the uncertainty that I have been describing.

In renewed conversations within the anthropological study of ethics, the question of freedom has taken a central role. Ethics and freedom appear together in, for example, Faubion's reading of Foucault's ethical system that takes freedom as a "necessary" if not "sufficient condition of ethical action" (2011, 37). Indeed, Faubion glosses Foucault's accounting of what constitutes ethics as "the domain…[of the] conscious exercise of the practice of freedom" (38). In particular, the relationship between human freedom and moral responsibility has emerged in these discussions as a recurring theme, figuring significantly in James Laidlaw's work on ethics (2002; 2014), and appearing in the writing of Mahmood (2005) and Robbins (2007; 2012), among others. One presumed relation between responsibility and freedom has been that the former requires some degree of the

latter; the presumption is that a person cannot be held responsible unless she is free to choose and to act.

What is the nature of this freedom presumed necessary in the ethical domain? Some anthropological work has queried how we examine freedom, questioning the classical definition of freedom as the capacity to act and to choose, unconstrainted, between alternatives. Saba Mahmood partially raises this question in contrasting two distinct approaches to the relation of agency and responsibility, in a religious context where God is given an agentive role: that of "a religious imaginary in which humans are considered to be only partially responsible for their own actions" with "an imaginary in which humans are regarded as the sole authors of their actions" (2005, 168). As she points out, the latter is more familiar to a Western liberal tradition of the autonomous self. The former instead seems to place sufficient emphasis on divine activity (or on some kind of "fate") that the freedom of the agent is fully diminished. What her ethnography shows is how circumscribing human agency with divine control does not eliminate the possibility for human participation in acts of transformation- personally or socially. Still, what persists unanswered is the nature of this relation between freedom and moral responsibility, and whether it remains a necessary feature in discussions of ethics.

Rather than presume the links between freedom and responsibility, I propose to ask instead what attributes a person has that allows them to be held morally responsible. I argue that my interlocutors attribute moral responsibility to themselves and to one another prior to asserting any kind of freedom. Rather than being persons who are free to choose and can thus be held morally responsible, they conceive of themselves as morally

149

responsible agents *first* based on the relation they have to the divine. From their position in relation to God, they are then attributed freedom of *conscience-* rather than freedom of *action-* which in turn provides them the means to participate in moral reflection and debate. This is my first argument.

The second argument that I make is that these urban Baptists affirm that they are free despite beliefs about their own moral degradation- their "sinfulness-" but conceive of their freedom as something other than capacity for action. Their moral failings and that of the world around them constrain the possibility of free choice. Where free choice has been a defining feature of liberal ideas about human freedom, these Christians affirm their own freedom based not on choice but instead on theological notions about the human will, which I examine.

Urban Baptists in Zimbabwe affirm the freedom that human beings possess to reflect, affirm, or reject possible attitudes and courses of action, evident in the frequent moral debates among these Christians detailed below. Joel Robbins (2007) has called this kind of stance a "morality of freedom," in contrast to a "morality of reproduction." In the latter, the Weberian values that organize society are not in conflict with one another, so the cultural work people experience as moral takes the form of efforts to adhere to the rules and expectations pertaining to that sphere of life. Or, more crudely put, to act morally is to keep things going socially and culturally. By contrast, the morality of freedom emerges when conflicts between cultural values occur, and people experience a need to choose between alternative values. He suggests the morality of freedom might become significant

in moments of cultural change, when different cultural systems bring values into competition with one another.

Robbins is responding, in part, to James Laidlaw's appeal that anthropologists attend to the "possibilities of human freedom" (Laidlaw 2002, 311). We must do so, Laidlaw claims, if we are to understand the ethical practices and systems of people in ethnographic specificity and to distinguish ethical practice in some way from mere maintenance of social order, on the Durkheimian model. He gives accounts of two specific ethnographic cases- one from Jainism and one from Foucault's discussion of some monastic Christian practices- to make the case that "freedom" is not captured by the contemporary anthropological use of the term "agency" (Laidlaw 2014). Instead, to study ethics would be to take on the places where "the ambition of shaping the self is explicit, and is informed by sophisticated theoretical reflection" (2002, 326-327). He suggests this is the way we can move beyond the narrow and somewhat pre-determined "freedom" of classical liberalism where persons are in a position to choose and to act unimpeded by external constraints.

Laidlaw particularly highlights "reflective freedom" (2014, 149)- raised above in Faubion's use of Foucault- as a freedom distinct from a liberal notion of capacity for action. The practice of conscious ethical consideration might mean that, like the pious Muslim women described by Mahmood, those performing reflective freedom might choose to use their freedom precisely to create the conditions where that freedom is reduced (Mahmood 2011). People's end-goals in exercising freedom might not be to achieve

greater autonomous self-determination, but instead might move them towards other, less "free" ends.

As Mahmood points out, "agency" has been one of the ways in which anthropologists have construed human freedom to choose and to act. Agency is connected to the liberal definition of freedom because both hinge on the actions of a subject. The former is reckoned in part by assessing how outcomes are tied to actions, or more simply, to *causality* between agent choice and outcome. In turn, we think of responsibility as somehow connected to this causality.

The relation between causality and responsibility, however, is substantially more complex than mere connections between choices and outcomes, and can take different forms within the same system. Steven Parish (1994) shows how Newar Hindus in the city of Bhaktapur conceive of several orders on which agency, responsibility, and causality move. Newars may ascribe suffering to *karma*, or to *dasa*. *Dasa* is usually cast as a kind of "misfortune, a state of bad luck or ill fate" (114), in some sense removing the moral responsibility from a person for their suffering by suggesting that this suffering was produced by something that they could not control. By contrast, in situations where suffering is ascribed to *karma*, it is morally bad actions that have produced the poor outcome with which a person must live in the current life or in a future one. However, the fact that *karma* is also at work within a system that God controls means that the element of causality is again unsettled- caught between bad luck, the product of wrong behavior, and the sanction of divine authority. As Parish puts it: "Responsibility- and the absence of responsibility- in Newar culture is known and experienced in terms of multiple concepts

that do not necessarily have a stable relationship with each other" (115).  In this case, we see how responsibility may not have anything like a clear connection to causes and to actions, providing support for the analytical de-coupling of human agency from moral responsibility.

The presumption that human responsibility requires human freedom, or, more narrowly, that a human agent must have the right to choose in order to be held responsible, has not only been troubled within anthropology. Philosophers, too, have recognized that the task of attributing responsibility or of being held responsible do not emerge directly from lines drawn between agency and causality.

In philosophy, the relation between responsibility, agency, and causality has been approached in part through talking about the notion of "moral luck," developed by Bernard Williams (1981). Rejecting Kant's assertion that morality relies on reason, control and responsibility in contrast to luck, which belongs to areas of life over which agents have no control, Williams shows how a felt level of responsibility need not depend on an agent's level of control. "Moral luck" is intended as a kind of oxymoron: it exposes those situations where the "crucial elements of the moral decision" are beyond an agent's capacity to control, where an agent has no apparent command of the circumstances, and yet we still want to "hold the agent responsible for the act" (Athannasoulis 2005, 1).

Williams' example is of the driver of a vehicle who hits and kills a pedestrian through no fault of her own (that is, without driving negligently in any way). While spectators may experience a kind of "regret" as by-standers in the tragedy, Williams suggests that the driver experiences a specific kind of "regret"- "agent-regret"- by nature of

her involvement. He argues that people would feel something was amiss were the driver not to experience a regret more acute than that of the spectator, even if she had no control in causing the accident. This is the case even if people then work to relieve the driver of that sense of regret by clearing her of culpable responsibility. "Agent-regret" is a feature of moral life; it reveals where responsibility is attributed to persons even in situations of "non-voluntary levels of agency" (Williams 1981, 27-28).

The ethics entailed in both "agent-regret" and "moral luck" show the complexity of the relations between causality and felt or attributed human responsibility. Williams explores senses of blame or praise- aspects of responsibility- that people may experience as agents even when they have no direct control of the causes or outcomes. Moral life, in this accounting, is more complex than assigning responsibility only in cases where a clear line is traceable between an agent choosing to act and the outcome. What this philosophical exploration cannot offer, however, is an answer to *why* people experience this kind of regret or responsibility when they had no direct command of the situation.

In the same way that "moral luck" complicates the process of attributing responsibility to an agent based on causality and on control, and where "agency" does not capture what is entailed in the notion of human freedom, I discuss the way that a group of Baptists in Zimbabwe are concerned with moral reflection even when they take themselves to be morally inhibited. They are responsible, despite seeming to have only marginal control over the world or even over their own moral lives. These urban Baptists spend considerable time debating how to approach anticipated moral dilemmas, which implies they experience some degree of freedom for acting and reflecting in particular ways. They

term the areas of these moral debates "grey areas" because they are situations where no clear black and white ideals emerge from the Bible or from their church doctrines with which they could determine their course of action. I call these debates "moral," because they are not disagreements about fundamental tenets of orthodoxy. Right belief, in this context, is not a "grey area"; discussions about doctrine regarding the nature of Jesus Christ, or of the salvation process, demand a definitive resolution for these Christians. "Grey areas" instead refer to those places where features of modern or cultural life are not directly addressed in the Bible, and this is precisely the reason why individual believers are encouraged to use their personal religious freedom to reflect and to deliberate.

In what follows, I consider how these Baptist Christians reckon responsibility and moral freedom in these grey area debates when they consider their own moral actions to be continually impeded by sinfulness. I make my argument by exploring further the doctrine of original sin, to which this group and many other Christians adhere. I ask how people can hold themselves and others morally responsible when they take sin to be a fundamental feature of human lives, prior to any kind of human choice. I have already indicated how similar questions about the relation between agent choice and agent responsibility have been a feature of discussions in ethical philosophy. I suggest that theology offers an important parallel exploration of these issues, showing that the views of personhood promoted in some Christian doctrines provide the ground for a set of distinct relations between human freedom and human responsibility. While the group of Baptists that I describe are heirs to a particular Christian tradition, which structures their worlds and in which they are conversant, I turn to Christian theology for theoretical reasons as much for

155

ethnographic ones. The theology I discuss provides potential conceptual answers as to *why* people might experience responsibility for something over which they have no control. The theology to which Zimbabwean Baptists are heirs presents an instance where responsibility is not predicated on freedom, at least not in the terms of choices and alternatives. Instead, the doctrine of original sin presents a means for thinking through the connections between moral responsibility, agency and causality based on human will, moral autonomy and divine-human relations.

Facing everyday challenges - from obtaining cash from one's bank account to negotiating with police at frequent roadblocks - urban Baptists at Fairside consider their own capacity to act, participating regularly in conscious moral debate and self-reflection on everything from media consumption to modesty, to ritual participation and financial responsibility. For what do they hold themselves morally responsible in these debates and in their current unstable context?

I trace two ethnographic cases in which questions of human responsibility rise to the fore as particularly salient for the Baptists that I describe. These cases illustrate how evaluative practices are rooted in their notion of human freedom, despite beliefs about human sinfulness that seem to constrain the capacity for choice in human action. This is because the Christian doctrine of original sin, which I explained in the previous chapter, points to alternative conceptions of the relation between freedom and responsibility that do not depend on human capacity for action. Baptist perceptions of sinfulness are the means through which believers in the church reckon with their idea of what it means to be human, and particularly with their own senses of being sinful selves in relation to God. These

ethnographic instances show how a particular model of humans as responsible moral agents implies a vision of human freedom, but one conditioned by a prior relation between humans and God. This system of responsibility plays out in concerns about conditions in Harare, where Zimbabwean Baptists engage their immediate social and political circumstances, and also shapes the ethical relations they cultivate with one another.

**"Grey Areas"**

As Baptists, believers who attended this city church prioritize careful interpretation of scripture and also moral living. These efforts are the focus of a weekly gathering of thirty or so young adults who meet in several downstairs rooms of the church building- to enjoy music, food, games, discussion, to hear a speaker and to pray.

During my fieldwork at Fairside, this young adult group, which I call "Faith United," added a new segment to their evening meetings, headed up by a young man named Munya. Like many who served as leaders in the group, Munya was a similar age to the rest of the attendees. As the son of a former elder, he and his siblings had been a regular fixture at Fairside for some years. Termed "Grey Areas," the segment Munya developed addressed issues about which the church had no clear stance and was intended to invite individual reflection on appropriate courses of action. In the past, in less formal discussions members of Faith United had debated the value of watching movies and of dressing modestly in Church. Introducing a formal discussion of "Grey Areas" to Faith United meetings further revealed the importance these Baptists place on personal moral reflection about situations in which they might find themselves.

The introductory "Grey Area" session addressed the question of drinking alcohol. After a few rounds of games and with plates piled high with popcorn and sandwiches, the group sat in a U-shape facing Munya. He posed the question "Is it ok to drink alcohol?" To answer the question, in the session that followed participants had the opportunity to hear from different group members about their own approaches to drinking alcohol, and to discuss their views on the subject in smaller groups with the people seated near them. The conversations were lively, and the room was noisy throughout.

After these conversations, Munya presented a series of possible answers to the group. He talked about various relevant verses from the Bible that were perceived as both supporting and condemning drinking. He profiled what he saw as four different Christian approaches to alcohol, garnered from Christian blogs and websites, listing them on a PowerPoint slide accompanied by images:

1) it's ok to drink alcohol of any type
2) drinking alcohol is not something a Christian should do
3) the effects of drinking alcohol lead to ungodly behavior
4) drinking alcohol is ok in moderation

Young people were invited to raise their hands in agreement with one or other of the four approaches and then talk about their response. All four of the approaches were represented in the raised hands of the audience members.

Munya's closing question highlighted the intended take home message: "When I drink, is it my own decision or do I act out of social pressure?" For him, the issue was a matter of making an intentional choice rather than participating unreflectively in a potentially morally hazardous activity. While a Christian needed to consider that drunkenness was a sin, the goal of the discussion seemed not to be that the group reach a

158

given conclusion about drinking in general. Rather, the outcome was to encourage those present to make wise and godly decisions in each situation. There was clearly something at stake in the moral act of drinking or not drinking alcohol, which made it worthwhile to discuss, but reaching a final decision was not the most important end. The very act of struggling with a moral question was an important religious practice.

The "Grey Areas" discussion shows that for these young Baptists, facing morally difficult situations is a regular and anticipated feature of a Christian's life. The "Grey Areas" segment rose directly from the frequent discussions the youth had with one another: about non-Christian music, about relationships and sexual purity, about bribery and government bureaucracy. The act of debating and anticipating the need for moral action is a religious practice that is as regular a feature of the collective lives of this group as any explicit Church sponsored teaching. Similar debates fill young people's leisure time and can be a kind of sport, lively and entertaining for those involved. Munya's conclusion was one I heard repeated with regularity: that a key outcome of debates is not to reach a definitive position about what was right or wrong, but rather to ensure sufficient reflection so one is able to make a conscious decision.

A more recent social media discussion illustrates the point. Vincent, a group member finishing secondary school, posted to a Faith United group message board, asking whether Christians were allowed to have tattoos. A female group leader replied that this was a "grey area," with no simple "yes or no" answer. Her advice was that each person needed to "research in the scriptures and deduce for yourself in wisdom if u [*sic*] think it is acceptable before God for yourself." She pointed out a passage in the biblical book of

Leviticus that proscribed tattoo markings for the Israelites because of specific cultural associations to pagan spiritual practice, suggesting that some Christians will see this as a reason not to have a tattoo.

Several other responders illustrated how Christians were to approach the "grey areas" situation identified by Vincent and by the female leader. No one directly condemned the marking of one's body with a tattoo. Instead, they triangulated between three elements, which was a strategy I frequently saw in similar conversations. Firstly, the decision belongs to oneself, and must be considered in connection to one's relationship to God and based on one's own study of the Bible. Would the actions "honor" or "glorify God?," they asked. In response to this particular question, one or two others, including Zeke- the young man I introduced in the previous chapter- said more definitively that tattoos would not make one closer to or further from God nor would they send one to hell. Even so, they concluded, having a tattoo likely would not bring the kind of spiritual good that a Christian ought to be seeking.

To determine the kinds of moral good a Christian should be seeking one should, secondly, consider one's choices in relation to those around oneself: would one's actions cause spiritual difficulty for others? (In their words, would it cause others to "stumble?"). If it would cause any of those around one to "fall," that is to sin from temptation, it would not be something pleasing to God. Thirdly, one had to consider how others might relate to God as a result of one's own choices. This triangulation forms the foundation for their ethical considerations.

These two examples of moral discussions are characteristic, perhaps, of an urbanized and cosmopolitan group of young people. But I heard similar discussions among older people in the church, in staff meetings or social visits as opposed to the noisy gatherings of Faith United. Grey area matters were open to debate. The very act of deliberative practices among these church members indicates that believers affirm some sense of their own freedom to evaluate and to choose. This freedom, however, is also conceptualized in direct relation to matters of sinfulness.

**Freedom Meets Original Sin**

Despite this concern to effectively navigate moral dilemmas, Baptists at Fairside frequently affirm their own moral degradation. Congregants describe this moral degradation as a feature of sin: a pervasive and persistent reality in life. As I've already shown, views of sinfulness include both bad individual acts and also a broad general degeneracy inhering throughout the world,. While Christians are forgiven and are represented as righteous, their daily reality is still one of continual sin. This approach to human sinfulness is evident not only in conversations among young people, but also in the teaching and collective practices of the Church; many meetings and prayers begin with collective confession. One Fairside pastor showed this view of sinfulness in his all-church prayer one Sunday morning:

> We know that even though you [God] have given us your own
> righteousness and so before you, Father, we stand completely righteous, we
> know that functionally and practically and experientially day to day we
> continue to sin and it's such a horrible thing that we hate and we know that
> you hate it too and you long for us to be free completely from sin and to
> walk in the spirit.

161

The pastor recognized and affirmed for the group that sin would be a continuing feature of a Christian's life. If the experience of a Christian in their daily life is one of hating sin and also inevitably participating in it, why spend so much time debating future moral actions? I argue that the freedom affirmed in the evaluative practices of the "Grey Areas" discussions and conceptions of human sinfulness are not about freedom to choose but about freedom of conscience: about the work of the human will. This conception of the human moral agent rests on a view of the world in which human sinfulness and God's ultimate agency do not undermine human freedom, but where freedom rests in *conscience* and *will* rather than action and choice. Christians will continue to sin even as they strive to be free of it, but exercise moral autonomy in relation to God and to others.

The doctrine of original sin is a key part of understanding this Baptist view of human moral agents that is based on will and that informs the way Zimbabwean Baptists reckon their own responsibility. The tenets of original sin pose a challenge to the kinds of classically liberal views of freedom to which we as analysts might be inclined to resort-after, for example Isaiah Berlin, in one influential formulation (see Laidlaw 2014; Schweiker 1995): freedom as the capacity to act unhindered by external forces or to be in control of oneself. The doctrine of original sin opens up a different way to conceptualize freedom.

I draw here again on the theological discussion around original sin because I suggest that it provides a conceptually distinct image of human freedom, where a person acts by their will but not with respect to choice nor to pursuit of self-realization. Because

162

the doctrine takes sin to be a universal state into which one is born, having what the theologian Ian McFarland calls a "congenital" nature (2011: 32), issues of responsibility become complicated. Original sin makes humans culpable, but not on the basis of acts or outcomes of their own choosing. Not only does original sin make humans responsible for things they did not consciously self-determine, it also connects original sin to the human capacity to act at all. The larger view of sin that makes it a "universal condition," McFarland points out, locates it "within agency itself: human beings are not sinners because of the *ways* that they act (or fail to act), but by virtue of the mere *fact* of their acting" (2011, 9-10). In this conceptualization, sin is not a discrete act that breaks a set of moral laws. Rather, the doctrine of original sin distinguishes between "actual sin"- the acts by which a human rejects God's will- and "original sin"- the "condition" in which a human at once and already exists. Original sin is a "condition" distinct from external forces that act upon a person, and distinct from a person's own autonomous actions.

The connection between original sin and responsibility is a result of the relations in which humans exist. In the Christian conceptualization I describe here, humanity was in relationship with God from the moment of creation, meaning that human persons are held responsible on the basis of this relationship prior to any sort of action on their part. The Baptists Christians I've described then also understand these relations (to God and to others as they relate to God) to be the metric for assessing their future moral acts. The condition of original sin is the outcome of having been held responsible *before* acting in the world, and these urban Baptists now debate moral situations as a way to continually address their responsibility towards God. Original sin makes human responsibility evident

because it is based on the primordial human condition rather than on subsequent choice or action.

In what way does this responsibility relate to freedom? To understand the kind of freedom that this view of original sin and responsibility entail, we will need to examine the theory of person with which the doctrine of original sin articulates.

Couenhoven (2013), a modern interpreter of Augustinian theology, takes the relation between freedom and responsibility as a central problematic for many contemporary readers of Augustine. Augustine maintains a view of freedom that allows for humans to be responsible for something over which they have no control. This is because human freedom does not hinge on the capacity to choose between alternatives. Freedom goes beyond "ability" or "willing." Couenhoven's "normative view of freedom" is that being free is "to know, love, be, and do what is truly good" (2013, 71). "Normative freedom" is a matter of desire being rightly directed toward God. Sinfulness, too, is deeply about desire, but a *disordered* desire (Couenhoven 2013, 38; Robbins and Williams Green 2018; Torrance 1957, 124). As Jacobs has it: "Augustine believed that we achieve true freedom not by doing what we want, but by conforming our wills perfectly to the will of God, so that nothing in us rebels against him" (2008, 93).

Augustine's view of responsibility does not rely on the possibility of choice, and so shares in anthropological critiques, mentioned earlier, that trouble a view of personhood in which the self-determined individual acts in the world based on pure will. As theologian Ian McFarland puts it: the "Christian language of sin challenges the private character of choice, because it locates human deed within a context of a relationship with God that is

164

prior to and independent of any human choosing," highlighting that human action is reckoned in relation to God, rather than to autonomous self-determinism (McFarland 2010, 6).

Post-Augustine, Christians understood humans to possess desires and also a human will. To will is not the same as to act, but willing brings with it the capacity to act. Desires are what lead and direct the will, and those desires are something over which humans do not have control (Jacobs 2008). Once humanity experienced the Fall- that primordial sin event that changed the human condition- these desires were no longer ordered towards good by aligning with God's will. While a human agent is free in so far as she can will- that is, she is the one *doing* the willing- she cannot choose or control the desires that her will follows. Still, because humans will, their actions are not merely mechanistically determined by God.

All of the features described above apply to the context where humans have been conditioned by the primordial sin event: the Fall. Those humans having received salvation, by contrast, have some additional resources from which to draw in directing their wills. But as was evident in the prayer of the pastor given above, both saved believers and unsaved humans will towards evil. It is not until final redemption is completed, in the new era of Christ's return still to come, that the working of the human will is fully transformed. Future redeemed humans retain freedom, not losing the capacity to will, but the freedom entailed will be defined by the capacity to fulfil the good towards which their redeemed human will desires; to will towards and with God is the consummate way to be a human creature, in the Christian reckoning (McFarland 2011, 102).

165

For our purposes, this deeply theological discussion shows that freedom as conceived in this vision of personhood is about desire and will, not about action or choice. This view of the human person distinguishes between recognizing oneself as an agent (by possessing a will), the process of deliberation, and the action one chooses. It also makes clear the limits with which free humans operate in their fallen state. Humans engage their will as agents, but this will remains ordered by desires that are conditioned by original sin, (and in turn, later, by redemption). In their fallen states human persons cannot control the desires that shape their will. By understanding one way that Christians conceive of the will, we can see how humans tainted by original sin can contemplate moral issues, and also how they remain responsible agents who are constrained by their corrupted desires.

The doctrine of original sin means that Baptist Christians in Zimbabwe take themselves to be always orienting towards sinfulness, which would seem to constrain their capacity to act morally at all. This Christian understanding of the earthly human will reveals a distinction between, on the one hand, morally responsible agents who enact their wills while being conditioned by original sin, and on the other, the frequent social scientific conception of human agency as capacity for action. Zimbabwean Baptists see their will in terms of desire and responsibility, rather than as agency and freedom to act.

The "grey areas" discussion exposes the importance of moral debate as a practice engaging responsibility and the human will- rather than highlighting the importance of the outcome of human actions. This responsibility comes into question in the politically and economically unstable context in which these Zimbabwean Christians live, a matter to which I turn next. In the next ethnographic case that I present, I illustrate part of my claim

in the last chapter- that the extensive effects of original sin make it difficult for Baptists in Harare to attribute responsibility for structural issues- and extend my argument to show how this also produces difficulties for outlining their own freedom to produce change.

**Negotiating Responsibility**

Just as young people at Faith United were grappling with the nature of sinful action, other members of the church were negotiating where to place responsibility for the state of their nation. Original sin not only means that all humans possess moral responsibility, but also that all aspects of human life are corrupted because they bear the marks of rejecting God and his will.

These pessimistic expectations became particularly clear during a busy afternoon in the middle of rainy December in Harare. Ratidzo, a young church staff member, had been co-opted into helping Zeke, a regular church volunteer whom I mentioned above, and I with making up Christmas grocery parcels for one of the Fairside Baptist social care ministries. As Zeke and I snaked through the expansive Mbare markets to make purchases for the parcels, people were pointing and staring at me, a very conspicuous foreigner in the bustle of activity. Soft-spoken, with an unsuspecting humor, Zeke observed that if things were "right" in Zimbabwe then it would not be so remarkable that I was a white person. He explained that if the economy was operating well, then people from outside the region would be investing in Zimbabwe, and foreigners arriving to work in industry would be a regular sight in the city, making my own presence less noteworthy. He clearly saw this phenomenon as a problem.

"Who then is responsible for the way things are in Zimbabwe now?" I asked, as we jumped back into the church truck with Ratidzo. She and Zeke answered my question: "the government," without hesitation. It was a mantra that people were unreflectively ready to produce. They chuckled at how readily they had responded, and then grew serious once more. As we bumped our way out of the sprawling Harare market, and towards the mass supermarket outside of town, Zeke and Ratidzo agreed that the average Harare resident was also responsible.

"The National Road Administration gets money but look at the roads!" Ratidzo exclaimed, as the truck suspension struggled to accommodate the deeply potholed road on which we were then traveling. Ratidzo explained that people working for the Harare City Council use tax revenue, intended for repair and maintenance, to award themselves higher wages. Rather than fixing the roads, the city workers had the capacity to line their own pockets.

Zeke and Ratidzo affirmed that people should be speaking out against this kind of corruption. This was the point where individual city workers and the wider public *also* had a responsibility. "People should do something," Zeke said, "It's also their responsibility." They brought up the litter all over the streets as another example. Responsibility rested with all the people discarding rubbish wantonly, with the government for not clearing it away, and with civilians for not speaking up to demand infrastructure and services from their government.

Zeke said that the government will try what he called a "divide and conquer" tactic: in the stress of their everyday lives, civilians will start to take their frustrations out on one

another, instead of holding the government accountable for the situation. He referred to an example that Ratidzo had flagged the day before in a supermarket: a cash transaction machine at a till had not been working, and people waiting in the queue started to bicker as they grew impatient. Zeke had emphasized that the problem of cash payments and electronic transactions was not the fault of anyone standing in the line, nor of the supermarket workers. Yet people were fighting as if they could blame one another for the conditions. In this case, people in the supermarket line were not responsible for the non-functioning electronic payment machine, but they were responsible for allowing the government to create and perpetuate the cash crisis and to pit civilians against one another.

In their accounting, Zeke and Ratidzo continually collapse together government responsibility and the responsibility of all Zimbabweans. The "government" was causing and perpetuating the economic decline. Yet "we" are culpable too because "we" as people also have the capacity to act just like the government- fomenting division and acting corruptly when the advantages will accrue to oneself. While no person present in the supermarket line was directly at fault, general human capacity to act in corrupt ways meant that the ability to hold any other single person or group responsible ultimately collapsed. Ratidzo and Zeke dissolve the distinctions between the responsibility of various agents because of their adherence to the doctrine of original sin. Original sin places humans on a level moral playing field: all are held responsible regardless of their individual actions.

The broader population was *not* responsible for the economic situation *because* they had voted in a specific regime. While Ratidzo could single out corrupt individual actors who were guilty of depriving the broader citizenship of public goods (that is, better

169

roads or rubbish removal funded by tax money), her own responsibility was not a product of the specific choices she had made, but rather of the *nature* she possessed as human. This shared nature produced the same capacity for sin that she saw corrupted officials enact, and so she and Zeke affirmed their own human responsibility in these instances, even if they weren't the ones littering or defrauding.

**Dialogic Responsibility**

Both in these discussions of responsibility at the national level, and in the moral debates I described earlier, Baptist church members affirmed the generalizability of human responsibility because of the far-reaching effects of original sin as an existential feature of life rather than the result of specific choices. They also declared the need for moral reflection about this responsibility, and that the elements under consideration should include one's own attitude towards God, and also how one's behavior might influence the relation between others and God. These might be summarized as what the theological ethicist William Schweiker calls the "dialogical model" of responsibility. In this model, "responsiveness" captures how responsibility emerges from the primacy of ethical interactions between the self and others (Schweiker 1995, 102), a model Schweiker takes from theologian H. Richard Neihbur. For Neihbur, ethics involves moral agents, and particularly a view of humans that he called "man-the-answerer." A moral agent is responsible because she recognizes and is "receptive" to being acted upon by others, and because she recognizes an accountability for her own actions as they affect those others. She continues to identify with her actions, expecting a response (Schweiker 1995, 100).

170

The dialogical model takes persons to be deeply aware of other moral agents and of the different kinds of relations in which an agent already exists. This aspect of Schweiker's theory of responsibility dovetails clearly with a notion of original sin: humans are responsible because they are free moral agents and also because they exist in relation to God prior to any other aspect of their existence.

The importance of "response" in the dialogical model is not far from more social scientific or philosophical accounts of responsibility. Harri Englund illustrates that discussions of "moral obligation" in anthropology are attuned to the relational, and material, nature of morality, so rather than reducing morality to norms and laws (2008), obligations may be precisely what gives freedom meaning (2006). Laidlaw (inspired by Mary Douglas and Max Gluckman) points out that Evans-Pritchard's book on Zande witchcraft is as much a discussion of readings of the world for causality and attribution of responsibility, as it is an account of the "rationality" of supposedly irrational views (2014, 197). Determinations of causality and responsibility were only pursued in Zande social life when there was the possibility of restitution. Zande accounts of a range of possible human and non-human agentive forces were connected to the importance of attributing responsibility in cases where something could be demanded of the perpetrator. Again, responsibility is tied not only to questions of causality but also to the need for a "response."

In the Christian ethical model I have described, the demand for a response rests in the relation between the human person and God, and relates to the person's recognition of other people's relation to God. This relation is not merely a product of symmetrical

recognition between two agents, a point made more evident in the case described by Patrick McKearney (2018). McKearney has shown how one Christian-influenced approach to social life, that of L'Arche charities, forces a reconsideration of agency in relations between ethical subjects. Engaged in social relations with people who have cognitive disabilities, carers at L'Arche learn to adopt ways of reckoning human agency that differ from the kinds of agency they see themselves as possessing, but which act upon them in ethically significant ways.

The responsiveness in responsibility is why Baptists hold themselves accountable in their moral deliberations, and also the reason they are responsible to God prior to any action on their part. Corrupt government officials and unenforced laws can be identified as immediate sources of causality for lapsed public works and crumbling infrastructure, for hyperinflation and election violence. Attribution of responsibility extends beyond government misconduct, however: everyday Christian moral agents are also responsible for public conditions because government corruption and personal culpability have the same root source, that is, fallenness. Fallenness, and more specifically original sin, is predicated on the fact that humans are in relation to God prior to their capacity to make choices, and this relation makes them responsible prior to action. A person's moral responsibility is towards God, but also towards other persons who are in turn also in relation to God. As long as a person exists, they exist in a set of relations- to God, and to others in relation to God- and so an ethics of "responsiveness" makes them responsible.

If original sin renders all humans responsible prior to action, it also complicates how to reckon responsibility in matters of "grey area" debates that I introduced earlier, and

172

in social relations between Christians. A telling example came in the form of a public

confession given by a member of Faith United and the way in which group members

subsequently absolved her of responsibility towards them. The group member was

confessing to becoming pregnant prior to getting married. Her audience at Faith United,

however, was disquieted by her act of confession. Despite the fact that the group affirmed

that sex prior to marriage was sinful, they took the confessor to be a moral agent

responsible to God, and not to them. This is because her responsibility was based on her

freedom of conscience, a feature of her relation to God, and not a product of her choice to

act.

During the confession, one of the church pastors did most of the talking. He

concluded with a short speech:

> We are an intimate family as well as [being Faith United] in this manner.
> One of us has stumbled. The fact that one of us has fallen into sin
> perhaps…in a way that is more visible, does not make any of us who have
> fallen into … sins that are not necessarily visible…does not make us holier
> than them. I am not saying this to justify sin but one of the things that we all
> recognize as children of God is we are on a journey, we stumble, but when
> we have stumbled we don't stay on the ground. We stand and we run again.
> Therefore it is actually an encouragement if someone has fallen but they are
> willing to stand and run.

Two group leaders joined the pastor and the confessor at the front of the room. One leader-

Reggie- spoke, saying it seemed like more attention was being called to this sin by singling

it out as if it were somehow worse. "We know that we all sin," he said, and this process

reminded him of his own sin. Extending forgiveness, he told us, meant that those present

could not now gossip about the confession.

While the Faith United leaders and the pastor tried to affirm that the singling out of the confessor's sin merely reminded everyone else present of their own sin, others in the group did not feel the confessor owed them any kind of apology, and certainly not so public a kind. Reggie and the Pastor reiterated the tenet of original sin as a way to make sense of the attribution of responsibility which was unfolding in the situation. Even at the very dramatic moment this young person's particular sin was placed in the spotlight, Reggie and the Pastor leveled the playing field, as it were. Both reminded the group that the confessor's sin called to mind that they *all* sin.

Following the confession, a number of young people voiced their disproval of the event, some directly addressing the Pastor. Zeke, reflecting on what had transpired, told me and a few other young people nearby that confession ought to occur amongst mature Christians who have agreed to relations of accountability with one another. In this more general group, perhaps, he reasoned, if the confessor had lied in order to make you an unwitting assistant to her sin, then the confession would be necessary. Zeke felt there could be possible scenarios in which the confessor *would have* been responsible to the group for causing them harm. These would have been instances where the confessor had disrupted the relation between others and God, causing them to sin. In this case, however, he took the situation to be one in which the confessor had not done so, and thus was not responsible to the group. Many other group members agreed with this assessment. The action of the confessor may have been sinful, but to the Faith United members her responsibility was a product of relation, rather than of action. In this sense the group

174

members reckoned her as free: free from responsibility towards them and responsible to God alone.

In a dialogic model of responsibility, Baptist believers recognize that others are responsible to God, and it is their responsibility not to interrupt that moral relation. The case of the public confession shows, however, that the triangulation of relations that ground Baptist responsibility are not equal in all directions: Zimbabwean Baptists are not responsible to humans *qua* humans, but to humans as agents in relation to God. Faith United members recognized that the confessor was responsible in her relation to God, so they extended her freedom of conscience: not that they wanted her to be free to act sinfully, but they emphasized that her freedom of conscience meant that her primary responsibility should be towards God and not towards them. They were not in a position to hold her responsible.

This case is significant for my argument because the public confession had undermined the primary responsibility that Faith United members felt should inhere between the confessor's own conscience and God. Though Reggie tried to use the opportunity to downplay the young person's sin as somehow more significant than the sins of everyone else in the room, many listening felt that the confessor had been made responsible to people who did not feel she should be responsible to them. The confessor was being held, or holding herself, publicly responsible for an individual sin, while others tried to affirm general human sinfulness.

The ways that original sin and dialogic relations create differing ways of reckoning responsibility among Baptists shows that we must not presume what people take to be the

relevant distinctions between culpable agents[63]. Maya Mayblin's account of gendered moral discourses makes this point salient, by drawing on the claims of Marilyn Strathern (1981). Where the analyst might see gender differences as being paradigmatic for Mayblin's Catholic Brazilian interlocutors, in fact the Santa Lucian villagers that she describes operated based on a commitment to moral sameness which *precedes* any such social differentiation and subsumed it in attributions of accountability (2010, 124, 146). Mayblin recounts that Santa Lucians viewed human maturation as a necessary process of losing innocence for the sake of creating productive lives. But the entry into productive lives required a "knowledge" and "self-awareness" that moved one away from the innocence that rendered a child closer to God, and necessarily brought with it the capacity for sin. The sinful proclivities of men and women in marriage and the redemptive, socially affirming underside of this maturation, were bestowed through discourses of labour and suffering that were indeed gendered. Nevertheless, they were "discourses that eschew facts of power and difference among individuals and emphasize the universality of morality and its pitfalls" (2010, 177). Mayblin's accounting shows how a case of attributing moral responsibility could easily be misread by an outsider based on presumed differences between moral agents.

Baptist members of Faith United, like Mayblin's interlocutors, sought to maintain the sense of moral sameness across their group members. The confessor's public statement was predicated on sin, but also on membership in the group: the father of her child was not a member, and therefore not subject to the same responsibility to the group. In the other

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[3] Englund has shown how mistranslations can distort or confine ethical subjects and views of freedom in discourse (2006).

176

cases I heard of, unmarried pregnant couples had confessed together, both being members of the church. While Fairside attendees affirmed some important spiritual and social dividing lines, as a basis from which to assign blame or accountability the force of original sin had a levelling effect across spiritual and social differentiation, reduced to the base line of membership.

The vision of personhood entailed here affirms human moral freedom, while also proclaiming individual human responsibility. The young woman's confession was an "encouragement" to other group members because she was taking responsibility for a sinful action. The Pastor and Reggie attempted to use the moment of public confession as a way to remind everyone of their sinfulness, while many in the group instead emphasized that the confessor should be concerned with her responsibility towards God and not towards them, as a product of her own freedom of conscience.

Her freedom of conscience was a product of relation with the divine. In the terms described above, humans are distinguished from all other created beings by way of a unique relation to God. The divine-human relation bestows on human persons a moral responsibility to God, by virtue of the human will, but this will is formally prior to and distinct from human action; the will operates at the level of desire. The will produces freedom of conscience for humans. But original sin works on the will too. The responsibility bestowed on a person does not require that that person possess freedom of action, though for the Baptists I've described freedom to morally reflect or debate does result from the same elements of personhood that render them morally responsible. They do have freedom, but they have responsibility first.

**Conclusion**

One question motivating this argument has been how people come to be concerned with moral reflection and responsibility when they take themselves to be limited in their capacity to act because of a sinful condition intrinsic to being human. The Zimbabwean Baptists I describe are responsible but appear not to be free. This is because they are committed to the idea of original sin- to a vision of the shared and generalized moral degradation of all humanity, independent of individual acts undertaken by persons. The same relation to God that renders them responsible is also what generates their responsibility towards others. In their dialogic model, Baptist Christians in Harare are not responsible merely because of a social contract. They are responsible to others because they recognize that others are also responsible to God. Responsible Christians must do nothing to interrupt the relation of others to God, and for this they are held accountable.

Moral debate becomes important for urban Baptists in Harare because of the same conditions that ground original sin. Baptists in Harare take themselves to be responsible for their capacity to perform conscious reflection about moral issues because of their own conscience and its relation to God. In this reckoning, humans are not "free" by the definition of classical liberal articulations about freedom of choice, or even in the terms of more contemporary accounts of "agency," but rather by the terms of the human will and according to the conscience that constitutes their own relation to God.

In the confessor's case, where her sin was singled out, acts of repair by the Pastor and by Reggie were intended to reinforce an equality in sinfulness across the group of

believers. The singling out of one particular sin was turned into a means to affirm everyone's sinfulness by emphasizing what Alan Jacobs calls the "universal democracy of sinners under judgment" (2008: 82). However, other group members prioritized the confessor's individual conscience as a feature of moral responsibility as significant as that of original sin, and indeed, both predicated on her primary relation to God.

Despite the levelling effect of the doctrine of original sin and its explanatory power in bestowing responsibility, the confessor's case revealed the profound discomfort people experience in distributing this responsibility because of the sanctity of the believer's own relation to God. Those affirming or demanding the confessor's public statement to Faith United saw her responsibility as extending to the peer group because of a shared set of religious moral values. The confessor was responsible for her sin, but her membership in the group did not make her immediately responsible to them. To be held responsible to the group in this case was a violation of her freedom: this was a matter between her own conscience and God, and not between herself and other group members.

The theological doctrine of original sin foregrounded in the religious lives of Zimbabwe Baptists addresses precisely this point: their account of moral personhood shows how people experience moral freedom even without asserting an unimpeded capacity for action, and an existential state of sinfulness accounts for the responsibility they experience even apart from individual power to choose. The doctrine accounts for a third kind of moral actor- the divine (cf Evans 2016)- in a way that upsets the possibilities of "moral luck," which I introduced at the outset.

These urban Christians' belief in original sin makes apparent the ways that humans can possess both freedom and responsibility, not in the terms of agency, but in the terms of relation. These Baptists participate in moral debate with a vigor and frequency that suggest that the practice of moral reflection and decision-making is of value, and that they do indeed take seriously their own freedom to reflect on their actions in moral terms. However, moral responsibility comes *prior* to this moral reflection and indeed prior to action. They see responsibility as a result of the relation towards God in which humans exist- from the moment of their creation- and original sin reveals how this responsibility is in place entirely before, and independently of, human action. Ethical reflection is an important feature of these Zimbabweans' religious lives, as is freedom- and both play a role in organizing their social lives as Baptists. However, if we understand moral reflection and freedom as features first and foremost of *agency* as the capacity to act to bring about change (or similarly conceived), we misunderstand the primary conception of their moral personhood as *relation* to the divine.

The kind of freedom I have described can entail moral reflection without requiring freedom of choice, being instead dependent on a vision of the human will in relation towards others and towards the divine. Rather than conceiving of freedom as a kind of moral agency relative to structure, for Baptists in Harare it is the divine-human relation that produces both limits and also the moral responsibility on which they focus so much of their energy. Their subsequent view of freedom based on relation rather than action is not

entirely unique[4], but does drive home the importance of decoupling freedom from moral

responsibility in the anthropological study of ethics, in order to gain a more substantial

perspective on the nature of both in their ethnographic specificity. Indeed, I next address

some examples of assessments about morality and freedom with regards to kinship

responsibilities, and matters of submission in politics and to other earthly authorities.

A version of Chapter Four has been prepared for publication. I am the sole author.

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[4] For example, it is similar to one element of the Ancient Greek ethical system explicated by Faubion as connected to "the encompassing web of the house and the polis" and not merely a matter of individual self-determination (2011, 75).

## Part III:
## Exercising Freedom and Meeting Responsibilities

Having established the ways that Christians in the Baptist network in Harare understand the upheavals and uncertainty in the world around them in terms of sinfulness, and having explored how original sin reveals that moral responsibility comes prior to freedom, in this section I examine this freedom as moral autonomy in two areas of social and cultural life.

In life-cycle events and in the realm of human politics, Fairside Baptists are negotiating their recognition of moral authority by way of responsibilities to kin, to fulfilling cultural values, and also to the authority given the State according to divine sovereignty. I examine how human freedom is exercised in relation to the responsibilities that are entailed in recognition of moral authority.

## Chapter Five:
## "Tete Ndiani?" Kinship Responsibilities and the Temporality of Moral Boundaries

"Rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn," Pastor Govera emphasized by re-reading a single verse from a passage in the New Testament book of Romans. He was using the verse to convince young people that it was important that they participate in the funerals of members of their church and family community. A recent funeral of a former church member had been underattended. There had not been enough church members to help serve food and assist in hosting mourners during the wake at the deceased's family home. In response, Pastor Govera explained that the collective sharing of emotions was a spiritual responsibility for Christians and described the quality of what he termed "coming together" as an important cultural value. It was thus culturally and spiritually meaningful that they be present at funerals, even for people they did not personally know.

Pastor Govera was obligating the group to their kin- conceived as both church family and birth or marriage family. Thus far, I have been focusing on the way that the religious practices of Zimbabwean Baptists make issues of moral responsibility central to their everyday lives. In this chapter, I turn to the way that they mediate moral responsibility and moral autonomy in their kinship relations. Christians at Fairside value relations to spiritual kin and real kin and choose to participate in activities that will reproduce these relations. These relations possess a moral authority. At the same time, Christians must maintain the capacity to decide for themselves to whom they will be obliged and the nature that this responsibility should take. Discerning the nature of their

responsibilities is important because these family obligations can pose a risk to the capacity of individual Christians to control their own moral choices. The exercise of this moral autonomy is the freedom made possible by their conception of moral responsibility based on the divine human relation.

The tension between maintaining kin relations, and tempering the demands placed on Christians by these relations, manifests in another tension between "Shona" ways of reproducing relations, and Baptist ways of doing so. In the lives of Fairside Baptists, both tensions become focused in the planning and execution of two life-cycle events: weddings and funerals. Wedding and funeral events are particularly important because of the role they play in processes of social integration and social reproduction.

Death and marriage generate what Hertz called a "double change of status" (1960 [1907], 80), where a person is withdrawn from one social collective and must be reinstated in another. Fairside Baptists face a series of problems in relation to weddings and funerals because these processes of social withdrawal and reintroduction, for them, entail two very distinct temporalities: in Baptist models, the social transformation of a person and her relations are instantaneous and complete, with the "double change" occurring in one single moment. In Shona cultural conceptions, the "double change" in social relations is extended and partial, unfolding over time. The model of immediate transformation of relations allows for greater control on the part of the individual in the kinds of relations created, whereas the processual model distributes control across various parties.

These divergent temporal patterns involved in the establishment of various relations challenge Fairside Baptists' ability to meet their kinship obligations because the

184

quality of the relations produced in these different models of time also diverge from one another. In wedding rituals, it is sexual relations that are being morally regulated, and in funerals, it is relations with dead ancestors. Baptists moralities presume an immediate transformation of these relations, while Shona patterns of relating allow for extended changes.

I show how these two perceptions about the way that relations are created-instantaneous versus processual- contribute to conflicting desires to support kin relations and also to restrict the demands that these relations place on individuals, so that individuals can continue to be held responsible for their own moral lives. These Christians expect that they will be obliged to kin- both real and spiritual- but strive for some control over the degree and nature of these obligations so that family relations do not undermine their capacity to live according to Baptist visions of a (free) moral life.

I begin by discussing how differences in ritual temporality are shaped by the kind of relations Baptist marriage is supposed to achieve, and those relations which *lobola* (bride wealth)[64] payment creates. Then I describe how both funerals and weddings generate a series of family responsibilities that Fairsiders seek to meet, while also striving to protect their sense of personal moral independence. I end by showing that the formal similarities between the two ritual processes pose a similar challenge to the Baptist way of establishing and maintaining social relations which Fairsiders are seeking to fulfil.

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[64] While "lobola" is not originally a Shona word, it is the term most used in popular parlance (in Shona and in English conversations) to describe bridewealth negotiation. In fact, Shona-speakers divide the process across a series of exchanges nominated by different terms, the bulk of the process being known as "roora," the components of which can vary substantially by ethnic sub-group and region. Here I use "lobola" because it is the term by which my interlocutors most often referred to the general practice of bridewealth payment.

**Creating Kin Through Marriage**

Through marriage, Christians in Harare create new kin, and also achieve new social and spiritual identities. For Baptists at Fairside, weddings are a moment of immediate transformation of relations: the creation of husband and wife, and also of new affines. Zimbabweans can marry by a range of possible ceremonies, and each Fairside couple often has multiple wedding events. Baptists must select *one* of these events as that which represents the moment when their relational status is transformed. In legal terms, there are two marriage acts under which an "African" (as opposed to a white European) Zimbabwean may marry: the Civil Marriages Act and the Customary Marriages Act. The latter incorporates a bridewealth payment into the legal process, while the former does not. Black Zimbabweans, like many is southern Africa, maintain the practice of lobola- the transfer of bridewealth between the groom and the family of the bride. Generally, the first transfer occurs at a negotiation where the groom is formally introduced to his potential affines.

When a couple decides that they would like to marry, they first approach the bride's *tete*, a paternal aunt[65]. The tete often acts as an "intermediary" between father and child (Gelfand 1973, 36), and is also a go-between for the couple and the bride's family. The groom, in turn, enlists the assistance of his own intermediary- a *munyai*- who acts as his agent. The munyai is a man with a close relation to the groom, and for Fairside

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[65] Shona kinship patterns are patrilineal, and a *tete* is usually a father's older sister, though other women in his lineage may fulfill the role. See also Bourdillon (2004[1976: 31) and Gelfand (1973: 36).

attendees and others in the Baptist network, the pastor or a young church leader sometimes fulfills this role.

The meeting at which the lobola negotiations occur may be very protracted and is conducted predominantly through the intermediaries. The bride's family will draw up a list of items they are requesting, which they present to the groom's munyai, and then begins a back-and-forth pattern of offers and counter-offers. The amount requested is composed of money and gifts in kind: the total will include value in cows, clothing for the father and mother, other household goods, and cash amounts representing various values lost in the marriage of their daughter (including her labor in the household, the money they invested in her education, and the breaking of emotional ties). The groom often arrives with boxes or crates of groceries (cooking oil, rice, juice, biscuits, soap and other toiletries) as a first gift. Since the way that the amount is divided- number of payments, in kind or in cash or as cows- can vary based on ethnic and regional patterns, elder family members are essential for assisting urbanized young people and their parents to navigate this complex pattern of negotiation[66].

Baptists at Fairside most often conduct lobola as an initial part of the wedding process and then are subsequently married by the pastors under the Civil Marriages Act. This latter portion is sometimes a simple and private ceremony conducted with the pastor. Almost all are, however, expected to aspire to a much larger "white wedding" - an

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[66] Some important differences are based on Shona ethnic sub-groups. For example, one Fairside pastor told me how easy it was to be a *Munyai* for a negotiation where the bride's family had been Kalanga, and so had merely requested a single lump sum, rather than separating out cash payments from the number of cows or other livestock requested as other ethnic sub-groups most often did. See also Bourdillon (2004[1976]).

elaborate European-style ceremony and reception, "white" being a referent to the bridal gown- whether in lieu of the private ceremony or in addition to it.

This series of possible marriage events poses a problem for Christians in Harare as they navigate their responsibility to God and to their families. In particular, marriage is the boundary line for appropriate sexual activity, and the stakes for determining this boundary are high. At which ceremony is one married? Or, as one attendee at a church young adults camp put it: "So, when can I sleep with my wife?"

Church leaders at Fairside do not answer this question by prescribing the exact form that the wedding process should take. Much as with the moral debates discussed in Chapter 3, the task of the Christian couple is to reflect and to decide for themselves which wedding event will serve as their moment of marriage. The couple can choose whether lobola is the recognized marriage ritual event, with a celebratory additional wedding to follow, or if lobola will be akin to an engagement, serving as a promise recognized by the couple's families and meaning that the couple will be married at another ritual event soon. Of course, this choice on the part of the couple does not prevent family members from asserting their own expectations with regards to the various wedding events.

**A Wedding with No Marriage**

The problem of choosing among wedding types, and the question of timing for sanctioned sexual relations across these processes, became most apparent to me at one of the first white wedding ceremonies that I attended. A couple from Fairside Baptist- Alice and Tapiwa- had paid lobola the previous year and were now hosting a white wedding. At

the event, the officiating Pastor and the Master of Ceremonies- a church elder- were particularly adamant: the couple being celebrated had already married at the payment of lobola. It was not the case, the pastor stated, that Alice and Tapiwa had previously been 95% married; the white wedding was not a completion of the process. Instead, the pastor continually recast the ceremony as a celebration of a transformative moment that had already occurred. Consequently, a great deal of semiotic work was done in order to make the bridal gown, procession, and cutting of cake index a celebration after the fact, rather than a moment of wed-ding itself.

The friend seated next to me, Rudairo, commented that the pastor may have been particularly explicit about the couple's prior marital status in order to dispel potential judgment from people who might notice that the bride Alice was already visibly pregnant. In the current economic context, couples like Alice and Tapiwa regularly have to wait to host their white wedding until a year after marrying by lobola simply because they need to save up more money[67]. In the meantime, as in Alice's case, the bride might become pregnant.

The statements from the pastor and the MC were more than just attempts to quell gossip, however. This white wedding ceremony in which a couple did not get married is made possible by the maintenance of a specific set of ideologies about the transformation of social relations. Fairside church leaders were promoting the model of a single moment of relational change, which had already occurred for Alice and Tapiwa at lobola payment.

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[67] This pattern aligns with Bourdillon's (2004[1976]) observation that couples sometimes wait until after they know that the bride can conceive before they finalize their marriage. This remark is more relevant in cases where there is a clear division of the bridewealth payment in two components: the first for sexual rights (*rutsambo*), and the second for rights over children conceived (*roora*).

They helped the couple to meet their spiritual responsibility by ensuring there was clarity that the moment of their wed-ding had been at lobola payment, thus representing the immediate kind of change in relations that Baptist marriage demanded.

**What Baptist Marriage Achieves**

According to the church leadership, wed-ding entails a transformation of bride and groom into a couple who model a specific kind of spiritual and sexual relation. In late 2015, the pastors and church elders at Fairside promoted this meaning of marriage through a pamphlet they wrote and a series of sermons taught on Sunday mornings. Firstly, they explained that a wed-ding marks the moment of change when the relation between bride and groom alters radically, one aspect of which is that the relation is now a sexual one. Secondly, the relation of husband to wife is a metaphoric representation of a spiritual relation that exists between God and the church.

The immediate change in status afforded by wed-ding creates the possibility that the couple can model the appropriate relation. Wed-ding signals entrance into a space of sanctioned and God-ordained sexual activity between a husband and wife. As I described in chapter four, boundaries around sexual behavior carry significant moral weight for Fairsiders, and wed-ding must reinforce clearly the point at which Baptist persons shift their position in relation to these boundaries. Pre-marital sex is recognized as outside the bounds of appropriate Christian spirituality and breaches of these bounds can mean that the church will discipline the lapsed member[68]. There is thus a great deal at stake morally and

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[68] Church discipline refers to actions taken on the part of the church elders towards church members who knowingly and intentionally continue to break certain commitments they have made when they become

spiritually in determining when a couple is married, and thus, when sex between them is sanctioned. In the context of multiple rituals of wedding it is less clear when sanctioned sexual activity may begin.

Young people told me that non-Baptist family members often understood the young bride to be their daughter-in-law as soon as lobola was paid. Affines might expect the couple to be sleeping together once bridewealth transfer had begun. This caused some embarrassment and confusion for couples who paid lobola first but who had chosen to marry later on in a civil or white wedding, and who were committed to not sleeping together until they were married.

In addition to morally regulating relations of sexuality, Fairside Baptists take marriage's meaning and purpose to metaphorically represent the relation between Christ and his church. Marriage exhibits the relation that Christ has with those human beings whom he has saved according to values of life-long promise, service, and commitment. A person's salvation status does not change upon wedding, but the change does produce a new set of spiritual obligations: husbands have to lead and also serve wives, and wives have to be led and to submit to husbands.

The importance of a single moment that moves a person from one social position to another- from being a single person to a married person- is closely connected to that which the marriage relation is supposed to represent. The relation of Christ to Christians is similarly one of immediacy: for Baptists, personal transformation involves a singular

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members, as I outlined in the introduction. The goal is to restore the member to "right living" within the group, but if the lapsed member continually refuses the changes, the end result is removal from church fellowship.

191

moment of instantiation- there is a *moment* of salvation. This relation between God- as Christ- and humans is brought about in a specific event, and the marriage relation between a man and a woman should index or make present this relation in some capacity (see Stasch 2011). The marriage moment thus parallels the salvation moment: as a single point in time through which and at which a new status (and new sets of relations) is established.

How do Baptists in Harare attempt to make this transition in sexual and spiritual relations a discrete one? In order to explain how they do so, I first need to explain the temporality of non-Baptist Shona notions of marriage and its relation to social structure. These patterns will make clear why it is so difficult to create a "moment" of marriage- a wed-ding.

**The Value of Lobola**

Public debates that emerged surrounding bridewealth in the 20th century (see Barnes 1999; Jeater 1993; Ranger 1995; Schmidt 1990; West 2008), show how approaches to lobola were intimately tied with a newly emerging class position, one in which wage labor and new domestic patterns modeled on nuclear family units, Christian models of morality, and middle-class consumption undercut the authority of village elders, who were often the most substantial beneficiaries of lobola payments. Though concerns about the possibilities and potentials for marriage in Zimbabwe have been shaped in important ways by the cash crises since the 2000s and by processes of urbanization, these concerns extend at least back to the colonial era.

While Theresa Barnes points out that scholars have given several reasons for the "longevity" of lobola as an institution throughout the colonial (and now, postcolonial) period, she claims it was perpetuated particularly as a matter of social reproduction: as fewer men had multiple wives, securing the line of patrilineal descent became more critical (1999, 101). Bridewealth ensured that the husband's family had custody of any children that resulted from the marriage. Lobola also played a gendered class role: it remained a form of security for urban married women seeking to advance their living conditions, particularly, and a platform around which they could rally for recognition. They could protect themselves against relations that did not entail payment of lobola and thus did not ensure social reproduction- like temporary relations labeled mapoto[69] (1999, 102).

Michael West (2008) has documented how members of the nascent Zimbabwean middle-class, prior to national independence, were equally concerned with negotiating the various categories of marriage and wedding ceremonies available to them. As early as the 1930s, Zimbabweans were holding white weddings that were strikingly similar to those hosted today.

One prominent Zimbabwean Methodist minister, among others, lobbied to prevent the colonial authorities from banning the practice of bridewealth payment[70] (Ranger 1995, 44). He suggested that the desire to ban the practice was a result of ignorance on the part of "Europeans" who did not understand the significance of the kinship connections created through lobola. While missionaries often sought to curtail bridewealth practices among church members, the "emerging African middle class" defended lobola as a key site for

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[69] I introduced these "informal marriages" in chapter two.
[70] This man was Reverend Thompson Samkange. I discuss him and his wife Grace Samkange in chapter two.

navigating the "articulation between tradition and modernity" (West 2002, 85). In similar ways, Baptists at Fairside still value the kinds of kinship relations cemented in the payment of bridewealth. The elders' pamphlet affirmed that lobola "historically has been so helpful in helping maintain stability of marriages and society."

Long-standing debates about lobola in the public sphere- about whether it commodifies women, or whether the amount should be legislatively capped - show how apprehensions regarding marriage processes intersect with changes in class structure. The rise of the urban nuclear family has alienated young people from their sense of belonging towards extended family, and thus their sense of responsibility to these kin. Lobola payment can reinforce some of these broader kinship networks.

In selecting how to marry, Baptists at Fairside are enmeshed in many of the same concerns that have occupied Zimbabweans and been documented by others, mentioned above. Yet their Baptist religiosity shapes how they approach these same issues: in selecting how to marry, Fairsiders are attempting to uphold these kin relations, while mitigating the kinds of extensive pressure from family that pose a risk to their fulfilment of spiritual responsibilities around sexuality, modesty and money. The church leaders, in their pamphlet, encourage parents and "senior family members" to protect young people from excessive family coercion. I regularly heard both pastors and young people express frustration, and sometimes even disgust, at the demands they felt were placed on bride and groom to provide substantial meals, entertainment, transportation, and even small cash payments to family members throughout the entire wedding process.

One important change that makes the problem of cost and family pressure so

significant is that in the contemporary middle-class context the bridewealth comes much more substantially from the pockets of the couple themselves, rather than from the extended family[71]. Van Dijk (2017) describes a similar phenomenon in Botswana, where family representatives used to be responsible for the public realization of marriages, including organizing many of the resources involved. He shows how couples now develop a distinct type of "intimacy" prior to marriage because they finance and organize many parts of the white wedding as a couple apart from their extended kin relations (Van Dijk 2017, 32). Rather than further embedding them in their kinship networks, weddings now create for the couple a kind of insularity. I argue that in the case of Zimbabwean Baptists, pastors and elders are particularly interested in protecting, and helping parents to protect, this kind of intimacy as a reflection of the particular view of marriage promoted in Baptist teaching. The financial independence of the couple in bridewealth payments and the possibility that they can choose their wedding ceremony does provide them with seemingly greater control in these kin interactions, but at the same time opens them up to different demands from their affines, a topic to which I turn next.

**What Processual Marriage by Lobola Achieves**

There is a long history in scholarship on African marriage practices that emphasizes its "processual" nature, not least of which is Radcliffe-Brown's fundamental interpretive point that "to understand African marriage we must think of it not as an event or a

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[71] Bridewealth received from the marriage of a sister used to provide the cattle for her brother to pay lobola. This is part of what gives the tete her status in the family: it was her marriage that provided the cattle for her brother's marriage, and she possesses authority in her brother's family as a result (Holleman 1952: 66).

condition but as a developing process" (1950, 49; see also Meekers 1993). In Bourdillon's words, "there is no clear point at which the couple can say that they are now married whereas they were not married before" (2004[1976]). The point at which the couple is expected to have sexual relations can also be somewhat unclear (Holleman 1952). Rather than a "single procedure," marriage is a "cumulative series of events" (Murphree 1969, 29), that unfold sets of relations between whole family groups (cf Bourdillon 2004; Jeater 1993).

The processual nature of marriage creates two important Shona relational categories, *muroora* (daughter-in-law) and *mukwasha* (son-in-law), around which concerns about family pressure crystalize. Mukwasha is the social relation between the groom and his affines created through lobola; the groom gives a "token" of thanks to the parents of the woman he would like to marry, and he thus becomes mukwasha in relation to them, and to other members of their family. Lan describes this relation between the son-in-law and any member of the affinal lineage as the "relationship that bears perhaps the greatest weight of ritual stress of any in Shona society" (1985, 85). His structural interpretation of these relational patterns shows that bridewealth is given in return for the life-producing capacities of the wife transferred from her lineage to that of the son-in-law, leaving his lineage always in some degree of debt[72] (Lan 1985). Bourdillon (2004[1976]) points out

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[72] "[I]f one lineage supplies another with the fertility it needs to perpetuate itself [ie. a wife], it will be partially reciprocated by a marriage payment or labor but the debt is so great that the wife-giving lineage remains in a position of superiority with a call on the services of the wife-takers even when the initial exchange has been completed" (Lan 1985, 86). In turn, Lan makes the argument that this explains patterns in origin myths about the ancestral fathers-in-law being the ones that provide the rain for their mythical sons-in-law. Shona marriage patterns do not favor wife exchange because wife-giving and wife-receiving lineages exist in a clear hierarchy to one another, and exchanges between the two lineages would confuse the relevant behavioral systems associated with seniority and juniority.

that this continuing indebtedness between wife-giving and wife-receiving lineage serves both parties. Fathers-in-law may request continued services from mukwasha, and the groom may in turn be waiting to see if the wife is fulfilling her obligations (particularly her capacity to produce children), before he pays the final installments of brideprice.

Parents-in-law can indefinitely call upon their mukwasha for any number of favors, leading people to joke that you never really finish paying lobola. Several men complained to me that, as a mukwasha, if someone in his wife's family died, the in-laws would call on him to be forthcoming with resources for the funeral arrangements[73]. I know of cases where a mukwasha sent his father-in-law an expensive new smart phone from overseas, or performed forex currency transactions on his in-law's behalf, which they could likely never repay. Bourdillon cites a Shona proverb in his explanation of these relations: "A son-in-law is like a fruit tree: one never finishes eating from it" (2004[1976], 43).

A muroora, daughter-in-law, must perform specific kinds of labor for her affines. At a bridal shower for a young woman who attended Fairside, an elder's wife gave a speech instructing young women on the extreme lengths a muroora must go to in order to offer hospitability and remain peaceable, despite provocation from her in-laws, who might challenge her by showing up announced, demanding food and trekking dirt through her home.

While labor and resources are demanded of both muroora and mukwasha, the occupants of these roles are also valorized: mukwasha are spoken of with pride, and muroora are celebrated effusively by their affines at wedding ceremonies.

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[73] Mukwasha and muroora both have ritual roles to fulfill in the funerals of their affines.

Linguistic usage is another clue to the specificity and importance of these social categories. The middle-class Zimbabweans I describe conduct significant portions of their life in English. In using kinship terms, people frequently operate with modified English words to specify the relation. For example, a child of your mother's sister is called your "cousin sister" or "cousin brother." Muroora and mukwasha, however, are almost never translated into English. People very infrequently use the term "in-law" and codeswitch into Shona to refer to mukwasha and muroora. The social relations that these kin categories entail are specific and valued, and my interlocutors do not see "daughter-in-law" as a ready equivalent to muroora.

These particular social relations- muroora and mukwasha- are iconic of the kind of moral obligations to kin that are entailed in the drawn-out process of paying lobola, and they index a set of relations established between two whole groups of people from different patrilines. Those in the wife-giving patriline will remain in a position of symbolic seniority over those from the wife-receiving patriline (Bourdillon 2004[1976]). These relations of obligation are not like the immediate change entailed in white wedding ceremonies but extend over the course of whole lifetimes.

**The Challenge of Wed-ding**

As in the semiotic work done at Alice and Tapiwa's wedding, any time couples marry by multiple ceremonies, pastors, elders and others must work to make only *one* ceremonial moment signal the change in social position. The easiest way to achieve the

single-moment marriage, as I'll describe below, is to have all of the ceremonies take place on the same day, or as close to one another as possible.

While many young people at Fairside do hope for a white wedding, I also heard a number of young people describe their dislike of such ceremonies, precisely for the reasons outlined by the elders in their pamphlet. These young people feel that families often have too much control in demanding elaborate celebrations, and so they make plans about how to mitigate these demands placed upon them, for which the church leaders echo their support.

One way that Alice and Tapiwa curbed some of these family pressures was by choosing a white wedding venue that was difficult to access. A green outdoor space, it was one of a number of other similar venues behind tall gates along one of the main arteries leading out of Harare. At some distance off the main road, taking public transportation to the venue would have still entailed making a substantial trek by foot across rutted dirt tracks. Anyone who did not have access to a private car would have found the journey a prohibitive one. Rudairo, a host sister, had borrowed her parent's small hatchback to transport myself and five others, hair carefully sculpted, in best suit jackets or high heels, to the venue.

Figure 2: A rotating display advertising white wedding supplies near a petrol station

After 45 minutes winding off the main drag and across dirt roads, inside the gates we found a large expanse of lush lawns spread before us, accommodating a white marquee set with tables and elaborate color-coordinated decor. A small creek trickled past the seating area, with the grass and wall of green trees lining the little stream bringing a welcome change from the dust, noise and rebounding heat of the city concrete.

The invitation to attend this white wedding had been open to the entire church body of several hundred possible participants. Coupled with the families of both bride and groom, this would have made for a large and very expensive celebration, had all the invitees been able to make it. Choosing a distant venue was one strategy by which young couples could remove themselves- even in geographical terms- from the pressures of their extended families. They met their kinship obligations by paying lobola and by extending

invitations for the white wedding, and then curbed their expenses by reducing the number of attendees through choice of location.

One potential problem anticipated by couples in the church was additional family expectations of monetary payments and gifts throughout the wedding process. However, none of Alice and Tapiwa's family members had, for example, demanded more bridewealth money for the bride to emerge from the car, or for her to leave the house. If the bride had been late to the wedding, this would have signaled to attendees that her family members might be trying to extract more money from the groom.

There were many instances before and during lobola and white wedding ceremonies when the couple were at risk of excessive family pressure. Attendees at Alice and Tapiwa's wedding had been impressed by how they appeared to have avoided most of these assertations of familial authority: the speeches had been short and no one had seized the microphone uninvited to pronounce on family issues. Guests expressed relief that no family member had taken control of the wedding program or garnered the spotlight to themselves, which would have dragged the ceremony into the late hours of the day. The kinds of demands that the elders feared would be placed on young people were absent and the white wedding carried on as planned by the couple.

Though Alice and Tapiwa's wedding process managed to forestall the excessive intervention from kin that people feared, the span of time that had passed between their lobola and white wedding opened up a new variety of possible family pressures that could be applied.

The long and processual temporality of lobola cements kinship ties and the associated

quality of relations between affines. By attempting to create relations of muroora and

mukwasha in a Baptist ritual framework of immediate transformation, my interlocutors

regularly run up against the problem of a marriage process spread across many moments.

Having explained how these challenges arise, I now address one of the solutions that

people regularly put forward: bringing all the possible moments together on the same day.

This strategy proves to be a difficult feat which few even try to achieve.


**"I will eat chicken and rice at your wedding"**

By contrast to the year-long gap between Alice and Tapiwa's lobola negotiation

and their white wedding, Simba and Star paid lobola and hosted their white wedding on the

same day. Church members and leaders praised this latter organization as a more ideal

arrangement.

However, the couple themselves had wanted to pay bridewealth and forego the

white wedding entirely, Star told me. Simba reflected, watching a groomsman ironing a

shirt into a crisp white panel by a terrace window, that he and Star had hoped to have a

civil wedding at the courthouse and then a big "braai[74]"- an outdoor barbecue – with their

friends to celebrate. Instead, on this day, they found themselves rushing from Star's family

home where they had paid lobola in the morning, to the small mansion of a family friend,

to dress for the white wedding ceremony, hosted poolside in the back garden.

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[74] "Braai" is an Afrikaans word borrowed into Zimbabwean English and Shona.

A well-known teacher and leader in the church, I knew Star's adoptive mother quite well. I knew Star comparatively little. Still, I sat with her, on her parents' bed, awaiting the beginning of the bridewealth negotiation earlier that morning. She had been highly agitated as we waited several hours for the process to begin. She and Simba had saved the money for bridewealth, but now the parents were insisting on a white wedding. Much of the money saved for lobola had instead been used to pay for the European-style ceremony. Star knew what remaining amount Simba had available to him, and she was terrified that her aunts and uncles negotiating lobola would ask much more than they had left.

She was equally concerned about the time, however. The bridegroom and his contingent had been sitting outside in a car for a half hour before I arrived, and it was some hours before they were invited in to begin the process in earnest. From her parent's bedroom, Star watched her intended departure time for the white wedding venue tick past. After midday, once negotiations were finally settled, I became a welcome additional laborer as the party moved to the wedding venue. An hour later, I was the only one on hand to help the bride into her white wedding dress, the mother and bridesmaids still bathing and arranging flower bouquets until moments before the ceremony began[75].

During the hour of white wedding preparation, Star sat on the balcony of a bedroom in the rich family friends' home, comparatively lavish next to the very comfortable but still-unfinished middle-class house of Star's parents, while a make-up

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[75] Being the only one available to help with the wedding gown made me very uncomfortable. I made an (ethnocentric) assumption that putting on the gown was itself meaningful, and that her mother or a bridesemaid should have been assisting her. It became clear that this was merely a practical concern of dressing, and that the meaningful aspects of the ceremony and preparation process were not necessarily the ones that I had presumed were most significant.

stylist chatted idly to her as she worked. Star described the pressures that female relatives had placed on her to have an elaborate celebration, including a wedding theme. Tugging at the old shirt she had worn during the lobola negotiation, she said she had refused to buy a *third* outfit for that purpose, in addition to the two intended for the white wedding and reception. Star had sighed in the end, "it's *my* marriage and *their* wedding."

Once the ceremony was over, palpable relief showed in the young faces of Simba and Star, as the choreographed wedding dances began, the noon heat waned to a cooler afternoon, and guests milled freely about the beautiful garden. As we loitered on the lawn, waiting to move to the tent for the reception to begin, a church elder beside me spoke up, approving the process. To pay lobola and have a white wedding on the same day was an ideal strategy, he declared. He remarked that a couple will often pay lobola and then sleep together. They will wait until a year later to have a white wedding, and in the meantime the bride will claim that the husband has actually "raped" her because he has slept with her without fully completing the marriage process. I expressed my surprise, and the elder reiterated that it is a frequent scenario: after paying lobola, by the time of the white wedding the bride will be pregnant.

Another attendee at the event commented that having the white wedding and lobola on the same day was a good strategy for a different reason. This woman, a baby perched on her hip, told me she was from another church and had mentored the bride, being also distantly related by marriage. Reasoning that it would cost less money overall, she too claimed that it was better to have the bridewealth payment and wedding the same day. The payment of lobola involves the gathering of people who must be fed, and these are often

many of the same people that would gather again for a white wedding. To condense both events to a single day would mean providing a single large meal, instead of two.

I pressed the elder and the lady on the fact that trying to accomplish both ceremonies on one day must be enormously stressful. I had heard repeated expressions on the part of Simba and Star that it had not been their choice to do so. Though agreeing that it might be stressful they - like the church elders- still insisted that it was better to do everything at once.

The elder next to me had highlighted the importance of marking the boundary for sexual activity, pointing out all the potential ambiguities. I had been at Fairside for a full year before I found out that a number of couples had confessed before the church membership, in a closed meeting, that they had had premarital sex (I also discuss one case in chapter two). Many of these couples had, however, been engaged or betrothed, supporting the elder's remarks that the bride might often become pregnant between engagement and white wedding. The elder's concerns were laid out in religious terms, but they also point to the cultural meaning of pregnancy and the wedding process. In Shona marriages, a significant piece of the bridewealth is transferred once the wife becomes pregnant, usually around a year after first negotiations occur and the bride has gone to live with her husband. The accusation of rape that the elder described suggests that a man is getting what he has not yet paid for. In the example he gave, lobola had already been paid, but the presence of the white wedding on the horizon of their marriage process confused the timeline of conferring of rights and obligations.

The white Zimbabwean pastor who had performed the ceremony was willing to conduct the white weddings that people asked for, but he told me that given the choice he thought it would be great for people to forego these elaborate events altogether. Many young people at Fairside seemed to agree. While it might seem that white weddings are a status symbol aspired to by young couples, many also experience the demand or desire for white weddings as being a product of pressure from their families. When I asked others in the Baptist network why they thought the parents had urged Star and Simba to have a white wedding at all, they suggested the parents probably felt that it was necessary for maintaining family relations. Members of Faith United described how, as small children, their parents' and grandparents' siblings would say to them, "I will eat chicken and rice at your wedding." From childhood, these aunts and uncles oblige their younger kin to perform hospitality for them. Similarly, marriage-age Baptists told me how their own parents would say that they had been hosted by the children of their siblings- that is, at the wedding of nieces and nephews- and so now it was their turn to host their brothers and sisters at the wedding of their own children. They want to reciprocate, and also take pride in providing a meal and entertainment in a lavish setting. This is why Star experienced the white wedding as "their wedding," though according to Baptist views of marriage relations and nuclear family ideals this was "her marriage."

The Church is given the prerogative to confer on white weddings, lobola negotiations, small civil or church ceremonies, the authority of a marriage event[76]. Church

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[76] Any notion of "legitimate cohabitation" without marriage (Hunter 2016) is side-stepped by Baptist Christians by the fact that a range of different ritual forms may be recognized as a legitimate marriage ceremony by the church.

leaders work to mediate within families and oblige parents to be moderate and fair in their expectations of payment, and to encourage young people to participate in more modest ceremonies. Church leaders acknowledge the importance of lobola in establishing the marriage stability provided by cultural forms- a moral authority- while simultaneously attempting to curb the influence and desires that families have, so protecting the moral autonomy of the couple as their relation is transformed immediately into a new sexual and spiritual one.

A circulating story I heard several times exhibits the family relations in lobola that Fairside Baptists most hoped for. The story features a couple who have completed lobola negotiations in order to marry. The father of the bride accepts the lobola as a token of thanks, and then subsequently takes all of the cash from the negotiation and hands it back to the couple in an envelope, for their own use. Those who told me this story saw it as a representation of the most ideal values: the couple pays lobola to honor their family, and the parents, rather than using their children as a source of money, give generously to them in order that they can start a good life together. People who told me this story were so impacted by the tale that they sometimes shed tears, illustrating the value that they place on fulfilling responsibilities towards their family relation and also on being able to live lives in which they are not bled dry by the demands of these kin.


**Funeral Participation and the Problem of Relations with the Dead**

Just as the Baptist temporal mode of wed-ding is used to manage the moral boundaries of marriage relations, so too in funerals Fairsiders seek to create a discrete

207

moment when relations between the living and the dead are altered. In both cases the expectations of kin have the capacity to extend these processes according to Shona conceptions of how social relations should be created, managed and changed. Shona funeral and burial rites entail a temporal extension parallel to that of the lobola payment. Dead kin become ancestors over time through the ritual activity of their descendants. For Baptist Christians, by contrast, the moment of transition is immediate: a dead family member is now absent from body and fully separate from the world of the living. The Christian rituals associated with death are intended to sever relations with the now-dead person.

Hertz (1960) asserts a clear parallel between death, marriage, and birth because of the socially mediated change involved in each. In all three, the social group is put at potential risk because of a change in the position of a member of the group, and a series of rites surrounds the movement of this person into that new social status. Conceived this way, death is "not a singular event" (1960, 61) but instead a series of changes that "marks the passage from one form of existence to another" (61). Because death is a "transition [that is not] completed in one instantaneous act" (48), Hertz points out, many cultures perform a secondary burial: a period of time elapses before completing the final burial process, so allowing for a phase of mourning and transfer, in which the deceased will be able finally to make their way to the realm of the dead. Shona funerals have followed a similar pattern: the body will be mourned, buried, remembered at one month on, and then another final ceremony will follow a year later (see Bourdillon 2004[1976]; Gelfand 1962).

These processes are one of the subjects covered in a course titled "African Traditional Religion" (*ATR*) [77] taught at the local affiliate theological college. When I attended the class, the other adult students of varying ages were equal experts on the topic and consequently the lectures of the instructor, Mr. Banda, devolved into discussions about Zimbabwean rituals around death. They agreed that on the day of the death, the body remains in the house while people sing and mourn overnight and watch for signs[78] that the death was caused by something malicious or untoward. If no malicious intent is perceived-if it is a "good death"- then the next day the body is lead in procession by *varoora* (daughters-in-law, sing. muroora), who clear a path to the grave, located at a distance from the family home. The body is buried, and a month later a similar pattern of singing overnight and procession to the grave is repeated. During this time, the spirit of the deceased is potentially volatile and liable to express dissatisfaction with their kin, so steps are taken during both processions to prevent the spirit from returning to the homestead to cause trouble.

Approximately a year after burial, a final ceremony is performed, referred to as *kurova guva* (lit. "to beat/strike the grave"). Kurova guva is the time at which the deceased spirit will now be guided from the grave back to the homestead and instated as an ancestor spirit (*mudzimu*). The estate of the deceased – including responsibility for the care of widows and children- is also allocated at this point. This funeral rite establishes new

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[77] I use *ATR* as an emic term. Theology students at the college use this acronym, but many of my interlocutors more often referred to "our culture" or "tradition." I have chosen to use the term *ATR* because it reflects some of the analytical distance with which Fairsiders describe Shona cultural patterns regarding what they see as spiritual matters- particularly those around death- and avoids the confusion that "tradition" or "culture" might entail. See also Engelke (2007, 36-42) for a discussion of similar issues, though my interlocutors do not quite so readily denounce "tradition" as do his.

[78] The sign is usually a white shadow (cf Bourdillon 2004[1969]).

relations among the living kin, and between them and their ancestor, reinforcing a new social order and a new set of kinship obligations: or as Hertz describes, "in establishing a society of the dead, the society of the living regularly recreates itself" (72).

In the *ATR* view of death, a relationship between the living and the dead persists, so that, according to Banda, the "dead have continual responsibilities towards the living family and insure the family's continual existence." The living rely on their ancestors- in spirit form - who are responsible for providing for, protecting, and also disciplining their descendants. The funeral practices extending over time, as Hertz's argument asserted, are intended to create this separation of the deceased from their existing kin relations, to welcome them to the realm of the ancestors where they become mudzimu. This amounts to a situation where "the difference between spirits and the living is one of degree and not of kind…[where] spirits and people occupy the same social world" simply at different levels on a lineage hierarchy (Engelke 2007, 42).

**Funerals for the Dead and the Living**

Funerals in contemporary Zimbabwe occur frequently and can seem sudden. While many at Fairside have access to more resources and healthcare than most of the nation's population, life expectancy in Zimbabwe remains very low, AIDS and other communicable disease rates are high, and it is common for people to lose close family members at a young age. When news of a person's death reaches someone in their circle, a person will immediately travel to the deceased family home to gather with other mourners. The word

"funeral" thus refers to more than just a ceremony or single ritual, but indicates the days spent in the household of the grieving family- as in a wake[79].

The first wake that I attended was a typical one: the house where mourners had gathered was on an unmarked dirt road in a mid-density suburb. We could see where large furniture like couches and tables had been moved to the front garden to make room for the body being held in the living room. Male mourners occupied these outdoor seats. Inside, more people were seated on the floor, lining the walls of the living areas. Some of these visitors would have been present for the duration of the wake- anywhere from one day to several- sleeping on the floor and filling all vacant space. Housing these mourners also means providing food and bathing facilities for substantially more people than the home usually accommodates.

We arrived late, so it was already time for the body to be transported *kumusha*[80]- to the village homestead of the deceased's family. A caravan of mourners followed in their cars. Once there, final funeral services would be held at the homestead and the body buried nearby. If the deceased is a long-time resident of the city, does not have strong ties to their village homestead, or simply wishes to be buried closer to Harare, the family can choose to bury the body in one of two cemeteries on the outskirts of the capital. Even if the burial site is near the city, the transfer of the body can involve a great deal of logistical

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[79] My interlocutors did not use the term "wake." Instead, they used the English word "funeral" to include the many days of mourning, visitation, and services. I use "wake" to indicate the days of mourning in the family household to distinguish from the funeral or burial services.

[80] Literally, "to the village," but referring to the specific rural family homestead.

organization, with the family often needing to charter a bus to help transport mourners to the final resting site[81].

As should be clear, this process generates a great deal of need for resources- food, shelter, transportation- and labor. Urban residents rely on funeral service providers to assist with transporting the body, providing charter buses, running ceremonies, and acting as general event planners. Even with the assistance of a pastor and funeral service provider, there is always a significant need for money and for human-power to support the funeral activities. Married men told me about their in-laws persistently requesting money for more meat to feed the mourners gathered, and women told me about the endless chopping of vegetables for these large meals. One woman described keeping a supply of disposable dishes ("kaylite") on hand specifically for funerals, so that when she was summoned to help feed mourners, there would at least be fewer dishes to wash.

Mr. Banda taught that both *ATR* and Christianity treat death as a transition, and Pastor Govera, my host mother, and the Christian women's exercise group that I attended, all affirmed that "coming together[82]" was of "cultural" or ATR, and also Christian importance. For Christians, Banda taught that the transition of death also meant a

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[81] For example, at one funeral that I attended, the family knew that there would not be sufficient water at the drought-stricken homestead to accommodate all of the mourners who would be staying there. Not only did they have to arrange for transportation of body, mourners, and food to a remote area, but they also had to organize for several drums of water to be carried many hundreds of kilometers so that there would be a way to haul water for bathing, cooking and drinking.

[82] "Come together" was an English term meant in quite literal terms: when there is a death, people should gather immediately in support of the family. For example, when a man died suddenly while he was jogging one morning in my middle-class Harare neighborhood, his body lay in the busy neighborhood thoroughfare for many hours. The body remained, covered by a blanket, while his wife, adult children, and pastor all gathered to mourn in the street before he was finally taken away. The body was removed not by the police officers standing around, who themselves had no transportation, but by a vehicle from the private funeral service.

separation- both of the soul from the body and the dead from the living. Therefore, those dead and those alive no longer had responsibilities towards one another, existing as they do in different realms. The responsibility of the Christian is towards the living alone: to comfort one another and to await the later reunion that all Christians will experience at some future eschatological point. For Baptist Christians, the transformation of the living to the dead is an immediate transition. Disembodied spirits do not wander the earth, and there is no period of indeterminacy regarding the spirit's status.

Like the divergent temporal conceptions of the wedding process, these distinct views of death and transition produce sets of relations that seem incompatible in *ATR* and Baptist views. Baptist Christians take it as an important responsibility to support grieving kin, which entails participating in funeral activities. At the same time, to participate in practices like kurova guva involves affirming relations between the living and the dead with which they do not agree, challenging their assertion of personal moral choice in the matter. For Christians, funeral services should signal the immediate break in relations with the dead person.

While ATR and Baptist ideas differ with regards to how and in what way relations are transformed in death and funerals, they both value "coming together" with grieving family members and neighbors, to provide them with both emotional and practical support. In many Shona ritual activities, one or two generations of a family will come together around a patriarch (Holleman 1952, 24), kurova guva being one of several of these ritual moments that signal family belonging. So, too, at the outset of this chapter, I showed how Pastor Govera drew from the New Testament to also emphasize "coming together" at

funerals. For Baptists, this value takes on the force of a spiritual mandate. Christians must determine the nature of their involvement in the funeral of people in various degrees of closeness to them- whether with regards to real kin- their consanguines and affines- or the fictive kin of their Church "family[83]."

Fairside Baptist funeral logic, as with ATR, thus values funeral attendance. Pastor Govera taught that it was a major role of the church, for both cultural and religious reasons, to not only attend but also to meet the need for labor and resources on the part of the grieving family, including for extended family of church members, whether or not they were Baptist, and whether or not you knew them personally. He showed his commitment to funeral participation when one workday he rounded up as many of the church staff as he could to visit the mourning household of a church member. The pastor and caretaker filled the back of the pastor's truck with food and supplies- huge cabbages from the market still with their outer leaves, bags of bread, sugar, oil- and all remaining space was taken up by staff members, leaving their work tasks unattended during the middle of the day. There were few family members present so the visit did not last more than a couple of hours, but in other cases, the church members might sing and pray together for many hours with the family, all prior to the formal funeral services.

Though valuing coming together, the problem for Fairsiders is that participation in funeral activities can lead them to unwittingly promote ATR views of relations with

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[83] Rupert Stasch describes what he calls an "event-focused understanding of kin" (2009:136) to show that through sharing goods, activities, or notable experiences, Korowai in West Papua affectively experience and also categorize their kin relations. Urbanized Zimbabweans, too, categorize and experience their kin according to their participation with them in funeral events.

mudzimu- the dead spirit ancestors. As with weddings, kin expectations can pull on ritual processes that Baptists in Harare are trying to contain as discrete moments of relational transformation. Baptists regularly express their anxieties about how they could participate in kurova guva without jeopardizing their own view of relations (or lack thereof) with the dead. They want to show respect and care for their families without compromising their view of death and spirituality. How do they manage these kin expectations while also upholding the moral value they place on participation in funeral activities?

As I described at the opening of this chapter, Pastor Govera scolded Faith United because truancy from funeral activities meant the church had not been meeting their responsibility towards grieving church and community members. He read from Romans 12 in the Bible's New Testament, which describes the church as a body with multiple members who should love and meet one another's needs. He saw participation in funerals as a matter of family care: the church was a family, and so obligations of kin should be extended towards fellow church members. He was distressed when church family members refused his help or presence. Others in the church more clearly attempted to protect aspects of their individual moral integrity from expectations of help on the part of kin- whether real or spiritual.

Pastor Govera asked the group "do young people have a place in funerals?" It was quite clear that the topic was motivated by the lack of participation on the part of the church at the recent funeral. The woman who had passed away had been living outside of Zimbabwe for many years and had not been at Fairside for a long time. During her wake back in Harare, the Faith United social media group started to receive a series of messages

requesting "physical practical help," from the young people. It appeared that few had responded. A Faith United group member posted a follow up message in Shona, which gave the reported speech of the mourners at the wake[84]. They were commenting that there was food to be served, water to be handed around for hand washing, and many other tasks. In light of all the work to be done, where were the members of the deceased's church? It was apparent that family members and the pastor both felt that church member absence at the wake was a problem.

In response to the pastor's question about the role of young people, some Faith United members expressed considerable reservations regarding their participation in funeral responsibilities. Many pointed out how they found themselves uncertain of what their family elders expected of them at a wake, particularly when they did not know the deceased. They complained that even if one was very close to the deceased- their child, perhaps- it was aunts and uncles who would take over control of the funeral proceedings, leaving one with little room to grieve in the way that one wanted. Why participate when one had so little control over the way in which the deceased was mourned? Being surrounded by people who had expectations that one could not predict and sometimes having minimal relationship with the person deceased, made these young people reticent to attend.

Several people told me that they avoided funerals of any kind, citing several different reasons for their truancy. In a few instances, this avoidance resulted from their own traumatic childhood experiences of the funerals of their parents or close loved ones.

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[84] It was not entirely clear whether the text message was coming directly from the pastor or if it was the sender interpreting the pastor's words.

Others said they found ways to shirk funeral obligations because they were offended by what they perceived as a lack of sincerity in the mourning process. Faith United participants and older church members all told me stories of their own puzzlement as youngsters who saw older aunts induce themselves to tears during funeral visits. They recounted travelling to wakes and being shocked to hear women deciding amongst themselves who it was that would cry and in what order.

Several non-funeral goers told me that they could be motivated to attend if they felt the need to show explicit care to one of the mourners based on their relation to one another. One non-funeral goer in his thirties said that while he would attend a cousin's funeral, he would not go to, say, his sister's brother-in-law's funeral. "I haven't gone through life with them," he explained. As we spoke, we were walking to the wake of a Fairside member in the neighborhood. He said he was attending this particular wake for the sake of the deceased's daughter, a peer to whom he wanted to show care because "she's the one crying."

Among Fairsiders, ideas vary about the kin to whom these funeral obligations extend. For some, responsibility towards anyone connected to one's network- kin, neighborhood, church- wielded a moral authority. My host mother took me to attend the funeral service for her husband's grandmother's brother's son. Because of the relational distance, she initially had difficulty identifying him, struggling to remember which son was the one who had died[85]. Still, with her husband away from Harare, she knew that she was responsible to attend. An elder's wife known for modelling the fulfilment of social

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[85] She identified the relation as her *Sekuru*, a general title of respect for an older man, or a more specific kinship term for a grandfather or a maternal uncle.

obligations in morally commendable ways, she made it a priority to attend and assist at funerals, even for this very distant relation. Similarly, I participated in a thrice weekly women's exercise group associated with the Baptist network, and when one member's mother passed away, the group paid a funeral visit to the woman's house following one of the aerobics sessions. By contrast, Baptist young people told me that they would only attend the funeral of those with whom they felt they had "lived life." These young people found different ways of managing the moral imperative to come together with the potential risk of having their moral autonomy undermined, whether by affirming ATR-style relations with the dead or participating in something they perceived as insincere, than did my host mother, the pastor, and the mostly middle-aged women in my exercise group[86].

## Chris' Experience

While these approaches to balancing moral autonomy and moral obligations to family in funeral participation might seem to fall along generational lines, it is also the case that experiencing the affective power of kin relations during difficult times could shift someone's stance. This was the case for Chris, who lost his father unexpectedly a few months after Pastor Govera's exhortation. In response, the group hosted an evening to support him and others who might be mourning their own losses. Earlier, Chris had been outspoken about how little responsibility he felt in terms of funeral participation. After the death of his father, he explained how his views had changed.

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[86] One Baptist young person claimed in a group discussion that youth didn't go to as many funerals because they themselves felt invincible, death being the domain of old people and not of them and their peers. I think there is some truth to this statement, though many vehemently disagreed with him.

Chris recounted to the group how his active father had fallen ill quite suddenly a few weeks previous. He described the long journey from Harare to his home town, the subsequent travel necessary in order to move his father to the hospital, and the struggle to obtain the required and very expensive medication that was only available at one location in Zimbabwe. Though his father appeared to be doing better once he had started taking the medication, he passed away shortly thereafter. Chris' story revealed the shock and trauma of the experience, as he remarked on how rapidly his father had deteriorated and all of the subsequent matters that arose following his death. He pointed to the practical difficulties of transportation, arranging the medications, hospital admittance, insurance issues, and juggling his own work schedule.

Two main issues were highlighted by Chris and by those who prayed for him at the Faith United event. Firstly, it became apparent that Chris' role as the "first-born"[87] in the family meant that his father's death entailed taking on a new and significant level of responsibility. As soon as he had finished speaking that night, the room had fallen silent, until a group member asked quietly about birth order in his family. The listeners could tell by the way that his family treated him that he was the first born: family members had asked him to make decisions about the arrangements for his father even before arriving at his home town. The listeners actually laughed in sympathy, struck by the strangeness of this formerly care-free bachelor now being expected to make consequential decisions about important family issues. When youth leader Reggie prayed for Chris at the conclusion of

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[87] Birth order is significant, as I show below, and so in English people regularly identified themselves or others based on being "first born," "second born," "last born" etc.

the meeting, he too referred specifically to the "huge amount of responsibility that's been placed upon [Chris following the death of his father]."

Secondly, the events produced a change in Chris' experience of his kin relations themselves. In his narrative, he described several instances which he tagged with the phrase "*Tete ndiani?*" ("Aunt who?"). These were all cases where a family member identified Chris with a kinship term. Chris' response ("Aunt who?") signaled less that he could not identify the person, and more the fact that he or she felt like a stranger to him. A few weeks prior Chris recalled rejecting his tete's invitation to participate in family rituals at her house. After his father's death, that same aunt became the one to guide him through the Shona funeral rites. He recounted how he now valued his kin- who were previously strangers to him- in new ways, because they had been there to assist him in taking on his new family responsibilities but also because their help provided him a profound comfort. Chris' experience of these relations had moved from being relations characterized by alienation, to relations that were affectively powerful and established through a funeral.

In his final prayer, the pastor recognized the burden of care and decision-making that Chris would now be responsible for in his family and reminded the group that the cultural obligations of mourning practice were also spiritual obligations. While in his previous talk at Faith United he had pressed young people to be more involved in serving at funerals, in this instance he acknowledged the difficulties associated with kinship responsibilities in Shona "culture." He suggested there might now be family members who call and place various burdens on Chris. He affirmed Chris' statement about "the good things in our culture" while adding "but we also know that there are other [things in our

culture] that are terrible." He prayed that Chris would know how to "discern" what to do as a "leader" in his family, so as not to be led astray to non-Christians practices when fulfilling family responsibilities. In this last statement, Pastor Govera was also affirming that Chris should not in turn allow these family obligations to undermine his own capacity for moral reflection. Individual moral reflection brings us back to the tension between maintaining kin relations while not allowing responsibilities to family to pose a risk to one's Christian values.

Pastor Govera was attempting to convince young people (and other congregants) at Fairside of enduring responsibility to participate in funerals based on biblical notions of kinship through the church. Yet the continued Baptist emphasis on individual spiritual discernment- a moral autonomy- allows young people the freedom to reject aspects of this responsibility as posing a risk to their capacity to assert their own moral values around sincerity in mourning or grieving with those whom they knew.

**Responsibility and the Experience of Kin**

In both weddings and funerals, Fairside Baptists take seriously their responsibilities towards kin, while seeking to assert some control over the degree to which these obligations shape their own actions. In Shona conceptions of death and marriage, the changes in the social position of a person are conceived as gradual and processual. Baptists Christians in Harare, by contrast, perceive of death and marriage as achieved in a single transformative moment during the wedding or funeral event. When they marry, controlling the meaning of the ritual form- as a moment of transformation- is the way that Fairsiders

221

meet their obligations to family but also uphold Baptist values regarding sexual boundaries and spiritual relations, and also modesty and fiscal restraint. In both funerals and weddings there is a dual need for family involvement: the outlay of resources and labor demands that families assist one another, but, like Chris, Fairsiders also have important affective experiences of care in the practice of coming together. In these cases, Baptists in Harare are not choosing between fulfilling Shona kinship and social expectations as opposed to Baptists ones. Instead, Fairsiders place value on kinship relations, and seek to fulfill their responsibilities towards kin but do so according to a Baptist sensibility that accords persons a right to make their own moral decisions about the degree and nature of these obligations. In this sense, kinship obligations are another area in which Fairsiders orient their social and religious lives around moral responsibilities to others and to God, while attributing decision-making authority on these moral issues to individual consciences.

When describing the Korowai value of "autonomy," Rupert Stasch points out how social relations and interactions are often created or affirmed at the very point of "violation of boundaries of separation and autonomy between people" (2009, 215). For Korowai, "egalitarian autonomy [is] a dominant but contradictory Korowai value, one that creates social problems as much as solves them" (214-5). Zimbabwean Baptists do not conceive of strangers or otherness in anything like the terms of the Korowai, but Stasch's argument makes a point about the nature of autonomy being both valued and breached as a means to create social relations. Kinship relations are an important place where the moral autonomy of Fairside Baptist is asserted and also, at times, set aside in recognition of moral responsibilities. Together, these are expressions of their human freedom. In the next

chapter, I consider how these Christians negotiate protecting their moral autonomy with regards to another moral authority: the State.

**Chapter Six:**

**The Cross and the Flag: Political Engagements with Sovereignty**

Just as kinship relations and obligations play a significant role in shaping how Baptists in Harare fulfill their responsibility to their families, Fairside Christians must also reckon with their moral freedoms and responsibilities to other forms of authority within their lives. From frequent police checkpoints on city roads to the extensive bureaucratic red tape guarding the use of hospitals or business, many of the daily moral valuations that these Christians make occur at interface with the machinations of State power. Baptist freedom is reckoned in terms of individual conscience rooted in the divine human relation, so in the face of this state power Fairside Baptists determine how to act ethically by trying to align themselves with God's character.

At the same time, as I argued in chapter three, these Christians are committed to the idea that their own human limits prevent them from fully discerning divine action in the world around them. The simultaneous commitment to divine sovereignty and also indiscernibility produces two particular outcomes. The first is that submission is a Christian responsibility, not because submission is such an important value in itself, but because submission is a way of acknowledging God's sovereignty in the situation. Submission is a feature of the human freedom that comes out of the divine-human relation. The second outcome is that even as Christians recognize the authority of the earthly government, the fallenness of human institutions does not leave any room for a representative sovereign to contain or embody divine sovereignty on earth.

Submission to *divine* sovereignty makes Fairside Baptists responsible for submitting to *earthly* sovereigns because divine sovereignty has allowed for those earthly powers to be in place. When submission to these two sovereigns- divine and earthly- conflicts, Baptists in Harare are at pains to identify and align themselves with God's authority in the first instance.

In the current context, Fairsiders are subject to authorities who are often complicit in perpetuating economic and political systems that are the cause of suffering for Zimbabweans on a daily basis. These difficult circumstances pose a challenge to Baptist affirmations of submission to government or other earthly authorities. In this chapter, I show how submission to God's sovereignty allows these Christians to deal ethically with earthly authorities, while also imposing limits on the kind of political action in which they are willing to participate.

**Baptists at the Courthouse**

In April 2016, a pastor of a small Harare church in a prosperous suburb became the unexpected architect of a viral social media campaign of patriotism for national reform. Evan Mawarire[88] uploaded a seemingly impromptu video in which he draped a Zimbabwean flag around his shoulders and aired his frustrations, from his office desk, about how difficult it was to pay his kids school fees in a country which he loved so much and in which he worked so hard[89].

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[88] Mawarire is a public figure and so I use his real name.
[89] International media frequently refer to Mawarire as a "Baptist pastor." I found no evidence of clear connections between his independent church and any of the Baptist denominations, and the pastors at Fairside did not recognize him as closely affiliated to Baptists in any way. I can only figure that this was

Mawarire was a particularly charismatic communicator: in the stream of videos that he continued to upload, he moved easily between Shona and English, repeating himself in each language so that no listeners missed any part of what he was saying. In the clips, he frequently wore a Zimbabwean flag, and called on the government to address the devastated national economy and rampant political corruption. Across the country, and throughout the very large global Zimbabwean diaspora, people- black and white- began uploading videos in response. As #thisflag, the patriotic campaign not only built momentum as a social media project, but swiftly spilled into physical space. The videos resonated with several other movements that were gaining sway, including efforts on the part of the National Vendor's Union of Zimbabwe, and a group called *Tajamuka* ("we have woken up/we are rising up"). Together, these groups precipitated a civilian movement of the kind unprecedented on the streets of Harare for a decade. While there had been a handful of individual activists visible in protest for several years, the uptick in broader civilian participation was notably newer.

After his campaign had gathered some momentum, Pastor Mawarire organized a series of *stayaways*[90]*:* rather than asking people to strike or participate in visible marches, he called on them to empty the streets and to remain at home. July 6th 2016 was perhaps the most successful stayaway, when public transportation all but halted, city streets

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journalistic short hand for a theologically conservative church. That said, his theology appeared to be mostly compatible with Fairside and other evangelical churches, and I met quite a few people within the Baptist network that knew him personally or had a first or second-degree connection with him.

[90] Stayaways have been used before in Zimbabwe as a form of civilian protest (See Jones 2012; Raftopolous and Mlambo, 2009)

cleared, and businesses and shops in cities across Zimbabwe shuttered their doors, whether in protest or simply from fear of violence.

Attempting to gauge the degree of participation in the stayaways on the part of churchgoers at Fairside, I surveyed attendees- anonymously- at a Faith United meeting following the first stayaway. Of the 18 respondents, 11 said that their place of study or work had closed during the Wednesday 6th July shutdown.[91] Based on the surveys and on many conversations that I had on that day in July, many who "stayed away" did so in order to keep a low profile and avoid being caught up in riots or violence as much as to participate actively in any kind of public statement. In some ways, their support of the protest was almost by default. Either way, city-wide support for the stayaway seemed to have been substantial[92].

Not long after the stayaway, Mawarire was arrested. The morning of Mawarire's scheduled courtroom hearing, a pastor at a Baptist affiliate church circulated social media messages, inviting congregants to show up at the courthouse for the event. Pastor Loveson was a little more socially cavalier than many other pastors in this conservative context, but I was still surprised at this seemingly overt political action.

I had not seen or heard the churches advocate for any kind of explicitly "political" activity or support- no one was teaching about how or whether to participate in the stayaways. Why was a pastor now inviting people to rally at a courtroom in support of

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[91] Results are from an anonymous written survey that I conducted of 18 respondents at a Faith United meeting two days after the stayaway, July 8th, 2016.

[92] There was substantial evidence of widespread observance of the stayaways despite the fact that state controlled media attempted to paint a "business as usual" image – including a prominent feature on the national evening news, showing everyday activities in the city streets.

someone charged with treason? My suspicion is that on that July day, Pastor Loveson's acute cultural and social alertness gave him a sense that this was an important moment.

Not very many people took up Loveson's invitation. As I tried to catch a kombi to the courthouse that morning, a couple from Loveson's church saw me and pulled over to offer a ride. Young, well-traveled, and heavily involved in ministry, Elijah and Blessing were a cheerful pair. They were headed to the courthouse, but Elijah wasn't going to show up without a flag, the symbol of the civilian protests begun by Mawarire. It proved more difficult to find a flag than we had anticipated: vendors had raised prices from a usual USD 3 to USD 30, a sign of increased consumer demand for an old symbol that was now charged with new meaning, being associated directly with Mawarire's campaign[93]. Elijah finally spotted a vendor in the median who had a few remaining flags and was willing to part with one for a more reasonable price. As we neared the courthouse, Elijah pointed out the rows of tank-like water cannons that had been lined up near the dusty grounds to ward off any potential gatherings. Still, there were some half-dozen small groups of people milling about outside the courthouse steps when we arrived around 11am, and the green, yellow, red, white and black of Zimbabwe's flag was visible among the groups.

We spent much of the morning standing in the courthouse halls, uncertain when the hearing – originally scheduled for 8am- would begin. The crowd was swelling, and with so little action people were growing tense. We were finally ushered into a courtroom, where Pastor Loveson had taken up a position in the back corner. Imitating bossy local bus

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[93] The Zimbabwean flag worn around the shoulders or on the body became so identified with the #thisflag movement that there were calls to ban members of the national parliament from wearing it in the parliament chambers because it signaled a challenge to the ruling party. See https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/10/14/how-zimbabwe-made-zimbabwes-flag-illegal-mugabe/

conductors, he directed people to move down the benches and to fill all available standing space in order to allow as many spectators in as possible. I stood in a tight corner with the pastor and a few other church members- two of them particularly conspicuous as some of the only white people in the room. When the hearing finally began, it was relatively short. The prosecutors announced that they were bringing charges that were different than those cited at Mawarire's arrest: they were now charging him with treason.

During the next several hours of waiting for the judge's verdict, the courtroom began to fill with singing and praying. The drama was palpable, as at certain points the trial could not proceed until riot police were pressured by the judge into exiting the room. People in the room called on religious leaders to lead them in prayer or a song. The leaders complied, before silencing the crowd again. The riot police had long since blocked the main gates out of the courthouse, but we saw images circulating on social media which showed the gathering mass outside the entrance, on the dusty patch of ground in front, a crowd of colorful flags, photographs of people kneeling with arms lifted up in prayer, dancing and singing in Shona. In these images and videos I saw a surprising number of white people, who most often avoid large public gatherings in town, revealing the wide appeal of Mawarire's campaign and an increasing willingness for people to take visible action.

Mawarire was finally released after dark, the judge indicating that the police and public prosecutors had not followed protocol, and so Mawarire could not be held. The crowds exploded in joy, and a traffic jam of honking cars and waving flags leaving the courthouse looked more like a hometown team win than a pastor leaving a legal

proceeding. I almost lost Elijah and Blessing in the darkness and chaos as people

recognized and then swarmed Mawarire. He gave a short speech from atop the shoulders of

his supporters, before being ushered away. Our car eventually joined the line of other cars

waving flags out of windows, and Elijah declared that he was too excited to go home,

wanting to celebrate in the streets a little longer.

Why were Baptists in Harare- often reticent to openly engage anything political-

involved in this public event in Zimbabwe's national life?

When I posed this question, several Harare Christians answered this question by

talking about the fact that Mawarire was not an explicitly political figure. Both Loveson-

the young pastor- and Elijah- Blessing's husband- agreed that they would not have come to

the courthouse for a political activist, that is, if this was merely "a political thing."

Mawarire was a "man of God," they told me, and that's why they came[94]. They recalled

the mangled face of the main opposition party leader when he appeared in court some

years before, having been brutally beaten, and said they might also have come to support

him. But Mawarire's case was not a political issue in the same way.[95] One Baptist

commenter after the fact told me: "We've been silent too long, pretending everything is

ok…so it was quite a relief that, you know, we got united at least with one common good

with no political affiliation." Others said that Mawarire was standing against injustice and

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[94] Titles like "man of God" might call to mind the language of charismatic Pentecostal followers of a prophetic leader. I suggest that this comment should not be heard in that light, for reasons that I discuss below.

[95] Indeed a politician named Acie Lumumba tried to ride the coat tails of Mawarire when he too appeared in court a few weeks later. The lack of support he received showed that people did not find it convincing that he was a similar kind of activist. Lumumba was a political candidate, expelled from the ruling parting and the founder of a new, rival party. I did not hear any of my interlocutors float the possibility of showing up at his court hearing.

his efforts were non-violent. One young woman pointed out that he aimed his critique at the system, never attacking individual people. In public discourse as well as in conversation with my interlocutors, Zimbabweans would sometimes comment on the fact that their capacity to continually find ways to withstand the economic upheavals, and to do so with humor, undermined their ability to demand changes from the government or unite in collective action. They also indicated that fear of violence was a deterrent, though others pointed to the fact that it was not in their cultural "nature" to rebel or to challenge the figures of authority[96].

These answers about support for Mawarire suggest that initially these Christians did not take their own actions to be explicitly political ones. Conversations in the wake of the courthouse event, however, revealed that Fairsiders did have an explicit vision of the relation between political and religious authority, and how they were to act ethically in response.

**Reading God's Sovereignty**

Elijah, Blessing, Loveson, and others showed up at the courthouse because doctrines about divine character, for them as for other Baptists, reveal that God cares about specific aspects of human social life that bear out in political issues. Support for political activity on the part of Harare Baptists is motivated by the sense that a major avenue of divine agency on earth occurs through people- particularly though not exclusively- through Christians. Human agents can be prompted by God to act in support of justice, as one key

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[96] On these points, see Jones (2010, 289 n 19)

231

value that is seen to align with God's concerns. Still, this concern for justice is tempered by a range of other considerations about authority and its limits.

In previous chapters, I explored understandings of human nature and the human condition – sin and original sin. These ideas about human nature are important in the current discussion because Baptists at Fairside understand their own sinfulness in relation to God's character (cf Torrance 1957). I showed how ideas about human sinfulness mean that humans- even Christians- do not possess the capacity to accurately see and judge God's work in the world. Instead, they rely on a prior affirmation of God's character, and then interpret the world around them based on that affirmation.

The result is that sovereignty and God's action in the world are read *backwards*: God's designs and control are most visible in the world based on what has already taken place. Urban Baptists in Harare affirm first that God is good and in control, and then look for his activity in the world through that lens. While congregants might sometimes challenge their leaders to articulate the *mechanism* of God's control- they want to know *how* his control plays out in practical terms- the fact that God *is* in complete control is not much disputed. Teachings regarding sovereignty remain focused on God's essential character, suggesting that whatever divine action takes place in the world is not as easy to discern as it is to affirm God's overall goodness.

**Divine Sovereignty and Zimbabwean Politics**

While Baptists in Harare privilege divine sovereignty as a key element that shapes their understanding of the world, *national* sovereignty has served as a determining

ideology in the way that Zimbabweans have understood their own political history (Hammar 2008; Ranger 2004,). This focus is congruent with a recognition by Piot that African studies since the 1950s has been concerned with "[q]uestions of sovereignty and political overrule," long before the so-called "war on terror" and the advent of theorizations of neoliberalism (2010, 10).

Sovereignty is not a fixed or established power, and as Postero and Fabricant argue, neither must it necessarily be taken as a mode of "violence or domination" (2018, 5). They suggest, instead, that "sovereignty can be constructed through negotiations and shared misunderstandings" (5), including the kind of agreements or cooperation that "political actors must forge to enact sovereignties" (5). I adopt this approach to sovereignty as I examine the different meanings through which the concept is employed, in the nationalist history and political agenda of the Zimbabwean ruling parties, and in the Baptist doctrine and ethical stances taken by Christians in Harare.

While Hammar (2008) points out that Zimbabwe's postcolonial history could be told in terms of efforts on the part of the state to gain, assert, and maintain sovereignty, this pattern of ordering sovereignty extends into the colonial and pre-colonial period. In Shona society during these eras, political and religious authority was dispersed across multiple figures - mediums, chiefs, and ancestors (Lan 1985). Thus the locus of sovereignty- either political or religious- was not centralized.

In postcolonial Zimbabwe, political rulers have sought to consolidate their power in asserting national sovereignty, in part, by means of religious discourse. Chitando (2002; 2005) has shown the ways in which political and religious discourses in Zimbabwe have

relied upon one another to assert their power, each drawing on the other to lend a credibility to their claims of sovereignty. So while Fairside church goers are wrestling with specific Baptist and reformed theological approaches to political life, they do so in a context marked by a strong history of mutual interaction between church and state and where indigenous religion and Christianity have been sites of major political organizing or seen as authoritative and dynamic avenues for mobilization and change (see Hallencreutz 1988; Maxwell 1999; Ranger 2004; Scarnecchia 2008).

Given this relation between the political and the religious, it is perhaps somewhat surprising, so O'Neill (2010) has claimed, the lack of attention paid to Christianity in citizenship studies. Christian citizenship has only recently begun to emerge as a relevant field for ethnographers (see Marshall 2009; O'Neill 2010), and the work in this area has overwhelmingly focused on Pentecostal Christianity. In her exploration of "postmulticulturalism" in Bolivia, Nancy Postero takes citizenship to be the "relationship between the state and its members" (2007, 6) but asserts that because claims to citizenship and the rights associated with it take place in particular political moments and within particular structures, citizenship might better be thought of as "an idea or discourse that orders society" (223), and as a site of negotiation itself. While my interlocutors do not often use the terms of "citizenship" explicitly, the ethics they are negotiating is focused on the relationship between themselves and the state, particularly when they take God to be the divine sovereign.

Conservative Protestants like those at Fairside differ significantly from neo-Pentecostals and other mainline Protestant groups in their approach to engaging the nation

and the state. Fairside Baptists are not full separatists, but neither do they possess the religious nationalism of many Pentecostals (Marshall 2009; O'Neil 2010). While Zimbabwean Baptists pray for their nation, they do not presume that the country will be saved as a whole, nor that the nation will be the unit of transformation. Instead, sovereignty informs the kind of political ethics in which they engage.

#This Flag and this Cross: Teaching youth about Christians and politics

The #thisflag campaign, and the series of civilian street actions that followed, occasioned an ongoing set of conversations about how Baptist Christians were to engage the state, and to act as citizens of their own nation. People were still grappling with these issues the following month, at the annual week-long youth meetings put on by the Baptist network of Churches in the city. Termed "Youth Week," (YWeek) these meetings were held during school break, for youth between the ages of 15 and 24, though in fact many more people of all ages were involved. The week was styled like a day camp, consisting of workshops, lecture sessions, small group meetings, games and outings.

During YWeek, some 130 young people, on break from a rigorous, exam-based schooling system, were seated in an elementary school gym which served as a church on weekends, in rows of desks borrowed from classrooms nearby, to listen to local pastors and teachers give theologically sophisticated and text-heavy talks. Each attendee was issued a composition book which they filled enthusiastically with notes as the speakers present lecture-style instruction. The school hall is surrounded by greenery, where the group took frequent breaks for tea and home-made baked goods supplied by church

235

mothers. The afternoons were filled with water-balloon games and sports, which, for many, makes the whole event a yearly highlight. The "camp" dynamic is maintained by running gags, particularly jokes played on and between the pastors.

A popular feature of the event is the afternoon "elective" workshops. Provocative posters for each elective are posted to the YWeek notice board at an appointed time, and campers rush to pencil their names into the limited number of slots available for each. The content of the morning talks is particularly doctrine-heavy, while afternoon workshops and discussion sections take up more contemporary concerns and skills intended to help with practical Christian living. In 2016, the #thisflag campaign described above had begun in April, and by the time YWeek started in August, it was a hot topic of discussion. In that politically surprising year, church leader Mr. Banda chose to do an elective titled "#This cross and the flag: Politics and the Christian citizen."

In the workshop, Mr. Banda showed how God's attributes were the interpretive tools that Christians should use in order to determine how to deal with politics. He framed his teaching around two particular issues, the first addressing the relation between the state and the "church" (Christians as a collective), and the second relating to the individual choices a Christian makes in assessing how they respond to the political. He used the #thisflag campaign as an entry point to these issues, in part by outlining two patterns that he saw Christians taking towards politics.

The patterns are posited on two distinct relations between the political and spiritual. In the first pattern, the spiritual and the political operate in distinct realms, with the former taking complete precedence over the latter. The spiritual is so privileged in this instance

that the only way to address earthly matters is through spiritual means- that is, by staying at home to pray. Though one could pray for change in the mundane world, the political realm in this framework ultimately does not matter at all. Banda characterized people who live according to this pattern as those who say: "Whatever…happens here on earth, it doesn't matter; it's all going to pass. Let's just glorify Christ and wait to die and go to heaven."

The second pattern involves a complete absorption of the spiritual by the political. Christians operating according to this framework become so concerned with social justice issues that these completely supersede spiritual realities. Those following this second pattern, according to Banda, are focused on their own discontent with a particular situation. The second group Banda described was reminiscent of a broader running narrative I heard Zimbabwean urbanites level at themselves: people were prone to complain too much, without taking real action in response. Such was a worry continually reiterated in popular parlance: that we, Zimbabweans, regularly find fault without producing alternatives.

Mr. Banda identified himself as having operated according to the first pattern. When Mawarire was arrested, unlike Pastor Loveson, he had been very reluctant to show public support for the arrested pastor. He did eventually go to the courthouse, but not until very late in the day, because he had been concerned about supporting someone whose beliefs he could not verify. He was not opposed to political action; he told me he had been to the courthouse before, standing to support non-Christian defendants because they were being treated unjustly. In this case, however, he was worried by the fact that people were explicitly using Christian rhetoric about God to justify their political agendas.

Banda introduced and advocated for a third pattern, born out in his own reasons for finally going to the courthouse. In this third approach, God's attributes are used to determine the kinds of responsibility that a Christian should take, and thus, the nature of the relationship between spiritual concerns and political ones. For instance, when the charges against Mawarire were upgraded to treason, from merely "inciting public violence" and "disturbing the peace," part way through the day at court, then Banda perceived the issue to have become a matter of "justice." "I know my God wants to stand with those who are being oppressed," he told me later. God's love of justice was important for Banda in assessing how to act morally and spiritually. It was "more the character of God that drove me [to the courthouse]," he concluded. Rather than placing priority on spiritual activity to the neglect of mundane political action, or of allowing popular causes to dictate one's spiritual sensibilities, Banda sought to bring his own moral motivations into alignment with the attributes of God. In this case Banda's conscience was led by the determining factor: that Banda's action fit with God's character. Since God cared about justice and Mawarire was being unjustly treated, Banda went to rally with thousands of others[97].

"Justice" is a similar concern for the Vineyard Christians of Southern California, described by Jon Bialecki (2009; 2017). Yet rather than this concern for justice motivating them towards concrete political action, they reject many kinds of collective mobilization. This is because the interventions that would bring about a more just system are not

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[97] Since Mawarire had been arrested under a different set of charges than the ones brought in the courtroom, the requirements for the case against him, according to the law, had not been met. This made the case an unjust one.

conceived as compatible with the current earthly temporal order. What Vineyard Christians "call for is always a 'radical' justice that must mark its alterity, its link to the divine, by rejecting quotidian forms of practice that could be given a space in existing social arrangements" (2009, 116). The Baptists I have described *do* anticipate that God will act within "quotidian" forms, but often reject political action for similar reasons to the Vineyard believers, that is, that they see the limits of human action in the existing world.

Justice is a divine attribute that people reference in determining that God supported their advocacy for Mawarire's release. There are several others, however, and divine sovereignty is perhaps the most significant of God's characteristics with which Baptists in Harare seek to align in their approach to the political. This became evident in the rest of the elective, as Banda taught attendees how Christians were supposed to relate to their government and to behave morally as citizens. If God was sovereign, then the government, in place by legitimate means, was there under God's purview. Therefore, justice could be mediated through the instruments of the state. The appropriate response to this legitimate government was submission to it- by way of paying taxes and by following the law- as a way to recognize that God was in full control.

Banda taught this point by describing a passage from the gospels where Jesus is challenged by religious leaders on the issue of paying taxes to the Roman authorities. Banda explains:

> Jesus' answer is that- hey, you can't equate a Christian government to a legitimate government…You can't say 'if my government is not Christian, then it's not…legitimate.' So, Jesus' affirmation of paying the tax shows that even the pagan state is legitimate in his eyes. Do we struggle with that?... I struggle with that, right?

Banda acknowledged that, difficult as it might be, government legitimacy is not a product of how closely that government aligns with Christian values. *God* places the government there and he can do so through secular institutions- like the mechanisms of the constitution. How did a Christian know that a government was legitimate? As one attendee answered, "cause it's there, and it was elected."

One outcome of God's sovereignty over government institutions is that God can use it to issue forth his will- another reason for Christians to submit to it. "God actually mediates his blessings to us oftentimes through government," Banda explained, anticipating that the group would receive this statement with some degree of incredulity. He presumed that they would find it difficult to consider the same government that was full of corruption and overseeing a tanking economy, harsh job prospects, dilapidated infrastructure, and scarce resources as that which not only *could* but *is* mediating divine blessings: The government was "an imperfect tool" that God could still use to bring about his blessings. Banda's conclusion is that God is the author and animator of those blessings the government enacts, not the ruling party. He asked attendees to list what blessings they thought they did have as a country. People were slow to respond, but they concluded that they did have *some* degree of peace, religious freedom, and access to education. Banda replied, "that's not because of ZANU-PF [the ruling party] that's because of God."

On occasion, one of the pastors at Fairside would make his ideology of governance as explicit as Banda had made his. From the pulpit, this pastor would express heartfelt distress at the number of children or disabled adults that he would see begging at street corners and traffic intersections. In these moments he made clear that the primary task of a

government, as he saw it, was to provide care for the most needy or vulnerable among us. God might be the primary source of help and of all good gifts, but the government was to be one of the main distributors and mediators of these gifts, and it was failing at its task. In needing to support so many vulnerable city residents through its ministries- which the church did willingly- the pastor saw the church as compensating for what should have been the responsibility of the state, that is, the blessings of God that the state should be dispersing.

Though God can use even a "pagan" government to channel his blessings- even if, as the pastor lamented, it often did not- and Christians are to submit to this government in recognition of God's sovereignty, they are still ultimately accountable to God. Within the framework Banda builds, the importance of submission has a dual edge: while it means that Christians must take seriously the legitimacy of even the most pagan government, it also means that their primary allegiance is firstly to God. Should the secular government in some way force Christians to undermine God's injunctions, believers may stop submitting to the government for the sake of submitting to Christ. But Banda warns that such a case should be very carefully considered, and that even a government that promotes or rewards sinful behavior does not undermine its own legitimacy by doing so.

By the end of the elective Banda had completely rejected the first pattern of Christian response to the political, to which he himself had at one point aligned. He pointed out that a Christian's actions in the world are always read as political, even when not intended to be. This is because a Christian's actions are statements about authority:

statements about God's sovereign control. Thus, the political and spiritual realms cannot be turned into separate and hierarchically organized realms.

Though not requiring that they be loyal to the ruling party, attendees at the elective also pointed out that God can use whatever mechanisms he chooses in order to fulfill his will. This includes using the ruling party. As one white, female leader in the room commented:

> For me, when Evan [Mawarire, the arrested pastor] started [the campaign], you go "okay Lord, so you've raised this man." That doesn't mean that man is the answer, God is the answer. He may raise another man. He may raise many men. He may do anything.

At which point, Mr. Banda interjected, saying "He may even raise a man within ZANU-PF!" The woman agreed, stating that it was God who would produce change and so Christians were not reliant on any one leader or political party, nor should they completely reject any single person or party as incapable of fulfilling God's will.

Banda and the white female leader also actively undermine the notion of a single charismatic prophet-savior. They oppose the idea that the charisma of a person could be a sign that they are a special agent of God. Mawarire is certainly charismatic as a leader and speaker, but this made Banda perhaps even more suspicious of him at first. The leaders in the room at the YWeek elective make clear that, counter to the power of the charismatic prophet or to the cults of personality around populist leaders, Christians were to take the actions of individual leaders as almost negligible, much in the same way as they had been told the Party was not the ultimate cause of their blessings. Instead, Christians are to understand God's action in the world as primary, and not dependent in any way on humans to achieve.

Banda's concluding prayer reminded the elective attendees that the government is the mediator of God's blessings to them, and that Christians are to be active in making their city and country a better place:

> Thank you so much for the government that you have given to us. Thank you for mediating the blessing of being able to worship right now through the government and the blessing of being able to go to school and learn and to leave the country largely freely. Thank you, Lord, that we are relatively safe. Thank you, father, for all of these blessings. Lord help us to be wise as Christians to…help us to see…not the extreme of just being silent and just thinking about heaven and being of no earthly good and also to get involved and seek the welfare of our country and our city in the opportunity in the context that you have given us.

In addressing the #thisflag campaign, Banda taught that the government has legitimacy as a *secular* institution and by virtue of its own existence. Divine sovereign control means God can use the institution as a means to impart grace and blessings. Beliefs about God's sovereignty which underlay governmental legitimacy then compel believers to work within the existing institutional mechanisms as legitimate ones, rather than attempting to overturn them. Hope remains in God for right outcomes, so the political party itself is somewhat incidental to the outcome.

Banda does not advocate that secular institutions be charged primarily with promoting morality (contra the Falwell Christians described by Susan Harding (2000)). Rather, he explained that the government works in the civil realm according to secular rules. Christians in other contexts have claimed that Christianity itself sets the terms for a secular public sphere, a feature of social and political organization worth protecting.[98] However, for Fairsiders secular authority is not entirely distinct from spiritual authority.

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[98] I refer particularly to those Christians described by Matthew Engelke as involved in the British and Foreign Bible Society (2013). I discuss their case further below.

Rather, secular authority is legitimized by God's sovereignty. Divine sovereignty means that the government is not the actual author, but merely the animator, of God's blessings and will.

The way that Banda frames his teaching reveals his concerns about possible approaches that his audience might take in the then-current political and economic climate. The injustices of the situation were becoming clearer and more painful: not only was unemployment incredibly high, workers were not getting paid, and when finally paid they could not access their own money because of cash shortages. The government was instituting laws which made it harder for citizens to buy and sell everyday imported products, and then cracking down on peaceful protests that were staged on a patriotic platform. People were indeed angry. Banda was attempting to temper some of this anger with careful reflection. He was also trying to warn those who were tuned into "social justice" issues that these were a cause and, while important, should remain ancillary to the gospel message about Christ's salvation.

Banda was encouraging attendees to read God's agency in the situation in retrospect. By taking God's control to be absolute- as sovereign- then any institution or person in place could be seen in some way as being permitted by God. The particular relation between divine sovereignty and politics is something that has been considered in political philosophy in terms of "political theology," an area of thought which offers additional insight into the Baptist case.

**Sovereignty and Political Philosophy**

Thus far I have been exploring the ethical considerations of Baptist Christians as they evaluated their participation in the political realm. God's sovereignty means that Christians interpret events in the world as being under divine aegis, and so they render some degree of authority to secular institutions by virtue of God's control. The question of the extent of sovereign power has been addressed by anthropologists who have drawn on recent discussions in political philosophy termed political theology.

Recent engagement with Agamben's critique of Carl Schmitt has focused on identifying the "sovereign" as the one who decides on the exception (Agamben 1995; Schmitt 1985). Schmitt's project sought to recover the "element of transcendence" in sovereignty, which he argues was eroded in the centuries around the Enlightenment (Strong 2005, xxv). Schmitt asserts that "[a]ll significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts" not merely in terms of content but also in terms of structure (1985, 136). Thus, by his account, efforts to recover the "element of transcendence" in theories about governing sovereignty and authority are necessarily tied to theology.

In this model of sovereignty, political theology springs from the need for an external, transcendent figure to confer "legitimacy" on earthly politics. The need for the transcendent to legitimize authority is termed a "political theology." This theology posits a lack or absence on the part of humans and power; "political theology" "presumes the nonautarchy of the human being, the insufficiency of human innate and acquired capacities, the impossibility of an immanent rational foundation of one's way of life"

245

(Assman, Assman and Hartwich 2004, 140). Political theology emphasizes human incompleteness in the realm of the political: humans cannot fully legitimize a structure of authority in and of themselves.

Fairside Baptists also subscribe to a kind of negative political theology, where the inadequacy of human capacities refers believers continually to a transcendent authority distinct from human efforts. At the same time, God's transcendent sovereignty is not fully instituted in secular institutions or worldly powers. Divine sovereignty allows the State to operate as legitimate in earthly matters, and as potential animator of God's blessings. Still, a State cannot encompass divine sovereignty on earth, and so God's sovereign work spills over into other realms, while remaining distinct from them.

Based on his own ethnographic case with Pentecostal Christians in Melanesia, Joel Robbins (2013) asks why Urapmin in Papua New Guinea do not have the "political theology" that many other Pentecostal groups do. For the Urapmin, the religious and political realms remain distinct as a "diarchy." It is conceivable that in this case the more priveledge Christian realm could fully encompass the political realm, which would result in a kind of distinct Christian nationalism. Indeed, similar approaches are found among Pentecostal groups in a variety of places (see Marshall 2009). By contrast, Urapmin divide these realms without allowing one to incorporate the other, segmenting off the appropriate human action in each realm. As Robbins then argues, the "Urapmin diarchy is not a complete rejection of politics. It is not a quietism that foregoes all relation to the political realm, but rather a quite assertive way of handling politics, one that carefully circumscribes

the scope for legitimate political action. To misread this as political withdrawal is to badly misunderstand its character" (Robbins 2013, 207-8).

While negative theology characterizes the relation that Fairsiders presume between political authority and divine sovereignty, it could be argued that sovereignty has been at the heart of Zimbabwe's larger political history (Bornstein 2005, Hammar 2008). Hammar highlights two modes of sovereignty in which the Zimbabwean state has engaged: the first is a national assertion of sovereignty in the face of a colonial past, a kind of "discursive" use of sovereignty in political rhetoric, and the second aims to create and maintain "boundaries of inclusion and exclusion," determining who gains the protections of the law, and who has the authority to delimit these boundaries (2008, 429). In the latter sense, after Agamben, the sovereign power of the state is established in the very act of determining who acquires the safeguards of the state and who falls beyond its care. Above, I traced how the application of this view of sovereignty in contemporary political philosophy draws on Schmitt's and others' arguments about the theological formations of sovereignty.

Ruth Marshall asserts that for postcolonial Africa, the "site of sovereignty is designated as an 'elsewhere'" (2009, 171 citing Mbembe). This externalization of sovereignty stands in contrast to "modern democracies" where sovereignty is located in an "empty place" (169). Sovereignty from an empty place makes no recourse to transcendent authority but also requires no "outside," as it were. It is this sovereignty without transcendence that Schmitt critiqued. By contrast, sovereignty in the postcolony, Marshall claims, is a sovereignty that belongs to and exercises a power from beyond immediate space. The outside or "beyond" quality of sovereignty characterizes urban Baptists

engagement with the political and economic structures that shape their experiences of postcolonial uncertainty, though they locate this sovereignty with the divine rather than the colonizers or multinational institutions implied in Marshall's account.

The spectrum of evangelical Christians in Zimbabwe (of which the Baptist network is a part) position themselves ideologically to the realm of politics according to a range of factors, from "hope for divine intervention" that motivates "political involvement, to an emphasis on sin that puts the possibility of change "beyond humanity's power," requiring God's action " (Mukonyora 2008, 146). As Mukonyora shows, the result is that different groups, sometimes within the same evangelical churches in Zimbabwe, disparately participate vociferously in political advocacy and also renounce intervention in the political world.

How to account for these differences in the terms of sovereignty? As we saw in the teaching of Mr. Banda, Christians expect that God will work his blessings and his will through the operation of secular institutions. This leads to the key attribute of trust in God, which should also result in submission, a matter which I take up again below. Yet in one sense this sovereignty must always be read backwards: Christians know, in part, what God's will is based on what they judge occurring around them. If the government is in place legitimately, then because God's sovereignty is total, that government must in some sense be a part of God's will. In this way the sovereign or determined nature of the state of things is always understood in retrospect.

God's sovereignty will also shape what is possible in the political realm, based on Christian eschatological visions. While belief about divine authority does not allow for the

opening of the kind of "rhetorical" space described by Jassal (2016, 15), this kind of relation between the political and the divine does show how the two together can produce a "particular ontological and ethical worldview towards authority and governance" (17), where authority is also rendered in divine and not "secular" terms.

As Mr. Banda pointed out about himself, he had been operating at the pole that privileged the future and de-emphasized the current earthly realm: he emphasized the falling away of the present realm and the establishment of a new heaven and a new earth. This approach downplayed the meaningfulness of engaging in action in the current era. He was prompting himself and others to temper such an approach by engaging cautiously in earthly political matters because God's sovereignty makes the here and now meaningful, too. Christians acknowledge divine sovereignty in the present by fulfilling their responsibilities to legitimate secular institutions and also by engaging in activities that contribute to making their cities and state better.

Reviewing the aspects of the theoretical approaches of Agamben, Benjamin and Schmitt, Smith points out that: "Sovereignty, in sum, is not a substantive quality to be possessed but rather a condition of political interactions, embedded in the 'accentualities of relations' (Humphrey 2007, 420), that ground that association" (Smith 416), akin to the characterization of Postero and Fabricant given above. Zimbabwean Baptists do affirm that sovereignty is a defining attribute possessed by God, but in order to work that attribute out in relation to the world and to their own lives, they make recourse to other aspects of God's character and understand those attributes in relation to their own nature as humans. They, like Smith and Humphrey, take sovereignty to be deeply relational.

The way that divine sovereignty plays out in ordered social life is an empirical

question. Assman, Assman and Hartwhich summarize three potential forms of manifest

sovereignty on earth, as they read in the work of philosopher of religion, Jacob Taubes:

> [I]f one calls to mind the possible relationships between politics and
> religion or between domination and salvation in their historical forms, there
> are only three conceivable basic types, which correspond exactly to the
> three parts of the theme: that of representation, which regards the sovereign
> as God's earthly representative; that of 'dual sovereignty' (to use R.
> Needham's expression), which strictly distinguishes spiritual and worldly
> sovereignty or attachment; and that of theocracy, which seeks to
> institutionalize divine sovereignty on earth directly, and not through
> representation (2004, 139)[99].

For Taubes, the existence of the Messiah means that divine sovereignty cannot actually be

"represented on earth", and so "[th]e messianic cannot legitimate real, existing political

orders but can only make them irrelevant and ultimately replace them" (Assman, Assman

and Hartwhich 2004, 142). By his reckoning, one key aspect of sovereign authority is that

it must remain external to any earthly institutions.

The implications of this idea that divine power cannot inhabit human institutions

shapes the politics of many Christians, including the British and Foreign Bible Society

employee Dave Landrum, described by Matthew Engelke (2013). Despite his strategic role

engaging UK Members of Parliament, Dave ultimately took politics itself to be "a human

construct," and thus less dependable and less prioritized than the task of pursuing Christ's

kingdom. As Engelke glosses it: the "[mechanisms and processes of politics]…are

products of humanity and are flawed" (105). This approach prevented Dave, like Mr.

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[99] To these three potential forms is added a dual dimension of "vertical" and "horizontal" dimensions of sovereignty. The vertical privileges the "cratological dimension," that is, the authority to rule, as opposed to the horizontal or "the social" dimension, the sovereign power of the people themselves, theologically the "body of Christ" or the church (Afterword 140).

Banda, from advocating for specific party allegiances on the part of Christians. How do Christians in Harare respond ethically to the evidence of the sovereign in the State, while knowing it cannot embody God's actual character and sovereign will?

**Submission through Tax-Paying**

For Fairsiders, submission is one answer to this question. Submission is the corollary to sovereignty, and also an index of freedom. As I explained above, Fairside Baptists understand God's sovereignty relative to the limits of human nature. Submission to governing authorities was the site of entry to discussing the relation between politics and Christian life for Blessing, Mr. Banda, and for attendees at Mr. Banda's elective because submission is the way that the will of the human recognizes and responds actively in the face of divine sovereignty, aligning the self with God's character. Banda takes order and rule as one of the signs that God is in control: "By God's grace," he said in the workshop, "there is some measure of order, of peace…of justice…we don't have anarchy happening." Elijah had made a related comment on the way to the courthouse: in other countries, similar circumstances – a dire economy, drought, cash crisis- would have led to civil war. I often heard people in Zimbabwe lament the state of their nation, at the same time expressing gratefulness for peace. People would emphasize the stark contrast between their own nation and the civil war of the Central African Republic, or the indignant street protests and violent crime of South Africa. People expressed relief that their nation had remained free of civil war, and Elijah saw this as evidence of God's work.

Emphasizing the contrast between "order" and "anarchy," Banda identifies order as one of the blessings that God provides and also the way that God's control is visible. The appropriate response to this order is submission.

What did this submission look like? For Elijah and Blessing, submission looked different than for their parents. On July 13th, the young couple had headed directly into the center of public activity, stopping to collect a symbol of protest along the way. By contrast, those of their parents' generation in the Baptist network were generally wary of the public action taking place and avoided town whenever similar events went on.

Blessing explained that these differences were rooted in divergent experiences of their own nation. As we had stood with swelling crowds in the hallways of the Central Courthouse, she remarked that the generation who had lived through the war for liberation- our parents- approached any kind of public gathering differently. She admitted that she had not told her own mother that she had come to the courthouse today. The inclination of the generation who had experienced the war for liberation was to avoid visible public participation, and the possibility of violent confrontation, by submitting to authorities [100]. They thus recommended staying at home to pray.

Elijah and Blessing also placed a priority on submission, but it looked different from the submission of their parents. Prayer was important to both her and to her parents,

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[100] Blessing used a story from her mother's childhood to explain her reasoning: As a teenager near the end of the war for liberation, her mother had been playing with friends outside, near their home. Soldiers were moving through the area telling guerilla fighters to cease their efforts, when they came upon her mother and playmates. They were instructed to leave immediately with the soldiers, in whatever clothes they were wearing. Along the way, they were instructed to pick up bullet shells and other items and place them in bags that they were given. They travelled for three days, sleeping wherever they stopped, until the soldiers told the girls they could go back home. Blessing's mother returned to parents who were terrified with worry. These kinds of experiences were the reason that this generation responded differently to authority and to the threat of national violence.:

as was submission. Both generations were wary of the government, but also considered it necessary to submit to it. For Blessing, however, and for the many who gathered at the courthouse, prayer was not wholly sufficient. While submission could take the form of paying taxes, submission did not demand that she be absent from a public demonstration in support of a government detractor.

Banda and Blessing both show that submission is an important consideration in how a Christian is to approach the world of politics. One young man asked at Banda's workshop if it was ok to "advocate for things like *regime change*[101]" or if it was the task of the Christian to say "'yeah, we gonna pray and let God's will be done'?" Banda's answer was that submission to the government in recognition of God's sovereignty did not mean that Christians could not advocate for change. Banda emphasized that voting and elections were the way to do so.

Answering the young man, he said:

There are systems in place for those things to change… the next election. That is still under the sovereignty of who? of God. So you will have an opportunity during the next election…cause that's what our constitution would say…. you have the right to vote and say why you want to vote that way. You can do that and you are still under Romans 13[102]. You are submitting to the government because it's the same government that says…you have the right…to vote and you have freedom to express yourself in that. It's not wrong. You're still being a heavenly citizen and an earthly citizen.

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[101] In a one-party context, *regime change* was a term used to refer to a kind of insurrection- a show of disloyalty to the ruling party, or of undermining the de-colonizing efforts of ZANU-PF, often interpreted in treasonous terms.

[102] Banda was referring to a passage the group had discussed from Romans, chapter 13: 1-2, which begins: "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves."

Banda shows that he is concerned about those who might think that submission to the government means that one cannot challenge the ruling party by voting against it. In a country where only one party has been in power since independence, and where solidarity with that party is seen as the measure of loyalty to blackness, Zimbabweanness, and de-colonization efforts, submission to the government could sound like to submission to the ruling party. But Banda points out that the constitution allows for citizens to vote for a change in rulership, and that to do so is still an act of submission. In other contexts, I heard Faith United members affirm similar constitutional rights. While these young people disagreed on the role that popular discontent should take in the public sphere, they did agree that one of the biggest threats in society was that people did not know their freedoms and rights under the newly instituted 2008-constitutional re-write. This ignorance meant Zimbabweans did not demand that the government uphold their constitutional freedoms. Fairside Baptists believe that Christians should have access to their constitutional rights, and submission to authority does not demand unyielding loyalty to the ruling party.

In this way, submission is importantly implicated in issues of freedom. Baptists in Harare see it as vital that Zimbabweans know their constitutional freedoms, so that they know the necessary limits of their submission to earthly power. But submission is also a *kind of* freedom. Fairside Baptists reckon the relation between freedom and submission in similar ways to Dave of the London Bible Society, introduced above. Dave takes human

freedom to "com[e] through the act of submission to sacrifice" (Engelke 2013, 106)[103].

This submission predicates freedom directly on the divine human relation.

Submission is made relevant for my interlocutors both because of cultural patriarchal modes of governance, and because submission is an important means by which to recognize God's divine sovereignty at work in the world in often semi-opaque ways. Patriarchy is represented in government narratives as the avenue for returning to a rightly ordered world, where presiding elders teach the correct history to youths and women, and where black, traditional and autochthonous identities are reclaimed in opposition to whiteness, foreignness, and modernity (Jones 2012). Fairside churchgoers do not wholly reject the importance of elders, and indeed submission remains a value with which they have to reckon. What they *do* reject is the government narrative that has coopted patriarchy in service of their own ends, rather than in service of their people.

Scholars of Zimbabwe have long discussed the making of a politically motivated narrative of history (Jones 2012; Ranger 2004) as a way to assert national sovereignty in the face of a colonial past of dispossession. "Patriotic history" justified the land reform policies and quelling of dissidence voices propagated by the ruling party. Teaching this "patriotic history" became a tool of ruling party governance, which drew on a gendered and generationally based pattern of authority (Jones 2012, Ranger 2004). Governing by patriarchal authority bolstered the efforts of particular ZANU-PF leaders: as elders who had fought in the liberation war, they were lent a physical and mental toughness. Blessing

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[103] That being said, Dave's perspectives lead him to advocate a particular kind of "secular public square" (106) that is not quite what Fairsiders seek. They do see the just and fair functioning of a government- and not necessarily a Christian one- as an important venue for the exercise of human freedom.

pointed out how this narrative differentially affected the political involvement of various generations, evident in the kinds of submission older and younger people participated in.

Both the narrative of patriotic history and patterns of patriarchal authority have been used to prompt submission on the part of Zimbabwean citizens. Chitando (2005) notes a vision of submission - or passive acceptance- promoted by the ruling party by way of religious imagery. After Mugabe won the 2002 elections (yet again) Chitando describes propaganda songs played to provide a narrative in which Zimbabwean citizens could imagine themselves- calling on them to "Remain resolute!" (*Rambai Makashina*): "Like religious people who wait patiently for the divine will to be done, so would true patriots bear the burden of inflation, fuel and food shortages, unemployment and other economic difficulties" (2005, 233-234). At the same time, various forms of submission fall along both temporal and religious lines: Baptists submit in recognition that God can and does use human institutions to mediate his blessings, and they affirm an orderly society as a reflection of his attributes. Older Zimbabweans remember all too well the violence entailed in the war for national liberation, and so shy away from public demonstration, while others do not see submission and public demonstration as being in conflict.

Banda was at pains to make clear that the instructions about submission to governing authorities laid out in Romans 13 are not qualifiable on the grounds that the Roman government was a benevolent one. Quite the opposite, in fact. He described the Roman government as the most extreme pagan example about which Jesus could teach submission. By comparison, the Zimbabwean government is not pagan at all. Thus, the grounds for submission as indicated in the Bible are not made on the basis of the

"Christian" nature of the government. The ground for submission is based on the government's legitimacy, and on Jesus' teaching that Christians must acknowledge and submit to those authorities in the earthly realm. God's sovereignty makes it retrospectively apparent that the authorities are in place by God's design, and so submission to these authorities represents an affirmation of divine control, even if the submission is made more directly to secular rulers and institutions.

When Mr. Banda asked the group what kind of citizens Christians were called to be in relation to even a brutally pagan government, the white female leader in the room answered, "good taxpayers." Blessing pointed out, emphatically, that she and Elijah submit to government authority by turning in their taxes, a very substantial portion of their monthly income. She remarked that many people do not pay their taxes at all, but despite the high cost this couple saw tax-paying as a form of submission.

The matter of tax-paying was raised several times in conversations about submission to governing authorities. There are several likely reasons for this. Firstly, the example used by Banda in his opening teaching- that of Jesus being addressed by Herodians and by Pharisees- is about the religious leaders asking whether they should pay tribute to the Roman government. He answers by pointing out that Caesar's head is on the coin and utters the oft quoted dictum: "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's" (Matt. 22:21). Money, in this narrative, becomes a key image of what belongs in the earthly realm and over which earthly powers may maintain control. Blessing described her and her husband's tax paying responsibility as a form of submission, even as she went out in public protest.

Tax-paying is particularly salient as an image in the Zimbabwean context because of the very large informal sector in which so much of the country's economic activity takes place, and which thus undercuts the tax-revenue stream. I did not hear any Baptist Christians condemn the existence of the informal sector, nor condemn informal sector workers, who often operate at the margins of survival. Rather, I heard frustration over the misuse of the taxes that people did pay. Recall Ratizdo's exasperated tirade, in chapter three, over the taxpayer money that goes to the transportation office, but which results in no noticeable improvements in the pot-hole ridden roads, particularly because of corruption on the part of council officials. Blessing's choice to pay taxes while protesting stood in contrast to those Christians who took submission to mean primarily quiet prayer in private space. Tax paying showed she was submitting, even as she confronted government authority in public space.

This idea of responsibility as a feature of Christian citizenship could be read in terms of contemporary ideologies of "responsibilization," where individuals are held responsible for what would once have been the prerogative of the state (Postero 2007, 167, 180). What makes the Zimbabwean Baptist case distinctive in this regard is that the value of responsibility is reckoned in terms of divine sovereignty[104]. Because Fairside Baptists take neither the individual moral self nor the state to be the means to social transformation, the sense of responsibility that they are willing to bear on behalf of the state has strong limits.

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[104] The Zimbabwean state is sufficiently totalitarian that I would argue it is not willing to relinquish much authority for self-governance to individuals.

The issue of submission brings us full circle, back to the links between human freedom and moral responsibility. Human freedom depends on the relation between humans and God, and Baptists recognize that they should submit to God as the sovereign. While this sovereignty legitimates, to a certain degree, the human institutions that are in place, divine sovereignty cannot inhabit these institutions in ways that attribute to them much power. If we return to the dictum "render unto Caesar what is Caesar's," it is now evident that for Fairsiders, this phrase does not produce a strict separation of the realms of political and divine authority. Divine sovereignty *is* implicated in the political realm, though not represented by it.

**Conclusion**

In Harare, Baptist Christian political (in)activity is founded on beliefs about the relationship between God's control of the world, and the responsibility of Christian citizens. Hararean Baptists take it as their ethical responsibility to submit in order that they align themselves with God's attributes, chief among them his sovereignty. Divine sovereignty means that there is no need for institutions, nations, or citizens to be "Christianized." Fairsiders are not cultivating a vision of a Christian government or nation, in contrast to Christians in many other postcolonial contexts in Africa and elsewhere. Rather, they see God's sovereignty as meaning that blessings and justice can both be mediated through existing secular institutions and mechanisms, and that God can use these mechanisms to achieve his ends, rather than merely the ends of the political party. Christian submission to these institutions is important because of God's sovereignty over

them. At the same time, the relationship between earthly and divine authority is important for people to decide how to act. They recognize that their action *or* inaction will be politicized but are not complete political quietists.

In their acts of submission, these Christians do not claim that the government is necessarily *good,* but merely that God has *allowed* it to be in place, permitting it some degree of authority. Christians must submit to governmental authority *and* can also use it as a valid channel for creating desired social and religious change. The act of submission affirms that God is in control of the world.

As I described above, any kind of Christian nationalism is absent from Mr. Banda's discussion and from much of the public sphere discussions about religion and politics in Zimbabwe in part because it forces a complete subsuming of the political within the religious realm. The problem with such an approach, as Taubes argued, is that no secular authority on earth can represent divine sovereignty in its fullness. For many evangelicals in Harare, Fairside Baptists among them, God can work through earthly structures, but the inadequacy of these temporal orders means that they can never fully assume a character that allows God's authority to move unrestricted through the world. Human institutions remain incapable of achieving this task completely, though God may still mediate his blessings through political parties, government ministries, schools, and even corrupt government officials.

The political, religious and legal realms all implicate sovereignty because of how they order the social world (Kirsch and Turner 2009). For Zimbabwean Baptists, God is orderly and so his sovereignty can be manifest in the orderliness of civil life, and they

value this order as a recognition of God's presence. Of course, those knowledgeable of the difficulties faced by current postcolonial states across sub-Saharan Africa would remark that Zimbabwe's government might not be easily recognized as orderly or as operational. Indeed, the uncertainty with which many Zimbabweans live appears to undermine any claims to order: non-functioning utilities, record breaking hyperinflation, petrol and food shortages, disease outbreaks resulting from lack of potable water and access to sewage lines, unpaid civil servants and multiple currencies valued at dizzyingly disparate official and black-market rates. Still, courts operate, election votes are counted, the constitution is amended, and schools open for session. Baptists in Harare work to uphold these institutions of state order, out of a moral responsibility to God, while recognizing that these institutions remain ultimately void of the capacity to bring the most hopeful kinds of change.

In understanding human institutions to be incapable of acting as representatives of the divine sovereign, Fairside Baptists share some perspectives with Bible Society workers in the UK (Engelke 2013) and of Baptists in the Southern US studied by Carol Greenhouse (1986). Even if institutions like law or the courts can operate to produce order or justice that is characteristic of, and indeed, flows out from God, they remain flawed and corrupted, meaning that moral crusades to produce substantive change in the political realm are pointless. Greenhouse reveals how the Baptists she studied took a distinctly different approach to politics from those of other Baptists (for example, Jerry Fallwel's moral majority- see Harding 2000). Her interlocutors in the American South drew from the very terms of liberty and freedom of the Enlightenment while rejecting its heritage in American

261

public life. While they were adamant supporters of a separation of church and state, they rejected the notion that humans can replicate God's justice in their own legal systems (1986, 39-40). As she puts it: "they pay their taxes and send their sons to war, but they insist that the domains of politics and law are conceits" (41) and believe that "civil law is perhaps mandated by the frailty of human nature but not legitimated by it" (39). Like Harare Baptists, these Southern Baptists take their stance not as "separatists," but as skeptics entirely unsure of the human capacity to achieve righteous ends.

While attendees at the courthouse might have appeared to place some trust in the court system to mete out justice in Mawarire's case, they were reliant on God's intervention. This is evident in the fact that while we waited the many hours for the judge to deliberate, congregants told me that they were quite sure that some public relations damage control was being done behind closed doors. Had the judge chosen to charge Mawarire it would clearly have been a case of injustice, as he had been arrested on one set of charges, and then in the hearing charged with a different set of substantially more serious crimes. Legal protocol had not been followed by the police and state prosecutor, so when Mawarire was eventually released, it was in fact on a technicality. At the time, however, the Christians around me knew that with the surging crowd outside, the pressure to uphold law under public scrutiny had likely meant that some nebulous power "higher up" in the State apparatus was calling in directions to have Mawarire acquitted. These Christians presumed that the government apparatus was corrupt, even as they also trusted that God would use the courts to free a man who was seeking the country's good and had not committed any act of treason.

In this chapter, I have argued that Fairside Baptists take an existing constitutional government as a sign of its legitimacy because God is in control of everything. They take political sovereignty to be derivative of divine sovereignty but not representative of it. The ethical response to divine sovereignty is submission to it, and to the earthly authorities which are legitimized through divine sovereignty, but, naturally, this submission can prove to be a challenge to Zimbabweans who see the corruption through which their taxes are misappropriated and who struggle daily with the apparent disorder in economic and political life. In response to this challenge, they continue to find evidence of God's control around them, responding to this control with trust and with a renewed sense of their own moral responsibilities. At the very same time, this submission is also an expression of their freedom, as an extension of their relation to God.

**Conclusion**

In the fairly small and oddly shaped, tiled church foyer, where so much of Fairside church life is conducted, I watched Mai Gladys trying to attach a piece of white paper to the front of a small wooden box. A little shorter than a foot across, the box stuck out, bolted awkwardly in the middle of the flat brick wall, opposite the front door. The strip of paper read "Suggestion Box." Affixed there unceremoniously, the locked lid contained a slot, where congregants could submit written comments or questions anonymously to the church eldership. The effort came a little late.

By the rainy season of 2016, attenders at Fairside had already grown increasingly frustrated. The disagreement about church doctrine that I highlighted in chapter three- about the relation between a person's own responsibility and God's role in his or her salvation- had been an ongoing issue for some months. The congregation had periodically been updated that the elders were still in discussions on how to proceed with the rift between the church's "historic Baptist stance," which gave a greater prominence to the human will, and the reformed teachings of New Calvinism, which stressed God's control. In response to the ongoing differences in doctrine, when the elders announced an abrupt series of leadership changes at a closed members' meeting one evening, various Fairsiders showed up at the church offices the following day as if in mourning. They were distraught on multiple fronts: that the elders had made a series of decisions without sufficient consultation with the congregation- without putting the issue up for general discussion or a vote- that the decision entailed the removal of several beloved church teachers from their ministry positions, and that the outcome had not preserved the sense of unity that people so

valued in their social and religious lives. The suggestions box felt like an attempt to address these concerns.

Mai Gladys tested out possible locations for the paper sign, affixing it finally to the front face of the box. The strip was a little too long, though, and wrapped around one corner unevenly. On-looking church staffers stood back, arms crossed. They commented to me as they watched Mai Gladys' efforts, remarking that it should be labelled "receptacle," the English term used by the elder who had made the announcement in church about the use of the box. The term "receptacle" signaled the seemingly excessive bureaucratic nature of this gesture on the part of church elders, and though the box did fill with papers over the coming weeks, Fairsiders remained wary of it. Church-goers told me they could not trust that what they put in the box would be read and not discarded. One person even confided that she worried people would recognize her handwriting and identify her as the writer of an anonymous note. Under his breath, a church staffer decided the box was actually most like a coffin, where the comments would go to die.

Much as members of Fairside tried to organize the running of the church in a theologically orthodox and also doctrinally Baptist way, the fears and mistrust that pervaded their everyday lives could not be quarantined away from the church itself. The mis-steps on the part of the elders, the collective discord, and the anger expressed could be understood as a result of sinfulness, but these evidences of sinfulness mirrored the patterns of uncertainty that persisted outside the organization of the church. Suspicions about voting and anonymity, fair patriarchal administration, potential for racial and class

tensions, were all concerns that came to the fore because of doctrinal disagreements about the nature and degree of human responsibility.

The box represented efforts to maintain a tension: it allowed people to express ideas individually and independently. At the same time, the lock on the box, and its appearance after decisive moves already made by the church leadership, showed the persistence of a strong structure of authority. This tension is, in many ways, a key part of the reckoning of moral responsibility for Fairsiders.

## A Persistent and Productive Tension

It would be possible to read what I've written here about the doctrines, experiences and concerns of Fairside Baptists as they shared them with me, and then to conceive of the world they navigate as a kind of moral trap. They are called to be morally responsible, but also affirm strongly their moral corruptibility and the limits of their action, while reckoning to God an absolutist control. How then can they act as free agents in the world?

To answer this question, I would argue that we need to conceptualize their view of their own freedom in terms more like their own. This is part of what my task has been through the preceding chapters. I began by describing the problem of morality in a setting of uncertainty, and one of my purposes was to show that moral responsibility is a primary orienting concern for Baptists in Harare, in the face of this uncertainty. It is in the same terms with which they reckon their moral responsibility that they also make some sense of the upheavals they wade through each day as they deal with unreliable *kombi* services, argue with police officers demanding cash because they are not carrying the approved

266

brand of neon hazard triangles, queue for hours at ATMs to try and access their money, gamble with unreliable drinking water, and surmise about whether there will be electricity to charge mobile phones and cook food when they return home.

More than just a way to make sense of uncertainty, however, I have also tried to show that a specific kind of freedom remains a vital part of the conception of moral responsibility for Baptists in Harare. This freedom works out in a variety of ways, partly through attempts to protect the moral autonomy that would allow Christian young people, in particular, to make conscience-based decisions in "grey areas" around wedding and mourning. Urban Baptists in Zimbabwe also express their freedom in ideas about submission, giving deference to certain earthly authorities but denying those terrestrial orders ultimate control over human futures.

Perhaps one way to see how this freedom still operates within an apparent "moral trap" is to specify one of the tensions that I have also traced throughout, that is, a tension between authority and autonomy. This tension, represented by the box in the foyer, is a persistent one within Baptist theology more broadly. It is a tension that is both persistent and productive. Indeed, Brian Howell (2008) shows how Baptist churches in the Northern Philippines exhibit and experience this tension. The issue at hand is "the locus of authority," what he calls "one of the most dynamic aspects of Baptist life" (47). The question of authority is a challenging one for Baptists because they affirm both the power and privilege of place given to the Bible, and also give authority to the individual believer as they interpret it- an important Reformation value. Howell quotes Orr speaking

specifically about Southern Baptists, but his account is highly pertinent to the tension at

hand:

> Functionally, Southern Baptist churches operate with a two-fold authority
> structure that rests on the question "who is the proper mediatory of
> authority?" Is it the individual believer or is it the congregation as a whole?
> Baptist life is hardly comprehensible apart from understanding the
> dynamics created by the circumstantial way that Baptists answer this
> question. Ideally, each is to balance the other, but the dialectical
> relationship between these two mediators of authority always produces a
> degree of tension. (Orr cited in Howell 2008, 47)

This question about authority gets at the heart of matters related to moral responsibility and

freedom. In describing the process of salvation for the Baptists that he studied, Howell also

emphasizes their concern with "personal responsibility" (48). The elements of this tension

are evident in the Baptist distinctives that I outlined in the introduction, and they flow into

the life of the believer and determine the organization of church polity. Congregations

direct the life of the church, not the pastors- who are always ultimately responsible to the

congregation. However, congregations are also composed of believers who possess a

conscience, and who bear attributes of autonomous agents because of their relation to the

divine. At Fairside, this means that issues of moral responsibility are shared, discussed, and

debated, and then authority is rendered to the autonomous believer to weigh possibilities

based on their own relation to God, and on their relation to others' relation to God, by

reading the Scripture and by praying. In this way, the Fairside notion of moral autonomy is

distinct from pure agency, because it is not reliant on action.

While some might be tempted to read this tension between autonomy and authority

as a structure/agency dichotomy, I would argue that "autonomy" is distinct from agency in

at least one very important way. For the Baptists that I describe, autonomy is a moral

concern based on relation to God, and need not require some kind of choice or action, or even necessarily the *capacity* for action or choice.

For Baptists living in Harare, moral responsibility precedes freedom. They take themselves to be morally responsible prior to action and prior to freedom because they are in relation to God from the moment of their creation. They also live in a world of uncertainty, which seems to unsettle the kinds of ethics that theorists have laid out as available for human navigation. Reckoning responsibility in this uncertainty looks more like facing consequences about which one cannot be certain. This kind of responsibility is important because it addresses uncertainty while also claiming a freedom that follows from it. In the last chapter I showed how divine sovereignty was read backwards, but in the introduction I showed how responsibility, like Weber's "ethics of responsibility" is reckoned forward, into a near future, which is unknowable and uncertain.

In his reflection on Durkheim's and Fauconnet's account of responsibility, John Kelly declares social scientists ultimately unconvinced by it because a Durkheimian approach "proffers no solution to the bleak vistas of actually experienced modernism itself, to the world's increasingly unquiet desperation to secure meaning and order with justice, while losing confidence in the promise of a better future" (427). Of course, Baptists in Harare posit something other than society as the apex of evolution, and reckoning humans as responsible and sinful and God as sovereign, while offering its own set of moral dilemmas, is a wholly convincing way of viewing the world.

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