

UNDERSTANDING THE METHODIST CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE LOGO

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Introduction

Various definitions are given by scholars on the term ‘logo’, depending on the field which one is defining from. For example, in business studies a logo is a trademark or other identifying symbol of an organization, often including name (Statt, 2003:95). This means that it is a sign that is used for the purposes of distinguishing goods and services provided by one enterprise from those of other enterprises. In the same line of understanding, Thompson (1993:523) defines a logo as an emblem of an organization used in its display material, etc. However, from all the definitions provided, there is a consensus that a logo serves the purpose of identification. As an emblem it comprises of picture(s) and colour(s) to represent a person, group or organization. The pictures used also represent a quality of idea. This means that a logo can be understood as a means of identification of an organization. Furthermore, in that identification and trademarking, there is also the notion of communication.

A logo speaks for the personality of the organization in two ways. First, it speaks to the stakeholder conveying the message about what the organization believes and stands for. Second, it also helps members of that organization discover and occupy their place in the organization; understanding their identity and roles as members of the organization. This means that it is designed with two people in mind, i.e. the stakeholders and members of the organization. Different scholars and presenters give quite a number of features that have to characterize a logo; for example, Shobhasana (2023), gives ten, and these include, memorable, iconic, simple, etc. However, by just looking at these and the purpose which the logo has to serve, one can actually notice that three characteristics are critical, and these are, simplicity, distinctiveness and impactful. A logo has to be simple but recognizable. It should not complicate the message which the organization is

intending to convey. Second, a logo has to be distinctive. This means that it should not be confused for other businesses or organizations. Third, it has to be impactful. The organization wants to capture its viewers' attention and leave an impression which is obviously positive. A logo is designed based on the fact that visuals are powerful ways of expressing brand identity.

This is what is said about a logo in a business set up. However, religious organizations are no exception. The same can be considered when coming up with a church denominational logo. This is because the church logo speaks volumes about the identity of that church denomination as it thrives to carry out the mandate of taking the gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations as is enshrined in the 'Great Commission' (Matthew 28:16-20). A church logo helps the church to connect the church's name with its community while also communicating the mission and value of the organization (Rougeau: 2022). It also speaks about the doctrine of that denomination. On the outward looking, a good logo can help the church grow and be more successful in the community, helping the organization bring more like-minded people together. On the inward looking, a good church logo plays the role of making people feel more connected to the congregation (denomination), and show that the church is professional, and cares for its appearance and its message. In this understanding, every shape, item, colour, etc. of the logo is, and has to be full of meaning, and so is the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe logo.

Origins of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe Logo

The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, as a religious organization, has a five-featured logo which, like any logo, communicates the message, in symbols and colours, about who we are as members of the Body of Christ, and what we stand for as we seek to know Christ and make Him known. The idea of having a logo for the church came in 1987 through the church's 'Evangelism Committee' whose main anchors were Revd. Andrew Sankey (who was a missionary) and the late Revd. M. Maswanise (F.J. Chirisa, personal communication, November 11, 2023). Revd. F.J. Chirisa was President of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe from 1986-1988 (Mujinga, 2017:162), and was the last to use that title before it was changed to 'Bishop' in 1989 [currently 'Presiding Bishop']. This means that the 'logo' was designed and adopted during his term of office. The late Revd. Maswanise was the secretary of the committee. The first sketches of the possible 'logo(s)' were presented to the 'Standing Committee' meeting of July 25, 1987, and a choice was made for further development (Evangelism Report to Standing Committee: July 25, 1987). The features that made up the logo, according to the report, were four, and these are; the Cross, the Dove, the Shell, and the Map of Zimbabwe, and the symbolism of these shall be discussed in the next section of this article. Putting the features together, three possible 'logo(s)' which the church could be identified with were presented to the Standing Committee and all had the same above mentioned features, and were ranked in order of preference (Standing Committee Minutes, July 25, 1987). The features of the 'logo' were selected carefully so as to be a correct representation of who we are as 'Christ's ambassadors' having the mandate of making Christ known. The proposed logo was presented and adopted by Conference 1987, and it incorporated the Cross, the Map of Zimbabwe, the Dove and the Wesley Shell (Conference Minutes, 1987, pp 5). The 'Circle' and the colours were not yet added. The Circle was added at the final stages of the designs.



After the adoption of the logo for use in the church by the church's 1987 Conference, it was realized that since it was something new in the church there was need for aggressive education models among congregants about it as well as marketing it. The women organization (Ruwadzano/Manyano) took it upon themselves to fill in the vacuum by marketing the logo within their members using the, "Teach a woman; teach the whole world" concept, and also taking advantage of their constituency which constituted the largest population of the church's membership. The most convenient method that was suggested was to do it through the printing and sale of materials (cloths) with logo inscribed on them. That is when the red colour was added to the cross, and its black background was redefined.



The colours that were put on the Cross were the main colours, especially of the Ruwadzano/Manyano uniform colours of the day. The colours of Ruwadzano/Manyano women uniform were traditionally regarded as the church colours, perhaps because of the dominance of these women in the church in terms of numbers. During that time MCU members were just putting on a 'Red sash' with 'MCU' letters inscribed with white sewing thread. The symbolism of the colours, i.e. red and black, that were put on the 'Cross' remained the same as those of the uniform which Mujinga (2017:131-132), quoting Gladys Chirisa, asserts that black was an

acknowledgement of the past sins, and red symbolizing the blood of Jesus that washes away sins. However, with the new emerging theological understandings, the symbolism, especially of the black colour, can be relooked at as shall be discussed in the following parts of this article.

The idea of marketing using material (cloths) was first ridiculed by other high ranking officials (the treasurer of that time who was white) in the church who doubted the success of something that could have been initiated by a black person, and worse, a woman (G. Chirisa, personal communication, April 29, 2024). The initiative started rolling in 1988 but at a slow pace as people were still trying to grasp the concept behind it.

Despite the slow uptake of the initiative in 1988, these women did not give up. The uptake of the logo material increased in 1991 during the church's centenary celebrations as the material was sold concurrently with the autonomy material, and continued in the following years. In a bid to speed up the uptake of the logo material, fashion competitions were introduced at Ruwadzano/Manyano Conventions and revival rallies, and all this was being done by the women. Categories which they were competing in included fashion designing, modeling, sewing, smartness, etc, and the same is happening even today. Besides fashion shows and competitions at Conventions, they would also designate a day when everyone would put on dresses made from logo material, and by so doing they were encouraging everyone to buy the material, and it is happening even today. During the same time, work of God in Nyaminyami area of Mashonaland West Province was facing serious financial challenges. The women took it upon themselves to run the 'logo material' project so as to fundraise for mission in Nyaminyami. The team that comprised of Mrs Mundawarara, Mrs Chitiyo, the late Mrs Serima and the late Mrs Machakaire was put in place to spearhead the initiative and they did a tremendous job, and the dream came true (G. Chirisa, personal communication, April 29, 2024).

Having realized the success story of the women organization (Ruwadzano/Manyano) and how they looked good in clothes made of logo material, men also joined the ship such that clothes made of logo material became, and have become Methodist families' thing. The same women went further to make many other household items designed with the church logo inscribed on them, and such included mugs, handbags, umbrellas, dinner plates, stationery, etc. and the items are still visible in many Methodist homes even today. They also tried to do ladies shoes but the project did not go far.

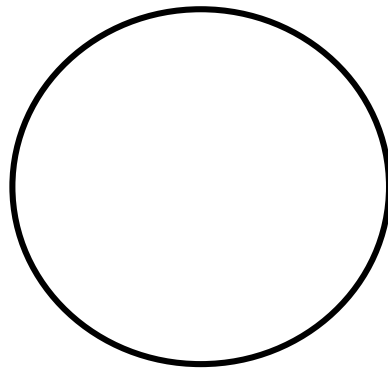
The logo material (cloth) has dominated space in the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe such that it is rare to find a Methodist who does not have something to put on that is made of the material in its different colours. In most cases, the logo material has made life easier for those who do not have organizational uniforms. The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe has uniformed organizations, i.e. Ruwadzano/Manyano, Men's Christian Union (MCU), Boys Christian Union (BCU), Girls Christian Union (GCU) and Tsungare. Such uniforms are worn on specific occasions and services such as the service of Holy Communion, Revivals, burial of Christians, etc. However putting on such uniforms is not automatic. It requires one to be a full member of that organization first, and the process of being a full member involves a number of grilling and qualifications. The process of making one a full member is done through the process of either blousing or badging once the leadership is satisfied that the member qualifies to be one of them. The set conditions and

requirements put some people out of the organisations even if they want to be part of the movement. For example, those in polygamous marriages will never be bloused or badged in such organizations. However, the putting on of a dress or shirt made from logo material has no other strings attached to it besides that one has to be a member of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. This means that the logo material has become a unifier in the church. Those who belong to uniformed organizations and those who have been disqualified due to some circumstances beyond their control can now all put on clothing made from logo material and worship as one family without any problems or discriminations. This means that clothes made of logo material have become Methodist Church in Zimbabwe uniform in one way or the other by default.

Many uniformed organizations in the church have designed their materials (cloths) with their organizational logos, but this church logo features on all of them. It has become a trademark of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe such that it features on every official document, vehicles, posters, banners, billboards, sign posts, to mention a few.

Delving into the Features of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe Logo

The Outer Circle



The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe logo has an 'Outer Circle'. This is a key feature on this logo. It is unfortunate that some people think that it is just there as a boarder to the features that are inside, and such people sometimes opt to leave it out when designing their posters. In some cases they temper with it and change it into many other shapes as they see it pleasing to them. That is actually very wrong. The 'Outer Circle' on the logo should not be tempered with, nor be left out. The 'Circle' is critical as it symbolizes two issues with regard to our theology. Any logo that does not have an 'Outer Circle' is not a Methodist Church in Zimbabwe logo.

First, the ‘Outer Circle’ symbolizes God the Father surrounding and protecting the church as it carries out God’s mission (M. James, personal communication, November 13, 2023). *“A circle has no beginning or end, so it signifies the eternal God”* (oldcem.bc.ca). The ‘circle’ as part of the logo communicates the truth that in as much as the circle does not have a beginning and an ending, so it is with God and His love for humanity. We have the conviction that God never began to exist, and He will never go out of existence.

According to Barth (2016:369), the Church confesses, worships and serves God as He has revealed Himself in the scriptures. This means that our concept of God as eternal emanates from sacred scripture as a source of theology. Many Biblical passages of the Bible affirm to this concept of God as eternal. For example, Deuteronomy 33:27; Isaiah 9:6; 26:4, etc. *“Throughout scriptures God has never been depicted as having been brought into being. ... The adjective ‘eternal’ is applied to Him frequently, implying that there was never a time when He did not exist”* (Erickson, 1985:271). This concept is not only contained in the Old Testament, but also in the New Testament. For example, Romans 1:20; Colossians 1:16, etc. With regard to God’s existence, we are reminded that only God exists by virtue of His very nature, and that He was never created and never came into being. He always was (Grudem, 2000:171). Genesis 1:1 affirms that He was there in the beginning, and all things were made by Him. The affirmation that He will never cease to exist has its basis in the Bible, for example, Isaiah 44:6; 48:12; Revelation 22:13, etc. The psalmist speaks about this truth referring to God. (*“Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God”* [Psalm 90:2]).

In His eternal nature, God is very active protecting those who are called by His name. The author of the book of Deuteronomy has this to say about God’s protection; *“The eternal God is always your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms. And He thrust out the enemy before you and said, ‘Destroy’”* (Deuteronomy 33:27). Psalm 46:1ff carries the same concept of God, hence the reason why the circle on the logo occupies the outer space. Everything is inside as a symbol of protection.

Second, the circle on the logo speaks of our ‘connexionalism’. ‘Connexionalism’ is the term used to describe the principles and practices by which Methodism is intentionally interrelated and connected together (Atkins, 2010:17). Methodists have a peculiar way of spelling and using the word usually rendered ‘connection’. They spell it ‘connexion’. According to Atkins, this is a normal rendition in the eighteenth century. The origins of Methodism as a discipleship movement is in the ‘connexion’ of its congregants, and this concept backdates to the ministry of John Wesley.

“‘Connexionalism’ is all embracing, uniting and inclusive. Within the concept of ‘connexionalism’, the people called Methodists express their concept of the church in the conception of connexion, we see the church as stretching into all countries, race colours and cultures. ... Members of the body of Christ are united without exclusion.” (Quaye: 2012).

It is in this understanding that the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe upholds that its structures and members are connected together. This notion and concept of ‘connexionalism’ finds its roots even in the Bible, especially if one is to look at the practices of the early church on Acts 4:32. All the

resources that are gathered are gathered in the name of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe despite of them being gathered in the city centre or in the deep rural societies. They all belong to one church. Members of this church are connected together by the unending love of our Father in Heaven. That is why we see even the stipend of ministers being centralized so that they are all equally looked after despite the different environments which they operate in. The understanding is that ministers should not suffer in a disadvantaged circuit whilst those who are in able circuits have a decent living because they did not station themselves there. No one should feel like being a victim in the church's processes. Congregants in Harare circuits rejoice as they know that part of their centralization levies has been used to pay stipends for ministers who are in Matjinge in the Matabeleland South Province, for example. So, the circle on the logo is also a reminder that our love for each other in the whole 'connexion' is unending. Furthermore, our systems are also connected. For example, a preacher in the deep Muzarabani Circuit of Mashonaland Province is regarded and recognized as a preacher even in Matabeleland Provinces and worldwide; and this goes with all other statuses in the church. This means that besides being connected with each other at our local churches and in Zimbabwe, we are also connected with all other Methodists worldwide. That is why we saw that during the pre-independence era ministers were being sent from Europe to evangelize here in Zimbabwe. Now that things have gone the other way round ministers are now moving from Zimbabwe to serve in the Methodist Church in Britain without any hiccups.

The concept of 'connexionalism' augurs well with our African spirituality of Ubuntu as well. Describing how it binds Africans together Mbiti has this to say:

"As a rule traditional African houses are round in shape built around a village compound so that if there are several houses in one compound they also form a circle ... Only in terms of other people does the individual become conscious of his own being, his own duties, his privileges and responsibilities towards himself and towards other people. When he suffers. He does not suffer alone but with the corporate group; when he rejoices, he rejoices not alone but with his kinsmen, his neighbours, and his relatives. ... Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say, 'I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am'" (Mbiti, 1969:140-141).

That is what we are as Africans. It is in this regard that the concept or notion of 'connexionalism' is not alien or problematic to us because it existed in us before we even became Methodist Christians.

The Cross



The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe 'logo' has a 'Cross' as one of its features. The 'Cross' was put as an affirmation of its importance as a symbol of the Christian Church showing the centrality of the death of Jesus on the cross for the forgiveness of sins – reconciling humanity with God (Evangelism Committee Report to Standing Committee, 25 July 1987). In connection with the previous discussion on the 'Circle' where we pointed out that the 'Circle' speaks of the eternal God and His eternal love, in the 'Cross' we also see the fulfilment or the climax of the love of God. What is said in John 3:16 is fulfilled on the cross. Writing to the Romans, Paul said that God did not withhold His own Son, but gave Him up for us all. (Romans 8:32). *"The cross of Jesus, the beloved Son of God, is the supreme demonstration of the love God has for sinful man (John 3:16; 15:16)"* (Scott, 1984:287). In the same understanding Bauckham (2016:237) affirms that the cross is the event of God's love in which the Son suffers abandonment by the Father, the Father suffers the death of the Son, and the Holy Spirit is the powerful love which spans the gulf between the Father and Son and so reaches God-forsaken humanity.

Through the cross, Christ reconciled humanity to the Father, and also, humanity reconciled to each other (Ephesians 2:16-18). To the Corinthians Paul had this to say, *"All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them"* (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). This means that the word of the cross is God's word of reconciliation. The Christ whom we know is one who gave Himself for the sins of the whole world, and died on the cross for our redemption. He purchased us with His own precious life and blood. In that conviction, we preach none other than Christ. As Methodists we join Paul in his sentiments to the Corinthians when he says that *"... We preach Christ crucified; a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God"* (1 Corinthians 1:23-24).

The 'Cross' speaks to humanity about the great work of salvation that was done by Christ for the salvation of humanity. In this regard, Christ is the centre of our faith. It draws us closer to the event that happened over two thousand years ago at Calvary.

Obviously, the colours that we have on this 'Cross' are not the original physical colours of the cross that Jesus was crucified on. Although we were not there at Calvary on the day of the crucifixion over two thousand years ago we are certain that that the cross on which Jesus was crucified was ugly and rough. Several scholars and historians, eg. Mujinga & Masvotore (2014:51); Chagudhuma, (2021:11), affirm that the Romans of the day were ruthless, and obviously, in their ruthlessness they were not in any position to beautify the cross that was used to kill serious criminals on. Since the cross was made of wood its colour could have been brownish. However, the 'Cross' on the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe 'logo' is painted red with a black background. Both colours are theologically symbolic of what was happening when Jesus was dying on the cross. As has been pointed out in the previous discussions, 'red' symbolizes the blood of Christ that washes away sins (Mujinga, 2017:131-132). It reminds us as Methodist Christians that we were not bought with perishable things like silver and gold; but by the precious blood of Christ, a Lamb without blemish (1 Peter 1:18-19). Our salvation did not come on a silver platter. That is what we refer to when we sing; *"Raparara ropa renyu, muri mutsvene imi"* (Hymn 59:2.3

‘Shona’) [“*Laphalal’ igazi lakho, uyiNgcwele wena*” (Hymn 65:2.3 – ‘Ndebele’)]. The blood was shed for our salvation, hence the reason why the ‘Cross’ is painted red.

Second, the ‘Cross’ on the ‘logo’ has a black background. As has been pointed out before that the colours had to do with the main colours of the church uniform, especially the Ruwadzano/Manyano women uniform, initially there was an understanding that the black colour on the uniform reminds us of the past sins. It was believed that black stands for sins. Yes, it is correct in another sense. However, with the expansion of our knowledge and understanding of biblical texts, that can be relooked at and reinterpreted further. The initial position also has problems with liberation theologians. This is because there is nowhere in the Bible where we are directly told that sins are black. In fact, God Himself spoke through Isaiah saying that sins are red. (*“Come now, let us settle the matter, says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool”* [Isaiah 1:18]). Scarlet and crimson refer to different degrees of red, but the underlying factor here is that reference is made to red as the colour of sins.

However, black is referred to as dark. What this means is that instead of referring to sins as black we have to refer to black as a symbol of darkness, and there are quite a number of biblical verses which refer to black and darkness being related, for example, Jude 1:13. In this regard, the black colour at the back of the red colour on the ‘Cross’ is symbolic of darkness or sinful state. *“There is a very strong association between the colour black or darkness and the subject of sin in the scriptures”* (Johnson: 2021). In the biblical narratives darkness is used to describe a sinful state or death, for example, Psalm 82:5; Matthew 6:23; John 3:19-20; Romans 13:12; 2 Corinthians 6:14; 1 John 1:5-6, etc. These two colours on the ‘Cross’, i.e. red and black, show that humanity was living in darkness before Jesus redeemed them with His precious blood that was shed at Calvary. Matthew 27:45 gives us a clear picture of this process. According to this verse (Matthew 27:45), as the precious blood of Jesus was being shed on the cross darkness covered the whole land for three hours symbolizing the work that the blood was doing to humanity, i.e. removing them from darkness/death to life.

The cross is not only central in its historicity. It is central in the Methodist theology of worship. It is central and effective in the present and future understanding. Any contact with the cross does not leave things as they were. Methodists do connect with it on several occasions that have got with their spirituality. In as much as the ancient Israel would respond to who God is, what He has done to them, and what He continued to them in song and dance, so it is with Methodist theology (Chagudhuma, 2023:6). In this case, reflecting and responding to what God has done to them through the cross Methodists express their faith and gratitude in song. For example, as they reflect at what Christ did and continues to do one will hear them singing Hymns such as 57 ‘Shona’ (*Pasi pomuchinjikwa ndinoda kugara, ...*)/197 ‘English’ (“Beneath the Cross”); Hymn 59 ‘Shona’ (*“Makatakura kuipa, kusi kuipa kwenyu Jesu”*.) [Hymn 65 ‘Ndebele’ – *“Wazithwal’ izono, Jesu, zingezono zakho ...*”]; songs such as Hymn 54 ‘Shona’ second stanza:

*“Ishe waburuka kudenga,
Akazova munhu kuvanhu,
Nediramhamba kuvatadzi,
Pamuchinjikwa”*

[*“Inkosi yehla ezulwini,
Yaba ngumuntu ebantwini,
Yenzelwa thina boni ndini,
Emnqamlezweni.”* – Hymn 64 ‘Ndebele’].

There is healing on the cross hence we refer to it as ‘*Tsime rinokosha rinorapa vose*’ (Hymn 58 – Shona) [a precious fountain, free to all, a healing stream – 199 MHB]. In affirmation to this truth Peter has this to say, “*He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed*” (1 Peter 2:24). Responding to this truth we sing Hymn 58 ‘Shona’ / 199 ‘English’.

Furthermore, the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe is a missional church. The ‘Cross’ is also a symbol of discipleship (Scott, 1984:287). It enables successful carrying out mission against all odds. There is assurance of victory as long as the ‘Cross’ is guiding the way, hence we sing:

Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus
Going on before!
Christ, the royal Master,
Leads against the foe;
Forward into battle
See his banner go!

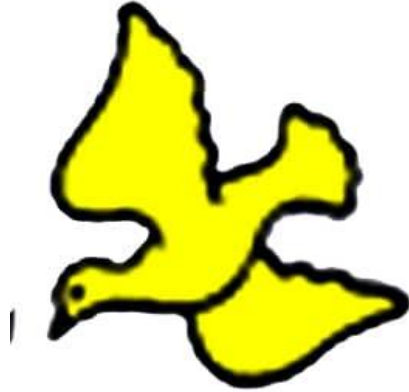
*“Fambai vaKristu, somunondorwa,
Munotungamirwa noMuchinjikwa;
Kristu Ishe wedu, Mutungamiri,
Fambai sehondo nesimba rake;”*
(Hymn 250 – Shona)

Obstacles may be there along the way but the ‘Cross’ is mightier and victory is certain (Colossians 2:13-15). Even the devil cannot withstand the power of the ‘Cross’ hence we sing:

At the sign of triumph
Satan’s host doth flee
On, then, Christian soldiers,
On to victory
Hell’s foundations quiver
At the shout of praise;
Brothers, lift your voices,
Loud your anthems raise!

*“Satani achatiza anoty kwazvo,
Fambai vaKristu munogokunda;
Anozunguzika nemazwi enyu,
Simudzai mazwi, imbai mose.”*
(Hymn 250:2 – Shona)

The Dove



The dove features in several biblical passages. It is first mentioned in the ‘Flood Story’ of Noah (Genesis 8:6-12). According to the Genesis narrative, after forty days when the water had receded, Noah sent out a raven which kept flying back and forth until the water had dried out from the earth. No feedback was given by the raven. Later he sent out the dove to see if the water had receded from the surface of the ground. At first the dove could not find where to perch because there was water all over the surface and it returned to Noah in the ark. After seven more days the dove was sent out again and it brought back a freshly plucked olive leaf and Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth. The dove returns with an olive branch as a sign of peace (McGinnell: 2021). We would want to see the connection between this event and what is said to be the symbolism of the dove in the New Testament in the following parts of this discussion.

Several other passages that feature the dove in the Old Testament are, Isaiah 38:14; 59:11; Jeremiah 48:28; Ezekiel 7:16; Hosea 7:11; 11:11; Nahum 2:7; Song of Songs 2:14; 5:2; etc. In the New Testament we have examples of Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32; 2:14-16; etc.

In the Jesus narratives, the dove features at His baptism. According to Matthew, “*As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and aligning on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son whom I love; with him I am well pleased’*” (Matthew 3:16-17). The same event is also recorded by Mark and Luke (Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22). John the Baptist says that he himself also saw the dove and it remained on Jesus (John 1:32).

It is from these events of the baptism of Jesus that the ‘Dove’ was taken to be part of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe logo. According to the Evangelism Report to Standing Committee of the 25th July 1987, “The ‘Dove’ on the logo speaks of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that transforms our lives and empowers us that we will have an impact on Zimbabwe.” That is what the church’s Standing Committee of 25th July 1987 also reported to the Conference of the same year and it was adopted (Conference Minutes, 1987:5). It is against this background that the ‘Dove’ is taken by Methodists as symbolic of the Holy Spirit.

However, this does not mean that it is only the dove that symbolizes the Holy Spirit. No. The Holy Spirit can choose to be represented by any feature as He pleases for a specific mission and purpose, and that is evident even in the scriptures. For example, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came in the form of a combination of violent wind and tongues of fire (Acts 2:1-4). In His discussion with the Samaritan woman at the well Jesus shows us that water can be an emblem of the Holy Spirit signifying eternal life (John 4:14). The same is also echoed in John 7:37-39. The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe chose the dove out of all these emblems in the light of mission. “In the synoptic Gospels, what the Spirit did to Jesus in the form of a dove represented His anointing to fulfill His messianic task” (Wenk, 2013:391). He was the messiah, but not a political and violent one. He was a prince of peace (Isaiah 9:6).

Furthermore, the colour of the ‘Dove’ on the logo is Yellow. Literally, there is no dove which is yellow in colour. The doves that we all know in Zimbabwe and other parts of the world are greyish in colour. This automatically means that the colour that we have on this ‘Dove’ is symbolic. In this regard, this puts to rest any arguments on whether there is any dove in the world of that colour. We are not discussing doves that are found in the jungle out there, but about the colour and its connection with the Holy Spirit which the dove is representing. The colour that has been used here has connections with the Holy Spirit.

However, this does not mean that this colour (yellow or gold) is the only colour that is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. Just like it is in the features discussed before, the Holy Spirit can be represented by different colours depending on the role He is playing at that particular moment. According to Leo (2024), the Holy Spirit can be represented by white signifying purity, holiness and virtue. He can be represented by blue signifying His coolness and peacefulness; red evoking the ideas of fire, heat and energy (Acts 2:3); green signifying His life-giving, growth, renewal and freshness (John 3:5-8); purple speaking of His awesomeness as the very presence and power of God dwelling within His people; orange, signifying light and heat speaking how the Spirit brings the fiery light of God into our lives illuminating our path; yellow speaking of the Spirit kindling His warmth glow within us and also representing the bright rays of hope. Yellow inspires worship. It is also symbolic of fire, and Acts 2 speaks of the Holy Spirit coming in the form of fire. The Holy Spirit can also be represented by gold signifying majestic, i.e. wealth, splendor and royalty. What this means is that different colours do teach us about different roles and qualities of the Holy Spirit described in the scriptures. It is in this understanding that the argument that ‘there is no dove which is either yellow or orange’, is dismissed. The colour has nothing to do with the doves that are out there in the jungle, but it is all about what the Holy Spirit does and inspires us to do.

The descriptions given above in reference to yellow do apply to us as we carry out God’s mission in Zimbabwe first, and abroad. God’s light illuminates our path as well as kindling His warmth glowing within us leading to worship. So, this has got to do with mission as well as our responses as an expression of faith. However, this does not mean that we are dismissing the significance of the symbolism of the other colours. No. They are all important, but they could not all be put on one logo at the same time. Otherwise if they were all to be put here the thing that was going to come out was going to do a disservice to the intended goal of any logo as has been discussed on the definition of the logo and its characteristics.

The Holy Spirit is critical in the life of the church. Just as the Holy Spirit birthed Jesus (Matthew 1:20-21), so He did to the church (Acts 2:1ff). The church is a product of the Holy Spirit. It is our conviction as Methodists that the Holy Spirit birthed the church on the day of Pentecost so as to unite it with Christ thereby bringing the church into the inner life of the Holy Trinity. The Spirit that gave birth to the church on the day of Pentecost is the same Spirit that gave birth to Methodism on 24 May 1738 in a house in Aldersgate Street, i.e. the event that John Wesley described in his own words in his journal on May 24, 1738:

“In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given to me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death” (Winwood:1988).

The early church was birthed by the Holy Spirit in a house on the day of Pentecost and in the same order Methodism was birthed by the same Spirit in a house at Aldersgate Street. Having been birthed Holy Spirit, the same Spirit continues to play critical roles in the sustenance and nourishment of the church so that it becomes effective in carrying out mission.

Furthermore, as has been discussed in the previous section (about the ‘Cross’) that the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe is a missional church, the Holy Spirit plays the role of guidance in the making of right decisions in the daily operations of the church. The church is ‘Spirit empowered’. This role is an extension of what He did in the operations of the early church (Acts 6:2-7). This means that the Holy Spirit is very active in the administration processes of the church. According to Stewart (2021), the Holy Spirit has supervision over the government of the church. The author of the letter to the Ephesians has this to say:

“This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:8-13).

What this means is that when Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, and took His seat at the right hand of the Father, He sent the Holy Spirit to begin the work of building the Body of Christ (the church) upon the earth. He is present in all church offices with officers across all our structures.

Second, the Holy Spirit enables and empowers to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations. Jesus instructed the disciples that the power to witness comes only when the Holy Spirit is upon them (Acts 1:8), and indeed when the Holy Spirit came upon them they began to witness with that power starting in Jerusalem (Acts 2:14ff).

Thirdly, the Holy Spirit equips the church for service. He has been doing this even in the Old Testament times, for example, Judges 6:34; 1 Samuel 10:9-10; Ezekiel 12:2, etc. Even in the New Testament we see Him very active in equipping the church for service, for example, 1 Corinthians 12:11. The presence of the Holy Spirit continues to be felt in the church today and this is seen in the way evangelistic programmes take a centre stage in the church. Bringing people to Christ is the core business of the church and has been made ‘Pillar 1’ of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe’s Strategic Plan (Strategic Document 2024-2028, pp 12), and this is being achieved. For example, one circuit in Harare East District of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, i.e. Mt. Pleasant Circuit, recorded an increase of 11% of its congregants in 2023 alone (Harare East District 2024 Synod Bound Volume, pp 72). That can only be achieved through the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

There are many other roles that the Holy Spirit does in the church in the operations of the church as well as the lives of individual congregants, and this article cannot contain all of them. What has been presented here is just a pinch of the many roles that He does and are evident in our church. In expressing our faith on the importance of the Holy Spirit in the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe we sing Hymns such as 77 (Shona) [*Mweya Mutsvene waMwari, garai muno mumba ...*]. Each stanza of that hymn addresses a certain aspect of our spirituality as Methodist Christians. We also have hymns such as 81 (Shona) [*Dondifemerai Mweya woutsvene ...*], which address the longing of the Holy Spirit in our lives as individual Christians.

It is in this regard that when we look at the dove on the logo we connect with the Holy Spirit and His works in the life of the church as well as individual Christians.

Lastly, the ‘Dove’ on the logo is facing downwards. This is also symbolic. The Bible talks of the Holy Spirit as to have descended from Heaven (Matthew 3:16; Acts 2:2). Facing downwards of the ‘Dove’ signifies the continuous outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the church. There is no time when we would say that we do not need the Holy Spirit. There is no time when we would say that we have had enough of the Holy Spirit. There is no time and place where the Holy Spirit turns His back against the church. He is always being poured out upon the church and all its congregants in their different age groups, as well as upon all programmes.

The Map of Zimbabwe



Setting of the Stage

Methodism was established in the then Southern Rhodesia on September 29, under the leadership of the Revs Owen Watkins and Isaac Shimmin when the duo arrived at Fort Salisbury (Zvobgo, 1991:7). These were European (British) missionaries. According to Zvobgo (1991:17-19), Owen Watkins was born of Welsh Methodist parents near Manchester in 1842. In 1863 he offered himself as a candidate for the ministry with a preference for work overseas. He was accepted as a missionary candidate, trained in Britain and served in England. As his ambition was to serve overseas, he was sent to South Africa and that is where he made a huge impact. He held several leadership positions there in the South African Districts of the Methodist Church. His greatest impact was felt in Transvaal where he was Chairman and General Superintendent of Transvaal and of the Swaziland Missions. It was during Watkins' chairmanship that not only was the work in the Transvaal strengthened, but new missions were also founded. Watkins worked in his capacity until 1891 when the Mission Committee in London decided to send him and a young minister, Isaac Shimmin, to pioneer the first mission in the Mashonaland in the then Southern Rhodesia, and the missionary expedition realized positive results.

When the church was established in the then Southern Rhodesia, it remained under the administration of the British Conference just as was the Transvaal District of the church in South Africa. One of the reasons for that, as was cited by Mujinga (2017:116), had to do with financial support. This is because the Rhodesia Mission was like an extension of Transvaal.

Right from 1891, the Methodist Church in Southern Rhodesia was under the British Conference. There was no specific logo that the church was using (M. James, personal communication, April 23, 2024). The Southern Rhodesia church was granted autonomy in October 1977 (Kadenge, 1991:113-114). From October 1977, the church became autonomous so as to be able to run their affairs and 'Conference', although this autonomy did not mean that the relationship with the British mother church had gone sour. The church in Rhodesia remained in good relationship with the church in Britain, and that is the order even today. However, what has changed is the focus. The focus and centre of operation is now Zimbabwe. It is in this regard that the map on the logo speaks of an autonomous church. We are the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. According to the Evangelism Committee report to the Church's Standing Committee of the 25th July 1987, "The map represents our specific responsibility in which we are called to fulfill the Great Commission". Zimbabwe is the base of operation even when the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe has gone further to reach out to the diaspora where some Zimbabwean Methodists have migrated to.

Second, the map on the logo is painted green. The colour green is mentioned several times in the Bible. For example, Psalm 23:2 speaks of God leading the righteous beside still waters, causing them to lie down in green pastures. Other passages where green is mentioned in the Old Testament are, Genesis 1:30; Psalm 52:8; 92:12-15; Isaiah 15:6; Ezekiel 17:24; Joel 2:22, etc. In the New Testament there are verses like Mark 6:39; Revelation 9:4, etc. In all these passages, the colour is associated with God's provisions that sustain life. For example, in the Gospel according to Mark, the multitudes were ordered to sit down in groups on green grass and they were given bread and

fish, and they had excess food there (Mark 6:39-44). Green colour symbolizes blessing, growth and the cycle of life (christianpure.com). The significance of green pastures is emphasized throughout the Bible in various verses and all tying into the theme of life and restoration. Affirmation to this is the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe vision which reads, “To be an oasis of life, love, justice and hope” (Strategic Document 2024 – 2028 pp 2).

Thirdly, there is no part of the map which is not painted. The whole map is painted with the same colour. This speaks the message that, unlike other denominations which only exist in certain parts of the country, the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe is found everywhere throughout Zimbabwe. It is not a regional church. It is found in all the provinces of Zimbabwe. The church’s eight Districts stretch over all of the country’s ten provinces. As of 2024, Harare East District stretched over the central, northern, eastern and southern parts of Harare Metropolitan province. It also occupied parts of Mashonaland East Province, right down to Nyamapanda Boarder Post, and the whole of Mashonaland Central Province, deep down to Muzarabani. The District had 21 Circuits there; Harare West District covered the western parts of Harare Metropolitan Province, some parts of Mashonaland West Province, and partly Mashonaland East Province, and the District had 26 Circuits there; Kadoma District stretched over parts of the Midlands Province, the bigger part of Mashonaland West Province, and encroached into Zambia, and the District had 25 Circuits there; Bulawayo District covered the central, northern, southern and eastern parts of Bulawayo Metropolitan Province. It had its foot in small parts of Matabeleland North Province makes ‘an about turn’ covering the whole of Matabeleland South Province, and the District had 11 Circuits there; Hwange District stretched over the western parts of Bulawayo Metropolitan Province and the whole of Matabeleland North Province, going deep into Victoria Falls, and the District had 12 Circuits there; Masvingo District covered some parts of Midlands Province, the whole of Masvingo Province and encroaching into Matabeleland South Province going deeper into Beit Bridge, and the District had 16 Circuits there; Gweru District covered the whole of Midlands Province and the District had 11 Circuits there; Marondera District occupied parts of Mashonaland East Province and the whole of Manicaland Province right down to Forbes Boarder Post, and the District had 19 Circuits there.

We can see how Methodism is found in every part of Zimbabwe. It is cross cultural. Shona, Ndebele, Tonga, Nambya, Venda, Xhosa, Sotho, etc, languages are spoken in the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe.

The Scallop Shell (The Wesleyan Shell)



The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe logo has a ‘Scallop Shell’. A scallop is a creature that builds fan-shaped sea shell. Scallops live in oceans. Their sizes range from about 1 inch to around 6 inches. The shell of a scallop is like a fan with two small wings at the bottom (kids.britannica.com).

Two theories do arise in this regard. The first one is that which argues that in the Christian tradition, a scallop is associated with James the disciple of our Lord. Legend says that when James died, his disciples transported him back to Spain for burial. However, a storm erupted in the sea and the body was lost in the water. After some time the body was discovered intact on the shore of Galician coast covered in scallop shells (insiderstravel.io). That made scallop shells be connected to James the disciple. James is believed to have been buried in Santiago de Compostela, Spain (Lane: 2024). Due to his role in the history of Christianity and the foundation of the church, Medieval Christians from Europe wished to connect with his grave site (shrine). They would do so by making pilgrimages to his shrine. Those who would make such pilgrimages, also known as the Way of St. James to his shrine at Santiago de Compostela, often wore the scallop shell symbol on their hats or clothes. This made the scallop shell find its way into heraldry as a badge of those who had been on the pilgrimage to Compostela (cdn.peterhuman.net).

The second theory locates the use of the scallop shell to the Wellesley family, the genealogy of John Wesley and Wesley himself. The tradition traces the origins of the family in the West Country of England, Dorset, and Devon, in particular. The family is assumed to be originally connected with the Wellesley family, from the same part of England. That family moved to Ireland and from it came Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington. It was the Wellesleys who used the scallop shell, and a seal from the 14th century including a shield with a cross and five scallops (The Methodist Church of New Zealand. n.d). Wellesley family had a shield crest that bears a cross decorated with five scallop shells (Drake 2011). It is believed that the Wellesleys had also once participated in the pilgrimage to St. James’ shrine in Compostela, hence the reason why scallop shells found their way into their lives. The connection between John Wesley and the scallop shell goes back to 1787 when his portrait was painted by William Hamilton. At the bottom of the painting, Hamilton put scallop shells. Later that same year, an engraving of this portrait was published by James Fittler. Beneath the portrait, Fittler added his conception of the Coat of Arms of the Wesley family – a shield with an outlined cross, containing three scallop shells in each quarter and a wyvern as the crest, with the words, “God is love” as the motto underneath (Paulo 1995). In the same way, Medieval Christians, including John Wesley’s ancestors, walked across Europe to the shrine of St. James, and John Wesley walked across the length and breadth of Europe preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In the MCZ, the shell links the ecclesia with worldwide Methodism, an emblem in Wesley’s coat of arms (Methodist Church in Zimbabwe 1987:6). This point is buttressed by the fact that the scallop shell feature on the logo of the Methodist of New Zealand, Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Methodist Church of Nigeria, Methodist Church in Kenya and the Methodist Church in Sierra Leone



This connection with John Wesley made the scallop shell finds its way to the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe logo. According to the Evangelism Committee report to the church's Standing Committee of 25th July 1987, "The shell links us with worldwide Methodism, an emblem in the Wesley's coat of arms. Although autonomous, we rejoice being part of something bigger than ourselves and seek to have an impact on the world. The Great Commission is not for us to be content within Zimbabwe but in the world". Though based in Zimbabwe, we are part of the Wesley family/community worldwide.

In conclusion, as has been discussed in the section of the definition of the logo, the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe logo speaks to the outsiders as well as insiders about our identity. We are Methodists, part of the worldwide Methodist community. Being Methodists as we are, we live and preach Christ crucified in the power of the Holy Spirit pilgrimaging across the length and breadth of the world with our base being Zimbabwe. In the words of John Wesley himself: "The best of all is that God is with us." This summarizes all the features of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe logo.

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