

CHALLENGES FACING THE CENTRAL METHODIST CHURCH IN INNER-CITY JOHANNESBURG IN ASSISTING ZIMBABWEAN IMMIGRANTS

By

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ABSTRACT

Zimbabwe is currently facing deep seated socio-economic and complex political problems which became overtly manifest in 2000. Consequently, individuals and families have been forced to migrate to neighbouring countries and to those further afield in search of meaningful livelihoods and safe political contexts. South Africa is one of the countries where Zimbabweans are migrating to. With the increase in the number of Zimbabweans coming to South Africa the South African government faces challenges in managing, formulating and implementing its immigration policies such that non-state organisations such as churches and other faith based organisations have to cater for the poor and vulnerable migrants. This research aimed to examine the challenges faced by a faith base organisation, the Central Methodist church in inner-city Johannesburg in assisting Zimbabwean immigrants. A case study research design was used to accomplish the aims and objectives of the research. Primary and secondary data collection was used to gather the information for the research. This study intended to broaden our knowledge on the challenges faced by churches and other non-state organisations in assisting Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa. The research findings show that overcrowding, raiding by police and lack of resources are some of the challenges faced by the Methodist church in assisting Zimbabwean immigrants. The report recommends that policy makers in South Africa should begin to examine the challenges faced by Non Governmental Organisations in assisting immigrants in South Africa and to strengthen the capacities of these institutions to respond more effectively to the needs and rights of poor immigrants.

DECLARATION

I Blessing Gorogodo declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Masters of Management in Public Policy in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

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Blessing Gorogodo

June 2010

DEDICATION

To my family who gave me all the support I needed to accomplish my dream. Special thanks to my brother Tendai for the financial support he gave me to enable my studies.

To Vaidah Gorogodo, my late mother who passed away with cancer, thank you for the advice that made me get to where I am now.

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ABBREVIATIONS

NGOs.....	Non Governmental Organisations
UNHCR.....	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
CASE.....	Community Agency for Social Enquiry
NCRA.....	National Consortium for Refugee Affairs
SAMP.....	Southern African Migration Project
IFP.....	Inkata Freedom Part
ANC.....	African National Congress
SAQA.....	South African Qualifications Authority
CORMSA.....	Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa
COSATU.....	Congress of South Africa Trade Unions
SAPS.....	...South African Police Services
TAC.....	Treatment Action Campaign
SANAC.....	South African National AIDS Council
SPT.....	Solidarity Peace Trust
ZANU (PF).....	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
CIO.....	Central Intelligent Officers

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Zimbabwe is currently facing a decade long social, economic and political ‘crisis’¹ whose origins are multiple, complex and diverse. Zimbabweans have reacted to the severe economic and political difficulties by immigrating to neighbouring countries particularly, to the regional economic powerhouse, South Africa and Botswana where they search for employment and pursue other livelihood options.

The South African government has, in recent years faced huge challenges in managing the movement and settlement of the increased number of Zimbabweans coming to South Africa.. The settlement of poor and marginalised categories of Zimbabwean immigrants in informal settlements and ‘unofficial’ refugee camps such as in De Doorns in the Western Cape or the Central Methodist church in Johannesburg has, for example, attracted widespread media coverage and political controversy. Klotz (2004: 831) argues that the phenomenal increase in the number of asylum seekers in the past twelve years is directly linked to the achievement of a peaceful transition in South Africa. For Klotz (ibid) since the collapse of the apartheid system, South Africa has become a safe haven for thousands of individuals from all over the world that are forced to flee their own communities or countries because of persecution or a well founded fear of persecution. The challenges faced by the state, as well as its failure to assist poor and marginalised immigrants has spawned the emergence of a wide variety of welfare, legal human rights advocacy organisations whose core mandate is to assist poor and marginalised asylum seekers and refugees. Among these groups are faith based Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that provide shelter, food and clothing to indigent foreign nationals. There is a dearth of information on the challenges that these non-state actors such as NGOs face in assisting immigrants.

In response to this observation this study set out to explore the living conditions of indigent Zimbabwean immigrants who reside at the Central Methodist Church a faith based organisation in inner city Johannesburg. Specifically, the study examined and explored the

¹ Johnstone et al 2000 state that although there is wide ranging debate and fierce contestation as to whether the situation in Zimbabwe constitutes a ‘crisis’ there is evidence that the political, economic and social situation has severely interrupted ‘the reproduction of economic, cultural, social and/political life’ See Hammar et al 2003; See also Bond and Manyanya 2003

challenges faced by the church in accommodating the Zimbabwean immigrants. The main goal of the project was to document the difficulties faced by the church organisation in sheltering Zimbabwean immigrants.

1.2 Background of the study

This section will highlight the role of the church in assisting immigrants. In this section I discuss the problem faced by the church and these include; socio-political difficulties; poor documentation of the immigrants and how legislative and policy development in South Africa affect the work of NGOs and faith based organisations.

1.2.1 Role of non-governmental organisations in assisting immigrants

Non-governmental organisations, especially churches have over the years played a crucial role in assisting newly arrived immigrants and those who struggle for a living within urban settings. The Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) Report (2003; 90) states that asylum applicants relied on churches and mosques as well as NGOS, for food assistance upon arrival in South Africa. The Refugee Pastoral Care and the Red Cross which are not UNHCR's implementing partners also played an important role in providing food and assistance to new arrivals. The Central Methodist Mission in inner city Johannesburg is one of the places which provide shelter and food to the Zimbabwean immigrants and a few other individuals from countries in Africa. The church is not a UNHCR implementing partner which means that it cannot get financial assistance from the multilateral organisation. Individuals however, continue to throng the church in search of shelter and refugee which strains the church's resources to provide or respond adequately to the needs of the inhabitants.

1.2.2 Socio-political problems

Zimbabwean immigrants consist of both economic and political refugees who are coming from an environment which cannot be categorised as a war conflict situation as defined in conventional interventions. As a result of this most of the immigrants do not have documents that legalise their stay in South Africa. Many in South Africa including representatives of the government have publicly doubted the validity of most asylum claims

from Zimbabweans arguing that they are economic migrants fleeing a country whose economy is in a state of collapse. However, the South African policy makers and politicians do not consider the long term causes of economic hardships. It is because of the political situation that the economy collapsed in Zimbabwe. The previous elections in 2000 and 2002 were characterised by political violence and state brutality. When Zimbabwe had parliamentary and presidential elections in 2000 and 2002 violence and rigging were blatant. However, the South African observer mission declared the polls free and fair (Meldrum; 2004). Amnesty International stated that human rights violations continued in Zimbabwe after the 2008 elections. (see Bryson (2008:4) As the negotiations to form the new government were taking place, beatings, rapes and killings escalated in Zimbabwe. This is the reason why some Zimbabweans continued seeking asylum in South Africa.

Knapp (2004:8) postulates that Zimbabwe's economic collapse and the consequent migration of individuals to South Africa and Botswana has been costly to the two countries. A politically and economically unstable Zimbabwe poses transnational risks to the region in the longer term. Anti-Zimbabwean sentiments and hostilities are strong and pervasive in South Africa and Botswana². (This is a great challenge to the South African government hence the Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg decided to shelter the needy immigrants.)

The South African policy makers and implementers face a huge challenge in attempting to meet the needs and demands of immigrant's on one hand and those of South African citizens on the other. As a result of this, the burden is often, indirectly, placed on non-state actors such as the Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg to assist immigrants.

1.2.3 Poor Legal Documentation

The lack of proper legal documentation makes it extremely difficult for immigrants to access sound social, health and financial services in South Africa. Many immigrants including refugees and asylum seekers do not possess proper legal documents allowing them to stay and work within South Africa. In some instances this is a result of the inefficiency and corruption within the Department of Home Affairs (see Landau and Jacobsen 2003)

² In May 2008 for example, violence targeting mainly black foreign nationals in South African townships and informal settlement left 62 people dead. Although the attacks targeted mainly foreign nationals 21 of those killed were South Africans nationals.

Landau (2004) notes that many locals in South Africa fear that the country is being overrun by foreigners, migrants, immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. There is 'a fundamental belief that the state and its citizens have no obligation to promote the rights or welfare of non-citizens until they have overcome the inequalities and injustices bequeathed by their own history' (Landau 2006; 233, see also Nyamnjoh 2006). According to this view improving immigrants' access to legal documentation that permitting them to work and study will result in a deluge of immigrants from surrounding countries and those further afield into South Africa. Currently immigrants cannot work; move freely to search for informal jobs because if they are caught without documents they can be deported.

The media also disseminates biased information on the numbers of Zimbabweans in South Africa and such factors have a negative impact on the Zimbabwean refugees. Harris (2001) states that the media plays an important role in disseminating information about foreigners to the South African public and oftentimes the foreigners are represented in a negative and stereotypical manner.

Klotz (2000) states that until 1993 for example, South Africa refused to acknowledge that there were Mozambicans nationals who qualified for a refugee status even though there was evidence that they were fleeing their war-torn country (in part the result of South Africa's destabilization policies in the region.) Some scholars like Brulliard (2009) state that diplomatically, the South African government has rarely dared to criticize the regime of President Robert Mugabe, even as Zimbabwe descended into economic ruin and political conflict. At home, South Africa has promised to ease visa regulations while at the same time it arrests Zimbabwean illegal immigrants despite a moratorium on deportations. These contradictions between policy pronouncements and practice on the ground means that Zimbabweans encounter difficulties in securing documents that legalise their stay in South Africa. The underlying assumption informing the practices of the Department of Home Affairs seems to be that issuing asylum and refugee documents to Zimbabweans will in other words mean that the South African government is acknowledging that there are political problems in Zimbabwe. Fabricius (2008) highlights that had the South African government accepted the crisis in Zimbabwe, it was supposed to have issued Zimbabwean immigrants with temporary documents to legalize their stay so that they can work and be able to survive on their own. Without appropriate identification papers immigrants cannot work or seek other livelihood options freely.

Peberdy (2002) argues that South Africa's immigration policy does not appear to have kept pace with initiatives to free the movement of trade and capital in the region. Neither current legislation nor the Immigration Bill contain provisions which facilitate (let alone encourage) the businesses of these entrepreneurs to trade across South Africa's borders.

Fabricsius (2008) believes that the eruption of xenophobia in 2008 also took place within a wider context of a restrictive national and foreign policy, which must be examined if the violence is to be understood and avoided in the future. For Fabricsius (ibid) Pretoria's failure to acknowledge fully that there is a crisis in Zimbabwe and that it had repercussions beyond its own borders was problematic. Fabricsius (2008) shows how the concept of politics had an impact on the challenges that Non Governmental Organisations face as a result of the government policy on immigrants. For example one would say if the South African government solve the political problems in Zimbabwe less people could be seen coming to South Africa to seek refuge. This would reduce some of the challenges that are faced by the NGOs assisting the immigrants with service delivery.

Asylum applicants and refugees alike have to wait for a long time to obtain identity cards that grant them the right to reside, work or study in South Africa. In instances where asylum seekers are granted temporary permits, these tend to be valid for short term periods like three to six months upon which one has to seek a renewal. A United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) study suggests that a fifth of refugees resort to bribing state officials in order to acquire legal documentation (Groot 2004). Employers tend to be sceptical and are hesitant to employ individuals who have a legal status that is valid for not more than three months. Without proper legal documentation refugees also face difficulties in trying to access health care and education services or to open a bank account.

According to the *National Consortium for Refugees Affairs (NCRA)* report (2006), some refugees and asylum seekers with specific skills and professional qualifications are often unable to practice because they are unable, at times, to have their qualifications certified by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) due to the costs involved. Zimbabwean immigrants also encounter such difficulties and most of the qualified immigrants may end-up relying on Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) for basic necessities and sheer survival because of such reasons. Thus pressure is brought to bear on organisations such the

Methodist Church to try and help the immigrants secure such necessities and requirements but very little is known about the challenges the church and others involved in similar work face in assisting immigrants.

1.2.4 Legislative

South Africa gives foreigners particularly those possessing specific skills particular work permits which are governed by specific legislations and regulations. The permits are however, not easy to secure and the process of getting a permit is long and cumbersome. The permits include work permits, quota permits and exceptional skills permits. Zimbabweans cannot easily secure these permits due to a host of challenges in securing legal documents such as passports; partly as a result of the economic collapse in their country. During the economic crisis it was difficult for the state to process and produce travel documents; which meant that even skilled individuals used illegal means to enter South Africa and without a valid passport they could not use their qualifications to secure employment let alone apply for a work permit. The South African Press Association (2007), for example highlighted that passport fees in Zimbabwe were, at that time, exorbitant and ordinary people and even professionals could not manage to acquire the document.

Without any legal documentation many Zimbabweans resorted to applying for a refugee status but could only be given temporary asylum seeker permits. The process to seek asylum is governed by the Refugees Act of 1998. A specific procedure must be followed and after following all the procedures, ideally one should receive a decision regarding his/her status as a refugee within three months of application (City of Johannesburg; 2010). However, because of severe backlogs this process currently takes much longer than the envisaged period. During this period applicants do not receive any documentation; do not have access to social services and have no protection against arrest, detention and deportation. In many instances this compels poor immigrants without adequate financial means and lacking social support from kin or community groups to seek shelter and various forms of assistance from churches such as the Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg while waiting for their application to be determined.

Asylum determination procedure in South Africa is characterized by a high degree of arbitrariness which fails to achieve acceptable standards of administrative justice (Klaaren 1996). Applications tend to be decided favourably depending where one comes from.

People coming from countries perceived as “refugee generating” can be rejected on the grounds that conditions are seen as ‘safe’ in other words on a ‘group’ basis rather than on individual assessment (van Beek; 2001 and Klaaren; 2000).

Handmaker (1998) postulates that the capacity of local Non Governmental Organisations which in some instances assist refugees ought to be strengthened both by international development assistance and government support. Refugees ought to be actively involved in the reconstruction of South Africa. However, refugees are often treated as ‘outsiders’ and under such a conceptualisation they cannot take part in the country’s development.

Klotz (2004:834) asserts that following the 1994 democratic transition South Africa confronts challenges both on its ability to satisfy domestic demands (for jobs, new houses, protection from international economic competition) and its legitimacy as a decision-making institution. This will mean that priority is to provide services is primarily to its citizens rather than migrants.

1.3 Problem Statement

The study focuses on the problems faced by the Central Methodist Church in assisting Zimbabwean immigrants. There is a paucity of empirical research on the challenges faced by churches and other faith based organisations in assisting immigrant groups in contexts characterised by violence, economic inequality, lack of proper documentation and limited financial resources. Extensive research by institutions such as the Forced Migration Studies Programme (FMSP) at the University of the Witwatersrand; The Zimbabwe Exiles Forum (ZEF); the Southern African Migration Programme (SAMP) inter alia has focused mainly on migration policies, migrants’ access to health services and livelihoods in South Africa. There is therefore a lack of knowledge on the challenges faced by churches and other institutions that assist immigrants and this study is an effort in that direction. This research will, potentially facilitate further studies on faith based and humanitarian organisations and the forms of assistance they render to people in crisis. In addition, it will contribute towards a better understanding of possible solutions to the challenges they face.

1.4 Aims and objectives

1.4.1 Main objective

The main objective of the study is to examine the challenges faced by the Methodist Church in Central Johannesburg in accommodating Zimbabwean immigrants. The research explores the causes, nature and dimension of the problems faced by the church.

1.4.2 Subsidiary objectives

The research is also aimed at achieving the following:

- To examine the extent to which the challenges faced by the church are a result of the nature of problems encountered by the Zimbabwean immigrants.
- To uncover if there is a relationship between these challenges and the South African government policies on migration in general and on Zimbabwean immigrants in particular.
- To establish what the Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg suggest as possible solutions.
- To come up with a set of action oriented recommendations.

1.4.3 Primary Research Question

What are the challenges facing the Central Methodist Church in inner-city Johannesburg in assisting Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa?

1.4.4 Secondary Research Question

The study sought to find out:

- The nature of problems faced by Zimbabwean immigrants residing at the Methodist church and to determine whether these problems are real or perceived to exist?

- Whether the problems faced by the Central Methodist church are influenced by the external environment the church has to operate within (For example, government departments, municipalities and the corporate world)?
- What the officials at the Central Methodist Church think can be done to improve their operations and response to immigrants' demands?

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa. Apart from examining the writings on Zimbabwean immigrants the chapter will discuss definitions of terms and concepts used in this report such as Non-Governmental Organisations, immigrant, illegal immigrant, asylum seeker and that of refugee. It is also important to note that the research will also fill the gap on the current literature in the field of NGOs and faith based organisations and their work with immigrants in South Africa.

2.2 Definitions of concepts used in the Report

2.2.1 Asylum Seeker

The South African Refugee Act defines an asylum seeker as an individual seeking recognition as a refugee in the Republic (see Olivier 2009). Asylum seekers are allowed to work and study in South Africa.

2.2.2 Immigrant and Illegal immigrant

According to Fatima (2007) the official definition of an immigrant before 1994 during the apartheid era was one who would be assimilated into the White population. By definition therefore Black Africans were not considered for immigration.

An illegal immigrant is one who is residing in the country illegally. According to Solomon (1996) the Aliens Control Act of 1991 states that an illegal immigrant is a person who is an undocumented immigrant or illegal alien if he or she remains in South Africa after the expiry of a residence permit. There is a distinction between illegal immigrants and refugees; refugees are forced by the circumstances of fear or natural disasters to leave their countries were as immigrants decide to move in search of greener pastures for example some of the Zimbabweans immigrants in South Africa.

2.2.3 Refugee

Human Rights Watch (2005) states that Article 1 of the OAU Refugee Convention as amended by the 1967 Protocol provides the definition of a refugee as that of:

"A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.."

It is important to note the limitations of the definition in relation to Zimbabwean immigrants. Most of them are economic immigrants fleeing the economic hardships at home. They cannot be classified as refugees meeting the above definition and they have therefore faced difficulties in acquiring legal documents granting them rights to live, work or study in South Africa (see Kok et al 2006, Crush and James 1995, Solomon 2003, McDonald and Crush 2002). Klotz (2000) argues that South Africa's restrictive migration policies are reflective of the country's apartheid legacy which the post apartheid state has yet to overcome. Notwithstanding this argument, Solomon (1996) expresses the fear that broadening the United Nations definition on refugees to encompass economic migrants; will adversely affect domestic stability in receiving countries as the opening up of borders might effectively allow large numbers of people from impoverished and authoritarian states to stream through national boundaries to relatively more politically stable polities such as South Africa and Botswana.

Agencies such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) can only assist individuals granted a refugee status only. Meldrum (2004) reported that, refugees have a difficult time in South Africa because they are almost illegal immigrants as they face challenges in legalising their stay. The United Nations definition does not recognise economic migrants as refugees and this has a negative impact on Non-Governmental Organisations as they cannot access United Nations funding because it's meant for organisations assisting refugees. This could mean that these NGOs and other faith based organisations assisting poor asylum seekers face challenges in sourcing funds to assist individuals under their care.

The South African government might also have been reluctant to recognise Zimbabwean asylum seekers as refugees because of the state's role as regional mediator in Zimbabwean talks as this would undermine their role as a neutral player. Responses within South Africa had to be designed to complement rather than undermine South Africa's supportive role in reconciling and reconstructing Zimbabwe. However, it is the contention of this report that humanitarian issues can and should be separated from regional political considerations as in the context of the Zimbabwean migration; this can impinge on the realisation of individuals' basic human rights as well as the security and welfare interests of South Africans.

2.2.4 Non Governmental Organisation(s)

It is important to define the term NGO to understand the scope within which they operate. A Non Governmental Organisation is any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organized on a local, national or international level. In this study the acronym NGO has been used in a broad sense to describe and encompass faith based organisations such as the Central Methodist Church which is the main subject of the study. NGOs are accountable to a variety of stakeholders including: those who shape their operating environments (e.g. governments, donors); civil society at large (social movements, public, grassroots, other NGOs); and those that NGOs often attempt to influence (private sector, global institutions, and governments).

According to Fernando and Heston (1997) NGOs' activity presents the most serious challenge to the imperatives of statehood in the realms of territorial integrity, security, autonomy and revenue. The role that the Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) play in filling the gap when the government fail to deliver services to people is always complicated. This is because states always attempt to maintain their ability to provide services and maintain territorial integrity.

Pearce (1993:224) notes that in some countries, certain Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have played an active role in providing support to repressed opposition groups. Where such groups have subsequently achieved power, there is likely to be a period in which these NGOs are viewed favourably (and possibly uncritically) by government. Zimbabwe is one such example, where a number of Non Governmental Organisations

(NGOs) and church health-care providers were supportive of liberation movements during the independence struggle and continue to be an important element, especially in the provision of health sector.

It is also important to note that in some instances the obtaining relationship between of Non Governmental Organisations and the state can have negative or positive impacts on how the NGOs operate. This mainly has to do with the political environment. Without the support of the municipalities and the government departments regarding service delivery to the disadvantaged, Non Governmental Organisations will always have a burden to deliver services to intended beneficiaries. According to Pearce (1993:224), relations between governments and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have ranged from hostility; through indifference to co-operation, reflecting differing historical factors and the attitudes on both sides. Although in many countries there are clear and specific relationships between governments and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in others their respective roles are unclear or uneasy. This uncertainty, where it exists, is counterproductive both for NGOs and governments, and leads to duplication, competition, or imprecise demarcation of roles. Criticisms of a failure by government to provide a broad strategic framework into which NGOs can fit are also increasingly heard and this relates to some of the findings of this study.

2.2 Zimbabwe: A History of Migration

The migration of workers from other parts of Africa into South Africa has a long history (see Maharaj 2001). McDonald (2000) attests that Southern Africa has a long history of intra-regional migration, dating back to the mid nineteenth century. Migration was probably the single most important factor tying together all of the various colonies and countries of the sub-continent into a single regional labour market during the twentieth century. Stalker (1994) states that mine workers were recruited into South Africa by the Chamber of Mines until the early 1970s since immigrants were the only people willing to work for low wages under difficult circumstances in the mines (see Nkai 2003).

Tevera and Zinyama (2002:4) argue that while intra-regional movement follows a long history, in the last decade there has been a qualitative shift in the nature of migration between South Africa and Zimbabwe as a consequence of changes in the political and

economic conditions of both countries. The migration of young, single men for work has continued and even grown but cross-border migration has become one in a basket of survival strategies because of the economic crisis and decline in Zimbabwe. The new Zimbabwean migrant is “typically a middle-aged family person who uses cross-border migration as one strategy for the survival of his/her family particularly where this is an urban household (Tevera and Zinyama 2002: 4).

Within the Southern African region, Zimbabwe’s migration history is unusual. Historically countries were either recipient or sending countries for migrants. Zimbabwe was always in the unusual position of being both. Over the years many Zimbabweans went to work primarily in South Africa. Foreign mine workers have traditionally made up at least forty percent of the South African mine labour force, and in the 1960s foreigners represented eighty percent of mine workers (see Crush; 1997).

The volume of ordinary cross-border traffic between Zimbabwe and its neighbours has escalated dramatically over the last decade. Many more Zimbabweans are looking outside the country for a means of livelihood. In a Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) survey, Zimbabweans were asked the purpose of their last visit to South Africa. Over 70 percent had an economic purpose for migrating with 29 percent going to work or look for work and 42 percent going to trade or to shop.

Makina (2007) argues that migration to South Africa especially for purposes of seeking employment has been a traditional feature for all Southern African people including Zimbabweans. Makina’s survey captured arrivals of migrant Zimbabweans in South Africa since 1979 to mid July 2007. Makina (ibid) states that from 1979 to 1999 the number that migrated was a mere 8 percent. However, since 2000 (the year of farm invasions in Zimbabwe to 2007 (when the survey was conducted), the number of people that has migrated to SA has shot up to 92 percent. For Makina (2007) the present trend of migration to SA by Zimbabweans is a product of the political and economic meltdown in the country as it significantly accelerated from 2000.

Zimbabweans and Mozambicans used to work in South Africa during the apartheid era. A report by the Global Crisis Solutions (2007) states that in the Limpopo province, which borders Zimbabwe and in which the agriculture sector is a major employer, there is a history

of Zimbabwean seasonal and permanent labour on farms. The dawn of South African independence resulted in the relaxation of border restrictions leading to the increase in the number of Africans migrating to South Africa. It is also important to note also that since the end of apartheid South Africa scrapped visa requirements for those visiting the country from among others, Namibia, Lesotho and Malawi. Maharaj (2001) highlights that most of the countries surrounding South Africa, with the notable exception of Namibia and Botswana are among the poorest in the world and their citizens migrate to South Africa, oftentimes illegally, to seek alternative livelihood options (see also Plender; 1986).

Studies by the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) reveal that cross border migration and trade from regional countries to South Africa has increased since the 1990s (see Mattes and Crush and Wayne; 2000). Tevera and Zinyama (2002) suggest that migration is no longer only a male domain as Zimbabwean women have also followed the migration flow in numbers. There are a number of cross border traders who travel to South Africa and most of them are women.

A Report drafted by the Global Crisis Solutions on undocumented Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa (2007) states that whereas migration from Zimbabwe to South Africa has a long history, the scale and character of migration has shifted in recent years. As the economic and political crisis in Zimbabwe has worsened increasing numbers of Zimbabweans have turned to migration as an additional coping strategy. Thus people continue to come to South Africa in search for a better life despite the formation of a new government in Zimbabwe in 2009 and the relative stabilisation of the country's economy.

2.3 Categories of Zimbabwean Immigrants in Regional Countries

Crush (2007) identifies two categories of undocumented migrants; the first one being that of immigrants who enter neighbouring countries mostly Botswana and South Africa, as visitors, through official exit ports but then overstay their visits. The second category comprises those who leave Zimbabwe without valid travel documents and do not use official exit points. These include individual 'border hoppers' and those relying on trafficking syndicates. The numbers are impossible to ascertain with any degree of accuracy although some surveys have provided important insights into the intentions, behaviours and strategies of these migrants.

Maharaj (2001) who concurs with Crush (2007) alludes to a third category of undocumented migrants which consists of individuals that enter the country and apply for a refugee status after which they attain the legal right to be in South Africa.

2.4 Policies on Immigration

Harris (2001) postulates that the immigration policy within South Africa must be contextualized and analyzed within South Africa's political transition from apartheid to democracy. The current immigration policies that are in place in South Africa emanate from apartheid era policies which were restrictive in nature. Peberdy (1997) states that ignoring the history of black immigration to South Africa obscures the legacy of South Africa's racist immigration policy that prevented black people from becoming migrants and established the migratory regulations in place today. Immigration policies in South Africa originated from the Alien Control Act which was active in the apartheid era and contain restrictions of the past.

Handmaker (2001) analyses the process of policy development in South Africa focusing on theoretical challenges facing the government in the implementation of the Refugees Act. He pays special attention to the proposed containment of applicants in reception centres. Handmaker (ibid) also draws attention to the arbitrary manner in which asylum is currently determined and inconsistencies between the interfacing of the Refugees Act of 1998 and the immigration legislation. For Handmaker (2001) the new legislation can only be effective if asylum applicants are granted a credible hearing in the asylum determination process.

The asylum system has always sat quite uncomfortably within the country's heavily criticized immigration regime (see Klaaren and Sprigman; 2000) The department of Home Affairs that administers the asylum determination process also faces various challenges particularly the lack of qualified and adequate personnel who can process the steadily increasing numbers of asylum applicants (see Klaaren, 1996; Kerfoot, 2001; Handmaker, 2001). This study was partly motivated by a desire to uncover how the NGOs and faith based organisation such as the Central Methodist Church deal with challenges related to immigrants' failure to legalise their stay in South Africa.

The former Minister of Home Affairs, and Inkata Freedom Party (IFP) leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi, saw the movement of people into South Africa as an acute threat to the country and he consistently advocated for strict immigration measures. In his introduction speech in parliament Buthelezi said:

‘If we as South Africans are going to compete for the scarce resources with millions of aliens who are pouring into South Africa then we can bid farewell to our Reconstruction and Development Programme.....’

(see Crush and William 2002; see also the Human Rights Watch 1998).

Surprisingly this tough policy stance has continued under the African National Congress (ANC) ministers (see Klotz, 2000). Such a restrictive stance impacts on policy implementation as the state may not work hand in hand with non-governmental organisations to assist poor immigrants. The rising tide of xenophobia against foreigners may also attest to the effects of tough policy pronouncements by state officials characterizing immigrants as outsiders.

Various policy options have been advocated to resolve the illegal immigrant issue ranging from tighter border controls and implementation of law and order to those that attempt to understand the problem in its regional and historical context. Handmaker (2001) postulates that, the challenge for South Africa is to formulate policy that takes advantage of the positive aspects of globalization. This includes the movement of people with skill, expertise, resources, entrepreneurship and capital which will support the country’s construction and development. Crush (2008) also states that after 1994, the South African government struggled to formulate a policy appropriate to the country's new role in a changing regional, continental, and global migration regime.

It is very important to note that in developing its immigration policies South African government has to consider the need of needed skills for development of their country. Programmes such as ASGISA need to be promoted for it to be a success. This programme calls for skills attraction of the needed labour migrants from all over Africa. However one could say the immigration policy is still restrictive in nature. While South Africa’s recent efforts to increase its skills base are acknowledged, a lot still needs to be done to ensure

immigration policy tallies with the ASGISA vision. Long term success requires affective engagement in global competition to attract needed talent (Khumalo; 2007).

2.5 Immigration Laws

Klaaren (1996) notes that the environment outside South African law on refugee had a positive impact on the development of the Refugee Law for the country (see also Kerfoot (2001 and Handmaker 2001). The Green paper recommendations on refugee policy were heavily influenced by the work of the international reformulation of refugee law. It is important to note that the process to improve policy and legislation on immigration and refugees started after South African independence. For Handmaker (2001) the process of the Refugees policy reform began in 1996. The process led to the country's first ever refugees Act in 1998. The first proposal to introduce refugee legislation came about in 1996 with the preparation of an initial Draft Refugee Bill by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) (Al- Omari 1996). This was followed by the circulation of a Second Draft Bill which received substantial critical commentary (de la Hunt, 1996, Hathaway, 1996, McNamara and Morjane, 1996)

Klotz (2000) believes that progress marked by the passage of refugee legislation in 1998 is oftentimes hindered by the manner it is implemented. . The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) who criticized South Africa for the xenophobic attacks stated that securing a legal status does not protect foreign Africans from harassment, imprisonment and or deportation.

The White paper on migration calls on communities to assist in the enforcement of the country's migration control systems, suggesting that one would be a good citizen by reporting anyone suspected of illegal residence in South Africa to the authorities. In the words of the white paper, the 'community' would be responsible for cooperating with internal policing actions to ensure that illegal immigrants are not attracted to South Africa (RSA White Paper on migration 1999:4.4.1). The proposed policy and the draft Immigration Bill was that it effectively brings refugee protection "back within the ambit of migration control" rather than distinguishing between the two (Klaaren, 2000)

Landau and Jacobsen (2003) argue that although the new Refugees Act of 1998 is in force refugees continue to be subject to discrimination, police harassment and foreigner violence. Many South Africa including representatives of the government have publicly cast doubt on the validity of most asylum claims arguing that most of the individuals are economic migrants.

Croucher (1998) cited in Maharaj (2001) states that immigration in South Africa and elsewhere is a complex social, political and economic issue that poses numerous policy challenges for even the most prosperous and democratic states. In an era of globalization there has been a great deal of debate about the rights of non citizens. This is with regards to access to basic welfare and social services. Since the collapse of the apartheid system South Africa has been grappling with huge and glaring economic inequalities and has been trying to improve the lives of poor categories of its citizens and the large scale settlement of African immigrants has brought added economic pressures on the state. For many citizens the challenge is to make sure its citizens are catered for first. Thus churches such as Methodist in central Johannesburg and other NGOs have had to come in to provide shelter and food to the immigrants. This study sought to find out the challenges that are faced by the Methodist church in dealing specifically with Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa.

Maharaj (2004) argues that official policy towards the illegal immigrants has also sometimes been confusing, incoherent and contradictory because the government had been caught unaware by the enormity, complexity and seeming intractability of dealing with large scale black immigration. For example immigrants from Zimbabwe increased because of the socio-economic problems in their country. It's not only Zimbabwean immigrants that the South African government has to deal with, there are also immigrants from Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Ethiopia that seek a refugee status in South Africa.

Lack of specific policies and law have also put refugees at risk of being mistreated and their rights infringed upon with impunity by security agents and other agents who should otherwise protect them (see Wachira; 2003). Police are accused of taking advantage of the immigrants despite the fact that the South African government has passed various legislative instruments, with a view to ensuring that the "Rule of Law" also respects and protects the rights of immigrants (see Lawyers for Human Rights 1999; 3). In the area of *cross-border*

migration, this has included amendments to the Aliens Control Act (1995), the Draft Green Paper on International Migration (May 1997), followed by the Draft Refugees White Paper, leading to the Refugees Act (1998) and finally the White Paper on International Migration, in 1999.

Migration policy itself can potentially contribute to xenophobia as does the ways in which government enforces it (Lawyers for Human Rights 1999). No attempt to “challenge xenophobia” will be successful if the country's migration policy does not respond to realities. In other words, the growing xenophobia in South Africa has no possibility of abating, so long as the migration policy relies on “myths and misperceptions” of why migrants and immigrants are coming to South Africa in the first place.

Crush (1999) argues that the White Paper seems motivated by the miss-perception that South Africa is faced with “flood” or “mass influx” of migrants from neighbouring countries (and further afield) and assumes therefore that strong controls are needed to restrict entry. However it is important to note that the immigration policy in South Africa has been improving. Long back between 2000 and 2003 the refugees and asylum seekers were not allowed to work and study but this was contested in court leading to immigrants being permitted to work.

A study by the Forced Migration Studies Programme (FMSP) and the Musina Legal Advice Office (2007) highlighted that Zimbabwean migration has received increased attention in the media. This is the first time that Apartheid South Africa has faced people fleeing from political crisis and economic depression. Recent parliamentary debates show that there is not yet a clear policy on how the problem on the Zimbabwean immigrants will be solved. For Landau (2004:7) ‘myths’ tend to inform the public attitude, policy making and research on migration in South Africa.

2.6 Refugee Decision Making Process

Asylum determination procedure in South Africa is characterized by a high degree of arbitrariness which fails to achieve acceptable standards of administrative justice (Klaaren, 1996; see also Handmaker; 1999). Only the possession of proper documents enables refugees to find employment and become self-reliant in South Africa. Due to the long

duration of asylum procedures, asylum seekers have to wait a long time to obtain identity cards, if they have been granted refugee status. Employers tend to be sceptical about individuals who have a legal status less valid for no longer than three months. Without proper documentation, refugees also have difficulties to access health care and education services or to open a bank account.

The National Consortium for Refugee Affairs (NCRA) (2006) states that official identity papers are a crucial aspect of refugee protection. Refugee identity documents are essential in finding work, accessing social services and preventing arbitrary arrest, detention and deportation. Despite their importance asylum seekers and refugees face severe obstacles in accessing needed documents to which they are legally entitled. Asylum seekers may be without valid documentation for as long as six months while they await interviews with the Refugee Reception Office (RROs). During this time they are at risk of arrest, detention and possible return to their country of origin without an asylum hearing.

A positive development is the decision by the state to guarantee refugees and asylum seekers the right to work. Access to productive employment is a critical component of preserving refugees' welfare and dignity. It also limits the financial burden on the state and other social service providers. However it takes long for the immigrants and refugees to get legal documents permitting to work.

The National Consortium for Refugee Affairs (NCRA) report (2006) notes that many refugees are effectively barred from productive employment. This is because delays in receiving valid documents prevent asylum seekers from securing employment or opening bank accounts needed to receive their pay cheques. It is also important to note that refugees and migrants face a lot of challenges when they want to look for jobs in South Africa. According to the *National Consortium for Refugee Affairs (NCRA)* report (2006) refugees and asylum seekers with professional qualifications are often unable to practice because they are unable often for reasons of expense to have their qualifications certified by South African Qualification Authority (SAQA).

The asylum application process is long, for instance one gets an appointment slip for six months. During this period the people do not receive any documentation, do not have access to social services and have no protection against arrest, detention and deportation.

The Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (CORMSA) notes that there are difficulties in the asylum process. A case study of the Marabastad Refugee Reception Office revealed that new asylum applicants were not being immediately issued with temporary asylum seeker protection (Section 22 permits). Instead they were permitted to lodge their applications for asylum and are thereafter issued with an appointment date to return after 30 days or longer to collect the asylum seeker permit. This was reported to be placing asylum seekers in a vulnerable situation where they face deportation and are unable to find work because they will be illegal (CORMSA Report, 2008).

2.7 Civil Society

The South African Civil Society has influence on refugee and immigration policy and legislation development. Crush (2002) is of the view that international experience suggests that civil society plays a crucial role in the incorporation of the immigrants into the society of the adopted country.

CORMSA (2008) illustrates that the Ministry Home Affairs once held a round-table discussion on immigration and young people with representatives of civil society where they encouraged a multi-stakeholder involvement in the management of migration. These included political organizations and community-based organizations. This is especially important as these groups have more access to and influence over the public.

Handmaker (1998) postulates that the capacity of local Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) including churches, which assist refugees, ought to be strengthened both by international development assistance and government support. However the perception of refugees as “outsiders” precludes them from taking part in such developments. As a result of this pressure may continuously be brought to bear on institutions such as the Central Methodist Church to assist because if one is not able to work to earn a living he or she may be forced to seek assistance at the church or other non-state actors involved in the welfare provision.

Maharaj (2001) argues that the perception that the state has failed to stem the tide of migrants has led to the development of organizations which advocate the rights of. These

organizations speak on behalf of the immigrants in terms of fighting for their rights and making sure their voices are heard by the government and other officials in terms of service delivery.. For example Geddo (2001:67) states that the National Consortium for Refugee Affairs and South African Human Rights Commission called for public education and awareness campaigns in order to foster accessibility with regard to refuge protection and understanding of their plight and rights.

The response of trade unions to the influx of migrants was ambivalent in the early 1990s in South Africa. In early 1994 the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU) threatened to hold a one day general strike in Pietermaritzburg over illegal immigrants according to (*The Natal Witness, 3 September 1984*). The reason being that they would not allow illegal foreigners take over their jobs. They also said the employers preferred aliens because they were vulnerable, had no rights, could not belong to any trade union, worked long hours and could not demand a living wage. Civil society also condemns the presence of immigrants in their countries because they feel threatened by their presence in their country. Unfortunately this leads to rising of xenophobia in South Africa.

Civil Society fought for the right of Zimbabwean immigrants who were arrested during the raid that was carried out by South African Police Services (SAPS) on 31 January 2008 at the Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg. The Methodist church in central Johannesburg is a sanctuary for approximately 1 500 Zimbabwean refugees. At midnight on 30 January 2008, the South African Police Services raided the church and arrested over 500 refugees. During this period, many of the detained immigrants were denied access to health services, humanitarian health care workers and lawyers. Nine people remained in detention and after an urgent application was brought to the Johannesburg High court by the Legal Resources Centre, they were released. In his order Judge Sutherland apologized on behalf of the judiciary for the treatment of the applicants (*AIDS Law Project Newsletter: April 2008*). Thus this clearly shows that Civil Society play a great role in advocating for the disadvantaged and in this case the refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa.

The Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) and AIDS Law Project (ALP) jointly made two submissions on behalf of refugees concerning their access to health care. One of the submissions was made to the Parliamentary committee on Home Affairs on the *Refugee Amendment Bill [B11-2008]* and the other was made to South African National AIDS Council

(SANAC). The submission which was made to Parliament dealt with access to health and social services of refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa. The submission was endorsed by a number of organizations including the AIDS Consortium, Lawyers for Human Rights, the Legal Resources Centre, the South Africa Council of Churches and the Rural Doctors Association of South Africa (*AIDS Law Project Newsletter*, 2008:3). Thus Civil Society plays an important role in advocating for the rights of the disadvantaged (refugees and asylum seekers).

With the increase of Zimbabweans crossing to South Africa (Limpopo province) the role played by Civil Society was very important to try and find solutions to the problem. *CORMSA Newsletter* (2008), reported that Thursday 24th April 2008, the Musina Legal Advice Office in partnership with the South African Human Rights Commission and the South African Broadcasting Corporation hosted a community dialogue on rights and responsibilities of migrants in Musina. The meeting was well attended by key stakeholders including the Musina mayor, the Musina SAPS Commissioner, representatives of the Department of Labour, Department of Education and Limpopo Premier's office as well as a number of representatives of civil society. This illustrates the importance of the civil society involvement when it comes to dealing with immigrants in South Africa.

2.8 Conclusion

The literature around refugees, immigrants in South Africa confirms that there are challenges that can come when working with immigrants in South Africa. Literature shows that migration of Zimbabweans to South Africa started long back during the apartheid era however the immigration policies were very strict. With the dawn of South African independence the immigration policies started to improve to allow free movement of Africans into South Africa. However there are still arguments regarding the policies with regards to "free movement". The legislative and policy processes regarding immigration can be said to be negatively affecting asylum and refugees to process their legal stay in South Africa. Without proper legal documents immigrants cannot either move freely or seek employment to survive and make ends meet in South Africa. Civil Society and NGOs come in and fill the gap to assist the immigrants for survival in South Africa by providing food and shelter. This research aimed at studying the Zimbabwean immigrants at the Methodist church in central Johannesburg as a case study. This will help to dig deeper on the main

objective of the study to find out challenges faced by the church in working with Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa. This will help to improve the policies on immigration in South Africa. NGOs working with immigrant in South Africa will also benefit from the recommendations from the study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology used in the study to explore the challenges faced by the Central Methodist Church in accommodating thousands of mainly Zimbabwean immigrants. The study was a small scale, case study type and the researcher privileged the systematic collection and presentation of data to give a clear picture of the situation obtaining at the church. Apart from discussing the data collections methods and highlighting the significance of a study of this nature, the chapter also highlights the limitations of the study.

3.1 The Research Site

The study was carried out at the Central Methodist church in inner city Johannesburg. The Central Methodist church was chosen as a case study because it has been accommodating thousands of mainly marginalised Zimbabwean individuals and families, the vast majority of whom cannot afford housing (The Economist; August 2007). The church was not built to accommodate a huge number of people and this has meant that individuals have to share the limited space, water and ablution facilities available. At night, for instance, the building bursts with people sleeping every inch of the floor and they have to share six lavatories. The researcher envisaged that this particular research site would be information rich on the challenges faced by the churches and organisations involved in similar work.

According to Bishop Paul Verryn in an interview with Deibert (2008) the Methodist has always had something of an open door policy. The church advocates for the homeless, providing them with medical care, food and blankets. The collapse of the Zimbabwean economy resulted in a huge number of Zimbabwean coming into South Africa and at that point the doors of the church went wide open allowing the migrants to sleep at the church.

3.2 Research Methodology

The study employed a qualitative methodology, which combined techniques such as interviews, participant observation and the analysis of documents in order to get a better

understanding of the challenges and problems faced by the Central Methodist Church in accommodating Zimbabwean immigrants. Qualitative methodology aims to 'describe, explore and explain' the phenomena under study (see Marshall and Rossman 2006: 32; see also Myers; 1997). Under this approach questions 'often take the form of what is this or what is happening here' (see Ploeg 1999; 36).

The challenges faced by faith based organisations such as churches are poorly documented and this also necessitated the methodological approach adopted in this study. Creswell (2002) postulates that a qualitative approach is appropriate in understanding a concept or a problem where there is dearth of information due to limited research on the particular area. A qualitative approach was appropriate to use because it facilitates the study of issues in greater depth and in detail. The task of the qualitative researcher is to provide a framework within which people can respond in a way that represents accurately and thoroughly their points of view about the world or the experience with a particular intervention program (see Patton 2002). With regards to this study it was imperative to find out the challenges that the Methodist church is facing in accommodating Zimbabwean refugees in order to come up with a set of recommendations that would help the church and other organisations doing similar kind of work for immigrants in South Africa.

In carrying out the study the researcher also adopted a critical approach. Neuman (1997) highlights that critical research is carried out to critique and transform social relations. Under this approach a researcher attempts to find out and reveal the underlying sources of social tensions and the obtaining social relations within a particular group with the avowed goal of empowering people especially the less powerful and in this particular case the immigrants. Thus Neuman (2000; 74) states that 'the critical social researcher is essentially action oriented'. He/she is dissatisfied with the obtaining state of affairs and seeks to improve the way things are. Towards the attainment of this end, the case respondents in this study were asked not only about the challenges faced by the church but were requested to proffer suggestions on how to improve the situation at the church.

3.3 Research Design

A case study of the Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg was undertaken as the study's research design. A case study design involves an intensive exploration of a single unit

of study, a person or a community (Burns and Susan; 2003). For Punch (2005) a case study gives a unitary character to the data being studied by providing an opportunity for the intensive analysis of many specific details that are often overlooked with other methods. Yin (1984) argues that case studies also examine phenomenon within its real life context. In this regard this study sought to find out, describe and explain the challenges faced by the church in accommodating a huge number of immigrants.

The main advantage of a case study is its potential to reveal important findings that can generate new hypothesis for testing. In addition a case study research design excels at bringing one to an understanding of a complex issue. It also extends experience or adds strength to what is already known through previous studies (Soy; 1997). A lot has been reported, mainly in the media in South Africa on the situation at the Methodist church and in this particular study it was important to establish the authenticity and consistency of these media reports.

However, Soy (1997) states that critics of the case study method believe that the study of a small number of cases can offer no grounds for establishing reliability or generality of findings. While this limitation is acknowledged, the researcher prioritized the production of a more detailed in-depth study than would have been possible under other approaches such as surveys for instance. For Soy (1997) a key strength of this research design is that it permits the use of multiple sources and techniques in the data gathering process. Tools used to collect data can include interviews and documents review. In this study the researcher did a thorough desk study to try and understand the policy issues. This was followed by document research related to relevant literature and policy documents analysis and interviews with the officials as mentioned before. It was only through reading and such analysis that informed questions were formulated to ask the respondents.

The recommendations and challenges that the Central Methodist church is facing can help a lot of NGOs and organisations working with Zimbabwean immigrants but it is important to note that the findings from the church may not be the same as what other organisations are encountering. This would mean recommendations will not apply to them and research might also need to be done to improve their operations.

3.4.1 Unit of Analysis

The Central Methodist Church sheltering Zimbabwean immigrants is the main unit of analysis in the study. The researcher prioritized finding out the difficulties faced by the church in sheltering a huge number of immigrants in a space not designated to accommodate such a huge number of people. The unit of analysis is the major entity that one is analyzing in a given study and for Trochin (2006) this is one of the most important aspects of the study.

In making the church the unit of analysis the researcher regarded it as a 'bounded system' which according to O'Leary (2004:115) means defining an entity by identifiable boundaries and identifying its particular challenges. Hornberger and Corson (1997:145) state that a feature common to all case study designs is that they examine a specific phenomenon as a bounded system.

3.5 Data Collection

3.5.1 In-depth Interviews

Primary and secondary data was used to gather the information for the research. According to Michael and David (2005), there are various factors to consider when evaluating data gathering methods. In social research data gathering techniques have strengths and weaknesses and there is no technique can be very accurate. The research instruments should be such that they are as close as possible to being in line with the expectations of the research.

In the study I used in-depth interviews to find out the challenges faced by the church from key informants who included church officials and clinic staff. I asked the questions following a pre-designed open ended questionnaire guide. During the interview process fifteen questions were asked in one-on-one interviews with the participants. The main questions that the researcher asked were centred on the nature of problems faced by Zimbabwean immigrants residing at the Methodist church and sought to determine whether these problems actually existed or were merely perceived to exist. Some of the questions the researcher asked were as follows:

- To what extent the nature of the problem have affected the capacity of the Central Methodist Church to assist immigrants settled in the church building.
- Are these problems influenced by the external environment the Methodist Church in Central Johannesburg has to operate within? (For example, government departments, municipalities and the corporate world).
- What the Methodist Church think can be done to improve their operation and response to immigrants' demands?

Open-ended questions allow study participants to give unlimited answers. The questions are also adaptable. Bell (1999) states that the interviewer can follow up ideas and probe responses and investigate motives and feelings which the questionnaire can never do. The way in which a response is made, the tone and facial expression can provide information that a written response would conceal.

Open-ended questions also yield detailed responses about 'people's experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings and knowledge' (Patton (2002:12). The data collected through this technique consists of quotations, often with sufficient contextual background to be interpretable.

The questions posed to the participants in this study were phrased in a way that encouraged them to give detailed responses related to the obtaining situation on the ground. Follow up questions were used to elicit detailed answers and also to clarify some of the issues raised. In posing the questions I allowed the study participants the leeway to move the conversation in any direction of interest and this was very useful for exploring the topic broadly. I also posed the questions depending on the context within which the interview was conducted.

However, in conducting the in-depth interviews I had to write down the responses from the participants whilst asking questions at the same time. There is a possibility that I might have missed some of the issues that the participants raised during the interview process.

3.5.2 Secondary data

Secondary data consists of a review of relevant literature and policy documents, journals, newspapers, magazines, thesis and dissertations relevant to one's area of study. Patton (2002) states that written material and other documents from organisations and programs records are essential in a qualitative study. In this study I carried out a comprehensive desk study of recent publications on Zimbabwean immigrants to find out in a more general and broader sense the challenges encountered by immigrants in South Africa and Zimbabwean immigrants in particular.

3.6 Study Participants

The study participants' were ten officials from the Methodist church. Among these participants were two security officers, school staff, clinic staff, administration staff and the Bishop of the church, Rev. Paul Verryn. These participants were selected purposively. According to Trochim (2000) purposive sampling is whereby the researcher targets a group of people believed to be typical or average or a group of people specially picked for some unique purpose. The selected participants in purposive sampling may not necessarily be representative of the entire group but they possess and may provide requisite information that speaks to the aims of the study.

In choosing the participants I took into account the positions they held within the church and the kind of work they did with the immigrants. The officials working at the clinic for example, attend to the health care needs of the immigrants and they could speak on the health care challenges faced by the church and in the same manner the church school officials could also speak about the educational challenges faced by the church. It was also imperative to include church officials- in charge of the day-to-day running of the church- among the study's key informants and they provided important perspectives on some of the challenges faced by the church.

Some of the participants in the study were selected through the snowballing technique. Trochim (2000) states that the snowballing technique begins with a few people or cases and then gradually increases the sample size as new contacts are mentioned by the participants one started off with.

3.7 Data Presentation and Analysis

Data analysis involves organising what the researcher has heard, read and making sense of the data collected. Racklam (1980:67) states that, data analysis consists of ‘classification, comparison, contrast and definition’. In this study the researcher analysed the findings from the interviews by comparing and contrasting them to the secondary data which include newspaper articles and reports.

The purpose of analysis is to bring meaning, structure and order to the data that has been collected (Marshall and Rossman; 1999). After reading documents, conducting interviews and writing field notes the qualitative researcher faces the difficult task of making sense of what has been learned. In this case data collected was put into categories or themes to try and bring sense to the findings.

In relation to the research after data presentation data was summarised to try and bring out the most important findings in relation to other scholars who have researched on similar issues in the past.

Data in this study was analysed systematically, by trying to find answers to the aims and objectives of the research depending on the findings. This helped the researcher to come up with conclusions on the topic on the challenges faced by the Methodist church in dealing with the Zimbabwean refugees.

Yin (1984) suggests techniques for organising and conducting the research successfully. They put across six steps that should be used. These are as follows, determining and defining the research questions, selecting the cases and determine data gathering and analysing techniques, preparing to collect data , collecting data in the field, evaluating and analysing the data and preparing the report. The researcher prepared the report in line with Yin’s (ibid) techniques.

3.8 Significance of the Research

This research helps to fill in the gap on studies that have been done in relation to immigrants and refugees in South Africa. Although a lot has been reported on the goings-on at the Methodist church no solutions have been put across to solve the problem. In this report I attempt to come up with recommendations to solve the problems that the refugees face not only at the church but in South Africa.

3.9 Ethical consideration

The interviews reported in this report were carried out with a promise of confidentiality. It is important to note that the period in which these interviews were carried out the Central Methodist church was under and is still under attack from the media. The respondents asked for their names not to be published. Considering the sensitivity of this topic which could cause fear to the respondent, the researcher complied with the ethical requirements. I took time to explain the purpose of the research to all the respondents before the interviews and then to seek consent of the respondents. Their names, addresses, and phone numbers were not recorded in this report to ensure their anonymity.

It is important to note that participation in the research was voluntary. The participants were free not to answer any question they were not comfortable with and I highlighted that they could terminate the interview if they felt they wanted to do so. Participants in this study were made aware of the fact that this is an academic piece of work and were assured of anonymity in terms of naming them. In keeping with a promise I made to the respondents I spoke to and who requested anonymity, in this report I use pseudonyms to identify them. In instances where I name a particular participant such as the Paul Verryn the Bishop of the church, permission to do so was explicitly given. In instances where I use pseudonyms, I highlight part of the personal circumstances of these participants so that they cannot be identified. In the sense protection goes beyond the use of pseudonym.

3.9.1 Limitations of the study

Although useful findings were obtained from the research on the topic it is important to note that additional time would have provided an opportunity for a deeper study. For this

research ten officials participated in the study as respondents. This was enough to get appropriate information required to understand the main issues under investigation. However it should be noted that the number cannot be representative of all the voices. The researcher managed to secure times for interviews with the respondents however it is important to note that some of the respondents were very suspicious of my research in the first place. This was because of their day to day experiences whereby journalists came in and took pictures of the refugees and wanted information without permission from the Paul Verryn, the Bishop of the church. To secure time with the officials was not easy as they are always busy. All of the interviewees were very cooperative and comfortable to talk about what they see as challenges faced by the church. However, there were a few challenges in terms of understanding or expression by one respondent as she preferred to answer in her local language other than English.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the data collected from the study. In line with the study's key questions the data is presented under the following sub-headings: personal profile of the respondents; nature of problems faced by Zimbabwean immigrants at the Central Methodist Church and challenges influenced by the external environment.

4.2 Personal Profile of Study Participants

Bishop Paul Verryn: He is leading the work to shelter the Zimbabwean immigrants. He started working with the Zimbabwean immigrants five years ago.

Richard: He is a Zimbabwean immigrant who used to stay at the church upon his arrival in South Africa. He is now working at the church school and he stays in the Johannesburg area. He is one of the individuals who pioneered the establishment of the school after realising that there were a lot of unaccompanied children who were staying at the church.

Mike: He is a Zimbabwean immigrant who used to stay at the church upon his arrival in South Africa. He works at the school run by the church and he stays in the Johannesburg area. He is among the individuals who together with the Richard pioneered the establishment of the school. He also set up a crèche as well as the various skills development programmes at the church which include catering, cutting and designing and computer courses.

Timothy: He is a Zimbabwean immigrant resident at the church and works within the church building as one of the security officers.

Peter: He is one of the security officers working at the church and is also a Zimbabwean immigrant.

James: He is a human rights activist who works at the church as both a security officer and counsellor. Like some of the people I spoke to at the church, he fled the 2008 post election violence in Zimbabwe.

Moris is a cleaner also resident at the church. He also works as one of the plumbers at the church.

John is a Zimbabwean immigrant and he works at the MSF clinic located at the church. He first came to the church three years ago and was interested in assisting sick people in the church.

Martha is a South African woman who is employed in the office of the Bishop at the church. She assists newly arrived immigrants mostly women.

Mary works as a secretary in the Bishop's office. She also deals with most of the newly arrived immigrants who have to meet the Bishop through her.

4.3 Nature of problems faced by Zimbabwean immigrants

In the interviews the respondents mentioned a number of problems faced by the residents of the church. These problems reveal the exact nature of the problems that the church grapples with in accommodating the immigrants.

Richard highlighted that some of the immigrants have psychological problems. Some of the women and men had encountered difficulties in coming to South Africa. Most of the individuals at the church had entered the country through illegally border crossing points. As a result some of them had been mugged and robbed in the process and in some instances women had actually been raped. Oftentimes, the psychological problems were exacerbated by the fact they had no social support mechanisms (As they got to South Africa their relatives and friends often switched off their phones making it difficult for immigrants to contact them such that they ended up staying at the church). (Interview, Richard, 17 November 2009).

The Central Methodist Church kept an open-door policy and could not turn away homeless or stranded individuals. However, the church could not provide other basic necessities to the immigrants. This created particular vulnerabilities for the immigrants. Pregnant women for instance, faced difficulties in securing remunerative work and could not afford to buy food and other basic necessities. While the Solidarity Peace Trust (SPT), a non-governmental organisation, provided food, they could not adequately cater for all the occupants of the church building and the food was only available on specific days rather than the entire week. Priority was given to specified categories of individuals such as women with infants, the sick and those deemed to be able bodied were left to fend for themselves. This created challenges in that the majority of the church occupants were unemployed or relied on unstable part-time employment where incomes were not guaranteed. (Interview, Mike, 18 November 2009).

John revealed that some of the women who fell pregnant later wanted to abort oftentimes using unsafe methods. (Interview, John, 18 November 2009).

Martha was worried about young woman who fell pregnant at the church and could not sustain themselves let alone their children. She stated that:

‘Some ladies are very young and they get pregnant’

She failed to understand why these young women fell pregnant as the clinic provided various contraceptives. These women often came to the clinic to request for diapers and the clinic could not meet the rising demand (Interview, Martha, 18 November 2009).

John, a medical practitioner mentioned that sick immigrants could not afford to buy medication and this was worsened by their inability to fend for themselves. Without adequate food sick immigrants remained vulnerable to diseases and their health deteriorated even further. The church did not have adequate resources to buy medication and provide immigrants with food. (Interview, John, 18 November 2009).

Peter saw isolation and rejection from the South African community as a problem. According to him some South Africans did not seem to know that the immigrants are

educated and held qualifications that could help in the development of South Africa. (Interview, Peter, 23 November 2009).

James the immigrants struggle to secure remunerative work and some do not have proper documents. Immigrants are not welcomed by the South African government as human beings. He cited what he perceived as xenophobic statements from the Social development portfolio committee head who said if she had the means to remove the immigrants by her own means or bombing the building if possible she would have done that. The respondent felt that the government was not doing anything about such xenophobic statements instead it preferred to close down the church. (Interview, James, 20 November 2009).

According to *the Bishop* it's difficult for the immigrants to have access to asylum papers. However he said that they have tried to work closely with the department of Home affairs to try and help those who do not have legal documents. (Interview, the Bishop, 8 December 2009).

4.4 Challenges Influenced by External Environment

Seven out of the ten respondents expressed the belief that the external environment within which the church operated had to a large extent affected the church's operations. By external environment the respondents were referring to the socio-economic and political context. The business community and the political entities are after protecting their own interests leaving the church as one of the few institutions that was willing to try and help the Zimbabwean immigrants.

The Bishop reiterated that the external environment was having a lot of negative effects on church's mission to help the Zimbabwean immigrants. The respondent mentioned that the church has faced a lot of criticism from political parties and the business community who constituted the external environment. According to Bishop Paul Verryn the immediate physical environment around the church is also not secure. Policing of the area was inadequate and hardly responded to the threat posed by criminals. However the respondent highlighted that in response to this challenge the church had selected some immigrants to be part of the Community Police Forum (CPF) and this had helped to improve policing around the streets where the church is situated. (Interview, the Bishop, 8 December 2009).

Richard stressed the point that the immigrants are not welcomed by the people around Chambers and business people around the vicinity of the church who also complained of loss of business. They had unsuccessfully filed a court application to force the church to remove the immigrants. A lot of bad publicity accompanied the church as well. This included allegations of child abuse within the building, complaints about overcrowding and accusations that from some non-governmental organizations that the church was benefiting from the people.

The church school was not receiving any financial assistance from the government and the City of Johannesburg (COJ) complained about the lack of fire extinguishers at the school. The United Nations Children's and Economic Fund (UNICEF) complained that the children were not getting quality food although the organisation was not providing any. Bishop Paul Verryn went on to state that the church was encountering difficulties in trying to register the church run school. The school was at one point threatened with closure since it was not registered and in breach of government requirements. The precarious state of the school funds was exacerbated by the fact that the school enrolled children who could not pay fees as they came from low income families (Interview, Richard, 17 November 2009).

The local business community with shops around the church were constantly fighting the church to protect their business interest they did not care about the needy immigrants and the South Africans who are residing at the church. *Mike* stated that policy implementation was poor in South Africa; the Local government did not support Paul Verryn's work or what he is doing at the church. (Interview, Mike, 18 November 2009).

Timothy stated that, the fact that the church is located in the city's Central Business District along one of the main streets made the city officials oppose the settlement of a huge number of people in the area. The business community usually complains and thus they ended up putting black barricades to block the immigrants. The High court and many of the lawyers attending court sessions also complained that the immigrants were congesting the street thus they could not move freely to and from the court. However all the court cases were won in favour of the church at some point they tried to assassinate the bishop because they said he was hindering their business. (Interview, Timothy, 19 November 2009).

The press was also giving the church a bad image. Most journalists never sought permission to take pictures of the immigrants and they published these without the consent of the concerned individuals. The church is being opposed for assisting foreigners e.g. the local government and national government (Interview, James, 20 November 2009). Shop owners in the nearest mall are against having people at the church. They took the church to court because they wanted the immigrants to be removed from the church building. (Interview, Mary, 26 November 2009).

4.5 Challenges Faced by the Church

4.5.1 Lack of resources

In relation to resources, six out of ten respondents said that the church does not have enough resources to cater for all the needs of the immigrants for example the church only provides shelter. The immigrants had to then fend for themselves. It also emerged in the interviews that the immigrants are all supposed to leave the church building everyday at 5 o'clock am and can only enter the building after 6 o'clock pm.

When asked if in the event that the church had enough resources, could it offer more services than it currently did the Bishop said:

“Absolutely in skills training programmes and we could rent out an inner city building to manage training in building and hair work”

According *Verryn*, one of the challenges facing the church and the immigrants is the fact that the government does not seem to realize that migrants possess key skills which could be utilised for the development of South Africa. Education and access to health care are critical; Verryn felt that all the two thousand five hundred immigrants' resident at the church had a right to access education and health. Due to inadequate financial resources this could not be realised (Interview, the Bishop, 8 December 2009).

James also said the church doesn't have enough resources to cater for every need even for basic things such as bathing facilities. People have to go to other places in the outskirts of the Johannesburg CBD to wash their clothes and to bath. However it was only a few

privileged individuals like him who could access bathing facilities at the church. (Interview, James, 20 November 2009).

John mentioned that the shortage of toilets could have fatal ramifications that could lead to the closure of the building if ever there was a cholera outbreak. There was a cholera outbreak in 2008 at the church which fortunately did not result in any casualties since those who fell ill were quickly treated. (Interview, John 18 November 2009).

Mary highlighted that if the church had enough resources it could also consider renting a new building that could accommodate most of the immigrants who currently reside at the church. This would at the very least reduce the number of immigrants who are currently residing at the Central Methodist church. For respondent ten the church needed assistance for the upkeep of the building and the people resident within. (Interview, Mary, 26 November 2009).

According to *Richard* the church does not have adequate financial resources to remunerate and retain teachers. If possible other NGOs could come in and assist the church with running the school so that the church could retain good teachers as the school experienced a high staff turnover. Highly qualified immigrants at the church were also not employed as they did not have legal rights to stay in South Africa. (Interview, Richard, 17 November 2009).

Moris complained about the treatment that immigrants received from the security personnel. He commented that the security personnel was supposed to make sure that everything at the church was in order but they seldom did their job properly because of the little money they received. As such problems such as violence among the immigrants and vandalism continued at times unabated. (Interview, Moris, 24 November 2009).

4.5.2 Health hazards and overcrowding

Four out of the ten interviewees highlighted concerns about the number of people staying at the church and the health hazards this posed. According to *Richard*, overcrowding is one of the challenges that the church is facing. Early in the morning the building is filthy, newspapers and card boxes are all over the place. This was not looking good and the church

hired cleaners to do the cleaning so that the building looks clean all the time. The interviewee stated that there is no proper space for people to sleep at night. Bathing space is also a problem. According to him a refugee is someone who doesn't have property, lost everything, has no proper clothes to wear and no work as a result people say they smell and they are segregated. People are not willing to accommodate them when they look for a place to stay. (Interview, Richard, 17 November 2009).

Timothy also perceived overcrowding as a major challenge, as it posed health hazards (Interview, Timothy, 19 November 2009).

John also added that overcrowding could potentially lead to the spread of infectious diseases such as Tuberculosis (TB) and measles. The interviewee mentioned that in the past there had been a few cases of cholera at the church but fortunately these were identified on time which prevented their spread to other immigrants. (Interview, John, 18 November 2009).

The respondent was also worried about the number of immigrants residing at the church which she felt made the immigrants lose their dignity. To express her views on the issue about lack of space to shelter the immigrants at the church she said:

'Lack of space or more dignified one' (Interview, Mary, 26 November 2009).

4.5.3 Behaviour of the immigrants

Four respondents complained about the behaviour of the migrants and listed the issue as one of the challenges facing the church. The respondents listed a lot of activities immigrants undertook that consequently tarnished the image of the church and even their own image.

Richard stated that some immigrants vandalise church property but he believed this was done by Zimbabwean Central Intelligent Officers (CIO). The assumption was that these individuals were sent by the then ruling government ZANU (PF) as part of a ploy to stop the church from accommodating Zimbabwean immigrants. A lot of valuable assets that belonged to the church, for example copper rods, geysers and toilet seats were stolen and this was done deliberately.

The respondent was worried that some immigrants who were gainfully employed did not want to assist others with food which he thought was bad. Some of the women at the church had resorted to prostitution because they were unemployed and the respondent felt that prostitution was actually rife. Women who could not buy food were often the ones that resorted to prostitution. There were also cases of violence between the immigrants over partners. Some of the immigrants who were gainfully employed did not want to leave the church. The interviewee said that:

‘Some have good jobs, but want to receive donations that come at the church’. (Interview, Richard, 17 November 2009).

According to *Timothy*, whenever three or four people gathered problems always arose. The security provided by the church was inadequate as they could not manage the estimated 2500 people resident at the church. The church was thus thought to be a ‘haven of thieves’. *Timothy* stated that:

‘People steal, fight and the media is always on standby to report and if it wasn’t for the Bishop who is strong the church could have been closed because of the bad publicity and stuff’.

Some of the immigrants were thought to be responsible for thefts that often occurred within the vicinity of the church building and they would then hide in the church building.

Timothy stated that:

‘The immigrants should respect the church. Some people steal because they would be hungry and some are used to it’. (Interview, Timothy, 19 November 2009).

Moris mentioned that, some people residing at the church did not use toilets. He explained that this could have been due to different cultural backgrounds. At the end of the day the cleaners have to clean their mess.

The church also faced a problem of vandalism and the Zimbabwean immigrants were thought to be responsible. Most of the respondents raised concern that the church had

utility bills for water and electricity were very high as the immigrants did not want to economise the use of water and electricity.

As a community the immigrants had decided to collect R5 per week to pay the cleaners. The immigrants came up with such an idea to try and minimize the costs incurred by the church in maintaining the building. However the interviewee stated that some of the immigrants never paid the money. These individuals often left the building when the money was being collected only to return after the money had been collected. The collected amount was however not enough to pay the nine workers employed to clean the building. As a result the church had to meet the expenses. The collected amount often amounted to only R1000 and the nine workers were being paid R300 rand a week. The collected amount was also not enough to purchase detergents.

Moris argued that the behaviour of immigrants tarnished the image of the church and that of the congregants because the church was increasingly being viewed as ‘Sodom and Gomorrah’ by the outsiders. (Interview, Moris, 24 November 2009).

Martha believed that some of the immigrants did not want to work. The respondent gave as an example an incident that she witnessed. One of the ladies got a job as a maid and she wanted to be off every weekend and the interviewee believes it is because she enjoys staying at the church. According to her it is not real for one to have a weekend off every week.

For Martha, vandalism by the immigrants at the church is a very big challenge. She said: ‘If you are to come back here tomorrow this chair will be in a different form because it would be broken’.

She however noted that the security that had been put in place ensured some form of order was maintained in the building. (Interview, Martha, 26 November 2009).

4.5.4 Complaints from the congregants

Four out of the ten respondents raised the issue that the some of the church members (congregants) from the local community did not support the work that the bishop was

doing. The behaviour of the immigrants' could partly account for the negative attitude the church members bore towards them and the Bishop.

Mike mentioned that the Bishop is facing pressure from Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), churches, individuals and the congregation. The fact that there is infighting from the church about the work the bishop is doing by keeping the Zimbabwean immigrants came out as well. (Interview, Mike, 18 November 2009).

According to *Peter* "The church is now a public place and a refugee camp as a result the church members can not practice their usual way of life for example all night of prayer and they are complaining" This was said by Peter as one of the challenges that the Bishop is facing in assisting the Zimbabwean immigrants. (Interview, Peter, 23 November 2009).

James stated that a few members of the church would want the immigrants to be removed from the church. The reason was that they are saying the immigrants are criminals. (Interview, James, 20 November 2009).

Behaviour of immigrants is tarnishing their image and that of the congregants because the church is taken as Sodom and Gomorrah. (Interview, Moris, 24 November 2009).

The church congregates are generally unhappy about the deterioration of the church building and they accuse the immigrants of taking over their church. The general negative stance taken by the church congregates against the immigrants is one of the challenges faced by the Bishop of the church and Timothy hoped that they would be taught that the church's role is to serve and assist the poor. (Interview, Timothy, 23 November 2009).

4.5.5 The Livelihood strategies of immigrants

Mike stated that immigrants encountered difficulties in securing employment and the church did not have adequate resources to feed all of them. There are some able bodied immigrants who could search for employment but other immigrants such as pregnant women could not do so. The church could not provide them with food. The Solidarity Peace Trust (SPT), a non-governmental organisation provided immigrants at the church with food but the food

was only provided on specific days and in most instances to specific individuals such as children and breast feeding mothers. (Interview, Mike, 18 November 2009).

Peter believed that employers were generally unwilling to hire immigrants, specifically those residing at the church. He failed to understand the reason for this and thought that it could have been due to the xenophobic attitudes employers have. (Interview, Peter, 23 November 2009).

In contrast to what *Peter* said, *James* was of the view that immigrants did not work because they did not have proper legal statuses. The majority of the immigrants could not walk freely and seek employment since they did not have the legal rights to work in South Africa. (Interview, James, 20 November 2009).

Mary stated that it was difficult securing employment for the immigrants. The respondent said a couple of years back it was somewhat easier to secure work for individuals residing at the church. The church through Bishop Paul Verryn used to place immigrants as farm workers and some as domestic workers. (Interview, Mary, 26 November 2009).

4.5.6 Allegations levelled against the church and the immigrants

Four out the ten respondents were concerned about the various allegations that were levelled against the immigrants residing at the church. There were; however differing views concerning these allegations. *Richard* explained that the immigrants were falsely framed and this was done as a way of degrading them. The interviewee said usually outsiders are hired to do such things and are paid. He cited allegations of rape and abuse of children at the church run school as illustrations of the false allegations levelled against the church. (Interview, Richard, 17 November 2009).

According to *Mike*, criminals tended to take advantage of the church community. Robbers who committed crimes such as theft outside of the church often ran to seek refuge inside the church building (Interview, Mike, 18 November 2009).

Peter stated that individuals who framed the immigrants were paid to do that. Zimbabweans who stay around Park Station were often the ones who were paid to do such things. (Interview, Peter, 23 November 2009).

4.5.7 Harassment by the police

According to *Richard* police often came to harass immigrants at the church. In certain instances they sprayed and beat up people. *Richard* recalled the January 2008 incident when the church was raided by the South African Police Services (SAPS). He said they were shouting “go back to your country” and people were arrested and stayed in prison for three days and some even longer. Some of the immigrants were taken to Lindela and later released because no charges were preferred against them. (Interview, Richard, 17 November 2009).

Mike added that the harassment of immigrants by the police was also a major challenge. The respondent also recalled the January 2008 incident at the church when he was still residing at the church. For him the actions of the police revealed state harassment of immigrants and the raids brought bad publicity to the church. (Interview, Mike, 18 November 2009).

4.5.8 Electricity and water bills

Electricity and water bills at the church were said to be high but the respondents held different views regarding the high bills. Some of the respondents believed the immigrants were careless in the use of water and electricity since they did not pay anything towards settling the bills. However other respondents believed that city authorities charged came up with the ‘unreasonable charges’.

According to *Richard*, electricity and water bills sent to the church were too high and unreasonable and it appeared as if Johannesburg Water and Eskom were taking advantage of the high number of people staying at the church to come up with the high costs. (Interview, Richard, 17 November 2009). *Mary* was of the view that the City of Johannesburg (COJ) had to charge lower rates since the church was not situated in low density areas (Interview, Mary, 26 November 2009).

For *James* the cutting off of water and electricity was a challenge for the church. The respondent believed that such basic necessities such as water and electricity were supposed to be provided for free given that the church was helping avert what could otherwise have been a catastrophic humanitarian crisis (Interview, James, 20 November 2009). Some of the respondents saw the cost of the electricity and water as being unfair and unjustified and they believed that there was no way in which the immigrants could economise the use of water and electricity (Interview, Moris, 24 November 2009).

4.5.9 Policy making challenges

The Bishop stressed the point that education as well as access to health care remained critical issues which the government was supposed to pay attention to. For Verryn, the South African government ought to comply with its bill of rights with regards to meeting human rights obligations. *Paul Verryn* was concerned about the widening gap between the rich and the poor. He believed that departments such as that of Housing have to take care of poor individuals by providing them with houses. The respondent expressed concern that the Department of Housing did not properly administer its funds hence it could not fulfil its mandate.

Most respondents expressed the view that the integration of immigrants into South African communities needed to be taken seriously. *Verryn* recalled the May 2008 xenophobic violence targeted towards black immigrants as an example of how integration has been unsuccessful. Since that time the government has not made an effort towards integrating the Zimbabwean immigrants residing at the church.

Respondent One, *Paul Verryn* asserted that:

‘The issue of poverty should be taken seriously, there is nowhere in the constitution where it is written that South Africa will take care of its people first and then foreigners’ (Interview, Respondent One, 8 December 2009).

Richard stated that while the department of local government and the City council lobbied for the relocation of immigrants from the church in the immediate aftermath of xenophobic violence, they deported the individuals they supposedly wanted to relocate. Some children

who used to stay at the church were relocated to Usindiso, a shelter home for children from Zimbabwe and Mozambique but later these children were also deported. The state even made efforts to search for their relatives so they could also be deported. These instances showed most immigrants that the government does not care about them and this could have a negative impact in future as the immigrants would be hesitant to cooperate with the any intervention programme instituted by the government or other organisations.

Whenever the church started to protect children such as on the above instance it was accused of abusing the children (Interview, Richard, 17 November 2009).

Richard stated however, that the church did not see government effort to relocate the immigrants as a challenge in itself but their subsequent deportation was the challenge as the deportees were at risk during the deportation process and also in Zimbabwe (Interview, Timothy, 19 November 2009).

Mike alluded to the widening gap between the rich and the poor not only in South Africa but even regionally and this had resulted in the poor seeking refuge at the church. The South African government should debate the issue of poverty and try and improve the lives of the ordinary South Africans so as to avoid situations whereby people end up settling in churches or relying on NGOs for sustenance.

Policy making was also a challenge in South Africa and this contributed to the difficulties faced by the church. *Mike* said before Zuma came to power there was quiet diplomacy even when people were harassed in Zimbabwe. The immigration policies remained tough and immigrants could not freely move around. He added that the Department of local government does not support Paul Verryn or the work he is doing at the church. The respondent felt that while South Africa had good policies on paper they were not properly implemented (Interview, Mike, 18 November 2009).

Moris who once worked for the United Nations in an intervention programme meant to repatriate immigrants' resident at the church by offering them packages said that the organisation had not delivered on its promise to give people packages. The United Nations promised individuals who willingly wanted to go back to Zimbabwe, R7000 as repatriation packages. These immigrants wanted to do small businesses such as hair salons, poultry

projects but these dreams were never fulfilled. 'Thus most immigrants no longer trusted NGOs that came to offer them any kind of assistance. (Interview, Moris, 24 November 2009).

Peter who concurred with Moris stated that the local government and UN were no longer trusted by the immigrants staying at the church because they had connived with the state to deport some of the immigrants (Interview, Peter, 23 November 2009).

4.5.10 Unaccompanied children

Two respondents pointed out that the church faced a challenge with regards to unaccompanied children. They both felt that the children needed to be taken care of and also to be protected but there was no space at the church where they could stay protected from the rest of the immigrants residing at the church.

Richard stated that the church assisted 140 children:

'Unaccompanied children staying at the church are taken care of by the church; for example by paying school fees for them and providing them with food.' Some children are drawn from the streets and are violent meaning they need rehabilitation but this needs money as well.' (Interview, Richard, 17 November 2009).

Mike observed that pressure must be brought to bear on the Zimbabwean government to solve problems faced by the country because the migration of minors to South Africa, unaccompanied, meant the continued deterioration of the socio-political and economic situation in Zimbabwe. At the church it was difficult to ensure that the children were safe (Interview, Mike, 18 November 2009).

4.5.11 Struggle for power and space within the church building

Within the building people fought for space. Usually the new comers' were the victims because those who had stayed at the church for a long time tended to dominate them. *Richard* described it as a 'struggle for power amongst the Zimbabweans'. Those who had spent more time at the church also tended to run all the projects at the church. If a newly arrived individual (new comers) tried to initiate a new project people tended not to support

them. The constant fights for control were thus one of the challenges that the church faced in accommodating Zimbabweans in the church. (Interview, Richard, 17 November 2009).

Groups and cliques were also being created depending on the ends, either positive or negative, that they wanted to achieve (Interview, Moris, 24 November 2009).

4.5.12 Bad publicity

There was a lot of bad publicity concerning the church and these included allegations of child abuse by the officials at the Methodist church. *James* said that:

‘the press is giving a bad image of the church, sometimes they do not ask for permission to take pictures and they publish these pictures without the consent of the concerned individuals’ (Interview, James, 20 November 2009).

The issue of overcrowding at the church was also publicized; and numerous organizations believed that the church was benefiting from sheltering the immigrants. (Interview, Richard, 17 November 2009).

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the findings from the study. The analysis is guided by the main objective of the study which was; to find out the challenges faced by the Methodist church in accommodating Zimbabwean immigrants. Included in the analysis are recommendations to ameliorate these challenges.

This report divided the study's findings into different sub-themes. These are categorized as follows:

- Health hazards and Overcrowding
- Behaviour of the immigrants and complains from the congregants
- Work for immigrants and unaccompanied children
- Framing of cases and raiding by the police
- Electricity and Water bills
- Policy making versus challenges a lot of bad publicity
- Lack of Resources and struggle for power

5.2 Health Hazards and Overcrowding

The data presented shows that four out of the ten interviewees highlighted concerns about the huge number of people staying at the church and the potential health hazards related to that. This is in line with what was reported by Tshisela (2009), that Molebatsi Bopape the Gauteng Legislature Health and Social Development Portfolio Committee chairperson called the church which accommodates about 3000 Zimbabwean immigrants a “disaster in the making” after she visited the church. She was appalled by overcrowding and filth at the church, which posed a health hazard to its inhabitants. However in response to the Chairperson's critics the bishop responded by stating that she had never spoken to him rather her opinions were based on gossip and hearsay. According to Verryn she should have listen to the other side of the story before passing judgment.

A statement released by the AIDS Law Project, Lawyers for Human Rights and the Legal Resources Centre on 8 December 2009 which listed a number of challenges confronting the

church, highlighted overcrowding as one of the grave concerns. This group of NGOs commended the selfless intervention initiated by Bishop Paul Verryn and his colleagues at the Central Methodist Church (CMC). However, the group stated that overcrowding in the church presented a health risk particularly for the spread of infectious diseases such as Tuberculosis (TB). This indicates that overcrowding is one of the major challenges that the church is facing in assisting Zimbabwean immigrants.

Due to the high number of refugees at the church some of them have been sleeping outside of the church building. The church has also stopped feeding those that have stayed in the building for a long time in preference for new arrivals.

The church also faces challenges in providing or facilitating access to health care. Brulliard (2009) states that the most common ailments at the church are sexual and respiratory infections but many migrants also need psychological assistance. This was corroborated by Sharon Chigwada, a nurse working at the clinic operated by Doctors without Borders:

“They cannot even find a job; they cannot even afford bread to have a decent meal, so some people become much stressed,” she said.

The issue regarding psychological assistance was mentioned by Richard, “Some immigrants have psychological problems some men and women are victims of rape, robbery and are border jumpers.” All these reports and findings clearly indicate that the church is faced with a complex and complicated situation in dealing with the immigrants residing at the church.

As an illustration of the health hazards at the church, a Special Report by Medicins Sans Frontiers (MSF), (2009), stated that as in any overcrowded and unhygienic setting, people staying in the Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg are exposed to a serious risk of contracting communicable diseases. As part of their planning it was reported that in response to the November 2008 cholera outbreak, MSF, in collaboration with the Department Of Health, organized an emergency response to help prevent the spread of cholera and ensure quick access to treatment for patients showing symptoms of cholera. The emergency response included active case finding; rapid detection and referral of patients through a network of Church residents and community leaders; the isolation of symptomatic patients and treatment of moderate cases at a small oral rehydration unit; and referral of severe cases to hospital.

Local government officials have been left in an awkward situation of having to deal with the fallout from migration related issues; from xenophobic violence to overcrowding at refugee settlement areas like Johannesburg's Central Methodist Church while at the same time waiting for national government to put an effective policy in place to deal with immigration matters. Some national departments, such as those of Health and Education, have formulated specific responses to the influx of Zimbabwean by providing antiretroviral treatment to all undocumented migrants, and employing Zimbabwean teachers to alleviate shortages in South African schools (Anon., 2009). The point illustrates that there is a need to integrate the policies that are currently in place for service delivery to be a success. Challenges faced by the church could be reduced if the local government and the National government work together.

5.3 Lack of Resources and Struggle for Power

The study found that six out of ten respondents said that the church does not have enough resources to cater for all the needs of the immigrants such as health care and food.

Ncube (2009) states that, officials at the Methodist Church told *The Zimbabwe Times* that they had experienced an increase in the number of new arrivals both straight from Zimbabwe and from the dismantled refugee centres, especially at the beginning of March 2009. Officials at the church said that the continued arrival of more immigrants had further stretched the church's resources while also worsening the general living conditions for the refugees. After the closure of refugees camps created after xenophobic attacks, the victims started flocking back to the Methodist church to look for shelter since they did not have anywhere to go. The church was faced with a challenge because they did not have the resources to take care of the increased numbers of immigrants.

Brulliard (2009) stated that some rooms have been turned into classrooms for computer, French and English classes. Others now serve as sewing workshops or day-care centres. A clinic operated by the non-governmental organization Doctors without Borders has opened in the building to serve the health care needs of the refugees. This illustrates the challenges faced by the church as its resources are clearly stretched to the limit.

Ncube (2009) also states that the church fears that the continued deterioration of the situation in Zimbabwe might strain the Methodist Church further. A church official is quoted by Ncube (2009) as saying:

“Things such as food and blankets are now becoming scarce because our resources have been stretched to the limit by the increase in the number of immigrants and we fear that if the situation in Zimbabwe does not improve, we might fail to take in any more desperate refugees” It is important to note that resources remain a challenge at the church since the church has to repatriate the bodies of deceased immigrants. According to Smith (2009) the Bishop, Paul Verryn, estimates that there is one death every two weeks at the church. From the interviews with the officials from the church the researcher found out that in most cases the church ends up taking care of these funerals. In instances where the deceased was working for the church it is the church’s responsibility to pay all costs incurred and to take the body to Zimbabwe. If the deceased does not have relatives the funeral is conducted at the church with the church meets the costs of burial.

The struggle for power was only raised by a few respondents during the research. However, Tromp (2009) revealed that some of the men who claim to have set up the school ran the school and they could get away with anything. They allocated themselves food as part of their privileges.

Within the building people often fight for space. Usually the new comers’ are victims because those who have long time staying at the church claim to know a lot of things and they want to exercise control over new comers.

5.4 Allegations of Cases and Raiding by the Police

Landau and Jacobsen (2003:3) argue that although the new Refugee Act of 1998 was in effect, the refugees continue to be subjected to discrimination, police harassment and foreigner violence. A Human Rights Watch study states that police raids tend to occur wherever large numbers of non-nationals are thought to congregate. Some NGOs desist from assisting asylum seekers with shelter even if they have shelter available and this is problematic from a legal perspective according to the international refugee law with regard to housing.

Although the challenge of police harassment was only raised by two respondents literature confirms that it is a serious concern. Sharon Ekambaram, MSF's general director, commenting on the 2008 raid on the Central Methodist Church argued that "The South African Constitution guarantees access to healthcare services to all those who live in the country. However, devastating operations like the recent raid at the Methodist Church undermine Zimbabwean migrants' access to health services."

Hjalmarsson (2009) quoted in a *Medicins Sans Frontiers* (MSF) report of 2009, stated that South Africa authorities forcibly expelled thousands of Zimbabweans from Musina Showground in March 2009. Thousands of Zimbabweans fled from Musina to Johannesburg, the majority to the Central Methodist Church. More than 4,000 people sought refuge inside and around the Church at the height of the crisis. This meant that the number of immigrants sheltered by the church continued to increase further stretching the church's resources.

The morning after the raid and detention of about three hundred migrants, the MSF team had access to the detainees taken to Johannesburg Central police station and they were able to assess their health conditions. Kharsany (2008) states that, many of the refugees were sleeping when the raid started. Elizabeth, a Zimbabwean refugee staying at the church, said: "I was hit and kicked around, but I was not arrested. It was very traumatic and I am still recovering from it."

A report submitted to the South African National Aids council (SANAC) Plenary 4 March 2008 reported that the continued arbitrary arrests of persons who are not South African all over the country and the raid of the Central Methodist Mission in JHB made many people justifiably afraid of being arrested by the SAPS for not being in possession of the correct documentation. This illustrates the point that police harassment is a challenge for the Central Methodist Church.

Landau and Segatti (2009:45) state that the heavy handed manner in which police have conducted immigration raids has also led to a perception by perpetrators of xenophobic violence that they are assisting in removing 'illegal's' from the country.

Hjalmarsson (2009) states that in February 2009, 100 police and 'Red Ants' attempted to raid people sleeping in front of the High Court next to the Central Methodist Church, harassing, intimidating, and arresting Zimbabweans sleeping on the street. This confirms that raids are popular can be said to be popular for the immigrants residing at the church in Central Methodist.

5.5 Behaviour of the Immigrants

The behaviour of the immigrants residing at the church could be one of the reasons why the congregants are against the work the church is doing. One of the respondents in this study alluded to the practices and behaviour of the immigrants as reducing the church to Sodom and Gomorrah hence the negative attitudes towards the immigrants by part of the church congregation. The immigrants should appreciate what the church through Bishop Verryn is doing by behaving well to reduce friction between them and the congregants.

Tromp revealed (2009) that Lovemore (17) said that he stayed at the church for a few months before he decided that he had to leave. This was due to the fact that people were fighting all the time and stealing each other's belongings. The Zimbabwean times reported that alcoholism, gang crime and violent feuds were a persistent scourge affecting the church.

5.6 Policy Making, Politics and Bad Publicity

Four respondents raised the point that bad publicity was also a challenge affecting the church. It is important to note that policy development in South Africa could be one of the factors that lead to most of the challenges that are faced by NGOs and other organisations in dealing with refugees in South Africa. Croucher (1998:654) in Maharaj (2001:53) notes that immigration in South Africa and elsewhere is a complex social, political and economic issue that poses numerous policy challenges for even the most democratic states.

Mlilo (2010) reported that criticism of the South African Government's 'stop gap' refugee policy measures is building. Tara Polzer, argued that:

‘Police use resources and energy to chase and arrest Zimbabweans and deport them, only for them to return in a week’s time. They arrest them again and deport them. There is a crisis in Zimbabwe, hence the influx of refugees from that country.’

Polzer was criticising the policy on deportation, stating that it had failed to produce the intended results and instead the government has to find other ways to deal with the influx of the Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa.

The Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (CORMSA) Report (2008:49) states that, protecting refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants in South Africa by providing access to dignified and decent housing is a key policy challenge for South Africa in light of the huge and glaring economic inequalities affecting the country’s citizens. This is especially the case in cities, where rural-urban migration far outweighs international migration in placing an ever-growing burden on available housing. Most Zimbabwean immigrants stay in urban centres such as central Johannesburg. There is a lot of competition from the locals in terms of accommodation and job opportunities. This shows that South Africa has to make policies that can make the country exploit the skills that immigrants possess but at the same time improving the lives of the South African citizens.

Handmaker (1998:6) postulates that the capacity of local Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) which assist refugees ought to be strengthened through international development assistance and government support. Refugees ought to be actively involved in the reconstruction of South Africa.

A report by Joint Submission to the South African National Aids council (SANAC) in 2008 stated that a protective legal framework was not being applied uniformly. Public hospitals, clinics and other institutions appeared to be unilaterally creating policies which denied refugees access to health care services in the process violating existing legal and human rights obligations. This illustrates that there are obstacles that hinder the effective implementation of policies meant to protect immigrants.

Some of the decisions made by the UNHCR are not communicated to authorities such as the municipalities and this often leads to ineffective policy implementation. The church often has to deal with the effects of poor policy implementation. For instance after the outbreak of the xenophobic violence temporary shelters were created to help the victims but

these shelters were closed down after a few months and this was not communicated to the authorities. Many of the victims were Zimbabwean refugees and when the shelters were closed they came to the Johannesburg Central Methodist Church. As many as two thousand refugees were living on the streets around the church. This caused tension and friction with the business community with shops in the vicinity of the church. "If they had communicated to the city we would not be having this crisis," said one of the municipal officials according to (Mooki; 2009).

In relation to policy regarding the unaccompanied children at the church Vearey, Núñez and Palmary (2009:13) states that a meaningful policy response from government is required that recognizes and positively engages with unaccompanied child migrants, particularly those lacking documentation.

Vearey *et al.* (2009:12) state that integrated policy and programming interventions are required to address the interlinked urban development needs posed by the triple challenge of migration, HIV and urban food insecurity. Intervention with national and local government is required in order to strengthen the understanding of migration related urban challenges.

The gap between the poor and the rich in South Africa is growing wider and it has a negative impact on the organisations that work with the disadvantaged. *The Zimbabwean* postulated that political and economic freedom remains farfetched dreams for poor South African citizens.

The unstable political and economic situation in Zimbabwe is one of the challenges affecting the Central Methodist Church in assisting immigrants. As long as the Zimbabwean political issue remains unsolved people will continue coming to South Africa and with some of these seeking accommodation at the church. Bloom argued that the problem at the Central Methodist Church is 'primarily, a foreign policy problem concerning internal conditions in Zimbabwe that has led to desperate people seeking shelter at the church.' The option of a properly-run refugee camp for Zimbabweans should be considered seriously. One of the respondents in this study stated that:

"There must be more pressure on the Zimbabwean government to solve their problems because if you see small children coming to South Africa unaccompanied it means a lot in

terms of the socio-political and economic situation in Zimbabwe.”(Interview, Mike, 18 November 2009).

Rabkin (2009) argues that "all the relevant people need to put their heads together" to find solutions. A permanent solution would need to address the political crisis in Zimbabwe as well as the needs of individuals already here because of that crisis’.

Brulliard (2009) argues that the South African government has to ensure that Zimbabwe resolves its ongoing political and economic crisis and at the same time treat Zimbabwean immigrants already in the country fairly. The US Secretary of state Hillary Clinton said as much when she visited South Africa in early August 2009. “South Africa is very aware of the challenges posed by the political crisis in Zimbabwe because South Africa has three million refugees from Zimbabwe”.

5.7 Livelihood strategies and Unaccompanied Children

The findings from the study indicate that immigrants face challenges in securing employment because they do not have legal documents. Handmaker (2001:92) analyses the process of policy development in South Africa focusing on theoretical challenges facing the government in the implementation of the Refugees Act. One of the respondents said despite the presence of highly qualified immigrants at the church they struggled to secure employment because they did not have legal documents. The South African government could use the skills the immigrants possess to develop the country. The findings from the study show that immigrants faced challenges in securing documents that guarantee legal stay in South Africa documents.

The Zimbabwean reported that immigrants could not get work because of their lack of proper paperwork. Most of the immigrants at the church had papers that showed that they were asylum seekers not refugees.

Matsangaise (2009) analysed some of the trials and tribulation faced by Zimbabwean migrants. He observed that South African authorities did not readily accept that there are asylum seekers from Zimbabwe, so they did not readily offer such documentation to those

who were seeking asylum or a refugee status. This is despite evidence that most Zimbabweans have suffered persecution of one type or another.

However it is important to note that some of the challenges that the church face emanated from the fact that some immigrants did not leave the church even when they secured employment. Staying at the church allowed employed immigrants to save money which they could send home. Ncube (2009) highlights that, the reluctance by some of the refugees to leave the church, even after they found jobs contributed to the overcrowding at the church.

Landau and Segatti (2009:23) state that although there has been a response from some non-governmental organizations, there has been little effort on the part of The Department of Social Development or other government agencies to address the concerns of unaccompanied minors.

Vearey *et al.* (2009:7) confirms that the numbers of unaccompanied child migrants finding their way to Johannesburg has increased. Previous work conducted by FMSP in 2007 found that unaccompanied child migrants stayed within border towns rather than in cities such as Johannesburg. In interviews conducted with unaccompanied child migrants from Zimbabwe, Vearey *et. al* (ibid) found that the reasons for children to migrate to Johannesburg were closely linked to the death of a parent or a care-giver, and migration was their livelihood strategy.

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) counsellor (2009) reported that some of the unaccompanied children realized that their parents no longer had the means to fend for them so they decided to leave for South Africa to look for work. During the journey to South Africa some of the children were exploited, robbed and raped.

5.8 Conclusion and Summary of Findings

There are numerous challenges faced by the Central Methodist church in assisting Zimbabwean immigrants. Both bad and good reports have been written about the church and its work in helping the immigrants. This information could help policy makers in trying to find solutions and improve the situation of the immigrants at the church.

The Central Methodist Church faces challenges in accommodating Zimbabwean immigrants. These challenges are related to the immigrants' failure to secure employment

due to the state's failure to give immigrants a legal status to stay in South Africa. As a consequent potential employers are not willing to employ immigrants because they are illegal and they do not hold documents that legalise their stay. The process of acquiring a proper legal status is long and cumbersome further hindering immigrants from legalising their existence in the country.

The church's external environment which includes the business community with shops in the vicinity of the church, the high court and law firms have largely been affected by the presence of immigrants near their business premises. In turn entities have sought to have the immigrants relocated from the church. The business community and the political entities are seemingly after protecting their interests rather than assisting the church in accommodating Zimbabwean immigrants. For the Democratic Alliance the solution to the problem at the Central Methodist church lies in local, provincial and national spheres of government instituting a coordinated approach to alleviate the suffering of immigrants.

Some of the problems affecting the church are a result of the experiences that immigrants have encountered. Some of the immigrants have psychological problems because they have been victims of rape, robbery and are border jumpers. These are in need of rehabilitation and counselling. The church cannot afford these because of limited resources it has at its disposal.

The church faces problems that are a direct consequence of the actions of the state and state institutions. These include police harassment, raids and negative media publicity. The other challenges are summarised below:

- Finding work for immigrants is very difficult because most of them are not documented and do not possess legal rights to stay in South Africa.
- Inconsistent policies on immigration contribute to the problems the church faces in accommodating immigrants.
- The behaviour of the immigrants and the complaints emanating from the congregants are also a major challenge.
- Framing of cases and raiding by the police seem to be one of the popular challenges. Most of the respondents spoke about this as a challenge.

- Lack of Resources and struggle for power – this was raised by almost everyone in the interviews. The number of immigrants is large and the church cannot take care of all their needs besides shelter.
- Health hazards and overcrowding is a major challenge since the number of the immigrants is large and space is not enough.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The political and economic situation in Zimbabwe which has seen galloping inflation has brought immense suffering upon ordinary people and as a result of this they are migrating to South Africa. The main objective of the research was to examine the challenges faced by the Methodist Church in Central Johannesburg in assisting Zimbabwean immigrants. The research explored the dimension of the problems as well as the internal and external causes of these challenges. In this chapter I give brief summaries of the factors contributing to the challenges faced by the church as well as a summation of the findings presented in the report. A concluding statement is given as well as recommendations on how the situation at the Central Methodist Church in inner-city could be remedied. Apart from these being recommendations for this particular church they could also be used by other faith based organisations as well as other non-state actors involved in similar work.

Having analyzed the challenges faced by the Methodist church in central Johannesburg through primary and secondary data collection, this chapter of the report offers recommendations which can be used to alleviate the problems faced by the Methodist church and organisations involved in similar work. It is important to note that although this study focused on the challenges faced by the Methodist church, the findings are relevant to faith based and NGOs assisting immigrants in South Africa. The recommendations made here can also be applied by these organizations to try and reduce the challenges they are facing.

The research questions posed in the study were as follows:

- What is the nature of problems faced by Zimbabwean immigrants residing at the Methodist church? Are these problems perceived or they actually exist?
- Are the problems and challenges faced by the church influenced by the external environment the Methodist Church in Central Johannesburg has to operate within? (For example, government departments, municipalities and the corporate world)?

- What are challenges facing Methodist Church in Central Johannesburg in assisting Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa?
- What do the officials at the Methodist Church think can be done to improve their operations and response to immigrants' demands?

6.2 Factors contributing to challenges

The available literature and the findings presented speak on Zimbabwean immigrants and the particular challenges they face in South Africa. However findings from this research show that there are a number of factors contributing to the challenges that the faith based and NGOs at large, face in working with Zimbabwean immigrants. For example the nature of problems faced by the immigrants impacts negatively on the operations of organisations. For example issues like rape and abuse will require counselling which might be costly to the organizations assisting immigrants. The external environment which consists of the business community around the central Methodist church, local individuals and the South African government is not friendly and supporting. Harsh criticism by these sectors contributes to the challenges that the church face in accommodating Zimbabwean immigrants.

Studies conducted on Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa are extensive, yet limited in terms of recommending what can be done improving the lives of the immigrants in South Africa. It is very important that the church and the South African government work closely together to solve most of the problems and challenges that arise when assisting immigrants in South Africa.

6.2.1 A Summation of Study Findings

Information gathered in this study suggests police raids and xenophobic sentiments from the law enforcing agents are issues of major concern. In this research it was revealed that police harass immigrants at the church.

Very often information and reports on the Zimbabwean immigrants residing at the Methodist church in central Johannesburg is only reported on when there is a major crisis and as a result of this bad publicity the church is often perceived in a negative light. It is

imperative to highlight that some of the challenges and problems that are reported on actually exists. The church faces severe financial constraints and cannot meet some of the immigrants' needs such as the provision of food. As a consequence individuals at the church resort to prostitution in order to fend for themselves and their families. The researcher embarked on this study in order to find out how such problems at the church could be ameliorated such that the church would not be overburdened in assisting the immigrants.

The study revealed that the church faces huge challenges particularly in assisting the most vulnerable and disadvantaged such as children and women. Most of the problems faced by the church are exacerbated by the lack of government. In the course of the research the researcher observed that the church did not only accommodate Zimbabwean immigrants as often widely reported but there are other African nationals who include South Africans who reside at the church. Some of the respondents recommended that the South African government should take seriously the task of introducing poverty reduction strategies as a long term strategy to reduce the number of poor and marginalised people within South Africa.

The findings revealed that the church is overburdened by the huge number of pregnant, young women. Some of these were victims of rape during their sojourn to South Africa. Most respondents revealed that illegal immigrants cross to South Africa through Limpopo River which demarcates Zimbabwe and South Africa. The journey is not safe and some women are robbed, mugged or raped. These women could not go out of the church in search employment and they relied overly on the assistance they received from the church. As one of the rules the church building had to be vacated everyday at 5 o'clock in the morning and these women were subjected to harsh weather conditions.

The challenges faced by the church call for an integrated approach from all sectors including the government to improve the situation. Policy makers could also learn from the situation obtaining at the church to respect and uphold the rights of immigrants.

6.2.2 Conclusion

The study findings reveal that the Central Methodist Church in inner-city Johannesburg has become a social safety net for poor and vulnerable immigrants arriving in the city. In most instances the church is the first point of call for these immigrants. Contrary to pervasive perceptions, the church houses not just Zimbabwean immigrants but individuals from other African states such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, a few Rwandese, some Kenyans and a significant group of marginalised South Africans. It is the researcher's contention that the church is therefore not only a space for immigrants but by and large a place for indigent, marginalised members of society. The capacity of the church to assist these individuals is severely constrained especially financially.

Some of the categories of individuals who stay at the church have gone through traumatic experiences and the church is unable to offer them the kind of assistance they require owing to both lack of capacity and material resources. These include women who are pregnant or have undergone traumatic experiences on the journey to South Africa such as rape and robberies. There is also a significant number of young men and women who come into Johannesburg unaccompanied and whose needs are often beyond the church's capacity to meet. Of great concern to the researcher is the in-fighting for space and resources (donations) amongst some of the people at the church particularly newly arrived individuals and those who have stayed at the church for a long time.

In light of the above conclusions there are recommendations that the researcher believes may improve the church and other organisation's capacity to respond to the plight of immigrants and other marginalised individuals within urban settings. The recommendations are given below.

6.3 Recommendations

- The church needs government support and financial assistance in order to provide better assistance. The government must stop deporting Zimbabweans as they continue to come to South Africa. Refugees and hard up immigrants could be accommodated in government sponsored refugee camps. Immigrants should be empowered through skills training in order to be self reliant and to stop them from relying on humanitarian assistance.

- There must be more pressure on the Zimbabwean government to solve their problems so as to stop the rapid emigration of citizens from that country.
- Other NGOs such as the United Nations, the United Nations Children's Economic Fund should also and interstate organisations such as the United Nations and the United Nations Children's Economic Fund (UNICEF) could provide assistance to refugees and immigrants housed in camps and shelters.

6.4 Suggestions for Further Research

The nature of problems faced by the Zimbabwean immigrants residing at the central Methodist church and in South Africa at large need further investigation.

Research studies need to investigate the factors influencing the behaviour and practices of the immigrants at the church to reduce some of the challenges the church is facing in accommodating the immigrants.

Further research needs to unpack the challenges the church is facing that relate to poor policy making on immigration policies, the regulatory frame work for the operation of NGOs and faith based organizations.

Further research is needed to investigate the survival strategies of unaccompanied children and their everyday life in South Africa.

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APPENDIX 1

This questionnaire has been designed to help understand the problems that immigrants face and the challenges that the Central Methodist church face in helping the Zimbabwean immigrants. While it is not compulsory; your honest and comprehensive responses will be sincerely appreciated. Any information you give will be treated with utmost confidentiality and respect.

1. When did the church start assisting immigrants?

.....

2. Is the church involved in any other field of work besides working with immigrants?

Yes... No...

a) If yes, which other work do you do?

.....
.....
.....
.....

3. How many members of staff do you have?

Permanent.....

Temporary.....

Contract.....

Volunteers.....

4. Do you get any additional subsidy from other institutions? Yes... No...

a) If no, how do you fund your operations?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

5. Besides Zimbabwe, from which other countries do immigrants come?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

6. How do immigrants know about the services you provide?

- a) Internet....
- b) Brochures...
- c) Media...
- d) If other, please specify

.....
.....

7. What kind of services does the church normally offer?

.....
.....
.....

8. Do you think the church could offer more services than it already does? Yes... No...

- a) If yes, what do you think would help your organisation to offer more services?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

9. What kind of help do Zimbabwean immigrants seek?

.....
.....
.....
.....

10. Are you able to assist them?

a) If yes, how?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

b) If no, what discourages you from offering your assistance?

.....

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11. What problems have you identified that are faced by Zimbabwean immigrants?

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12. Are the same problems faced by immigrants from other countries? Yes... No....

a) If no, please explain

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13. What do you recommend should be done to overcome these challenges you are facing in dealing with these immigrants?

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14. Which government Departments do you work with?

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a) With which Department is it easier to work and why?

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b) What do you think can be done to improve this relationship?

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15. Do you work and consult with any other NGOs or Community Based Organisations that work with immigrants? Yes... No...

a) If yes, how has that benefited both you and the other organisation(s)?

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b) If no, what has discouraged you from forming partnerships with other organizations?

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