

A Critique of the Patriarchalistic Paradigm as Practised in the Kingdom of Swaziland

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Abstract

The Kingdom of Swaziland is inhabited, in the main, by a people who can trace their ancestry back to a limited number of Nguni clans with a common language – *SiSwati*. Those belonging to the Dlamini Nkosi clan rule within this hierarchical culture. Swaziland is also said to be a ‘Christian country’ where 80% of the population maintain that they are believers. As such, the country is unique as a case study in which to examine the impact of patriarchy on the preaching of the Gospel.

The study investigates three aspects of patriarchy, which are found to be in conflict with Paul’s letter to the Galatians. Paul effectively states that classism, sexism and racism have no place in the Kingdom of God (3:26–29). The article sets out the current position, and then theologically evaluates each of the three ‘isms in question in the light of these, and other verses. It then investigates Paul’s practical approach to

¹ The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the beliefs of the South African Theological Seminary.

dwelling within the world but not being of it through his eschatological approach of living in the ‘now’ but ‘not yet’. Finally, it comments on the wider Church’s position on the outworking of the three ‘isms within the Kingdoms – of God and of Swaziland.

1. Introduction

Anjezë Gonxhe Bojaxhiu is more fondly known to the world as Mother Teresa. Throughout the greater part of her life, her mission was to care for ‘the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the crippled, the blind, the lepers; all those people who feel unwanted, unloved, uncared for throughout society, people who have become a burden to the society and are shunned by everyone’ (1979:¶7). Numerous sources report that she also said:

At the end of our lives we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received, how much money we have made or how many great things we have done. We will be judged by: I was hungry and you gave me to eat. I was naked and you clothed me. I was homeless and you took me in.

Hungry not only for bread—but hungry for love. Naked not only for clothing—but naked of human dignity and respect. Homeless not only for want of a room of bricks—but homeless because of rejection. This is Christ in distressing disguise.

In quoting the words of Jesus (Matt 25:31–40), Bojaxhiu omitted reference to thirst and race (p. 35), and sickness and incarceration (p. 36). Addae-Korankye (2014:151) summed up the current anthropological understandings of poverty. In doing so, they quote Massey and Denton who argue that ‘most poverty can be traced back to

structural factors inherent to either the economy and/or to several interrelated institutional environments that serve to favour certain groups over others, generally based on gender, class, or race (1993)'. Over a period of time, these institutionalised environments form a culture as generation upon generation reinforces them.

Since *Umbuso weSwatini*² (the Kingdom of Swaziland) ranks 68th in the 2015 list of the world's poorest countries with 63 per cent of Swazis living below the poverty line (World Food Programme n.d.:¶5), it is prudent to study the country's culture relative to gender, class, and race. More important, to this researcher, is the Church's response to whatever shortfalls may be revealed.

The research will begin with class, then consider gender and finally focus on race. Having examined current realities within the culture, the research will focus on a theological critique of the culture, and finally probe the position of the Church in relation to its biblical calling.

2. The Patriarchalistic Heart of the Swazi Kingdom

The three pillars of any Swazi's life, (within the overarching discipline of *Buntfu*) are respect (*inhlonipo*), commitment (*kutinikela*) and responsibility (*umtfwalo*) (van Schalkwyk 2006:219; Whelpton 1997:149). Similar in nature to Plato's understanding, virtue has 'a special role—beyond goals, ambitions and dreams; beyond wealth and health; it was the controlling and defining element in one's life' (Annas 2009:88). A similar view is found in the traditional Swazi culture. The King is seen to be the most noble of all and, within Swazi culture, it is

² *Eswatini* = the indigenous name for the Kingdom of Swaziland. When determining the Swazi homeland name, the British adopted the Zulu word as opposed to the Swazi word for the country. It should be noted that there is no 'z' in the siSwati Language.

understood that he ‘cannot lie’ [*Umlomo longacali manga*]. Similarly, individual men are expected to rise in virtue, and these men are acknowledged as virtuous by referring to them as ‘Babe’ [*IsiZulu-Baba*] – a term of great respect (Richter and Morrel 2006:1). Of the three pillars, respect is seen to be the most important, as it governs behaviour within the hierarchical community.

2.1. Class

As the country’s name infers, Swaziland is theoretically ruled by a king. Currently, His Majesty King Mswati III is the reigning monarch or *iNgwenyama*. According to Swazi law and custom, as *iNgwenyama*, His Majesty personifies the Nation of the *Eswatini* (Kasenene 1993:93). Not only is he King, but also the nation’s high priest (Kasenene 1993:93).

Whilst Mswati III is King, His Majesty’s position cannot and should never be interpreted, as it too often is, as ‘Africa’s last absolute monarch’ (CIA 2015:¶1). Nothing could be further from the truth. Whilst His Majesty is *iNgwenyama*, he is such ‘in council’. This can be explained in a number of ways. By far the most understandable is that of a chief executive officer in a company. Whilst as CEO His Majesty appears to have ‘executive power’, he can be overruled by the shareholders. In Swaziland, these ‘shareholders’ or councils are summarised in Prince David’s 2006 address to the Commonwealth (Section 13 and 231) (Dlamini D 2006:¶4–6):

There are traditional councils and the modern system of government is to a large extent superimposed over this traditional arrangement. Immediately at the King’s assistance is *iNdlovukazi* (the Queen Mother). As the real or surrogate mother of the *iNgwenyama*, *iNdlovukazi* exercises a moderating advisory role on

iNngwenyama (Section 229³). There is also the Ligunqa (a council of paternal uncles and half-brothers of the King) which is also consulted by the King from time to time on important or sensitive matters or disputes of national interest. There is also the King's Advisory Council under the chairmanship of a Senior Prince.

This position is confirmed in Dlamini and Whelpton's Restatement of Swazi Law and Custom (First Report) (2013:35–36). Within the King's advisory council, there is an inner council commonly referred to as 'the faceless Labadzala'.⁴ For all intents and purposes, this effectively makes the leadership of Swaziland an oligarchy where the interests of the Dlamini Nkosi family and, through marriage, clans allied to the royal family, are protected.

Over and above the oligarchy, the King is also subject to the nation in three forms though:

1. the Council of Chiefs;
2. the voting system of *Tinkundla* and
3. a National *Sibaya* (gathering of the Nation)—the last of which was held in the second week of August 2016. During the *Sibaya*, the people are free to speak their minds without fear of retribution.

³ References to Sections in this speech refer to the 2005 Constitution of Swaziland which was drawn up under the Chairmanship of Prince David Dlamini.

⁴ The Labadzala form the executive council of the *Liqoqo* (Councillors) (Dlamini and Whelpton 2013:35–36), but the identities of the Princes of the realm as well as the Inner Council who cause decisions to be made are never revealed to the public - hence the use by the media of the additional word 'faceless'. *Labadzala* literally translated means 'elder' but should be translated as 'Counsellor' or 'Overseer' (Langa 2011).

It is this researcher's opinion that if one were to examine the situations of Presidents Zuma and Mugabe, both have greater individual power than His Majesty. Yet the personal risks that Mswati III takes on an annual basis are comparatively extreme. If the ANC wished to punish President Zuma for non-performance, the maximum that could be done would be recall. When King Mswati dances *iNcwala*, which he is obligated to do every year, one of the requirements is to drink from a calabash over which he has no control.

The *Tinsila*⁵, who would normally pre-taste anything and everything that passes his lips, are banished from his presence. Hence, every year, at *iNcwala*, King Mswati risks the fate of dying in a similar manner to that of his grandfather – Ngwane V (Bhunu). Therefore, while Mswati III is King and *iNgwenyama*, he is not an absolute monarch. In many respects, this authority of the councils has been diluted by two significant factors: (1) His Majesty controls the purse strings of the Royal Trust and (2) the obeisance that many counsellors afford His Majesty.

From His Majesty's position, authority over cultural affairs is delegated down through his chiefs to the village headmen. When community matters are discussed, the *indvuna* will chair the meeting. These meetings (*indabas*) are meetings between people, but they are far more than just that. An *indaba* is a process of open discussion to come to consensus. At the base of the hierarchical system are the *Bandla ncanes*

⁵ *Insila* (*Tinsila*: Plural)—When the future king is nearing puberty, he enters into a blood-brother relationship with two boys of equal age from the Matsebula and Motsa clans. The joining of the blood is performed by the leading *Inyanga* of the Shiba clan (Kuper 1947:78–79). These 'blood-brothers' watch over him as bodyguards and pre-tasters of his food. As such they form his first line of defence against any person who would do him harm.

[village forums], where matters pertaining to the group are dealt with. Within a village setting, every adult male resident is free to participate (Curle 2012:81).

The extended household is headed up by the oldest male member of the clan. Below him are his sons and their sons. Until they reach the age of 35–40, the men are considered boys – no matter how many children they have fathered.

2.2. Gender

2.2.1. *The Swazi hierarchy*

Within the Swazi culture, male honour is seen through the amount of public respect that is given to the man. Areas where respect can be gained or lost are: control over wives and children; productivity – based on yields of crops and cattle; attendance at public functions where one is seen to be contributing to the community. This position of status is vital to the man, and to his ranking within the community. Typical of all hierarchical states is the position of women – on the bottom rung of the ladder. Only albinos, the physically disabled and homosexuals (Curle 2012:240) are lower.⁶

2.2.2. *The position of women and children*

To the traditional Swazi, marriage is primarily a union between families (*kuhlanganisa bukhoti*) (Van Schalkwyk 2006:181). The coming together of the two families also brings with it the payment of a ‘Bride Price’ (*Lobola*).

⁶ The *de jure* equality of all persons in terms of the 2005 Constitution is recognised; however, the *de facto* reality falls far short of those lofty ideals.

This payment is clouded with controversy between the traditional and modernist view. In the eyes of many, the exchange of *Lobola* is said to signify *kutsenga sisu* (literally - the purchase of the uterus) (Women and Law 1998:175–176). The modernist view of the practice of *kulobola* is that it ‘perpetuates the subordination of women by vesting rights in someone else, a man in his capacity as a father, a husband, brother, uncle or son’ (181).

2.2.3. The impact of Western culture

In their study, Gorodnichenko and Roland compare the individualistic culture of the West to the collectivist approach of the Eastern and African worldviews. Whilst their study focusses on the long-term economical outworking in the two approaches, the study also highlights the differences and pros and cons of both views. Essentially, collectivist culture encourages only individual behaviour in which you are constantly aware of how others are viewing you, which is not the case in an individualist culture. People from individualistic cultures also have higher needs for ‘self-enhancement’ and have a stronger self-serving bias than people from collectivist cultures (n.d.:13).

Curle, in his 2009 study, identified this self-serving bias being inculcated into Swazi men during their time away from the stringent disciplines of traditional Swazi culture as they worked in the South African gold mines. Bereft of those disciplines and subjected to inhumane conditions, the men turned to alcohol and practising sex with multiple concurrent partners outside of marriage to relieve their physical and emotional needs (Lourie as cited by Schoofs 1999:¶6). The men returned home where they wreaked havoc in what was once a morally stable Swazi patriarchal cultural system, when their new individualism mixed with their traditional patriarch, male-dominant worldview in a potentially destructive cocktail (Curle 2009:35).

An unfortunate by-product of this adoption of a Western life-style is the tendency of young girls to follow a practice that is very similar to prostitution (Curle 2012:111). They do this in an attempt to survive and advance out of poverty and acquire the trappings of a Western life-style. Unfortunately, there is a high prevalence of this within Southern Africa and the Kingdom⁷ in particular. While the girls deny that they are ‘women of the street’, their actions can easily be misinterpreted. As their ‘blessers’ or ‘sugar daddies’ supply all their various financial needs, euphemisms such as ‘Minister of Education’, ‘Minister of Transport’, and ‘Minister of Tourism’ are used to describe the men who fund their advanced schooling, transport and vacation requirements - regardless of the consequence (Kaufman and Stavrou 2002:15) of HIV – possibly followed by AIDS.

Out of the need for young women to extricate themselves from poverty in times of severe economic conditions, a further patriarchalistic trait arose. As Western free love and equality culture made inroads into Swazi life, some men have chosen, albeit subconsciously, to exploit the feministic attack on the paradigm to their own sexual advantage. As women seek out equality between the genders, men are able to negotiate sex without commitment - bringing about a new set of living arrangements – cohabitation or a series of multiple-partner ‘one night stands’.

The result of this has been an increase in families headed by a single mother with no support from the father. A case in point is found in the

⁷ In 2006, the CIA rated Swaziland as having the 5th highest percentage (69%) of countries with people who live under the poverty datum line (CIA 2011). Compare this with Libya’s 7.4% (Africa. The Good News 2011:¶4).

Industrial Town of Matsapha. Here many⁸ women employed in the textile factories live in single rooms together with the children they have borne - the result of being unable to live without a second income⁹ derived from transactional sex (Fakudze 2009:24–25; Selvester, Cambaco, Bié and Mndzebele 2012:26).

Thus, what was once a morally stable Swazi patriarchal cultural system is giving way to one in which men have so little respect for women that they will coerce 15-year-old girls into having penetrative sex (Curle 2012:112). Within traditional Swazi culture, such acts would have brought about serious sanction (Dlamini and Whelpton 2013:113–116). Today, because the checks and balances described by Curle (2012:81–83) are no longer in place, there is no cultural penalty (Dlamini and Whelpton 2013:114; 178; 239).

2.2.4. The resultant change in gender roles in traditional culture

This distancing from traditional custom has brought with it serious tensions against the monarchy. When His Majesty King Mswati III was enthroned in 1986, he announced to the people: ‘A king is a king by his people’ (Matsebula 1988:325). In so doing, he was espousing the spirit of *uBuntu*. Consciously or unconsciously, *iNgwenyama* understood the principle that *de facto* legitimate authority (Curle 2012:188–198) is given to him by the people. Such authority cannot be imposed through coercion from the top. Similarly, a husband and father’s *de facto* authority can only be voluntarily granted to him by his wife and family

⁸ No statistics exist that enumerate how many of the women live in this impoverished position. As such, the subject has been identified for further research. Current estimates are in the thousands.

⁹ The garment sector in which these women work is ‘characterised by “low wages” unhealthy and unsafe workplaces, substantial and often compulsory overtime’ (Bond 2006:63).

(Curle 2012:218). Yet this legitimate authority is blatantly missing throughout much of Swaziland, where men beat women for issues as small as burning a meal (Swaziland Central Statistics Office 2007:16).

2.3. Race

By law (Constitution 2005:¶20), there is no classification by race, of Swazi citizens. Thus, whether one is black or white, one is seen to be a ‘child’¹⁰ of His Majesty. All Swazis, of whatever ethnic grouping, are subject to a local chief who must take ‘ownership’ of the person and that person must swear loyalty to His Majesty and the local chief.¹¹ Notwithstanding the *de jure* position of equality there are subtle distinctions between ethnic groupings within the hierarchical ladder.

Race differences in Swaziland are clouded by (1) class issues based on an economical variance between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’; (2) historical subjugation of Swazis by whites; (3) unlawful acquisition of citizenship by non-Swazis; (4) historical cattle rustling issues on the Kingdom’s eastern border.

2.3.1. Economic variances

Economically, while Swazi citizens are protected from foreign competition, racial job discrimination is the order of the day. This has two underlying causes: (1) Class and (2) Education. With regard to class, Dlaminis (with royal affiliations) are preferred above everyone

¹⁰ In the Swazi hierarchical understanding, those who fall within a man’s sphere of protection are his ‘children’. Thus, every Swazi citizen is seen as a child of the King.

¹¹ ‘A person who is ordinarily resident in Swaziland and has been so resident for a period of at least ten years and whose application is supported by a Chief after consultation with *bandlancane* or supported by three reputable citizens may be registered as a citizen.’ (Constitution 2005:¶ 45(3))

else; then other Swazis; and finally, Shangaans. This also impacts the level of education, as the higher one's class the greater is one's ability to afford a decent education and to obtain a degree.¹²

2.3.2. Whites

Apart from the economic variables which have been achieved through personal effort resulting in economically acquired (*lizinga*) status, there does also seem to be growing antagonism to the 'light skinned' Swazis. Much of this can be seen to emanate from the subjugation of the traditional Swazis by *firstly*, the Dutch, who annexed large portions of Swaziland through 'Concessions'; *secondly*, the British, who taxed the Swazi men for just owning a hut, and *thirdly*, the Afrikaners, who embroiled the Kingdom in South Africa's apartheid struggle (Dlamini, Dlamini, Hlatjwayo and Mabuza 2012:12–13).

2.3.3. Illegal citizenship

Illegal citizenship is rapidly becoming a problem. At issue is the fact that only Swazi citizens may legally own land (Constitution 2005:¶211). Since land is becoming a limited resource, the subject of land ownership is coming to the fore. For persons wanting to do business within the borders, this has serious legal and financial issues. Thus, a number of people are resorting to unlawful or devious means to accomplish this end through the acquisition of citizenship. Here, the focus is substantially on persons of Asian descent (Dlamini 2016:15). Asians – especially those of Indian or Pakistani extraction – are seen as a threat to the Kingdom and are actively discouraged from coming to the country (Dlamini 2006:15).

¹² The same can be stated about women whose function, to a large degree, is seen as childbearing (Curle 2012:183).

2.3.4. Shangaans

For their part, Shangaans are at the bottom of the hierarchical ladder and the word ‘*Shangaan*’¹³ is often used as an expletive to denote anger or frustration towards another person (Langa 2016). This antagonism appears to have arisen out of historical disputes during the Mozambican civil war over cattle and car theft along the Mozambican border. An additional issue is the large numbers of illegal aliens who seek employment in Swaziland, thus taking away work opportunities from the locals (Irin 2003:¶5–13).

Although closely related to the SiSwati people grouping,¹⁴ Shangaans were the tribe with whom the dispute arose. The rustling dispute escalated until it reached a level of enmity. Because persons of mixed ethnic origin take their social standing from that of their father, a person whose father was Shangaan will be culturally classified as such even if the mother was of royal descent.

3. A Theological Evaluation

Regarding the patriarchalistic paradigm, Curle (2012:69) concluded:

¹³ This can include every black sub-Saharan person – Nigerians can just as easily be called ‘*liShangane*’ as a Mozambican. However, West Africans are sometimes referred to as ‘*emangangawane*’/‘*emanguza*’. Nonetheless, they share ‘the bottom of the barrel position’ with Shangaans (Langa 2016).

¹⁴ During the purge of people antagonistic towards the Zulus under Shaka, Shoshangane (a general of Zwide—king of a Nguni tribe operating in KwaZulu), fled north through Swaziland. He, and his followers, finally settled in Mozambique. His men found wives among the locals—among them Tsongas—and thus the Shangaan people were established (South African Tourism 2016:¶4). It can thus be said that the Shangaans and the Swazis have a common Nguni ancestry as both the Zulus and the Swazis are directly related with similar dialects.

Whether the paradigm brings in an autocratic or plutocratic rule, the patriarchalistic effect is the same. Firstly, the predatory elite take advantage of the illiterate poor in rising to power. Secondly, they gain at the expense of the poor. Thirdly, women continue to find themselves at the bottom of the economic rung. This is the true position of patriarchy.

3.1. Class

The patriarchalistic paradigm has, as its ultimate goal, the reproduction of self. ‘This goal (does) not only involve relationships between men and women, but between men and men, settlements, and entire nations in a hierarchical structured institution’ (Curle 2012:35).

3.1.1. *Oligarchic power*

This patriarchalistic paradigm is certainly the position in Swaziland where one is confronted by a hierarchical system headed by the king (in council),¹⁵ princes, chiefs, headmen and fathers (Curle 2012:84).

Ridley contends that the historical motivation behind this ancient structure was the accumulation of wealth. ‘Not only could it buy wives directly; it could also buy “power”... Power is, roughly speaking, the ability to call upon allies to do your bidding, and that depended strictly on wealth (1993:1995)’ which often requires violence to enforce. Winters describes this kind of arrangement as ‘ruling oligarchy’ (2011:35). According to Winters, the sustainability of such an oligarchy

¹⁵ When the British government gave independence to Swaziland, it rewrote the constitution. In doing so, it acknowledged the power of His Majesty as supreme ruler (Clauses 76:1–3; 79). While the counsellors were all Members of Parliament (Matsebula 1988:241–242), in Swazi terms, the Constitution reduced their authority to being subject to the king. The Constitution was therefore voided as being unSwazi.

is dependent upon the collective – *firstly*, hiring public means of coercion; and *secondly* creating rules and mechanisms to secure the collective against any rogue oligarch who might try to turn the coercive means against the ruling oligarchy (2011:35).

Whilst the Swazi oligarchy is different from the norm, in that His Majesty is subject to the authority of the council, it can be argued that the purpose remains the same – the accumulation and maintenance of wealth for both king and council.¹⁶

3.1.2. Authority—overview

Piper and Grudem define ‘authority in general as the *right* (Matthew 8:9) and *power* (Mark 1:27; 1 Corinthians 7:37) and *responsibility* (2 Corinthians 10:8; 13:10) *to give direction to another ...* for Christians, *right* and *power* recede and *responsibility* predominates ... Authority becomes a burden to bear, not a right to assert. It is a sacred duty to discharge for the good of others. The transformation of authority (from right and power to responsibility) is most thorough in marriage. This is

¹⁶ The truth of this desire to control maintenance of wealth is borne out in the power struggle within the executive of the *Liqoqo* Council that occurred just before His Majesty Mswati III was appointed to the throne. At the centre of the controversy was the control of the immense wealth in *Tibiyo TakaNgwane* meaning ‘wealth of the nation’. Magongo writes ‘The disputes of the *Liqoqo* era have been presented as a power struggle within the ruling elite. In the words of Parks Mangena: “The fight was between themselves”. *Tibiyo Taka Ngwane* was at the nexus of the feud. The establishment and expansion of *Tibiyo*’s activities over the years had “served as the principal vehicle for capital accumulation by elements within the Swazi governing royalist alliance” in the period since independence. *Liqoqo* members were among those who allied themselves with *Tibiyo* and established close links with South African business which had managed to replace British investment and dominate the Swazi economy’ (2009:76).

why we prefer to speak of leadership and headship rather than authority' (2006:78).

This immediately poses the question: 'Where does that authority come from?' Starting with Matthew 28:18, 'all authority in Heaven and on Earth has been given to me (Jesus)'; *firstly*, it follows, all other authority is delegated; *secondly*, when one considers the manner in which Jesus' authority operates—one of servanthood (Mark 10:42–44; Greenleaf and Spears 1998; Malphurs 2003:31–48; Agosto 2005:48; Kelley 2011)—our perception is instantly widened; *thirdly*, if we 'touch (abuse) God's authority, we touch God Himself' (Nee 1998:19). Taking points two and three together, any person taking on a leadership position does so under caution (Eph 6:9; Col 4:1). This is especially true of Church leaders who will be 'held accountable for your souls' (Heb 13:7). *Finally*, the writer to the Hebrews confirms that Jesus is the 'author and perfecter of our faith' (12:2) giving us a sense that the manner in which Jesus uses power and authority is by way of creation and creativity. This origination and creativity on the part of Jesus should not be misconstrued as dominating power as modern man sees it—which is the 'ability to act or produce an effect' (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2011) or 'the exercise of continuous control over someone or something' (Louw and Nida 1988:37.16).

3.1.3. Legitimate authority

Regardless whether the State is in the form of an oligarchy or not, two fundamentals (authority to act and the ability to enforce) must be in place for effective government. However, authority can be legitimate or otherwise.

Max Weber, the 20th century philosopher, believed that there were three types of ideal (or legitimate) authority—raditional, Charismatic and

Rational-Legal (Uphoff 1989:308). This researcher concurs with Hall and Biersteker's argument that it is only when this social contract is recognised from the 'bottom-up' in the form of active, participatory submission that 'Legitimate authority' occurs.¹⁷

Most people agree that the authority of the National Party was illegitimate, yet it was able to govern South Africa for over 40 years through coercive power. The same cannot be said of the reign of Mswati III. It is generally accepted that his authority,¹⁸ and that of the council, is legitimate. Even His Majesty's detractors¹⁹ consider that the nation needs a king. However, their position is that his council should be replaced by a party political Prime Minister in whom all real

¹⁷ This would not apply to God's authority, which he possesses through the fact that he is the Creator, and humans (he created).

¹⁸ Much ill is spoken of His Majesty by persons who would wrest power from the ruling elite (Magangeni 2009). However, their words belie their Swazi nationality and understanding of its culture. Many raise the question of the illegitimacy of Mswati III's birth. From a western perspective, yes, His Majesty's parents were not married at the time of his birth nor at the time of his father (King Sobhuza II's) death. However, in Swazi culture: *firstly*, even though the marriage of his mother (Queen Ntfombi Tfwala) was not yet finalized on Sobhuza II's passing, she went through a relatively common practice of posthumous marriage; *secondly*, marriage is a process from the time of engagement (red ochre), through the birth of a child to the final consummation of Lobola which focuses on the unity of the two families (Dlamini and Whelpton 2013:180). Culturally, as one of the ancestors or 'living dead', Sobhuza's spirit was believed to be present at the time (*umtsimba*); *thirdly* legitimacy occurs on the acceptance of the father of the child as his own (Dlamini and Whelpton 2013:176–177; 240–244).

¹⁹ In his paper, Pejstrup acknowledges that his views have been coloured by his engagement with labour activists. Yet, his conclusion is that His Majesty's legitimacy is valid in the three different manners: 'a rational one that is strong due to the King's supremacy; a traditional form that is strong in this case due to conservatism and nationalism; and a charismatic form that reflects the superhuman icon the King has become' (2011:17).

authority rests, while His Majesty fills the role of a ceremonial head – effectively taking away the power of the councils.

3.1.4. The spiritual pitfalls of hierarchy

Having dealt with the issue of legitimacy, we turn to the overall position of hierarchical leadership of any description.

Theologically, God, through Samuel, warned Israel against ever wanting a king to rule over them. (1 Sam 8:10–18) Ignoring the warning from Samuel, the people got the king they wanted, anmely, Saul. As Samuel had prophesied, he and the kings that followed him took their wealth and made it their own. They led the people into war and forsook the ways of God.

In the modern world, ‘kings’ are not necessarily royalty. Self-proclaimed rulers and other autocrats, surrounded by their oligarchic councils, drain their economies for their own benefit. Unfortunately, this is not only true of politics, but this author’s opinion is that it occurs throughout the commercial world and within the Church.

What does the New Testament say to leaders, the rich and the famous? Jesus said quite a bit. ‘Whoever wants to be first must be the very last and the servant of all (Mark 9:35b); But many who are first will be last, and those who are last will be first (Mark 10:31); You know that those who are regarded the rulers of the gentiles lord it over their people, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many’ (Mark 10:42–45); ‘Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for

the Father is not in them. For everything in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - comes not from the Father but from the world' (1 John 2:15–16). Perhaps his most telling parable is that of the rich man and Lazarus (Matt 19:24). Elsewhere, he compared a camel going through the eye of a needle to the ability of a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt 19:24; Mark 10:25; Luke 18:25). Yet, the case for the rich man is not hopeless. Jesus, knowing there will always be rich, admonishes them in Luke 16:9 to 'use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings'. In a similar vein, Jesus told the rich young ruler, 'You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven' (Mark 10:21; Luke 18:22).

3.1.5. Authority is delegated

Besides wealth, class brings with it the function of authority. Jesus understood authority better than anyone. He had abandoned his eternal equality with the Father. Therefore, he understood that the source of his authority was the Father; 'the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does' (John 5:19–20). With these words, Jesus set the standard for all questions on authority and submission. Jesus knew that 'All authority in heaven and on earth' (Matt 28:18) would be given to him. This would ultimately result in his submission to human authority in the form of the Roman soldiers (John 18:11–12) the Sanhedrin (John 18:13–26), the Roman Governor (John 18:27–19:16), and Herod—the puppet king (Luke 23:7–10) as he carried out the will of the Father.

With regard to submission to governmental authority, Paul states, 'Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that

exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves' (Rom 13:1–7). These words are self-explanatory. From the words of Jesus in Matthew 28:18 and those of Paul, we understand that all authority, of whatever description, is delegated. Those in authority are cautioned that they are God's servants. As such, God can withdraw their delegated authority at any time and bring hardship to those who abuse that office. Instead, Paul calls on those in authority to empower those under them.

3.1.6. Empowerment, as opposed to dictatorship

Not only are we instructed to obey governmental authority but the instruction extends to marriage and the workplace.²⁰ The overriding commandment, whether one is in or under authority, is fundamental to a Christian understanding of authority. This researcher accepts the following interpretation of Ephesians 5:18–21 where the words in italics (participles) below are directly dependent on the verb 'be filled' (Curle 2012:204–205):

Be filled_with the Spirit,

- *speaking* to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit.¹⁹
- *singing* and *making* music from your heart to the Lord.
- *giving* thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.²⁰
- *submitting* to one another out of reverence for Christ.²¹

²⁰ Writing to the Colossians, Paul instructed those under authority to 'obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favour, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord' (3:22).

While understanding the Aristotelian House Code (Osiek and Balch 1997:119), Paul chooses a different road when confronted with a master/slave situation amongst the brethren, one of empowerment. This is practically displayed in his letter to Philemon, where he appeals to his ‘dear friend and fellow worker’ (Philemon 1:1) to release Onesimus as a ‘runaway slave’ (Callahan 1997:38; Hooker 2003:1447), and welcome him as a ‘brother in the Lord’ (Philemon 1:16). Nowhere do we find the ‘top-down’ authority that would have been warranted by someone who owed Paul his ‘very self’ (Philemon 1:19). Instead we find Paul asking his friend (Philemon 1:14; 1:19) to empower Onesimus, in the only way that would be meaningful to his humanity—his release as a slave, even offering to settle any debt that Philemon believed that he might be owed (Phil 1:18). Paul asks Philemon to do this of his own free will, even though he ‘could be bold and order’ it (Phil 1:18).

If one views authority as the ‘ability to empower’, the question that confronts the various levels of authority is: ‘How best can I empower the person under me?’ In Ephesians 4:12–16, Paul explains that the role of church leaders is to ‘equip the saints’. This is a sound business and human principle. But empowerment does not necessarily refer only to the so-called ‘equipping of the saints’. Too often, leaders stand in the path of those underneath them fearing for their own position. In doing so, they stifle their subordinates and become a cork blocking the progress of the institution. If people are equipped, they need to express their new status in a real way—not to stagnate.

To those who must submit, Paul also gave sage wisdom:

- (1) ‘Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favour when their eye is on you, but as slaves of

Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free (Eph 6:5)'.

- (2) 'Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything (Eph 5:22–23)'.
- (3) 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honour your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—"so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth" (Eph 6:1)'.

3.1.7. A practical illustration of submitting in the 'now' while living in the 'not yet'

Paul's statement on the equality of all mankind (Gal 3:26–29) would have been outlandish (and is still so) in a patriarchalistic world. However, in Ephesians 5:21—6:9, we see the fruit of Paul's 'now' but 'not yet' eschatology. In his 2012 thesis, Curle used the following illustration of Paul's belief. 'Paul's eschatology has set up a spiritual "mezzanine floor"²¹ where believers experience the "already" while awaiting the "not yet" on the "upper floor". On this "mezzanine floor" Christians live in relationship with each other and the Holy Spirit above

²¹ 'Mezzanine: an intermediate storey that projects in the form of a balcony; a low-ceilinged storey between two main stories of a building' (Merriam Webster Dictionary 2011).

the patriarchalism of the “now” on the “ground floor” (Curle 2012:166).

The mezzanine image of the ‘already-not yet’ helps the reader gain a better understanding of Paul and Peter’s eschatology. From the mezzanine floor one can interact with those on the ground floor as well as those on the upper floor. Spiritually, one can interact with those in the world - the ‘now’ (ground floor), as well being in relationship with God in the ‘not yet’ (first floor).

This image helps us understand relationships between believers outside of cultural realities. It is within this ‘mezzanine’ relationship that Ephesians 5 and 6 makes sense.

3.2. Gender

Anthropologist Steven Goldberg notes that male dominance is, and has always been, extant across the entire globe: ‘There is not, nor has there ever been, any society that even remotely failed to associate authority and leadership in suprafamilial areas with the male. There are no borderline cases’ (1993:15).

Here too, Swaziland followed the historical paradigm set out in 2.1 above,²² although with the implementation of the Swaziland 2005

²² A wife’s legal status was similar to that of a child (Numbers 30:16); a father could sell his daughter as a servant (Exod 21:7; De Vaux 1961:27); the rape of a virgin was not considered an offence punishable by death. Only on discovery, would the man be required to marry the girl and pay her father fifty shekels (Deut 22:28–29; De Vaux 1961:26). (The purpose of the punishment was not the revenge of the rape, but to recompense the loss that the father had experienced as he would not be able to extract a bride-price for the girl.) Suspected adultery by a woman was subjected to a holy curse to establish whether she was guilty of unfaithfulness. There was no corresponding treatment for suspected unfaithfulness by men (Num 5:11–31).

Constitution, women achieved *de jure*²³ (¶20), if not *de facto*, equality. This legal position is at odds with Swazi law and custom, as women fall first under the guardianship of their fathers (Dlamini and Whelpton 2013:177) and, once married, their husbands (p. 166).

Curle found that in hierarchical positioning(*sigaba*)-based cultures, women are subjugated to the status of a second-class citizen and marital power is exclusively in the hands of the man (Curle 2012:217). In this culture, influence is coercive—whether physically, financially or emotionally. Conversely ‘in the (Western) postmodern world, marital power revolves around the concept of personal power. Each spouse maximises personal resources in order to gain influence in marriage’ (Balswick 2006:64). However, as Gilder and Goldberg note: ‘males occupy the overwhelming numbers of hierarchical positions’ (Gilder 1993:64) and ‘There is not an iota of evidence that any change in social, economic, or technological factors significantly reduces the percentages of males in hierarchies. The post-modern society is virtually as patriarchal as the most primitive’ (Goldberg 1993:128) The result of this generally is that in *lizinga* (acquired socio-economic positioning)-based societies, as much as women try to compete with their spouses for the maximisation of personal resources, they will always come second.

Also noted was that the position of extreme hierarchicalists (whether through patriarchal ranking (*sigaba*) or personal achievement (*lizinga*) is scripturally groundless: firstly, by a proper reading of Genesis 1:26–3:23; secondly, because of the counter-cultural approach of Jesus; and

²³ Clause 20 (2) of the Swaziland 2005 Constitution states that ‘For the avoidance of any doubt, a person shall not be discriminated against on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, tribe, birth, creed or religion or social or economic standing, political opinion, age or disability’.

thirdly, because of Paul's belief that 'there is neither ... male nor female' (Gal 3:28).

3.3. Race

The Bible does not indicate that race was specifically a major issue²⁴ during the time of Jesus' earthly ministry apart from the tensions between the Jews and the Samaritans. Samaritans are mentioned three times in the New Testament (1) the 'Samaritan Leper' – one of ten lepers that Jesus healed, but who was the only one to return and offer thanks (Luke 17:11–19); (2) the 'Woman at the Well' where Jesus went beyond acceptable protocol to speak to a single woman and a Samaritan (John 4:1–42) and (3) the 'Good Samaritan' (Luke 10:25–37). The story of the Good Samaritan is too well-known to delve into its depths. What is important is to apply the truths of 'who is my neighbour?' to the facts of modern-day Swaziland.

If Jesus were to have set his parable in Swaziland, it is likely that the journey would have been from Mbabane to Maputo. The cast could have consisted of the victim, a white pastor, a Zionist bishop²⁵ and a Shangaan. In the telling of the story, the pastor and the bishop would have passed by on the other side while the Shangaan cared for the victim. Jesus demonstrated that it was the person who was hated the most who brought the most compassion to the situation and acted as a neighbour. One should remember that the context of this parable was one of law, where the legal scholar posed to Jesus the question 'who is

²⁴ The reality of other ethnic groups lay mainly in their class position of being a slave.

²⁵ Readers should be aware that the choices of a white pastor and a Zionist bishop are used for effect—not from any personal bias. At issue is the need to remain as close to the original story as possible.

my neighbour?’ flowing out of God’s commandment to ‘love one’s neighbour as one’s self.

With the interpretation that Jesus gave, neighbours contextually would include everyone from Princes of the Realm, ordinary citizens, to Shangaans and others at the bottom of the hierarchical ladder.

4. A Critical Review of the Church’s Position on the Patriarchalistic Culture in the Kingdom of Swaziland

Because the extreme form of patriarchalism (which incorporates the veneration of ancestors) is so deeply ingrained in the life and worldview of the Swazi - it will not easily be deculturalized.

4.1. Class

As the Church looks to the future, it must face the reality of the role that the ancestors and earthly leadership play in the life of the Swazi. Sihlongonyane argues:

By simply controlling what the Swazi nation believes, what they can do or not do according to the dominating culture of the ruling elite, the chance for its independent existence is destroyed. In this way, the nation is controlled through socialisation of what they learn and believe in within the ‘national family hierarchy.’ In Swaziland, the ‘family’ became a psychological haven that weakens the determination of people to stand and fight oppression. This, to a large extent has made “activists in the country today to face the difficult task of convincing the public that resistance to an undemocratic government is not a betrayal of cultural identity” (Salmond 1997:7) (Sihlongonyane 2003:172).

In addition, there is the continued threat of the disenfranchisement of land, where the elite can remove the right to use Swazi Nation Land, without recompense from any individual.

It should be noted that this author does not believe that regime change, as a limited number of people are pushing for, will bring about a change in the status quo. All it will do is to replace one oligarchy with another. The political leadership of Zimbabwe (and recently South Africa) bears ample support for this position.

For its part, the current regime needs to be aware of the fact that:

God established government to be His hands and feet to do the good for the people that He intends for them and that He would do for them if He had physical hands and feet, which, of course, He does not. Government officials are charged by God with operating by proxy on His behalf. God defined the quality of life He intends for every individual as “a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity” (1 Timothy 2:1–2). God defines government officials as “servants of God (Romans 13:4,6) - a servanthood that has nothing to do with what they individually may think of God. He mentions Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, and Cyrus, King of Persia, by name as “My servant” (Jeremiah 25:9; 27:6) and “My shepherd” Isaiah 44:28–45:6 before either one of them acknowledged God’s existence or mastery over their lives. (Allen 2010:163)

What should the position of the Church be? Since the Church is the Body of Christ, it is prudent to view the issues through his eyes. At the onset of his ministry here on Earth, Jesus spelled out his mission in Luke 4:18.

Since his resurrection, it has fallen on the Church to fulfil that charge. There are Christians who argue that preaching the Gospel only pertains

to the spiritual side of humanity. This view, held by many, negates the social gospel, is damned by Christ's own position in Matthew 25:31–40 and the social gospel that is spread throughout the book of Luke. Bell (2011:41) argues that one of Luke's main themes that Jesus spreads is:

a social revolution, in which the previous systems and hierarchies of clean and unclean, sinner and saved, and up and down don't mean what they used to. God is doing a new work through Jesus, calling all people to human solidarity. Everybody is a brother, a sister. Equals, children of the God who shows no favouritism. To reject this new social order was to reject Jesus.

For the poor woman in Matsapha (1.2.3), forced to sell her body for a loaf of bread, the words of Luke 4:18 take on a meaning far removed from any super-spiritual focus:

To proclaim:

Good news to the poor;	<i>A better salary than she currently earns</i>
Freedom for the prisoners	<i>The ability to live in a two bedroomed flat – one for herself and one for her children</i>
To set the oppressed free.	<i>Not being forced to work under sweatshop conditions</i>

To that poor lady, the Gospel of Jesus Christ means being able to earn sufficient wages at her place of work, so as to live without playing HIV/AIDS Russian Roulette in order to provide a meal for herself and her family. For the young man growing up in that environment, being delivered is far more than just a spiritual act – it's being given an opportunity to experience life to its fullness backed by a decent

education and sufficient food to grow up into a world filled with opportunities. To the young girl, seeking the cooling taste of a simple ice-cream, life should not be about selling her body in the restroom of a fast-food restaurant (Moahloli 2008).

What options are then open to the Church?

4.1.1. Servant leadership

Christianity is a radical belief system. Its author, to whom all authority in Heaven and Earth was given (Matt 28:18; John 17:2), washed his disciples' feet. After washing their feet, Jesus commanded his disciples (and through them every believer) to 'wash one another's feet (John 13:13–14)'.

Thus, within the Christian faith, there is no place for *sigaba* (hierarchical positioning), religious domination, or *lizinga* (acquired socio-economic positioning). There is no place for classism, sexism or racism. When the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (1 Tim 6:15) commands that we love one another as he has loved us (John 13:34), there is no place for positional 'power plays'. All that is of consequence is the Kingdom of God and its proclamation.

4.1.2. Prophetic role of the church

As the Church, we need to prophetically proclaim a Gospel that preaches *de facto* equality of all people. A gospel that (while acknowledging different functional positions) does not permit anyone to belittle, abuse or otherwise look down on others.

Samuel called David 'a man after (God's) own heart' (1 Sam 13:14; Acts 13:22). Even though David was a patriarchalistic King with the

power of life and death over any of his subjects, he chose to listen to the prophets of his time—even when those prophets brought words that spoke of God’s displeasure against him personally (2 Sam 12:7–15). David, knowing he was a ruler under caution (Curle 2012:242) repented and was forgiven – notwithstanding the consequences. Swaziland has a similar culture to that of the time of King David. When rulers, such as His Majesty Mswati III have total authority, it is vital that the prophetic voice of the Church is vibrant and not silenced. This silence may come through closeness—where Church and State are undivided. (Mzizi considered His Majesty’s close proximity to the two branches of the Zionist Church problematical (1994:65)). While it is important for the King (and the elite) to have a personal priest such as David’s Ira (2 Sam 20:26), it is equally important that they have a Nathan (as opposed to a soothsayer) who can fearlessly speak truth about issues in their lives (2 Sam 12:1–14).

4.1.3. The ancestral cultural understanding that the elite will head up the afterlife

When one considers what Jesus had to say regarding the position of leaders, the rich and the famous (2.1.6), it behoves each constituent denomination within the wider church to address its position on the beliefs of the ancestral cult.

4.2. Gender

Approximately seventy per cent of the adults in the Church (the women) are seen as ‘second-class citizens’ by the other thirty per cent (the men) (Curle 2012:239–242). This presents the Church in Swaziland

with a significant challenge where the culture subjugates all women to that of childbearer.²⁶

When a large percentage of women acknowledge that their husbands have the right to beat them (Curle 2012:240), what hope is there of impacting Swaziland with a victorious Christian worldview where ‘there is neither (white) nor (black), neither (Shangaan) nor (Dlamini Nkosi), nor is there male and female, for ... all are one in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:28)?

Unfortunately, the Church is faced by the reality that ‘people are first Swazis and secondly Christians’. (Mabuza 2016) Thus their belief is not only coloured by their culture, it is actually determined by it.

This author sees the need for radical change within, not only the Church, but also, the entire Kingdom. He further believes that change will not come without a royal standard bearer. Unless one of the senior Princes²⁷ has the courage to stand up on behalf of Swazi women and say that enough is enough, there is little hope that they will ever be treated with dignity and respect as equals.

²⁶ The payment of *emalobolo* is said to signify *kutsenga sisu* (literally—the purchase of the uterus) (Women and Law 1998:175–176).

²⁷ The argument is well taken that it is unlikely that a senior Prince would ever adopt this position. However, this author aligns the plight of poor women in Swaziland to that experienced by the slaves in the 19th century. It was only the influence of political champions like William Wilberforce and President Lincoln that brought about meaningful change. When one is voiceless, one needs a champion with influence to contend one’s cause.

4.3. Race

With the rising level of poverty and a growing lack of employment amongst the youth, discontent will also rise. Caught up in the middle of it will be the Church and its attitude towards the poor. Theologically, the Church is required to adopt a position that supports more equality for the ‘have nots’. The aspects of race conflict listed in 1.3 above require two things: (1) economic upliftment as opposed to exploitation (2) forgiveness of past atrocities as opposed to festering bitterness.

The problem that this author notes is that there are a growing number of church leaders who are adopting a ‘prosperity cult’ viewpoint.²⁸

While the cult is undergirded by the truth of sowing and reaping,²⁹ the verse in question is written within the context of judgement and forgiveness—not self-entitlement and enrichment. These are heart issues that are more important within the Kingdom than personal gain. Regrettably, this prefacing does not accompany most Churches’ emphasis on tithing.

²⁸ This consumer culture is based on people growing up determining who they are by what they can consume. The Christian gospel is quite the opposite—one’s value, whether we are rich or otherwise, is found only in Christ. People are not aware of this and pastors don’t know that when they start out. Effectively the western culture, which Swazis are buying into, is designed to programme people into buying things that they do not need through telling them what they want. (This aspect of Western culture is too involved to detail within the focus of this critique and will be dealt with a further article).

²⁹ The principle of sowing and reaping is spelt out in Luke 6:37–38. However, it should be noted that the subject of giving is prefaced by thoughts on judging and forgiving. Only after dealing with questions related to the hardness of the heart, does Jesus turn to the heart attitude of one’s generosity of spirit (as is borne out in the witness of the widow who gave an immense sum compared to her means (Mark 12:41–44; Luke 21:1–4).

Sadly, not many Church leaders are even aware of the social aspects of the Gospels. As is the case with women, it will require the standard-bearing of a senior member of the Royal Family to practically lead the way.

5. Summary

At the heart of every ism, be it classism, sexism or racism, is an underlying standpoint that “I am better than you, and therefore I will treat you accordingly.” In this article, Swaziland was chosen as a case study, not because other countries are so blessed that they are not controlled by isms, but because the isms in Swaziland are so clear cut.

Not only is the Kingdom of Swaziland clearly a Patriarchal society, but other Southern African countries are experiencing similar issues as they bow to their oligarchical super-lords. The impact of the suffering caused by this over-lordship is beginning to be felt as unbridled youths rise up without any understanding of their own culture, their own real value, and the value of women.

Clearly this is contrary to the biblical position espoused by Christ Jesus and amplified by the Apostles in their epistles.

Biblically, relationships need to be determined by their ontologically equality, as demonstrated in this author’s understanding of living on a mezzanine floor where Christians are “in this world but not of it” (John 17:14-16). Within this context, Christians are called to meet the needs of their neighbours. From this standpoint, we can extract the following Biblical truths:

- a. The definition of neighbour within a Christian context encompasses everyone—regardless of class, gender or race (2.3).
- b. Ephesians 5:21–6:9 teaches us that:
 - i. Persons in positions of headship should lay down their ‘now’ positions of patriarchalistic advantage through sacrificial ‘servant leadership’.
 - ii. Persons subject to those in leadership should lay down their ‘not yet’ positions of equality as they submit to those over them whereby the functionally superiors experience honour (2.1.7).
- c. Headship should not be interpreted as the ability to command, but the ability to empower (2.1.7).
- d. Therefore, those in leadership through function (kings, princes, chiefs, indvunas, husbands, pastors, elders and employers) should actively empower those under them. As Christians actively empower others, the needs, not only of them and their families, but also those of the Kingdom (both Christ’s and Swaziland’s) will be met.
- e. Within this understanding of functionality, it is possible for two persons to functionally have headship over the other while also being in submission. An example of this could be an elder submitting to an employer in the marketplace while having authority over the employer in the church. The situation is similar in that of a Chief and his Pastor.
- f. If headship is interpreted as the ability to empower, it follows that on occasion, the leader will either need to step up, so that the equipped person can fulfil his purpose, or step aside and find what new purpose, God is calling that leader to.

As the Church, we need to acknowledge that cultural practices that espouse abusive domination do not comply with a biblical

understanding of authority as set out in the New Testament. Unfortunately, the wider Church (which includes the Zionist Congregations) has taken the less confrontational path by adopting the world's view of male, class, and race, superiority.

It is this author's opinion that: (1) when the predatory elite take advantage of the illiterate poor in rising to power; seek personal gain at the expense of the already impoverished (2) where women continue to find themselves at the bottom of the economic rung necessitating that they sell the only commodity they have—their bodies; Then the Church is called to prophetically speak up like Mother Teresa or be found wanting in terms of Christ's standard set out in Matthew 25:31-40.

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