

Schism and leadership Contestations after the death of Dorius Pedzisai Shoko of Zion Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe

Clement Makamure, Zimbabwe Open University

Abstract

Succession is the greatest challenge facing most organisations in Africa in all circles of life. Most religious, social and political organisations and institutions seem to face many problems after the death of the founding figure. It seems Africa today has failed to have a smooth transfer of power from the current leader to the successor. Owing to the failures of leaders to appoint their successors particularly in the religious spheres, most church organisations often engage in bloody fights after the death of the principal leader. This makes succession disputes one of the greatest crises facing African Independent churches in Zimbabwe. Daneel (1988) observed that the death of the founder of an independent church, more than any other occasion, brings conflicting issues to the surface. The issue of schism has been and is the result of all struggles that take place in most African Independent churches. The inheritance to the throne in the Zion Apostolic Faith Mission (ZAFM) church has from its inception been a problem. The church has been facing the problem of determining who should succeed the deceased bishop. Disagreements always arise whenever the successor is to be chosen. It is in light of this background that this paper seeks to spell out the schism and leadership contestations that took place after the death of Dorius Pedzisai Shoko the successor of Andreas Shoko of ZAFM. Much of the information for this paper was obtained from field work through focus group discussions, personal observation and face to face interviews with the leaders of ZAFM church.

Key words: Schism, leadership contestation, Zion Apostolic Faith Mission.

Introduction

The history of African Independent Churches in Zimbabwe is awash with schisms and leadership contestations especially after the death of the incumbent leader. Daneel (1988) stated that disputes always erupt in an African Independent church after the death of the founding leader. The ZAFM church has not been spared by this wave of disputes and schisms. After the death of Andreas Shoko, contestations broke between his first son Dorius and his second son Zachariah. This paper is meant to track the schisms and leadership contestation that ensued after the death of Dorius Pedzisai Shoko of ZAFM.

A brief history of Dorius Pedzisai Shoko

Dorius Pedzisai Shoko (alias Andreas ii) was born in 1932 (Daneel, 1971). His father was Joni Chinatsira (alias Andreas Shoko). His mother was called Punha Muzangwa who was later named Margret Muzangwa at baptism. Dorius assumed power from his father the founder of ZAFM church in Zimbabwe, Andreas Shoko in 1985 (Daneel, 1988). Dorius was fifty-three (53) years old when he came to power.

Bishop Dorius was married to six wives. The first one was called Sarafina Mazhindu and she gave birth to 10 children. She had 6 girls and 4 boys. The eldest son was Wellington, followed by Jamson, then Morgan and Zedekiel. Wellington died when he was still young and left Jamson as the eldest. The second wife was called Sarah Matongo from Mberengwa and was the first child of Ruka Matongo (one of the prophets during Andreas Shoko's time). Sarah Matongo had ten children, five girls and five boys. The eldest son being Andrew followed by Obadiah, Ezra, Silas and Eliazal. The third wife was VamaSibanda and had two children who are Costen and Mary. This wife did not stay long at Dorius' homestead since she was taken by her aunt who was against her marriage into a polygamous family. The fourth wife was Febbie Mpofo and has since died. The fifth wife is Gertrude Sibanda and is still alive. The sixth is Saliwe Ndlovu. All in all, Dorius had fourteen sons and Jamson was the eldest surviving son by the time of Dorius' death.

When Dorius assumed power in 1985, he moved forward with the gospel after the death of Andreas Shoko (Daneel, 1988). He led the church for 27 years. The numerical growth of the church was experienced under his leadership since he had few challenges in his ministry particularly from the political wing since he came to power after independence. Rather, the ZAFM church spread its tentacles across Zimbabwe under his leadership. He made branches in all districts and urban areas such as Kadoma, Bulawayo, Gweru, Harare, Karoi, Kariba, Marondera, Chinhoyi and Chitungwiza among others. There were new branches that were started as far as Binga, Gokwe, Makande, Rushinga and Victoria Falls. Under Dorius' leadership, the church also established branches in Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, and other nearby countries (Daneel, 1988). Dorius managed to finish the construction of the church that was started by his father at the church's headquarters in Museva area.

According to focus group discussions with the Council of High Priests, during the reign of Dorius, the priests were allowed to officiate over the Passover feast. Dorius himself authorised this because it was becoming almost impossible for him to make rounds to all the centres that were in his jurisdiction. During Andreas Shoko's time, priests were not allowed to officiate over such a feast, it was the sole duty of the leader. It is interesting to note that some of the centres were not formed by Dorius himself but his followers who were either migrating to these areas through work or in search of more habitable lands. The followers would then call Dorius to officiate the new centres (Daneel, 1988).

Internal factionalism during the reign of Dorius Pedzisai Shoko

In the year 2000, the ZAFM church was shaken by internal factionalism. Misunderstandings broke out between Dorius and his eldest son Jamson. Dorius by this time was advanced in age and had problems in

running the church which was growing numerically every day (Makamure, 2018). Moreso, due to old age Dorius was failing to organise and control his many wives. This led to instability within his own family as his wives were accusing each other of witchcraft practices. This implies that the misunderstandings in the family circles cascaded to the church. This explains why in the AICs, it is difficult to separate family from religious systems (Makamure, 2018). The two are interwoven to the extent that instability in one would automatically affect the other. So, disintegration in his family seemed to have affected Dorius' administration of the church since he is said to have started to be too dictatorial and egocentric. This led the priests to accuse Dorius of maladministration of the church. He was no longer consulting his priests on decision-making as he used to do. This made Jamson (Dorius; eldest son) to advise him against his dictatorship and maladministration but this only managed to brew animosity between them said one of the priests during the focus group discussions (Fieldwork notes, 2021). As the priests said, Dorius could go to the extent of rebuking followers using vulgar language. They further alleged that there was rampant mismanagement of church funds. Ben Mandiregerera the national secretary and High Priest in Masvingo urban was accused of misusing church funds. Jamson was one of the church members who complained over the abuse of church funds. Dorius interpreted the move by Jamson to mean that he was against the benefits he was getting as a bishop through the secretary general of the church. The Council of High Priests further highlighted that Mandiregerera was accused of using church funds to partake in money changing deals. He is said to have squandered the church's \$ZW 10 million, which was raised for sinking a borehole at Museva area (the headquarters of the church). At the helm of these accusations, Dorius sided with Mandiregerera. The accusations further made Dorius to excommunicate some of his office bearers and appoint Mandiregerera to double as both secretary general and treasurer of the church. The move according to the discussions with the Council of High Priests made Mandiregerera to further abuse funds and bought himself two houses in Masvingo urban (Fieldwork notes, August 2021).

The abuse of church funds made Jamson to intervene again encouraging his father to be transparent in the use of church funds. He also advised that auditors should be called to audit church funds. The advice from Jamson further intensified the enmity between him and his father and Mandiregerera as well. The move, however, made Jamson to be popular and he got the support of many church members who were also against the embezzlement of church funds. This made the church to have two contesting factions. On one hand, there was a group supporting Jamson and his call for the auditing of church funds. On the other hand, there was Dorius and Mandiregerera and other priests who were benefiting from the embezzlement of church funds.

Makamure (2018) notes that by the year 2007, the Council of High priest said that factionalism was visible, and Dorius hated his son Jamson. He was publicly accusing him of attempting a coup to take over leadership while he was alive. In his preaching, Dorius would always liken Jamson to the prodigal son in the bible. Most of the allies of Jamson were expelled in the church. Makamure (2018) further notes that among those who were accused of influencing the behaviour of Jamson was prophet Masocha from Masvingo urban branch of ZAFM church. Due to factionalism, the church was almost like it has been split into two churches. As the Council of Priest said, the situation was as if ZAFM had two churches housed in the same building. The factionalism continued until the time of Dorius' death (Makamure, 2018).

Bishop Jamson said that Bishop Dorius (Andreas ii) fell sick in 2005 at Museva area. In October 2005, Dorius relocated his home to Gunikuni together with his last two wives, Gertrude Sibanda and Saliwe Ndlovu (Makamure, 2018). He was suffering from high blood pressure (BP) and diabetes. Most probably the situation in his family and church made him suffer from blood pressure. The followers of Dorius at Gunikuni received him with open arms and by 2006 he was given a piece of land to do agriculture (Makamure, 2018). The relocation to Gunikuni near Renco Mine led to the creation of another small headquarters of ZAFM church there. Most of the celebrations were now done at Gunikuni save for the Easter and National Heroes celebrations which were held at Museva headquarters.

Bishop Jamson during the face-to-face interviews said that at the beginning of 2012, Dorius joined the Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe (ACCZ) and the ZAFM church became a member (Makamure, 2018). In May 2012, Dorius was given a medal of founding father on behalf of his father Andreas Shoko. After becoming a member of ACCZ, all the jurisdiction of choosing the successor was thrust into the hands of ACCZ.

According to the church minutes availed to us, Dorius had an accident at Lupane and broke his leg by the knee on 13 September 2012, on his way to Hwange to officiate a ceremony (Church Minutes, 2 April 2015). The driver died on the spot together with priest Edward Makadho from Hwange. Dorius' last two wives who were also travelling with him in the same vehicle sustained some injuries. Dorius together with his two wives were admitted to St Luke's hospital in Lupane where his wives soon recovered. Dorius was transferred to Mpilo hospital in Bulawayo where he died on 9 October 2012 at the age of eighty (80) years. Bishop Jamson said that Dorius was laid to rest on 13 October 2012, at Museva area near the ZAFM church headquarters after reigning as the ZAFM bishop for twenty-seven (27) years (Church minutes, 2 April 2015). By the time of his death, factionalism was still on. This implies that Dorius left behind a time

bomb that was some few seconds to burst. The contestations between his sons- Jamson and Ezra were a culmination of the eggs of disputes that Dorius left at the point of hatching.

At his funeral, members of the ruling party in Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) were present together with bishops from the other two Zionist churches (Fieldwork notes, August 2021). The president of ACCZ, Johannes Ndanga, was also present. According to Bishop Jamson, Bishop Tafirenyika Masuka and Makuwa Mutendi came as officials in charge of the burial. Interesting to note is that Tafirenyika Masuka (David III) assumed power from his father Johanne Peresu (David II) by virtue of being the eldest son. Makuwa Mutendi is from the ZCC of Rueben Mutendi and is the eldest son (Fieldwork notes, August 2021). Therefore, the presence of these leaders from the other Zionists in Zimbabwe was in line with the 1949 Zionist Covenant.

The Death of Dorius Pedzisai Shoko and the 2012 Contest and Schism

The time bomb of factionalism that Dorius left busted after his death. The contestations that followed his death were a result of the factions that had started from the year 2000 - 2012 when Dorius died. By the time of Dorius's death some of his followers were disgruntled about loss of the spirit in the church. This was attributed to Dorius's reluctance to stop corruption in the church and his transfer to Gunikuni. The leadership contestations after the death of the principal leader are not only common to the ZAFM church. In the ZCC of Lekganyane of South Africa, two of his sons, Edward and Joseph were locked in acrimonious leadership contestation when he died in 1948 (Anderson 2013). Bishop Jamson during the in-depth interviews said that after the burial of Dorius, on 30 October 2012, a delegation of a selected group of priests under the leadership of Joseph Matongo from Mberengwa gathered at Dorius's homestead and called all the family members for a discussion over *nyaradzo* (memorial service) for Bishop Dorius (Makamure, 2018). The ZAFM church's principle is that the members of the other Zionists of the Covenant in conjunction with the deceased bishop's family must arrange for a date to conduct a memorial service a month after the burial ceremony. At the memorial service, the successor of the deceased bishop would then be installed. This was also what Anderson observed in the ZCC of Lekganyane (Anderson, 2013). After the traditional mourning period of about a year the family members gathered to discuss issues of inheritance.

Bishop Jamson said that at the discussions on the memorial service there was no representative from the other two Zionist churches, that is, ZCC and ZAC, as was required by the 1949 covenant hence it was a misnomer. The representatives of the ACCZ were also not there as required by the new constitution that was adopted after Dorius joined ACCZ. However, despite the misnomer the group of priests asked the

family who they wanted to be the successor. The family spokesperson responded to the question by the leader of the group of priests, by stating that the successor is not chosen by the family members, but by the delegation from the other two Zionist churches and then the ACCZ would inaugurate the selected bishop (Fieldwork notes, August 2021). This triggered some disagreements, and a ten-member committee was selected, including five members from Dorius's family and five from the group of priests. As Bishop Jamson said, the committee was supposed to go to Bikita to consult Tafirenyika Masuka and Mutendi on how to proceed with the selection of the new bishop. Dorius's family was represented by Jamson Pedzisai, Nyasha and Munyaradzi Mandiona (both were cousins), Goliath Chinatsira (Young brother of Andreas Shoko), and Manasa Jave (young brother of Dorius from Andreas's young brother). Ainus Muzangwa, Joseph Matongo, Juniel Mazvihwa (nicknamed Big Fish), Pinias Penegwa and Tawanda Manyadza who was the secretary, represented the priests. The delegation set for the journey on 31 October 2012 and could not find Makuwa Mutendi upon arrival at Mandadzaka since he had gone to South Africa (Fieldwork notes, August 2021). They were accompanied by Makuwa Mutendi's young brother to Bishop Tafirenyika Masuka's place. They found Tafirenyika Masuka and narrated the cause of their journey. Tafirenyika Masuka told the delegation that they do not have the mandate to give him the memorial date since he was supposed to decide together with the ZCC wing without the priests. This did not please the priests (Fieldwork notes, August 2021). From the researchers' perspective, Tafirenyika had already sensed that there were some squabbles.

According to one interviewee, Bishop Jamson said that the meeting with Tafirenyika Masuka started at 7 pm and ended at 10 pm. It was at this meeting that Masuka learnt that all the priests present, were in support of Ezra while some of the family members were supporting Jamson using the 1949 covenant. Masuka concluded the meeting by stating that he would think of a date for the memorial service and notify the two sides (Fieldwork notes, August 2021). The priests as bishop Jamson said, were not pleased by this and they decided that the memorial service and the inauguration of Dorius's successor be held on 29 December 2012 (Fieldwork notes, August 2021). It is interesting to note that, the decision by the priests to continue with the inauguration of Dorius's successor led to the formation of three contesting groups. The first group comprised of the priests who supported Ezra as the rightful heir. According to this group, Ezra was the chosen successor since Jamson had revolted against his father while he was still alive (Fieldwork notes, August 2021).

The second group was made up of the members of the Shoko family and was in support of Jamson. According to this group, Jamson was the authentic successor using the 1949 covenant. Bishop Makuwa

Mutendi of ZCC of Rueben Mutendi, Tafirenyika Masuka of ZAC and Johannes Ndanga the president of ACCZ supported this group (Fieldwork notes, August 2021).

The third group comprised of the family members who were rallying behind Setty, the first son of Gertrude Sibanda, Dorius's fifth wife. However, as the argument continued to be violent, Setty later dropped the claim to the throne and backed Ezra. This means that Era and Jamson were then left in the race of succession (Makamure, 2018).

The two camps that were left in the succession contestation had different views on the procedures to appoint a successor. According to the focus group discussions (Fieldwork notes, August 2021), the Ezra camp argued that the incumbent bishop appoints the successor during his lifetime. This camp claimed that the late Bishop Dorius Pedzisai Shoko appointed Ezra Pedzisai Shoko to succeed him as bishop by anointing him with oil on the head. The camp claimed that the appointment was done in the presence of the members of the Council of High Priests, and this included Annas Muzangwa, Joseph Matongo, Kandros Mawisire and Tiro Hove. Annas Muzangwa claimed that the incumbent Bishop has the ultimate authority to appoint the successor (Fieldwork notes, August 2021). The Ezra camp claimed that the 2006 ZAFM church constitution states in clause 5.3 that the sitting bishop appoints the successor during his lifetime. They further argued that in conformity to the provisions of the 2006 constitution, the late Bishop Dorius anointed Ezra as the next bishop at Gunikuni. They said that Jamson was not well spoken of by the Council of High Priests because of his attempted coup during his father's reign, hence he could not be the successor. They further said that Jamson was not in good terms with his father Dorius. Thelani Dzekavo, during the focus group discussions (Fieldwork notes, August 2021), said that there was a rift between Dorius and Jamson hence he could not take over from his father. The camp further said that Dorius had publicly declared that due to Jamson's attempt to topple him from leadership he would not inherit anything after his death. According to the information obtained from the discussions with the Council of High Priests (Fieldwork notes, August 2021), the Ezra camp had a disc with Dorius preaching as an exhibit to support their claim that Dorius had appointed Ezra as his successor. The camp had also a photocopy of what they claimed to be Dorius's last will and testament. The will was written in Shona language stating that "*Jamson haafaniri kuwana chero chikiti zvacho panhaka yangu*" (Jamson should not get even a cat from my inheritance) (Fieldwork notes, August 2021). The Council of High Priests argued that the camp could not produce the original copy of the last will and testament after it was alleged that the document was not in Dorius's own handwriting (Fieldwork notes, August 2021).

For the Jamson camp, since Jamson was the eldest surviving son of the deceased Bishop from the first wife he was the rightful heir to the bishopric office. The camp believed that a successor to the office of a

bishop should be issued a Certificate of Oath of Service by the Apostolic Council of Zimbabwe. For him, any bishop without such a certificate was not considered authentic (Fieldwork notes, August 2021). The camp chronicled how the former to present bishops of the three main Zionist in Zimbabwe churches were ordained. They denied the existence of the 2006 constitution that Ezra claimed to possess. Jamson dismissed its authenticity because it did not have the signature of the late bishop, hence, Bishop Ezra fabricated it to support his power-hungry motives (Makamure, 2018).

According to the focus group discussions (Fieldwork notes, August 2021), Jamson had the support of the other sons of the covenant that is bishop Mutendi of the ZCC (son of Rueben Mutendi) and Tafirenyika Masuka (son of Johannes Peresu Masuka) of ZAC. These two leaders came to bishopric positions using the 1949 Zionist covenant and this is the reason why they said that the Ezra faction was just greed for power. The focus group further stated that the two bishops' argument was that Dorius could have communicated to them had he wanted to go against the 1949 covenant. They further argued that, if it was Dorius who wrote the last will and testament, the statement that Jamson should not get even a cat was not in reference to the office of a bishop, but to personal inheritance (Fieldwork notes, August 2021). For them, the statement was referring to wealth like animals and other items left by the deceased since they were not fully governed by the Zionist covenant. They also said that if Dorius had disinherited Jamson as a successor he could have notified them as members of the Zionist covenant. They argued that a bishop in the Zionist covenant has no mandate and power to disinherit a son of the covenant without their knowledge. The covenant as the two bishops argued, called for an amalgamated decision-making process pertaining to succession issues in the Zionist churches. For them, Dorius could not have violated the covenant since he also rose to the throne through it. Moreso, Dorius also had misunderstandings with his father Andreas Shoko, but Zionist bishops installed him as bishop despite the misunderstandings (Fieldwork notes, August 2021). For all these arguments, the two bishops said that there was no reason for Dorius to disinherit his eldest son.

Due to the disagreements on the successor candidate, the two bishops refused to ordain Ezra as the heir to the bishopric. For them, the ordination of Ezra would be a violation of the 1949 covenant (Anderson, 2020). The Ezra camp then started to accuse the members of the Zionist covenant of taking sides and biased. Jamson's deeds before the death of Dorius were to the Ezra camp unforgivable. Sensing defeat, the Ezra camp decided to proceed with their plans to ordainate their candidate without the members of the Zionist covenant. Interesting to note is the view that the refusal of the Zionist covenant bishops to coronate Ezra marked his rejection of the existence of the 1949 covenant (Fieldwork notes, August 2021). The most probable reason was that it was shutting out his hopes of becoming a bishop. It was from that point

on that Ezra cancelled any link with the other Zionist and the ACCZ. Up this day, Ezra does not want to hear anything concerning the 1949 covenant and ACCZ. The two institutions have become his enemies. Bishop Ezra during the interviews (Fieldwork notes, August 2021), argued that the 1949 covenant was only for the two Zionist fathers, that is, Mutendi and Masuka. For him, Shoko was not present at the meeting and was never part of it; hence, it should not be used as evidence to claim the position of a bishop. He further said that even the two Zionist fathers, Mutendi and Masuka did not take the 1949 Covenant seriously. For him this explains why Mutendi himself appointed Nehemiah as his successor while there were elder brothers to even Rueben Mutendi (Fieldwork notes, August 2021).

The events following the burial of Dorius led the two brothers (Jamson and Ezra) to be locked in a spiteful legal battle to take over leadership of the church. The contestations and disagreements led to sporadic fights between the two camps. The battle spilled into the legal court of Zimbabwe as the leaders were trying to determine which one of them was the rightful heir to the throne. The issues were exacerbated by the fact that the two brothers, Jamson and Ezra Pedzisai Shoko, have different mothers, with Ezra coming from the lower house (Fieldwork notes, August 2021). It could have been different if the brothers were from the same mother. This is supported by the Shona dictum that states that *dzedanga rimwe hadzirwisani* (those from the same house do not fight).

The vice- bishop during the in-depth interviews said that as the disputes continued to be bloody, the president of ACCZ, Ndanga, decided to have a nomination court that would name the successor in the presence of both groups and then they would set a date for the ordination of Dorius' successor. Ndanga called the two rival groups for a meeting in Harare on 24 December 2012 to decide on the way forward (Makamure, 2018). The vice-bishop further said that the meeting was only attended by the members from Jamson's group since Ezra's group refused to attend. The members of Jamson's group who attended the meeting included Jamson, Munyaradzi Mandiona, Nyasha Mandiona, Josephine Chinatsira (sixth wife of Andreas Shoko), Goliath Chinatsira, Samuel Pedzisai and Edward Pedzisai. Bishop Jamson said that the meeting started at 8 am to 5 pm and was meant to convince the family members that 29 December was not a feasible date for holding the memorial service of Dorius (Makamure, 2018). The meeting resolved that the ZAFM may continue to hold the memorial service but would not proceed to appoint the next bishop until a date had been set by the other two Zionist representatives, ZCC and ZAC.

The cancellation of 29 December as the date for appointing the successor of Dorius did not please Ezra's group, hence they decided to continue with their arrangements. On 29 December, Ezra's group called Ndanga to come together with his Masvingo provincial representatives and they all came. Nehemiah Mutendi's young brother Charles Mutendi was also present representing his brother. Mutendi, a son of

Rueben Mutendi and rival to Makuwa Mutendi, was also present. Zachariah Pedzisai (the one who had succession disputes with Dorius) was also present (Fieldwork notes, August 2021).

According to the vice-bishop (Makamure, 2018), Ndanga called for a meeting before the ceremony and all the officials present, including those supporting Jamson, attended the meeting. Ndanga announced that the family may continue with the memorial service but could not appoint the successor. This led to another intense argument (Makamure, 2018). Then Ndanga asked the family to have their own separate meeting and resolve their differences and come back with a report. The family meeting was to be attended by six members from the church and six from the family. As the selected members were leaving the house where the Ndanga meeting was held, Zachariah took hold of Ezra's hand and put it in the air as they came out the house and announced in a loud voice to the congregants who were gathered waiting for the resolutions "*tahwinaaaa!*" (We won!!!). The announcement and Zachariah's shouting was interpreted by the Ezra group to mean their candidate has been nominated as the next successor of Dorius; hence, they started dancing in jubilation (Makamure, 2018). The joy that followed made the congregation to be uncontrolled as many were ululating others clapping hands and whistling. The meeting that was supposed to be attended by the twelve-member delegation could not be held as people were already shouting for joy (Makamure, 2018). After some time of joy and jubilation, Zachariah silenced congregants and told them that he has seen his wrongs and has now reconciled with his deceased brother Dorius and as the bishop, he wants to anoint Ezra as Dorius's successor. Zachariah kissed the photo of the deceased bishop Dorius that he was holding in his hands as a sign of reconciliation (Makamure, 2018). Zachariah then took Dorius's garments, staff (*tsvimbo*), crown and sacred cords (*ndaza*) and dressed Ezra and ordained him as the successor of Dorius (Makamure, 2018). In the ZAFM church, it is believed that possession of such heirlooms warrants some considerable measures of success in church leadership. The religious relics of the deceased leader are very sacred and possessing them shows smooth transfer of power from the deceased to the successor.

As all these events were unfolding, the president of ACCZ was surprised together with other officials from the two Zionists. Mutendi Mutendi, a rival of Makuwa Mutendi, sons of Rueben Mutendi, upon sensing danger instructed Ndanga and other delegates to leave Museva area. The events did not please the Jamson group and several other ZAFM priests. They were arguing that the bishop in the ZAFM church is not elected in the manner Ezra was appointed (Fieldwork notes, August 2021).

According to Makamure (2028) on 16 January 2013, Ndanga announced that the successor of Dorius following the 1949 covenant was to be elected on 2 February 2013. Ndanga also announced that anyone who has a query to that effect should come and raise it before 2 February. He then called all the sons of Dorius, including Ezra, Setty and Jamson, to come for a nomination court. This implied that Ndanga did

not consider the 29 December inauguration to be authentic. The nomination court was held in Harare at Ambassador House. However, Ezra and Setty did not turn up at the meeting. Only Jamson was present and was not opposed during the nomination court. This led Ndanga to announce that Jamson was the candidate to succeed Dorius (Makmaure, 2018). Jamson was sworn in as the successor of Dorius and was given an Archbishop licence and a Certificate of Oath of Service. He then forwarded the name to bishop Masuka and Mutendi who then set a date for the anointing of the successor of Dorius following the 1949 Zionist covenant on 2 February 2013. Mutendi and Masuka were pleased and confirmed that Jamson was the name they had been given by Dorius that they should appoint as bishop. According to Bishop Jamson (Fieldwork notes, August 2021), Dorius had a closed-door meeting with Bishop Makuwa Mutendi and Tafirenyika Masuka where they agreed that Jamson would be the next bishop after Dorius. The meeting was held on 7 August 1999. However, it is not clear if Dorius had not changed his mind on this issue because this was before Jamson had contested with his father after Dorius' maladministration of the church. It is also not clear if the two bishops had a closed-door meeting concerning succession issue as the bishop claimed.

On 2 February 2013, Jamson was ordained as the successor of Dorius and this led the ZAFM to be divided into two groups. This clearly resembles what transpired in the ZCC of Lekganyane of South Africa. As Anderson (2000) said, two separate churches were formed after the death of the principal leader. Like in the ZCC of Lekganyane the two formed churches groups in the ZAFM have little differences in belief and practices. Their headquarters adjoin each other.

At Jamson's inauguration, there were 25 000 congregants (Anderson, 2000). Members of the ACCZ including Ndanga were present. The officiators were Tafirenyika Masuka and Makuwa Mutendi. The representatives from the government were also there including Clara Taridzo who represented the Ministry of Education where Jamson was working. The presence of these officials authenticated Jamson's bishopric according to the 1949 Zionist covenant (Anderson, 2000). At his coronation, Jamson was given Andreas Shoko's staff which he was given when he was seventeen years and was kept by Shoko's surviving wives. He was not given any crown since Dorius's had been given to Ezra. Jamson had to later on get his own regalia, crown and sacred codes. All these items were blessed by the bishops of the Zionist covenant that is Masuka and Mutendi before Jamson used them (Makamure, 2000).

In an interview with Magunha (not real name) (Fieldwork notes, August 2021), a supporter of Ezra, said that due to frustrations over the appointment of Ezra as Andrias III, Jamson teamed up with his supporters with the intention of usurping Ezra's leadership, arguing that the appointment was not recognised by the

ACCZ. Furthermore, Jamson started to interfere with the church's activities by sending his sympathisers to attack Ezra's followers while they had church services.

As the fight for leadership escalated, the two brothers dragged one another into the courts of law. According to the message of Bishop Ezra on the 2015 Easter conference, the two brothers dragged each other twice to the chief's court, four times to the magistrate's court and twice to the high court (Makamure & Chimininge 2021). According to Bishop Ezra, Bishop Jamson was defeated in all the court sessions that were held. For him, Jamson was defeated at chief Shumba's court, at the civil court (Masvingo), and at the high court in Masvingo and Harare (Makamure & Chimininge, 2021).

Bishop Ezra, in his own words, said, "In all these cases we have been pronounced the rightful heirs to the church property but defiantly, there is vehement opposition to these jurisdictions" Makamure & Chimininge, 2021, p. 149). He quoted (Matthew 10v19) which reads, "Whenever they hand you over for trial, do not worry about how to speak or what to say, for what you should say will be given to you at that time." He further said that, "in the first high court case, the honourable judge observed that our detractors did not present themselves as truthful and credible but were witnesses who were very economic with the truth." (Makamure & Chimininge, 2021, p. 150).

Bishop Ezra (cited in Makamure & Chimininge, 2021) said that he is the rightful heir of Dorius' leadership. He even went to the extent of interpreting his name. According to him, the name Ezra means helper or aide and is etymologically derived from the Hebrew term meaning 'God helps.' For him, the name shows that the Israelites depend on the help from God. If one is crying for help, he or she expects an answer and that is why Ezra was there. The Biblical Ezra would carry the burdens of the Israelites to God who in turn replied to them. Names are also prophetic and significant he said (Makamure & Chimininge). He further said that Jamson is just another name that means one who uproots or a supplanter (Makamure & Chimininge, 2021). The high court minutes and rulings provided to the researchers by the Ezra camp proved that he was declared the rightful heir (High Court Minutes, 2014). This could be attributed to the fact that Bishop Ezra being a lecturer was able to present his arguments well as compared to Bishop Jamson. More so, Bishop Jamson failed to produce the 1949 Zionist covenant document that made the courts of law not to find the basis of his argument (Makamure & Chimininge, 2021).

For Bishop Jamson, the office of the bishop does not come through court ruling (Makamure & Chimininge, 2018). The ZAFM church is bound by the 1949 covenant and the dictates of the ACCZ. Any authentic bishop in the ZAFM church should be ordained by the members of the Zionist covenant and must have a certificate from the ACCZ that control all African Independent Churches in Zimbabwe. If

someone who was not ordained by the bishops who uphold the 1949 covenant thinks he is a true bishop, then that person is fooling himself (Makamure & Chimininge, 2018).

From the events after the death of Dorius, the researchers can make the following observations basing on the fieldwork data; the ZAFM church today is divided into two assemblies with two different bishops (Fieldwork notes, August 2021).

Bishop Jamson who was ordained into bishopric office by the members of the Zionist covenant leads one assembly. Bishop Ezra who was ordained by a rivalry of his father Dorius that is Zachariah Pedzisai Shoko leads the other one. The representatives of the Zionist covenant did not sanction the inauguration process of Ezra and did neither the President nor representative of the ACCZ of which ZAFM was a member officiated it. All these raised questions on the authenticity of his bishopric. The shortfalls made some of the church members de-flock and join the Jamson faction which even to this day is multiplying in numbers.

The other observation which can be made is that the leader's name can only differentiate the two groups but in all other issues, they are the same. The two assemblies hold their annual and main celebrations at Museva. As they hold their celebrations, the two groups will be 400m apart. The leaders of the two ZAFM formations have adopted the name Andreas and it has now become more of a title than a name. This shows that Andreas continues to have influence in the church even after his death. The adoption of the name Andreas also shows the church's belief in the continued interaction between a deceased leader and his church. It shows the belief in the relationship between the living and the living dead. This implies that the deceased church leader continues to be actively involved in his church even after death. The adoption of the title Andreas also shows that the church honours the work that he did in establishing the church. It is also a sign of the recognition of the founders' endless presidency in the church. The leader in the ZAFM church continues to lead even after death in the form of his successor son (s). The bishops of the two formations are each addressed as Andreas III.

Conclusion

The death of Dorius Pedzisai Shoko the son of Andreas Shoko of ZAFM church led to serious leadership contestations between his two sons Jamson the eldest son and Ezra the third son from Dorius' second wife Sara Matongo. The contests led them to drag each other into the courts of law and civil courts under chief Chivi. As the contests went on the two brothers ended up forming their own separate churches which are 400m apart. In terms of belief and practice there is not much difference. The two churches each use Museva in Chivi district as their headquarters. All their ceremonies are held at this place. The two brothers

still do not see eye to eye. However, each group is flourishing numerically every day. There are some members who had left the church during the time of the first two bishops of the ZAFM church that is Andreas Shoko and Dorius who are coming to join either of the two depending on choice and interests. The failure to choose the successor during the lifetime of the incumbent bishop and publicly announce it worsen the situation in so far as leadership contestations are concerned. The 2012 schism and contestations were a result of the failure of the incumbent leader Dorius Shoko to settle factionalism before his death.

References

- Anderson, A. H. (2000). *Zion and Pentecost: The Spiritualist and Experience of Pentecostal and Zionist/Apostolic Churches in South Africa*. Pretoria: University of South Africa Press.
- Anderson, A.H. (2013). *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of the World Christianity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Daneel, M. L. (1970). *Zionism and faith healing in Rhodesia: Aspects of African Independent Churches*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Daneel, M.L. (1988). *Old and new in Southern Shona independent churches: leadership and fission dynamics, Vol 2*. Gweru: Mambo Press.
- Daneel, M.L. (1971). *Old and New in Southern Shona Independent Churches, Vol 1*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Daneel, M.L. (1987). *Quest for Belonging: An Introduction to the Study of African Independent Churches*. Gweru: Mambo Press. Fieldnotes, August 2021.
- Makamure, C. (2018) A Phenomenological Study on the Causes of Leadership Succession Disputes in the Zion Apostolic Faith Mission (ZAFM) in Zimbabwe, Unpublished Doctor of Philosophy Thesis, University of KwaZulu Natal.
- Makamure, C. & Chimininga, V. (2021) 'Leadership Succession Practices in African Independent Churches in Zimbabwe: The Case of Zion Apostolic Faith Mission Church (ZAFM)'. In J.R. Bostic, I. D. Mothoagae & T. Tucker-Worgs (eds.). *Black Religious Landscaping in Africa and the United States* (pp. 139-154). New York: Peter Lang.
- The High Court of Zimbabwe. (2014) Minutes of the Zion Faith Mission Church HH496-14, 2 March.
- Zion Apostolic Faith Mission Church Minutes. (2015). 2 April