

Chapel Services as Hidden Curriculum: Reflections on Religious Worship at Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University

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Abstract

Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University has entered the academia arena thereby joining the state owned and other private universities. A trajectory look at its vision, mission and values leads one to believe that, indeed, a university of a different currency has been birthed. It is not its Christian grounding which makes it different and unique but its concept of a total person. In line with the mother church's doctrine, that is, Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa Forward in Faith, the university acknowledges the Trinitarian nature of a human being. The university has introduced every working day morning devotions for staff and students, a unique scenario not only conspicuously absent but non-existent in the other universities. The assumption is that other universities seem to be obsessed with the need to 'feed' the intellectual at the expense of the other two important dimensions (the soul and body) of a total person. The paper both qualitatively and quantitatively posits that what we find at Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University is a hidden curriculum that celebrates Pentecostal Christianity as exuded in the chapel services and this is also evident in the objectives set in the courses offered in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies.

Keywords: chapel, total person, hidden curriculum, Pentecostal, unwritten curriculum, *Ubuntu*

Introduction

The quality of the Zimbabwean universities' graduates has recently been under serious scrutiny. The coming of Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University (ZEGU) on the tertiary academic platform is a milestone achievement since tertiary education in Africa is in dire need of a university curriculum that addresses African challenges. What makes ZEGU unique is that it is an institution owned by a Pentecostal church which was founded by an African, a known Pan-Africanist, Ezekiel Handinawangu Guti (born in Zimbabwe in 1923), the leading founder of Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA), established in 1960 now in 122 nations with over 2,000 churches in Southern Africa, founder of seven Bible colleges (named Africa Multination for Christ Colleges), he holds several church ministry degrees (BA, MA, DD, DMin, PhD), which are dismissed in some circles as not academic and he is the author of over 70 Christian books. However, the accusation by many moralists, academics, traditional leaders, political leaders, civic organisations and the generality of the people is that the universal curricula being offered in tertiary education are purely 'academic'. It has nothing to do with the total person. The calibre of a student who is about to graduate or receive a degree from secular universities leaves a lot to be desired. As a result, the Zimbabwean society has coined adjectives to describe these students. Some of the adjectives include among others, 'academic hooligans', which phrase has negative connotations for the students as the society disapproves them, and consider them as social misfits. As a result, this has negatively affected their chances of getting employment with the prospective employers, thereby affecting their participation in the wealth creation of the nation. They have high-sounding qualifications but have undesirable character traits. This has been the major challenge for would-be employers. The dilemma that secular universities have is on how they can come up with curricula that look at a total person who is not only intellectually sound but morally 'correct'. It is at this juncture that Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University, a new university on the block, claims to fill in that gap by looking at a total person as evident in the university's courses and chapel activities. Its founder and chancellor, Ezekiel Handinawangu Guti, has a passion for developing the total person- *kuhlubusa muntu* (in the Nda language), and thus the mastermind behind the establishment of the university, which envisions itself as a nursery for good citizenry. Hence, in order to fully understand the curricula thrust of ZEGU, there is need to look at the brief history of Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa Forward in Faith (ZAOGA FIF), the surrogate mother of this tertiary institution.

Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa Forward in Faith: A Brief History

Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa Forward in Faith (ZAOGA FIF) has a large following and the church began from a humble background. It all started when Ezekiel Handinawangu Guti claims to have 'talked' to God in the bushes of Ngaone, a remote area in Chipinge district (Guti, 2011). It is believed that from the day God told him 'Fear not, Sin not' the young Ezekiel was never the same.

Having been set apart for God's work Ezekiel Guti's zeal for the gospel grew from strength to strength. He prematurely left his carpentry profession as God said "What you are doing with these planks is exactly what you will do to perfect my people with my word." The first church was founded in Bindura, Mashonaland Central province where God performed his wonderful work through Ezekiel Guti (Guti, 2011).

It must be noted that Guti himself does acknowledge that his ministry was not conflict free but managed to plant various churches throughout the country. Currently, ZAOGA FIF has become an international organisation though some scholars like Maxwell (2006) dispute that by regarding the church as merely 'transnational' not 'global'. The church now has a large congregation of different nationalities. Guti regards ZAOGA FIF as a sacred ministry of God whose doctrine hinges on Jesus Christ, and although not a new doctrine, it is built upon the foundation of the Apostles, the prophets, and of Christ being the chief cornerstone as fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Guti, 2011). Hence, ZAOGA FIF is an indigenous church whose niche is the development of the whole person. And according to Machingura (2011, 2012), a part of Pentecostal churches which emphasise baptism by the Holy Spirit, and thus *Glossolalia* (speaking in tongues), prayer and fasting, healing through exorcism of demons, and prophecy wherein fervent prayers and fasting are regarded as the driving force behind the church's growth and expansion. Within the ministry, there are those who are regarded as 'prayer warriors' a phrase that has military innuendos, hence the ethos of the church is to churn out Christians who are total persons mentally, spiritually and physically. Driven by this perception, the visionary Guti personally initiated the building of schools, health centres and churches so that all human needs are met. And in unity, the chapel services at ZEGU are tailor-made to fulfil the doctrine of the mother church, hence becoming a hidden curriculum at the institution which has made Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University a twin to ZAOGA FIF in terms of its vision and mission.

ZEGU and ZAOGA FIF

Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University is a Christian university from the establishment of Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa Forward in Faith situated in Bindura town, Mashonaland Central Province, about eighty kilometres north of Harare, Zimbabwe. The founder and chancellor of the university, Ezekiel Guti claims that the dream to have a university came to him in 1972 (Simango 2013). The dream came to fruition in 2012 when the university opened its doors to its first twelve students at Africa Multination for Christ College (AMFICC), the church's Bible college, before moving to the university campus in Bindura. Its initial association with AMFICC has put a negative tag on the university as critics argue that the university will struggle to separate the activities of AMFICC let alone ZAOGA FIF from ZEGU. The first programme, the Bachelor of Arts Honours in Theology and Religious Studies has made critics heighten their allegations that the university is an extension of the church's Bible college, AMFICC (the sole sponsor of the university is the ZAOGA FIF church).

Among church members, in regards to ZEGU, they approach it as something they need to support to advance the church and themselves to the point that the church asked each member to contribute some money towards the establishment of the institution. This approach was successful, although it is littered with problems, beyond the scope of this study. But evidently, there is a symbiosis between the church and the university via an indelible link as most of its activities are sanctioned from the church's headquarters (popularly known as HQ), and obviously directed from a cleric and laity-based perspectives. So once again, this process has challenges that this study seeks not to discuss, but indeed, areas open for further research.

The activities of the university are shaped by the doctrine of the church, hence the community is driven by the belief in the divine rule of God and each day's activities are started by a morning devotion that lasts one hour, every morning; and most of the sermons and prayers seek to encourage the ZEGU community to advance the total person. The understanding is that people need to dedicate their various activities to God, be they staff or students (of the seven academic staff members, three are ZAOGA FIF members and others are from other churches). Generally, the staff shares the same perspectives, though some condescending voices could be detected especially from the associate members because they are sceptical of the teachings which they say are an indoctrination mechanism delivered by the mother church to the university. Fifty percent of the associate members fear that the academic freedom associated with universities is compromised by the chapel services where every student and staff members are encouraged to attend, though not forced. The interviews carried out demonstrate that members are divided, with another oracle wholly endorsing the devotions and another group, cautious and a bit suspicious. And besides the various perspectives on ZEGU chapel services in contrast to the academic curricula; the chapel services are meant to inculcate the virtues of honesty and friendship as part of an effort to building a Zimbabwean nation.

Honesty: A Virtue at ZEGU

Honesty (integrity, truthfulness, sincerity ...) is a value that the institution inculcates in its students and staff, and relevant passages from the Bible are shared with the members. One respondent, who asked for anonymity, (interviewed, 23 September 2013) had this to say about this value:

This is a rare opportunity for university students and staff. It is extremely missed in these other state and private-owned universities. The mere fact that each day begins with prayer speaks volumes about this Christian university. Society has been besieged and honest people are now rare. The university inculcates in its members an African sense of responsibility and honesty-Ubuntu. We are daily reminded about this special virtue if we are going to be real ambassadors of Christ and ZEGU. If we have honest people, our nation will be saved from corruption.

An African sense of responsibility and honesty via Ubuntu, an ethic of humanism within southern African philosophy/thought is indeed noble in structuring a university motto. And in this we know that a community founded on honesty is a community that upholds the sanctity of life and cherishes its well-being, and the well-being of others. And if Zimbabwe has lost its dignity and humanness because of dishonest people in positions of authority, Bible education may be an indispensable pre-requisite back to a greater humanness. It must be noted that such scenarios are rare in the other universities as Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University attempt to develop the total person, who is academically, spiritually and morally acceptable in society, in partnership with communal friendship.

Friendship: A Virtue at ZEGU

Friendship (a relationship of mutual affection, understanding and compassion between two or more people) choice is one of the main topics in the morning devotions at ZEGU. Incorrect choices can indeed become a nightmare and people often find themselves in a plethora of problems when they make wrong choices, as summed by Proverbs 12:26 which says, “*The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray*”, hence, a mainstay passage in ZEGU morning devotions as staff and students are warned of the dangers of choosing the wrong friends. Critics have however argued that such teachings though noble; they don’t advance an academic mission. And some students who preferred anonymity argued that, outside class, interactions are very difficult at ZEGU, and thus, part of a hidden curriculum, a happening that is also true in ZAOGA FIF in that a man and a woman cannot move around independent of others. And most interesting, the worst comes by being involved in a relationship without the involvement of the authorities.

Furthermore, for students involved in Focus Group Discussions, such subtle and open expectations disempowered them from being independent thinkers and decision makers as seen in other tertiary institutions. And ultimately, the chapel acts as the counselling and guidance body that makes sure members of the university are morally, spiritually and intellectually equipped in order to develop a total person so he/she can make meaningful contributes towards sustainable development in Zimbabwe. And in reference, one respondent (interviewed, 8 October, 2013), after receiving the teaching on friendship for the day, said:

Teachings of this nature are essential, especially at a Christian institution where *Unhu* is the catchword. Today’s message was inspired and most of us *tapona* (we have been saved). Prior this teaching I did not seriously think about what it means to choose a friend. This demonstrates that ZEGU is a unique institution that has a total person at heart. We cherish these devotions heartily.

Evidently, the morning devotions are efforts towards the development of a total person, and this became clear at one of the university's breakfast held for the Bindura stakeholders when Vice-Chancellor C. Denhere gave a scintillating speech wherein he echoed the importance of chapel devotions and categorically made it clear that university chancellor E. H. Guti has a passion for education (Open Lecture presentation at ZEGU Campus, 11 September, 2013), although Guti was born in a society that marginalised Black people, resulting in the chancellor not getting formal education then. And continuing, the speech singled out the university as a nursery for good citizenry and argued that it is the moral malaise that engulfs our society today that has necessitated the birth of a university that seeks to uphold Christian values that are deeply embedded in the university's culture.

On one of his visits to the university, E.H. Guti, took time to talk about the vision that drives ZEGU (on 23 October 2013 he visited the institution). During his address he frequently cite and read from the Bible, he categorically made it clear that ZEGU is different from other universities because it is God's university and that he was simply a servant of the owner of the university (Guest Speech on ZEGU Campus, 23 October, 2013). During his lecture he also emphasised the importance of interface between the spiritual, intellectual and physical selves which need each other for meaningful existence. And according to Guti, an educated person without God is like a rootless individual who has nowhere to lean on; people need both education and God, the *sine qua non* of humanity. And in his conclusion, he urged all present to live peacefully with everyone. Guti's speech was indeed an authentication and officialisation of chapel at ZEGU, reinforcing the researchers' submission that chapel is a hidden curriculum at the university.

The foregoing evidently demonstrates that the message of the university, from the leadership down to the students, is based on the need to transform humanity for the better. Statements such as *munhu uyu akafunda asi haana unhu* (*This person is educated but has no morals*) abound in referring to many graduands from other universities who are a cause for concern. ZEGU claims to fill this gap by making efforts to nurture the total person who is not only intellectually enriched, but also graduates that are spiritually and morally oriented. The interviews we carried out indicated that some students value the devotions very much. Justice Nechikwira (interviewed, 20 September 2012) had this to say:

These morning devotions have gone a long way in assisting us mend our ways for we are always reminded of the need to remain focused on our studies, relationship with Christ as well as with one another.

It is important to note that, the twenty-one convectional students have divergent views regarding the morning devotions. Three quarters of the students are ZAOGA FIF members and the remaining come from other Pentecostal, mainline and African Independent churches. One interviewee (who requested to remain anonymous, interviewed, 25 Sept, 2013) from a mainline church demonstrated that while the morning devotions are important, they must not be platforms to 'score' denominational and confessional vendettas against certain churches, especially mainline and African Independent churches which are usually castigated for lacking the spirit. The interviewee's perception was that people take these morning devotions as arenas for deliberately attacking other churches behind the Bible. And when that happens, some members leave the chapel disheartened, as it is clear that chapel services are used as a weapon to target followers of other non-Pentecostal churches and religions. Hence, students from other churches complain that they are compelled in some services to 'convert' to ZAOGA FIF and be baptised by the Holy Spirit, and they further argue that they would prefer a scenario where men and women of the cloth from other churches other than ZAOGA FIF be invited to come and preach in the morning chapel services than only having pastors and elders from ZAOGA FIF. Yet, those students with deep ZAOGA FIF roots seemed to see the morning devotions as a positive development.

Thus, they are content with the proceedings, possibly because they are aware of the doctrine of the church and the preachers style of delivery (hence, they possibly see ZEGU's mission and vision as one and the same as that of ZAOGA FIF). And when asked about the future of the chapel sessions, some students were very optimistic that it is bright with devotions in place. However, some students, especially those from other churches, seem to feel that they are left out in some programmes because they are not ZAOGA members, and that they could not 'speak in tongues', it is being used against them (some were quite emotional about this). Yet, observations made by the researchers indicate that everyone is given the chance to lead in the devotions regardless of denominational orientation and that the community has generally embraced the chapel set-up, from the administration down to the students.

However, for the critics, this is not surprising, as most of the members are from ZAOGA FIF and because the devotions range from morality to spiritual matters, they also argue that the teachings are rarely on academic issues. Next, they don't like that students are reminded to behave according to the will of God which is unusual in state universities, even though there are chapels and chaplains in these universities. And in like manner, they are critical of the university because it makes efforts to make sure every student at ZEGU is exposed to select these teachings which critics argue are just an extension of ZAOGA FIF teachings. Hence, this has been viewed with suspicion as critics usually see it as a way of extending the Bible School in Harare, and thus the role of the university is to contribute academically, and not necessarily advance spirituality at the expense of academics.

ZEGU Chapel: Confessionals versus Academia

The introduction of the morning devotions at the university has been received with ambivalence as the morning devotions are manned from the chaplaincy and a calendar of 'preachers' that runs from Monday to Friday. And to demonstrate that the institution takes these morning devotions seriously is the conspicuous presence of the university's executive. The Vice Chancellor, lecturers and Registrar of the institution participate in the devotions, hence reinforcing idea that the university cherishes these devotions. This is a rare occasion at other universities wherein the vice- chancellor is sharing the same platform with students, lecturers and others. And although this is happening, members are not coerced to attend, however, they are encouraged to because it is a part of the ZEGU culture.

Critics view the presence of the top leadership as a clear demonstration that the devotions are compulsory. Taking the devotions at face-value, one is meant to believe that they are optional, but the real scenario as raised by some students is that they are indeed compulsory and thus we dub it as a 'hidden curriculum'. Students who requested anonymity argued that if one does not attend chapel services for two days' a follow is made by the chaplaincy team or administrators or members of the student body. The students further argued that, during recruitment interviews, questions were asked in line with seeking confirmation for participation in chapels and they are told to sign a form during registration committing themselves to chapel activities which they later found out were typically run by the ZAOGA FIF way of praising and worshipping. The Bible takes the centre stage as teachings are Bible-driven with some Pentecostal colouring.

Indeed, Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University is a haven of spirituality that has opened its doors to the secular world; however, can this spirituality find common ground with the academic world? The academic world is characterised by 'academic freedom' and its practitioners employ critical, accurate and value-free terminologies (Chitando, 2005). It is a realm of radicalism and scepticism where things are not taken at face value. How does ZEGU, as an institution of higher learning, marry the two seemingly divergent perspectives to life? Is it a question of compromisation or tolerance? Spirituality especially amongst the Pentecostals is associated with docility and at times, unwarranted meekness. Sermons are not questioned lest one is accused of being an atheist/ungodly. There are condescending voices from within and without that the chapel sessions are oppressive and create in the people a sense of docility as students and staff are expected to be obedient to what the preachers say, even in matters where they feel short changed and oppressed. Furthermore, allegation by critics is that the environment stifles critical thinking thereby 'killing' innovativeness and the inquisitive spirit that humanity has been endowed with by the creator.

Here, we ask several questions since the chapel sessions are quite limiting and in sharp contrast to the domain of other academic institutions. First, does ZEGU chapel allow *religio-licit a*? For example, is a Muslim, non-Pentecostal or an adherent to African indigenous religion able to practise their religious faith in the same chapel?

Second, are students and lecturers in academic lectures free to make critical comments that interrogate the system and the leadership? These are the questions that normally confront people who want to understand ZEGU and unveil its characteristic hidden curriculum which benefits the authorities in terms of loyalty and allegiance, and interestingly, the loyalty given to God is the same loyalty expected to be given to the leadership, in this case at the university (Machingura, 2012).

Critics have also cited these devotions as mechanisms to keep ZEGU members within 'manageable' parameters, even in circumstances where their rights are being violated by executive managers. Thus, instead of standing for their rights, they leave everything to God and the university administration is free of guilt. Yet, people at ZEGU are told to inspect and interrogate their lives as they fear to be caught on the wrong side when the day of *Parousia* comes as biblical texts are carefully selected and delivered to the members, and thus deliberately meant to stifle any critical or sceptical thinking that interrogates the status quo, especially the intellectual freedom usually given in secular tertiary institutions.

Critics of ZEGU also argue that the scenario of ZEGU, and possibly other church led tertiary institutions make it very difficult for students to freely express their ill feelings regarding any mishaps. Instead students strive to impress God and the leadership of Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University. In the case of ZEGU, and perhaps at like institutions, the Karl Marx (1818-1883) call that "religion becomes a sigh of the oppressed...opium of the people" (Connolly, 2006) may ring true, although the concept of university chapel is not new or unique, but a ubiquitous reality.

The mere existence of chapels in a number of Zimbabwean universities is an undisputable reality that humanity has a spiritual side that needs nourishment. Hence, the ZEGU chapel is not unique. What may seem to be different from other universities is that ZEGU is still a small institution owned by ZAOGA FIF with a deliberate slant towards Pentecostalism as its spiritual diet in all its chapel services. Second, the number of students is marginally manageable and one can easily tell who is who, and perhaps with the expansion the scenario will change and may either mimic state universities where students from other denominations or religions would want space to worship differently, or obviously mimic what is present in other denominationally led tertiary institutions like the Solusi University of the Seventh Day Adventist, Catholic University of the Catholic University, Africa University of the United Methodist Church and Reformed Church University that continue to gate keep the doctrines of their mother churches, certainly something that can be expected as they get administrative financial support from their denominational hierarchies.

Hence, the chapel sessions must be viewed ambivalently, although critics' views cannot be swept under the carpet, it remains a fact that the members of ZEGU chapel sessions stand to benefit from the sessions. And in interviews and Group Focused Discussions (FGD) carried out in this study undoubtedly indicate the chapel devotions are transforming people's lives as students and staff, alike, spoke highly of the devotions, and therefore view them as platforms for professional character building.

Chapel as a 'Hidden Curriculum'

Curriculum is “all the experiences a learner has under the guidance of the school” (Skilbeck, 1984). Lawton (1973) views curriculum as all the learning which is planned and guided by the school, whether it is carried out in groups or individually, inside or outside the school. Various studies have been carried out on what hidden curriculum theories entail, for example, the works of Dreeben (1968), Lynch (1989), Margolis (2001) and Giroux (2001) have been utilized many times to explain the scope of a hidden curriculum. Lynch (1989) regards schools as having universalistic and particularistic hidden aspects that enable an unequal environment for students. According to Lynch,

Although some of them are visible such as syllabuses, school time and exam procedures that might be accepted as universalistic, some of them are hidden such as social activities, reward systems that might be accepted as particularistic.

In unity, Durkheim (1961) commented on Moral Education that, there is a whole system of rules in the school that predetermine the child's conduct, for example, that pupils must come to class regularly, must arrive at a specified time and with an appropriate bearing and attitude. Pupils must not disrupt things in class and a host of obligations that the child is required to shoulder thereby constituting the discipline of the school in the spirit of discipline in the child. By hidden curriculum, therefore, the researchers mean the expectations, implicit but expected messages, and thus, unintended learning outcomes (Portelli, 1993). In essence ZEGU chapel is a hidden curriculum in that the contents of the chapel are not enshrined in the university's course outlines.

Durkheim also observed that more is taught and learned in schools than specified in the established curriculum of textbooks and teacher manuals. Even though it is not directly mentioned as a 'hidden curriculum', there is indeed an operational hidden curriculum. What this entails is that the Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University chapel contents are implicit, yet invisible, unwritten and covert based curriculum wherein staff and students get a latent curriculum, hence, a curriculum that is the by-products of the university's schooling. It is what Vallance (1973) regards as the “non-academic outcomes of schooling,” the “by-products of schooling,” the “residue of schooling,” or simply “what schooling does to people”. The chapel is tailor-made to provide staff and students with the university's niche of a total person. Giroux (1983) rightly captured the purpose of a hidden curriculum as shown at ZEGU as those unstated norms, values, and beliefs embedded in and transmitted to students through the underlying rules that structure the routines and social relationships in school and classroom. The teachings that are emphasized in the chapel sessions are not planned as would be in a curriculum per se.

Hence, ZEGU chapel is not a completely hidden curriculum as is normally believed because overt behaviour demonstrates that the contents of the chapel are pre-planned and intentionally given to members for transformation. And as a result, the chapel forms the engine behind ZAOGA FIF's curriculum which is meant to encourage transient social relationships through the submerging of personal identity and the acceptance of the legitimacy of categorical treatment (Dreeben, 1967).

The seriousness that is attached to the chapel is a clear demonstration that, indeed, the chapel has become an official curriculum as register of attendees was kept during its initial stages, and obviously, the heartbeat of the institution grounded in the idea of a need to develop the total person. Hence, a simple hidden agenda is not evident, but rather a complex wherein chapel has become an official curriculum of the institution, and although it has been criticized, there are no intentions that the curriculum will be examined at the end of each semester, and the only checks and balances will be in the transformation that recipients of the chapel sessions may exhibit within the university setting.

Research Methodology

More specifically, in regards to methodology, this study used a descriptive survey, a process which Cohen and Manion (1989) and Newman (2000) assert is a method of gathering original data by assessing opinions, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours in order to describe existing conditions to determine the relations between variables. The study also used the anthropological method regarded by Sibanda (2013) as a method that is good because it “starts where people are, with people’s real questions and interests, rather than by imposing questions from other contexts’”, and asserts that the anthropological method respects the insider perspective and can therefore work well with the phenomenological approach. We extensively used the main principles of the phenomenological method, that is, epoch and empathy as we sought the views of the students and staff, the majority of whom are ZAOGA FIF members. In addition, unstructured interviews were employed, and a number of people were informally interviewed which included students, academic and non-academic staff. The study also exegetically analysed the biblical texts that are popularly used in ZEGU chapels in the light of the quest to build the total person idea via student involvement.

Findings and Discussion

Of the thirty students (both convectional and block release) involved in the questionnaires distributed, the majority admitted that ZEGU chapel is vital and has become a hidden curriculum as shown in the table.

Table 1: Respondents' understanding of ZEGU chapel

Statement	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
1. ZEGU chapel is an essential entity in developing a total person.	24(80%)	2(6.7%)	4(13.3%)
2. ZEGU chapel must be compulsory to all students.	20(66.7%)	3(10%)	7(23.3%)
3. The chapel is an indoctrination mechanism at ZEGU.	6(20%)	1(3, 3%)	23 (76.7%)
4. The chapel accept all students regardless of religious affiliation.	20(66.7%)	3(10%)	7(23.3%)
5. Courses at the institution are reflected in the chapel hidden curriculum.	15(50%)	8(26.7%)	7(23.3%)
6. Critical thinking is encouraged in the chapel sessions.	22(73.3%)	4(13.3%)	4(13.3%)
7. The chapel is a continuation of AMFICC activities	10(33.3%)	5(16.7%)	15(50%)

The majority of respondents indicated that the chapel develops students into total persons. A fair share of them stated that the teachings in the chapel are meant to nurture students into responsible individuals who are accountable for their behaviour. Only a sizeable fraction (13.3%) thinks otherwise. For this group, chapel is a platform where efforts are made to make every member of the institution a member of ZAOGA FIF. And others were quite frank and stated that they had no idea of the intent of the chapel. For this group, the chapel is just an entity that they found in existence, and it has unconsciously become a ritual for them to attend.

The study further revealed that (76.7%) of the respondents disagreed that the chapel is meant to indoctrinate students. In fact this group felt that there are no efforts (covert or cohort) to stifle students' creativity and innovativeness. In any case, the chapel encourages critical reflections on matters that affect students' life and properly communicate them to the powers that be. Critics may still argue that the responses are not surprising, as most of the respondents are ZAOGA FIF members.

Next, half of the respondents (50%) were of the view that the institution's chapel is a hidden curriculum. Fulya Damla Kentli (2009) rightly argued that,

Socialization of schooling are identified by the social interactions within an environment which transmit tacit messages to students about values, attitudes and principles. Hidden curriculum can reveal through an evaluation of the environment and the unexpected, unintentional interactions between teachers and students which revealed critical pedagogy.

The ZEGU chapel is the lifeline of the activities of the institution, thus there has been no evaluation of the environment regarding its unexpected, unintentional interactions between teachers and students to reveal its pedagogical agenda.

Some Critical Reflections

It will be foolhardy to think that the scenario of Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University is overwhelming rosy. There are challenges that the university has to grapple with as it grows with regards to the chapel's hidden curriculum. At the moment, there are few members of the staff and students making these devotions a bit easier to implement. We don't foresee a situation where the university may have challenges in maintaining its mandate as a hidden curriculum of ZAOGA FIF. Hence, the practice of excluding other denominational groupings and religions will remain within the chapel services. Yet, how will the university react when students from other religions (for example Islam) ask for their space in the chapel? Especially when students who subscribe to other religions are encouraged to attend, should they manage to survive the recruitment process.

What can be done with those who attend the devotions as a ritual as shown in our Focus Group discussions because students from other Christian denominations feel that the chapel devotions are an indoctrination mechanism that denies them the freedom to choose what they want for themselves? What should be done with those students that feel the university must focus more on the freedoms that come from academic studies and not so much on spirituality which is focused churches while they also argue that they are at the university to learn, not to pray and fast, because ZEGU is not a church, but rather a university?

This argument of ZEGU being a university and not a church resonates well with its critics' as they say the role of a Christian university must not duplicate the role of a theological college or Bible college that trains pastors. Indeed, failure to realise this distinction is a recipe for disaster. People need to be reminded that ZEGU is a university where academics and young students need their 'freedom' to decide for themselves. These condescending voices are indicative of how this may grow into big challenges as the university opens its doors to more students and staff in an academic and non-academic context that as said above, subscribe to different religions and some possibly being atheists.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has explored the nature of the Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University chapel as a hidden curriculum of ZAOGA FIF. Essentially ZEGU chapel is immensely contributing to development of the total person who is mentally, physically and spiritually adept to deal with existential challenges facing humanity. Yet, the nature of chapel is not common in other Zimbabwean universities in the sense that ZEGU chapel is tailor-made. The chapel, as a hidden curriculum of ZEGU does nurtures individuals to act responsibly, contrary to the popular belief that university students are 'academic hooligans' busy in the streets, fighting running battles with government and institutions of security. But, it would be foolhardy to romanticise ZEGU chapel without mentioning the deep-seated and simmering opposition that abounds as our interviews indicate that chapel seems compulsory contrary to what is often told to people (and, the removal of the initial register of attendance has not changed things), and those who don't attend are monitored in an effort to safeguards the interests of ZAOGA FIF. Thus, our study recommends that: (1) it is important to have chapel at ZEGU, however, it must be an asset that facilitates students growth academically that does not stifle creativity, innovativeness and critical thinking; (2) chapel must allow religious diversity and tolerance in order to assist students learning, and (3) it must also be a nursery for academia wherein students are equipped with skills that compliment an academic agenda.

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- Simango, J. interview, Bindura, 05 May 2013.
- Sarireni, P. interview, Bindura, 16 August 2013