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The Masowe Apostles Entrepreneurship Experience in Zimbabwe

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Abstract:

This paper addresses the entrepreneurial activities within the Masowe Apostles in Zimbabwe and the way religious beliefs play a role in their entrepreneurship. In spite of the fact that the Masowe Apostles live quite excluded from the wider society, relying upon their Christian beliefs they have been able to establish a strong and stable economic position in Zimbabwe. The paper specifically focuses on the interplay between religious beliefs and entrepreneurship and the way entrepreneurship was initiated and is sustained within the Masowe Apostles community. The paper thus identified the role played by Johane Masowe in the identity of the Masowe Apostles and genesis of their religious entrepreneurship. As this study involved a sample of few subjects, a further study using a greater number of the Masowe Apostles at Port Elizabeth in South Africa where their entrepreneurship was initiated is paramount to establish the progress and impact of the Masowe Apostles' entrepreneurship. The study is guided by the acknowledgement that entrepreneurs are closely linked to the stimulation of an economy.

Keywords: *Wilderness, self-reliance, religious entrepreneurship*

1. Introduction

In economic analyses entrepreneurs are often seen as agents who play a role in the arena of the market in which they make decisions to organise productive activities and are seen as the main risk bearers, innovators and industrial leaders (Ripsas, 1998). From this perspective entrepreneurial activities are taken solely to make a profit and thus are highly capitalist in nature. This would suggest that a combination with something like Christianity is rather contradictory, especially when it comes to orthodox Christians. With due regard their fundamental values and daily practices are based on the message of God and the scripture of the Bible (Roessingh, 2007). Basically one of the messages of the Bible is that people should live in acceptance with other people without gaining or pursuing too many advantages (Roessingh, 2007). The question thus rises and if so, it is possible for someone who is practising Christianity to unite his or her religious values with an entrepreneurial attitude?

Dodd and Seaman (1998) in their study about British entrepreneurs conclude that there is a complex and independent relationship between religion and enterprises. They even argue that religion has a purifying role in the relation between entrepreneurs and their environment. The objectives of entrepreneurs with a religious background are not exclusively focussed on the profits. Thus in their view, the link between religion and entrepreneurship is not contradictory as would be suggested from an economic view.

Similarly, in "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism", Weber (2002) argues that there is a relation between Christianity and the development of national capitalism due to the so called Calvinistic working ethos. The sober life is he argues, contributing to the entrepreneurial success. It is possible to draw a parallel between this line of argument and other religious movements like the Masowe Apostles. Their religious values and virtues have a bearing on the sustenance of their entrepreneurship behaviour.

In this paper this relationship of religious values and entrepreneurial activities will be explored by focussing on the evolution of entrepreneurship and its sustenance within the Masowe Apostles.

1.1. Background of the Study

With an area of 390 760 km² and 13.3 million inhabitants (2014) (Australian Government, 2015), Zimbabwe has a great diversity of ethnic communities including the excluded religious Masowe Apostles. Interestingly enough, these excluded Masowe Apostles are notably present in the entrepreneurship arena of the country. The Masowe Apostles although regarded as poor by the general society at large they regard themselves as contributing meaningfully to the economy of Zimbabwe practising entrepreneurship that has been endowed on their community through God's blessings and to that end have no fear of risk of business failure. This is a negation of Frank Knight's (1921) Theory of Risk Uncertainty.

As far as Frank Knight's (1921) assertions are concerned, entrepreneurs are more inclined to make risky decisions in the light of uncertainty. But how do the Masowe Apostles practice their religious entrepreneurship oblivious of the risk?

The above stated problem was a precursor to the following research questions;

- Who are these people called the Masowe Apostles?
- How did the Masowe Apostles begin their entrepreneurship?
- How do the Masowe Apostles sustain their entrepreneurship?

The literature review that follows focuses more on the key construct of Entrepreneurship; Religion and Religious entrepreneurship.

2. Related Literature Review

2.1. Definition on Key Constructs

The terms entrepreneurship, religion and religious entrepreneurship require some discussion before delving more into the entrepreneurship life of the Masowe Apostles.

2.1.1. Entrepreneurship

The prosperity and progress of a community depends on the quality of its people. If they are enterprising, ambitious and courageous enough to bear the risk, the community will develop quickly. Such people are identified as entrepreneurs and their character reflects entrepreneurship (Adeyemi, n.d.).

Interest in entrepreneurship as a phenomenon rests in the perceived contributions entrepreneurs make to public policy goals such as economic growth, increased productivity, job creation, technological innovation, deregulation and privatisation as well as structural adjustments or realignments (Gibbs 1996; Shane 1996). A common observation about the field of entrepreneurship research is that it lacks consensus on the definition of its object of study (Cornelius *et al* 2006).

The dilemma of defining an entrepreneur results from the inability of theorists and practitioners alike to reach a consensus on what entrepreneurship actually is (Spring and McDade, 1998; Di-Masi, 2013). Entrepreneurship means something different to different people.

The concept of entrepreneurship as organised knowledge came into being about one hundred years ago (Adeyemi, n.d.), though the economists from Adam Smith (1776) to Marshal (1890) had talked about it but without assigning the name of entrepreneurship to it. People who were carrying out different entrepreneurial activities were called by various names that included *employer, the master, the merchant* and the *undertaker*. It was Cantillon, who first brought out the term entrepreneur (Murphy 1999). Emami and Nazari (2012) assert that Richard Cantillon, a practicing businessman of dubious means who then turned reflective penman of economic treaties, is credited with first imbuing the term with a new and more significant meaning. In 1975 Cantillon used the term to identify those individuals in the economic system who accepted risk to make a financial profit rather than depend on a regular salary for income.

Di-Masi (2013) asserts that many definitions of entrepreneurship can be found in the literature describing business processes. The earliest definition of entrepreneurship (Di-Masi, 2013) dates from the eighteenth century where entrepreneurship was used as an economic term describing the process of bearing the risk of buying at certain prices and selling at uncertain prices. Other, later commentators (Di-Masi, 2013) broadened the definition to include the concept of bringing together the factors of production. This definition led to questions of whether entrepreneurship was simply a form of management as there was no unique entrepreneurial function in the definition. Early this century (Di-Masi, 2013), the concept of innovation was added to the definition of entrepreneurship where innovation could be process innovation, market innovation, product innovation, factor innovation and even organisational innovation. Later definitions described entrepreneurship as involving the creation of new enterprises and the entrepreneur being the founder.

Considerable effort has gone into trying to understand the psychological and sociological wellsprings of entrepreneurship of which studies have noted some common characteristics among entrepreneurs with respect to the need for achievement, perceived locus of control, orientation toward intuitive rather than sensate thinking and risk-taking propensity (Di-Masi, 2013). In addition, many have commented upon the common, but not generally agreed thread of childhood deprivation, minority group membership and early adolescent economic experiences as typifying the entrepreneur. However, Di-Masi (2013) argues that there are similar questions about what the psychological and social traits of entrepreneurs are. The same traits shared by two individuals can often lead to vast different results: successful and unsuccessful entrepreneurs can share the same characteristics. As well, the studies of life paths of entrepreneurs often show decreasing “entrepreneurship” following success, which tends to disprove the centrality of character or personality traits as a sufficient basis for defining entrepreneurship (Di-Masi, 2013).

The exposition by Di-Masi (2013) and others above demonstrates the complex nature of defining entrepreneurship, but an entrepreneur is a distinctive actor in an economic system (Spring and McDade, 1998). This view was taken as the focus of this paper. This did not imply that other aspects, such as sociological or psychological manifestations of entrepreneurship were irrelevant. They were merely beyond the scope of this paper. It is the activities of the entrepreneur that are termed entrepreneurship. As such entrepreneurship is an abstract noun from the word entrepreneur and it is viewed from that perspective.

The three economic perspectives (Naude, 2008) from which entrepreneurship is most often approached are that of occupational, behavioural or outcomes definition. The definition that successfully synthesises the outcomes, behaviourist and occupational perspectives of entrepreneurship and was most relevant in this study is that by Boone and Kurtz (1999). They define an entrepreneur as a person who seeks a profitable opportunity and takes the necessary risks to set-up and operate a business. This implies that this individual will scout around for profitable opportunities in the market and use his money, talent, skill, time to pursue that opportunity despite the risk of not making any profit in that opportunity. Opportunities can be new businesses, new products, new production methods or new product-market combinations.

Wennekers and Thurik (1999), state that from an occupational perspective an entrepreneur is someone who is self-employed. People who are self-employed start various enterprises which are micro, small or medium. In the economic development literature this definition of entrepreneurship is perhaps encountered most often, due to many formally-registered unemployed who seek to eke out a living through informal self-employment in small and medium sized enterprises (Banerjee and Duflo, 2007).

From a behavioural point of view, a number of definitions have described the entrepreneur according to perceived functions that are performed (Naude, 2008). Firstly, there is the entrepreneur according to Schumpeter (1949). Schumpeter perceived an entrepreneur as an innovator who brings new products or new ways of doing things on the market and in so doing makes other products and procedures obsolete (Wickham, 2006). Those people who are self-employed strive to bring new products or new ways of doing things on the market to avoid going under. In this line of thinking profit is then linked to how innovative the entrepreneur is in terms of keeping on bringing new ideas on the market. The link between profit and being innovative is an area that may require further investigation.

The second behaviourist perception is that from Kirzner (1973), who described the entrepreneur not primarily as someone whom initiates change, but as someone who facilitates adjustment to change by spotting opportunities for profitable arbitrage. Arbitrage means (Kirzner, 1973) the spotting and profiting from a situation of disequilibrium by improving on market inefficiencies or deficiencies. During the inflation period in Zimbabwe in the period 2007- 2008 numerous people were making a living through arbitrage whereby they profited from the disequilibrium in the rates of currency exchange. Although some are still surviving through arbitrage the extent is less than during the stated period.

The third dimension in the behaviourist perspective is that by Knight. Knight (1921) emphasized the uncertainty attached to the exploitation of opportunities. The outcome of exploiting some opportunities may not be given; hence the risk of uncertainty is borne by the entrepreneur. Thus far, risk, uncertainty and profit seem key to self-employment.

The third view (Naude, 2008) is from an outcomes perspective where entrepreneurship is defined from its effect on the economy. This was of greater significance to this investigation. Of noteworthy under this view was that not all forms of entrepreneurship are good for economic development (Naude, 2007). According to Baumol (1990:895) entrepreneurship can be productive (for instance the manufacture of goods and services for the market), or unproductive (for instance, rent-seeking) or even destructive (for instance, illegal activities like corruption or tax evasion). Baumol (1990) explains rent-seeking as an activity which does not add to the national product like the case where an entrepreneur seeks wealth by forcibly appropriating the possessions of others.

In this study, therefore, an entrepreneur is someone who seeks a profitable opportunity through being self-employed and takes the necessary risks to set up and operate a micro business.

2.1.2. Religion

While the varieties of religious expression in the world make it difficult to find a single definition that applies to all religions, in view of this study a sociologically-based definition, contextualised within an economic framework, was more relevant. As also stated by other researchers like Robertson (1980), such a definition allows for taking into consideration Weber's analysis of the conditions under which religion can be a source of innovation and change.

Stark (1985:310) defines religion as "socially organised patterns of beliefs and practices concerning ultimate meaning and that assume the existence of the supernatural". This definition implies that the patterns of beliefs and practices are centred or revolve around the supernatural. The supernatural can be viewed from various angles but ultimately this supernatural possesses extraordinary power or strength. In many religions the supernatural is a God who is called by various names. In Shona (a Zimbabwean most common indigenous language), the Supreme Being is called *Mwari* (God) if at church, and in the traditional religion is called *Musikavanhu* meaning the creator of man. In this case belief systems and practices are thus centred on a God.

Culture is usually thought to influence economic outcomes by affecting personal traits such as honesty, thriftiness, willingness to work hard and openness to strangers (Barro and Mcleary, 2003). Religion is an important part of culture. Thus, Weber (1930) argues that religious practices and beliefs had important consequences for economic development. Nonetheless, economists and other researchers have paid little attention to religion and other measures of culture as determinants of economic growth (Barro and Mcleary, 2003). On the same point Ataide (2009), posits that contemporary business textbooks on entrepreneurship are devoid of information on religion and its relationship to entrepreneurship and this lack of understanding likely extends to the business practitioner as well.

It was the principal aim in this paper to fill this gap by examining the entrepreneurship of the Masowe Apostles who are a religious group in so far as who they are, how they initiated and sustain their entrepreneurship.

2.1.3. Religious Entrepreneurship

Ataide (2009) argues that there has been some difficulty in creating a definition because some have identified religious entrepreneurs as being those who sell religious goods and services, such as bibles and other religious articles. However, while these individuals and organisations may well possess some entrepreneurial elements, they are more of religious activists rather than religious entrepreneurs. Goossen (2004) asserts that religious entrepreneurs can be differentiated by two drivers: the extent that success of the organisation is measured by monetary rewards and the extent that the organisation's operations are guided by the owner's religion.

Ataide (2009) further argues that religious entrepreneurship is a legitimate subfield of social entrepreneurship albeit with a few important distinctions. Religious entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship both advance a social mission, they both apply innovative processes and technologies, they both have a measurable and scalable impact and lastly they both integrate financial sustainability. However, for religious entrepreneurship the primary motive is to make a profit to support the life of the entrepreneur and not the community or social goals while being guided by the entrepreneur's religion. As such religious entrepreneurship is seeking a profitable opportunity and taking the necessary risks to set-up and operate a business guided by the entrepreneur's religion. On the other hand, social entrepreneurship may not be guided by one's religion but by a desire to serve a social need in society and if profit is being made it is directed towards the identified need in society. For example, there are philanthropists who see themselves as catalysts

for both organisational and societal change like Mother Theresa, the Dalai Lama, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller (Roper and Cheney, 2005).

In order to understand more about the religious entrepreneurship of the Masowe Apostles the methodology adopted is explained in the next section.

3. Methodology

The data presented in this paper are a result of a period of a case study in the ethnographic domain conducted in Mutare in 2014. Combined with interviews, several other qualitative research methods were used to obtain insight into the understanding of the situation within its context, rather than generalisation beyond (Stake, 2003).

It was the aim of this study to come up with the entrepreneurship social process of the Masowe Apostles and the study was therefore inductive in approach. Strategy is about which type of research will meet one's purpose. It was the study's desire to study the lived experiences of the Masowe Apostles and this was done in a natural setting. The research type that suits such an investigation is a case study. To that end Denscombe (2011) defines a case study as one that focuses on one or just a few instances of a particular phenomenon with a view to providing an in-depth account of events, relationships, experiences or processes occurring in that particular instance. This is in the ethnographic domain which is about describing (Denscombe 2011) a people or their culture. This study was done at a particular time and was thus cross-sectional.

The site that was chosen for the case study is in Mutare at a place called Sakubva Green Market. Mutare is about 256 kilometres to the East of Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe. Mutare is also about 47 kilometres to the East of Gandanzara village in which is the headquarters of the Johane Masowe Church. The site was most suitable after eliminating other sites using the following criteria as recommended by Denscombe (2011; 57)

- Relevance to the practical problems being researched
- The way the site is to be used
- Practical considerations
- Number of entrepreneurs (My own addition)

Collection of data involved the administration of a questionnaire on issues of how the MA initiated and sustain their entrepreneurship, participant observation of the MA operating their businesses at Sakubva Green Market, analysing documents on the MA as well as conducting in-depth interviews at Sakubva Green Market. Results were counter checked at the Headquarters of the Johane Masowe Church.

In the collection and analysis of data Grounded Theory principles were employed. Creswell, (2003) asserts that in exploring processes, activities and events, grounded theory is most relevant especially when the researcher attempts to derive a general, abstract theory of a process, action or interaction.

The study observed that the interviewees were not proficient in the use of English, the language which was used to present the study. As such there was need to ensure that the challenges of language differences were eliminated as much as possible as that would have affected the study significantly. To do that, the study employed the recommendations by Fenna van Nes et al (2010).

Firstly, to avoid potential limitations in the analysis of data the study stayed in the original language as long and as much as possible. This implied that data was captured and analysed in Shona, which is the indigenous language of the researcher and respondents, for the greater part of the research until the final analysis when the data was translated to English.

Secondly for translating the final analysis the researcher engaged a professional translator. The researcher acted as translation moderator in the process. Translation was thus done in the presence of the researcher to come up with the best possible translation. While the translation increased the cost of the study, it was however justified in that this contributed to improving the trustworthiness of the research and of the quality of the transference of the findings (Fenna van Nes et al, 2010).

To enhance trustworthiness, the study's findings, four data collection methods were mixed. These methods were participant observation, in-depth interviews, questionnaires and document analysis. Data analyses were undertaken with the aid of matrices, calculations and thematic approach. By using such a multi-method approach in the collection and analyses of data the study was following the doctrine of triangulation which enables one to see things from different angles. That is, metaphorically seeing things from above, the sides and below. Below are therefore the findings of the study in relation to how the Masowe Apostles initiated their entrepreneurship as well as how they maintain it.

4. The Masowe Apostles as an Excluded Community

To understand the entrepreneurship practised by the Masowe Apostles it is imperative to comprehend who they are.

4.1. Who are the Masowe Apostles?

The Masowe Apostles derive their name from Johane Masowe (1914-1973) whose birth name was Shonhiwa Mtunyane Masedza, sometimes called 'Sixpence' or *Susupenzi* in Shona (An indigenous Zimbabwean language). He worked as a cobbler as well as a carpenter and talked a lot of religious controversies concerned with heavenly things. In 1932 he began preaching the word of God at Marimba Hill in Norton, Zimbabwe, a town surrounded by a farming community after claiming having had a transformational encounter with the Holy Spirit that changed his name from Susupenzi Shonhiwa to Johane Masowe (meaning John of the Wilderness) or John the Baptist of Africa (Reese, 2008). This new name carried a mandate to preach to the African people (Reese, 2008).

According to Wayne (2002) after the original Elijah, Elias/Elijah became a generic term for key prophets who were, and will be, an "opening act" for the coming of the Messiah after the world is destroyed by violence. John the Baptist was the "Elias to come" of Christ's *first* coming. John Masowe was thus viewed as a key prophet similar to Elias of the Bible who was an opening act for the coming of Christ. To the Masowe Apostles it is the coming of God and not Jesus as they do not think Jesus was for black people.

In Shona the word *masowe* or *renje* refers to a wilderness. Masowe's commission, as described in his own words, resembled that of Moses, John the Baptist and Jesus in spending time alone in the wilderness (*murenge* or *masowe*), hence the name Johane Masowe, meaning "John of the wilderness" (Reese, 2008). In view of Masowe's commission in which he perceives himself as John the Baptist, Dillon-Malone (1980) writes, John Masowe is

- the messenger who has been sent by Jehovah to African peoples, [i.e. mudzimu waMwari], just as Jesus had been sent to white people (as they understand it). The Apostles [disciples of Masowe] do not reject Jesus Christ, but they have not experienced the relevance of his work.

The message that Johane preached derived from his background in African traditions, his religious experience in 1932 and from his interaction with white Christianity and the Bible. He strongly critiqued both African traditional religion and white Christianity (Reese, 2008). For instance, he demanded that Africans stop asking for rains from the ancestors as demanded by his commission while at the same time he could not support white Christianity that viewed Jesus as Lord. This was exacerbated by the way the missionaries portrayed Africans as second class and had to get an education in order to preach or come close to God. He believed in direct revelation from God through the Holy Spirit, as opposed to the mediation of white people or African ancestors.

According to (Reese, 2008) this notion of rejecting the Bible came from Johane who rejected white Christianity together with the Bible because Africans did not originally have books. The Bible in book form implied the need for European education which he did not perceive as necessary to preach and get close to God.

However, when Masowe accepted the bible, he still objected to how Europeans used it in terms of being too academic and thus in so doing failing to touch the Africans' deepest needs (Reese, 2008). Masowe (Engelke, 2007), preferred to do what people in the bible did rather than only read about it. This involved supernatural healings, prophetic utterances, exorcisms and ecstatic worship.

Johane Masowe introduced the wilderness concept and the concept is central in how the Masowe Apostles practise their religion and why they are an excluded community. During his time Johane Masowe caused alarm among the British colonizers of Zimbabwe (Rhodesia then) as he wandered throughout Zimbabwe making borders of landscapes sites for prayer (Mukonyora, 1998). Since 1932 the Masowe Apostles are seen anywhere in fringe places praying by the roadside, behind factories, on the edge of fields, on hilltops, near lakes, on rock surfaces, in grasslands and underneath trees. Buildings are avoided for ritual purposes because of the belief that the Holy Spirit comes through the wind and must blow freely through the atmosphere (Mukonyora, 2005).

Through the symbolic act (Mukonyora, 2005) of going to pray out of doors, the Masowe Apostles also see themselves as stepping outside *zvinhu zvechirungu*, meaning symbols of western culture that they associate with human folly and immoral behaviour. Mukonyora (1998) asserts that today Johane Masowe Apostles are associated with communities which pray in open air avenues (*Masowe*) or wilderness, preach repentance and carry out baptisms in rivers and/or dams called 'Jordans'. There is however a need to be careful of associating all churches that practice the wilderness concept with Johane Masowe and yet they may not be fully practising his beliefs. There is therefore a need to ascertain who you are talking to lest one is fooled by the widespread 'wilderness' practice.

The lack of buildings does not imply that the Masowe Apostles are unable to construct walled churches because they have become quite prosperous, it is but a reflection of their pilgrimage and stepping outside symbols of western culture (Mukonyora, 1998). Mukonyora (2005) however argues that although toilets and fences are becoming common features that gradually bring about a sense of the permanence of the sacred wilderness, the general pattern has been to declare the quest for freedom of the human spirit in sacred venues (wilderness) that contrast with the European missionary model of Church. It is this exclusion from the greater society that engendered entrepreneurship among the Masowe Apostles.

4.2. The Genesis of the Philosophy of Self-Reliance

Self-reliance is defined by www.dictionary.com as the ability to depend on yourself to get things done and to meet your own needs. An example of self-reliance is to grow your own food. The Masowe Apostles are known as an excluded community who sustain their livelihood through self-reliance. How then did this philosophy of self-reliance begin?

Of paramount importance to the evolution of self-reliance among the Masowe Apostles is that, Johane Masowe founded his church as an apostolic movement, which sought to empower blacks economically by challenging them to reject their low status in the racist and oppressive formal sector (Chitando, 2004). This was a response to the oppressive legislation that sought to protect white interests during the colonial period (Chitando, 2004).

In the 1940 when he had launched his international mission, Masowe settled at Korsten district of Port Elizabeth, South Africa in 1947(www.dacb.org). South Africa is a neighbouring country to the south of Zimbabwe to which Johane had gone to seek refuge from White persecution in Zimbabwe. *Together with his followers they realised that they needed some means of generating income that would not drive them to join the larger society* (Dillon-Malone, 1978). The Masowe Apostles thus identified themselves as "aliens" (excluded community) and separated themselves from the main stream society. Chitando (2004) asserts that Masowe encouraged his followers to be creative and find alternative strategies for survival in the stifling environment. By "stifling environment" Johane Masowe made reference to the oppressive nature of the colonial rule of the settlers with its discriminatory formal employment.

Formal employment was rejected because it denied a Masowe Apostle the freedom to pray on Saturday and as such they argued that a self-employed person is able to do God's duties any time. For the Masowe Apostles therefore community exclusion or alienation was a trigger for entrepreneurship innovation.

This was the genesis of the self-reliance philosophy which Johane Masowe initiated among his followers. Authoritative sources in the church believe Johane Masowe did not initiate self-reliance as such but it was a message from God that told him the idea to start self-reliance. It actually came as a message from the Heavens, they assert. Whether this idea of self-reliance came from God or not, one thing which is not questionable is that it was he who initiated the idea and how it is practised.

When the Masowe Apostles started practising their self-reliance through self-employment they abandoned working for the whites. As a result, Johane had nasty encounters with the white settlers who did not understand whether he was a politician or something else. This led to Johane Masowe's arrest as the whites suspected that he was too political and against the whites. Johane was not deterred and made his point clearer by instructing his followers not to work on Saturdays as he claimed that God rested on Saturday and as such a worker required resting on the Saturday as well. Saturday, up to today is reserved for rest and prayers among the Masowe Apostles. Johane stressed that if his followers do not observe the Sabbath day they will not have time to pray to save their lives.

The spirit of self-reliance thus became fully established as part of the church doctrine of the Masowe Apostles which has spread to other white garment wearing churches and the general public.

It is thus interesting to note that Johane Masowe's religious entrepreneurship concept did not start in Zimbabwe but South Africa. When the South African authorities discovered that most of the Masowe Apostles were illegal immigrants, they repatriated 1 880 by train to Zimbabwe in 1962 (Reese, 2008) whereupon they continued practising their religious entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe.

Johane did not only initiate the concept of self-reliance among his followers, he demonstrated how it should be carried out as explained in the coming section.

4.3. Practical Application of the Philosophy of Self-Reliance

Johane Masowe himself led the practice of self-reliance by demonstrating how one can survive in a stifling environment.

The pivotal strategy about Johane's self-reliance depended on doing manual jobs. The idea was to use one's hands to eke out a living. Johane demonstrated this by engaging in basketry and sheet metal work. He would make using his hands and a piece of wire baskets of various shapes and sizes from reeds. In addition, he would use a piece of a railway line mounted on a drum and with the aid of a hammer and cutters, design and make dishes, pots and tins from sheet metal. He marketed these baskets to members of the society at large to generate income. His followers copied how he did these things and realised that they would not starve or die of hunger if they engaged in these enterprises. Women were also occupied in selling the wares made by the men. A clear division of labour was thus evident in these self-employment activities which culminated in family sustaining enterprises.

Johane Masowe's business ideas proved a hit among his followers as they realised that they could pursue both work and religion simultaneously. This is unlike many churches which divorce work from religion. In fact, self-reliance was and is still a pivotal doctrine in how the religion of the Masowe Apostles is practised.

On Friday at 3.00pm work ceases and preparations for the Sabbath day begin. As already discussed earlier there is a strong belief that non-observance of the Sabbath day will impede progress in the enterprise as stated below;

- The church does not allow a member to work on Saturdays because God rested on the day while creating the world so one must also rest. If one does work on the Saturday, he fails to get graces he would have got had one observed not working on a Saturday.

When the followers of Johane Masowe realised that self-reliance is sustainable through the enterprises advocated by Johane, the MA as a religious group began to be actively involved in the informal sector in the 1940's, excelling in basket making and metalwork (Dillon-Malone, 1978). The industrial genius of the Masowe Apostles was a remarkable phenomenon as they created independent financially viable communities (Dillon-Malone, 1978).

From the above it is evident that the entrepreneurship practised by the Masowe Apostles was an outcome of being isolated or excluded and not their religion. It is however important to show how these self-employment enterprises are sustained.

4.4. Sustenance of Self-Reliance

The Masowe Apostles sustain their religious entrepreneurship in two ways. The first is through exercising virtues and attitudes necessary for self-reliance as per the church principles and secondly through disseminating the philosophy.

4.4.1. Business Sustenance through Virtues and Attitudes

As already shown alienation gave birth to self-reliance because the Masowe Apostles had to seek alternative means of survival away from the stifling environment established by the whites. Their enterprises which they strongly believe are a gift from God, centre on basketry and sheet metal work in the informal sector. What then are the virtues and attitudes that help them sustain their enterprises? This question was addressed from a spiritual and ideological perspective.

Spiritually, the Masowe Apostles believe that their enterprises are a blessing from God given to them through Johane Masowe. As such they do not fear any business failure (risk) because their enterprises are blessed. This is definitely contrary to Frank Knight's (1921) Theory of Risk Uncertainty whereby he concluded that profit was the reward for bearing uncertainty for entrepreneurs in small proprietary businesses. To the Masowe apostles it is the belief in the blessings from God which is rewarded by profit and not risk uncertainty. To that end a religious entrepreneur 'properly' earns the profits commensurate with keeping the entrepreneur in business through God's blessings. This view is corroborated by the influential Saint Bernardino of Sienna (1380-1444) and other scholastic

theologians cited in Rathbard (1995) who argue that profit is a legitimate return for one's labour, expenses and **belief in blessings from God**. This is a negation of Frank Knight's (1921) Theory of Risk Uncertainty.

As far as Frank Knight's (1921) assertions are concerned, entrepreneurs are more inclined to make risky decisions in the light of uncertainty. The Masowe apostles however are more inclined to make decisions with the belief that they will profit from their enterprises because they are blessed. There is no uncertainty. There is a lot of faith in the blessings from God and that God intervenes positively in all what they are doing and hence the need to observe the Sabbath day as holy. This faith in the blessings from God is consolidated by the fact that senior members of the church train their young ones in the businesses in order for the young ones to be able to stand on their own in future. There is a lot of certainty and confidence in that the enterprises will positively impact on one's life.

Based on their strong belief that their enterprises are blessed they also believe that their hands that manufacture the household wares are also blessed to the extent of them believing that they do not need modern technology as they are machines themselves. An average of 54.4% of subjects who responded to a questionnaire was pessimistic of using machines in future. This high belief in the strength of God is corroborated by Baroo and McCleary (2003) who found that higher religious beliefs help sustain aspects of individual behaviour that enhance productivity. Further, Weber's (1930) Sociological Theory as supported by Inglehart's (1997) and Roessingh's (2007) studies, corroborate these findings in that their findings show that entrepreneurial energies are exogenously supplied by means of religious beliefs. The doctrine of self-reliance for the Masowe Apostles is a therefore partly sustained by a strong faith in the belief that God will not let them down. The Masowe Apostles believe that they have only one master and that master is God and as such self-employment enables them to serve only one master who is God. By projection therefore employees have two masters- God and the employer. There is therefore conflict on who is more important God or the employer. To the Masowe Apostles God is more important than the employer and hence there is no need to be employed. God will thus reward one for being self-employment and observing religious virtues and attitudes centred on revering God.

According to discussion in the preceding paragraphs the Masowe Apostles believe that their enterprises are God given and therefore there is no risk of failure.

Under section 2.1.3, the researcher defined religious entrepreneurship as, "the practice of seeking a profitable opportunity and taking the necessary risks to set-up and operate a business guided by the entrepreneur's religion". At this stage the study partially agrees with this definition in that the entrepreneur does not "take any necessary risks" but has faith that God will intervene in the success of his business because the enterprises are God given. In relation to the Masowe Apostles, the definition of entrepreneurship therefore changes to: "a religious entrepreneur is someone seeking a profitable opportunity by setting up and operating an enterprise guided by the entrepreneur's belief in God's intervention". There is therefore no risk of failure. Ataide (2009) argues that the primary motive of religious entrepreneurship is to make a profit to support the life of the entrepreneur and not the community or social goals while being guided by the entrepreneur's religion. This is agreeable and it must be noted that supporting the community or social goals is not a primary motive for a religious entrepreneur. The religious entrepreneur can still support the community or social goals after he has made his profits.

Ideologically, the Masowe Apostles sustain their self-reliance by being capitalistic in the way they run their enterprises. Firstly, in support of this argument is that the Masowe Apostles' enterprises are private and non-government controlled (informal). The entrepreneur has the liberty to utilise his profits the way he likes. As such these enterprises are run on capitalistic lines. Nayab (2011) corroborates this finding by pointing out that those enterprises which are private and non-government controlled are motivated by the spirit of capitalism, which highlights economic freedom and private enterprise.

The Masowe Apostles do not believe in being idle and they believe that this is why people perceive them as poor due to that they are always in their work suits manufacturing goods. Again this is a capitalistic trait as corroborated by Udis-Kessler (2001), who found that at the core of the spirit of capitalism is a work ethic in which any time spent not actually making money is wasted time. It is this ethic, as further corroborated by Weber (1930) that is specific to modern western capitalism, and is based on Luther's idea of the calling or vocation. Indeed, the Masowe Apostles behave as if their enterprises are a calling or vocation by the determination and perseverance in which they run their enterprises.

The Masowe apostles believe in being trustworthy in business and also believe in being paying their debts as per their religious beliefs. That is so because they claim- "*your creditor will interfere with your prayers if you are not paid up*". This is seen to be necessary for one who is self-reliant in order to create faith and trust between yourself and your customers.

The Masowe Apostles have two personalities, one for business and the other for church in that in doing all other life activities like schooling the Masowe apostles show tendencies of being "alien" but mix freely with other community members when they are at work at Sakubva Green Market. That is, they are like "*fish in the water*" when at work as they say. They interact and network freely with other entrepreneurs so as to get jobs. One key characteristic of the Masowe Apostles that sustains their livelihoods is that they are modest in the way they live. That is, they do not show off that they are making money. This combined with the determination, perseverance and work ethic makes people conclude that they are poor and yet they are not. Weber, (1930) and Inglehart, (1997) corroborate this by their finding that stringent ethical standards cultivate virtues of frugality which are critical for the creation of wealth.

From the above therefore the Masowe Apostles partly sustain their businesses through good public relations, good craftsmanship, faith in God, humility, trust, approachability and being good debtors. Besides virtues and attitudes necessary for self-reliance the Masowe Apostles sustain their religious entrepreneurship through dissemination.

4.4.2. Dissemination of the Philosophy

According to dictionary.reference.com dissemination is to scatter or spread widely, as though sowing seed.

In the 1940s when Johane Masowe launched his international mission he had his own vision for Africa's future (Reese, 2008)). That is, he saw himself as a Moses- figure leading his people to the Promised Land. Masowe people see themselves as aliens shaped by their early experiences of being harassed by colonial authorities as well as having a message for all of Africa. Thus their missional push can also be described as pilgrimage. Inspired by Johane, the MA had an urge to reach Nairobi (seen as the centre of Africa), Ethiopia (an ancient centre of Christianity), and Jerusalem. This stemmed from their call to liberate all of Africa and their view of themselves as "the new African Israelites wandering through many lands as they made their way to the Promised Land" (Dillon Malone, 1978). The Masowe Apostles thus spread all over Africa and in so doing sowed the seed of self-reliance. It is therefore not surprising to find the MA in many African countries pushing their trade.

Johane Masowe's ideas of self-reliance couched in religious teachings were quite novel and unique among the Africans. They quickly brought a new way of perceiving life and to that end Johane assumed the role of a saviour among the Africans who were feeling the brunt of racism and oppression brought about by the settler regimes in many African countries. As such the poor and the oppressed were particularly attracted to Johane Masowe's message of healing and holistic spirituality accompanied by the life sustaining enterprises. Little wonder people associated the MA business activities as business activities for the poor and yet the novel ideas of Johane Masowe are quite life sustaining.

The seed of self-reliance business antics taught by Johane Masowe is apparent in the daily lives of the Masowe Apostles, be they Sisters, women or children. The discussion below demonstrates how each of these groupings of the MA is engaged in the spirit of self-reliance. This also demonstrates the significance of the philosophy of self-reliance in how it creates self-employment albeit among the Masowe Apostles only and also reduces inequalities among members. The Masowe Apostles do not wait for government funded or non-governmental organisations run programmes to create employment, they initiate employment on their own.

4.5. Sisters and Religious Entrepreneurship

At the Headquarters of the Gospel of God Church International (Johane Masowe's church), about twenty Sisters are stationed there. Like all members of the church the sisters also engage in self-reliance. They own sewing machines and related equipment from which they sew various clothing items which are sold to members of the church through the various branches of the church as a demonstration of the spirit of self-reliance propagated by the founder of the church. Members of the church buy the sewn items knowing fully well that the clothes are coming from the sisters. They encourage each other to buy so that the sisters do not starve.

4.6. Women and Religious Entrepreneurship

The seed of self-reliance did not escape the Masowe Apostles women folk who are also known for their religious entrepreneurship. According to the findings of the study, the Masowe Apostles women started their entrepreneurship by selling agricultural produce in big baskets in countries like Zambia, Botswana and South Africa. The Masowe Apostles women folk through Johane Masowe's ideas of self-reliance initiated the selling of agricultural produce like tomatoes, onions and vegetables in urban and semi-urban centres. As such they moved around carrying large baskets of agricultural wares that they sold in various locations. It is thus noted that women have carried further the self-reliance concept facilitated by the 'wilderness' concept by not doing business at one particular site but anywhere in Africa. MA women constitute a massive evangelising army that has spread this particular brand of Christianity in Southern Africa and as they traverse the region in cross-border trading, the women have carried the message of African self-reliance (Chitando, 2004). Besides selling agricultural wares the MA women are also known for cross-border trading. They no longer sell agricultural produce nowadays. Many people in town now sell tomatoes in stalls and the Masowe Apostles women folk have now abandoned that practice because that is what they started by doing. They were the leaders and they know the trade.

Nowadays the MA women are seen selling goods manufactured by men as well as the clothing items they sew. Interestingly, the hawking and vending of various wares has cottoned on in all urban and semi-urban centres and this is attributable to the seed of the novel and unique ideas sewn and cherished by the MA. Dissemination of the spirit of self-reliance to the children demonstrates why the MA can survive anywhere. This also explains why the Masowe Apostles have never looked back since they started practising self-reliance.

4.7. Training of Youths

The Masowe Apostles do not send their children to do formal training as entrepreneurs. The fathers train them *in-situ* at their workplaces.

The training of children for self-reliance through training a craft or trade is a huge responsibility that parents must perform in the church. Through observation and being a "tool boys" or assistants, the children of the MA will eventually understand how to manufacture the various sheet metal accessories used in the home like bread bins, tins for various purposes like boiling water, dishes, chicken feeders and drinkers from sheet metal. The child will observe the father cutting various patterns, the tools he uses and the way he puts the finishing touches. Not only that, the child will also observe the marketing and selling of the goods as well as how the customers are dealt with. Through this process the children are prepared to lead a life of self-reliance with confidence and optimism. This training was observed to be mainly done for sheet metal work which is trademark of the Masowe Apostles.

The parents also train their children on how to repair broken or leaking household kitchenware as well as manufacturing household kitchenware from bits and pieces of metal other people will have thrown away. The Masowe Apostles are thus trained in value addition among other things. To be able to do this requires ingenuity and innovativeness which Johane alluded to when he vigorously

pronounced that creativity was necessary to survive in a stifling environment. This training enables one to be self-employed and empowered to survive without being an employee. On average, the training takes about three years.

Through this process of dissemination, the doctrine of self-reliance is spread. The children will grow to become young adults and start practising the doctrine as well. This process of dissemination is illustrated diagrammatically below.

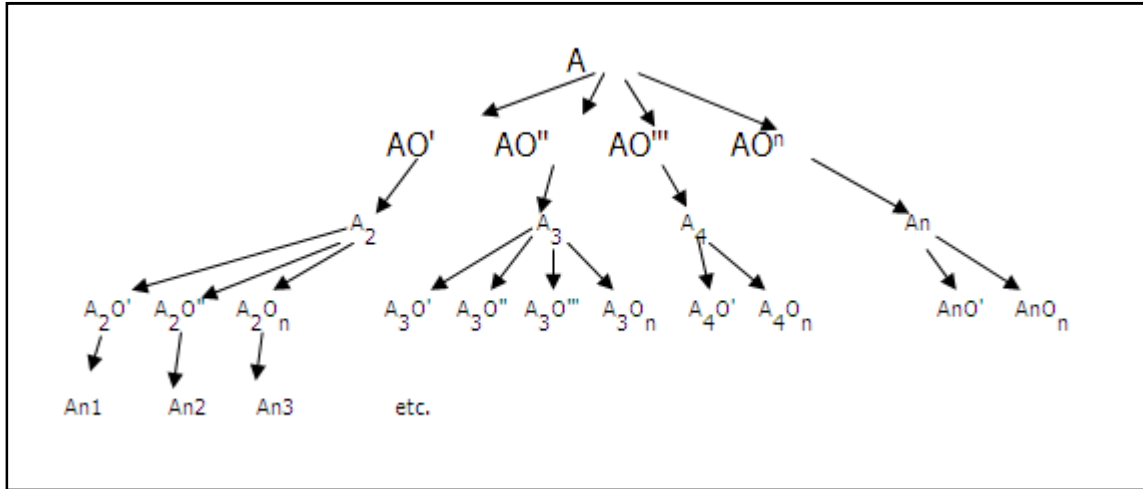


Figure 1: Perpetual Dissemination of Masowe Apostles' Practice
Source: Chikukutu, (2015)

In the diagram the A at the very top is the first adult who is practising and applying the church doctrine on self-reliance. The adult bears children AO¹ TO AOⁿ. These children are subjected to the church doctrine on self-reliance through informal training by the adult. They mature into adulthood A₂, A₃, A₄, Aₙ and also start their personal enterprises as prescribed by the church. They in turn bear their own children A₂O¹, A₂O²,.....A₃O¹, A₃O² and so on who are subjected to the church doctrine on self-reliance. They grow up to open their own enterprises in other areas in Zimbabwe or Africa at large. This process of perpetual dissemination replicates itself indefinitely and in the process creates a community of informally trained entrepreneurs.

While still on children it is imperative to talk about schooling.

Schooling is encouraged among the children but it should not be prioritised ahead of the church and beliefs in self-reliance. To that end Johane Masowe built his own schools and at the time of writing this article one school was being constructed by the Masowe Apostles in Mutare's Hobhouse suburb (Manica Post of December 31 2015 – January 7 2016). In these schools the children are taught the right type of education for a Masowe Apostle. Virtues of trust, love, faith in God, honesty, humility, high regard for work and personal responsibility are pivotal to being a Masowe Apostle (Kushure, 2015). A child may continue doing something else for a living but the basic skills they are endowed with initially centre on self-reliance revolving around the identified virtues. Even some school teachers and their classes visit the MA at Sakubva Green Market as a way of assisting their pupils see how sheet metalwork is done and by so doing have industrial experience.

Kushure, (2015) is a senior member of the church who summarises the teaching of youth as embodying the right type of education for a Masowe Apostle who are malleable to value addition as well as being skilled in various trades for self-employment. This is "education for our own self jobs.... a type of education that skills our children and make them ready for their own future...and makes them productive citizens who can till the land, exploit our resources, discover, recover and produce value" Kushure, (2015).

The first picture below shows the apprenticeship process in action while the next two show some of the products from sheet metalwork. It is interesting to note that the MAs have escalated their skills in sheet metalwork to higher levels that include coffin making.



Figure 2: Apprentice looks on at coffin making



Figure 3: Sheet metalwork products (Chicken feeders)



Figure 4: Sheet metal work products (Grinding mill components)

With time those trained will also develop capacity to train their own apprentices and the practice continues into the remote future. The above therefore also shows how dissemination enables the Masowe Apostles to sustain their religious entrepreneurship through ensuring that every member of the church is an active religious entrepreneur.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, the conditions under which the Masowe Apostles operated under during colonialism triggered the genesis of their religious entrepreneurship under their church leader called Johane Masowe. It is from Johane Masowe that the Masowe Apostles got their name. The Masowe Apostles do sustain their religious entrepreneurship using virtues and attitudes related to their church principles as well as through disseminating their doctrine of self-reliance to all members of the church.

While many entrepreneurs are believed to attribute risk of failure to their enterprises to uncertainty, the Masowe Apostles have a lot of faith in God's intervention in achieving success in their businesses and as such do not fear any business failure. A follow up large scale study to check on the success rate of Masowe Apostles' enterprises could be another exciting area of study through investigating the impact the Masowe Apostles have had at Port Elizabeth, the place where the doctrine of self-reliance was first proclaimed.

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