The Zimbabwe Council of Churches and Development in Zimbabwe

Edited by
Ezra Chitando

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Ezra Chitando
Religious Studies, Classics, and Philosophy
University of Zimbabwe
Harare, Zimbabwe

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Notes on Contributors

Tarisayi A. Chimuka (PhD) is Senior Lecturer of Philosophy at the National University of Lesotho. He teaches courses in African Philosophy, Logic and Critical Thinking. His research interests lie in the area of African Culture, Critical Thinking and Epistemology. He has published a book chapter: 1. Interrogating the Death Penalty Discourse and Its Hidden Dynamics in an African Context, in Fainos Mangena, Jonathan Chimakonam (Eds.), *The Death Penalty from an African Perspective: Views from Zimbabwean and Nigerian Philosophers* (Vernon Press, 2018).

Sophia Chirongoma (PhD) is Senior Lecturer in the Religious Studies Department at Midlands State University, Zimbabwe. She is also Academic Associate/Research Fellow at the Research Institute for Theology and Religion (RITR) in the College of Human Sciences, University of South Africa (UNISA). Her research interests and publications focus on the interface between culture, ecology, religion, health and gender justice.

Ezra Chitando (PhD) is Professor of History and Phenomenology of Religion in the Department of Religious Studies, Classics and Philosophy at the University of Zimbabwe and Theology Consultant on HIV and AIDS, World Council of Churches. His research interests include religion and development, human security, gender, HIV, climate change and others.

Jimmy Dube (PhD) is the Secretary General of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe and a lecturer at the United Theological College, Harare, Zimbabwe. His research interests include Liberation Theology, Theological Education, and the Church and Social Transformation.

Charity Manyeruke (PhD) is Professor of Political Science in the Department of Political and Administrative Studies at the University of Zimbabwe. Her research areas are Political Economy, Land Reform and Women Empowerment, International Economic Relations, the Politics of World Trade.

Molly Manyonganise holds a PhD in Biblical and Religious Studies from the University of Pretoria. She is a senior lecturer in the Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy at the Zimbabwe Open University. Her research interests comprise religion and politics, gender and religion, as well as African Christianity.

Richard S. Maposa (late) was an associate professor in the Department of Religious Studies, Classics and Philosophy at the University of Zimbabwe.

Tapiwa P. Mapuranga (PhD) is an associate professor in the Department of Religious Studies, Classics and Philosophy of the University of Zimbabwe. She offers courses on 'women and religion' and 'sociology of religion' at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Her research interests are in the areas of gender and sexualities. One of her latest publications is an edited volume, *Powered by Faith: Pentecostal Businesswomen in Harare.* Eugene (Wipf and Stock (2018).

Theresa Mugwidi is a former Midlands State University (MSU) lecturer and she now works full-time for her Congregation, the Sisters of the Infant Jesus (SJI). Her research interests include theology and development.

Ashton Murwira (PhD) is a political science lecturer in the Department of Political and Administrative Studies at the University of Zimbabwe. He is the holder of a Dphil in Peace Studies from the Durban University of Technology, South Africa. His research interests are in Peacebuilding, International Relations and Civil Societies in Peace and Governance.

Canisius Mwandayi (PhD) is a senior lecturer in the Department of Religious Studies at Midlands State University, Zvishavane, Zimbabwe. His research interests include Inculturation, Cultural Hermeneutics and Old Testament Interpretation. One of his recent chapters is "A forgiven

Sinner? Robert Mugabe and the strained Catholic relations" in Munyaradzi Mawere et al. (eds), *The End of an Era? Robert Mugabe and a Conflicting Legacy*, 2018.

Bednicho Nyoni (PhD) is a part-time lecturer at the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) in Systematic Theology, Political Theology, and African Theology. His research interests are in Systematic Theology, Political Theology, African Theology, Religion and Development, Transformative Masculinity, Religion and Sustainable Development, Gender and Sexuality, Religion and Society, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).

Munetsi Ruzivo (PhD) is Senior Lecturer in Church History in the Department of Religious Studies, Classics and Philosophy at the University of Zimbabwe. His research interests include African Christianity, Religion and Society, Civil Religion, New Religious Movements and others.

Tabona Shoko (PhD) is Professor in African Traditional Religion and Phenomenology of Religion in the Department of Religious Studies, Classics and Philosophy at the University of Zimbabwe, Harare. His areas of research interest include Religion and Development, HIV and AIDS, LGBTI, Peace and Conflict Resolution and Human Rights. One of his latest publications is Shoko, T. *'Mbiri Kuna Jesu:* Pentecostal Women's Economic Participation in Harare: The Case of Prophetic, Healing and Deliverance Ministries, in T. P. Mapuranga (ed), *Powered by Faith: Pentecostal Women's Economic Participation in Harare*, Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2018.

Joram Tarusarira (PhD) is Assistant Professor of Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding and the Director of the Centre for Religion, Conflict and Globalization at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands. His research interests include the role of religion in conflict and its transformation, religion and civil society, social movements, post-conflict reconciliation. He is the Co-editor (with Ezra Chitando) of the volume *Religion and Human Security in Africa*, (Routledge, 2019).

Solmon Zwana (PhD) is the Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe and immediate past General Secretary of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches. Zwana's research interests include Christianity and African Culture, Church and Higher Education, and Theology and Leadership.

Introduction: The Zimbabwe Council of Churches and Development in Zimbabwe

Ezra Chitando

INTRODUCTION

Whereas "religion" and "development" used to be conceptualised of as two totally separate and distinct fields of study, there is a growing awareness that these two are actually allies (Mtata 2013). The initial scepticism that religion was irrational and inimical to development has gradually been replaced by a more positive approach that recognises the potential of religion to contribute to development. Indeed, Var Beek (2000) had dubbed religion as constituting a "taboo" in reflections on development. This was largely consistent with the widely held notion that religion was/is opposed to science and development. However, there has been a significant shift since Var Beek's article. Religion has since been rehabilitated within development theory and practice. In their review of the scholarly output on religion and development, Swart and Nell (2016) refer to both "the extraordinary rise" of religion and development as a field (Swart and Nell 2016: 1) and the growth of the literary corpus that has grown to "extraordinary proportions" (Swart and Nell 2016: 2).

E. Chitando (✉)
Religious Studies, Classics, and Philosophy, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe

Unfortunately, reflections on religion and development are still at the incipient stage in Africa (see, however, the special issue of *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* Volume 72, Issue 4, 2016). This is an indictment of scholarship in Africa, given the extent to which religion (especially African Traditional Religions, Christianity and Islam) permeates all aspects of life. One would have expected African scholars of religion to have taken the lead in examining the contribution of religion to development. As with research on other areas of religion in Africa, very few African scholars have invested in reflecting on the interface between religion and development. Thus, it is disconcerting to observe that the discourse on religion and development in Africa is not being led by African scholars.

In Zimbabwe, it is vital to acknowledge the role played by churches in promoting development. Although Christianity in Zimbabwe is diverse (Verstraelen 1998), the different strands have contributed to development. The mainline churches (Catholics and Protestants), African Independent/Indigenous/Initiated/Instituted Churches (AICs) and Pentecostal churches have all contributed to development in Zimbabwe. However, this volume focuses on one umbrella body, namely, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), for closer analysis. A few chapters focus on bodies that are closely aligned to the ZCC. Contributors reflect on the extent to which the ZCC has contributed to development in Zimbabwe.

An Overview of Development in Zimbabwe

Emerging out of a brutal guerrilla war in the 1970s and attaining political independence on 18 April 1980, Zimbabwe has been popular among global South scholars. Here is one country that waged a bitter war against settler colonialism and received support from progressive forces throughout the world. The global ecumenical movement was particularly supportive, with the World Council of Churches (WCC) playing an important role through its Program to Combat Violence (PCR). Upon the attainment of independence, its Prime Minister, Robert Mugabe, proclaimed a policy of national reconciliation. The first State President, Canaan Banana, was a theologian and church leader. The stage was set for a successful and developmental state.

It is not surprising that the concepts of "development," reconciliation and nation building enjoyed a lot of currency from the early years of independence. Churches were invited to join hands with the state in the journey to reach the promised land of development. Although Mugabe's Marxist-Leninist rhetoric caused concern, with some church leaders being worried about atheism and its implications for freedom of worship, in general, there was a lot of goodwill towards the state in the early years of independence.

Mugabe's government did not disappoint in the early years of independence (*although here one must highlight the serious blot of Gukurahandi, the massacre of citizens in the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces in Zimbabwe*). The government invested heavily in education, health and other social services. Whereas the colonial state had neglected the rural areas, the government improved the general well-being of people in the rural areas, while ensuring quality service provision. It was envisaged that development would become the watchword, with church and state joining hands to achieve it. When reflecting on the meaning of "development," Moyo (1988: 380) writes:

> Development concerns people in a given society working together to raise their living standards or improve their quality of life or conditions of living. Defined theologically it concerns God's people recognizing their potential and creativity, making the best use of what God has given to them to create a new society, here and now, in which all "may have life and have it abundantly". (John 10: 10)

While Moyo's definition is quite appealing from a theological point of view, it must be conceded that scholars continue to split hairs and bicker over the meaning of "development." This concept triggers emotional responses from scholars in the global South who are keen to charge that the global North should not pretend to have reached the state of being "developed" and to foist its own definition of development on the rest of the world. Further, scholars from diverse disciplines, including economics, development studies, political science, philosophy, language and others remain divided over the meaning of the term. According to Rakodi (2012: 638),

> 'Development' is therefore not a monolithic idea with a single, universally accepted definition—understandings of and ideas about development are socially constructed by the citizens of 'developing' and 'developed' countries,

governments, development agencies, and critics. In addition, different interests within each of those groups are likely to have different views. Furthermore, ideas about what constitutes development and how to achieve it have changed in the light of experience and in response to challenges to dominant ideas and sets of policies.

In the specific case of Zimbabwe, it can be argued that with the adoption of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in 1991, the Government of Zimbabwe began to struggle to bring "abundant life" to the majority of its citizens. By the late 1990s, inflation, unemployment, political tension and other factors meant that many citizens were "no longer at ease." However, this suffering pales into insignificance when compared with the "years of drought and hunger" between 2000 and 2008. The Zimbabwean economy imploded, with many professionals going into the Diaspora. During this period, most citizens had to perfect the art of survival. The churches sought to mitigate the impact of suffering, alongside implementing their own developmental programmes.

Only the most fanatical of nationalists would maintain that Zimbabwe has achieved its development goals. The reality is that one economic blueprint after another has left citizens gasping for breath. It is important for the nation to engage in introspection and to come up with more realistic policies and strategies. This volume seeks to contribute to this process by reflecting on how the ZCC has fared in its endeavour to have a positive impact in the quest for development.

WHY FOCUS ON CHURCHES AND DEVELOPMENT?

One would ordinarily imagine that it is only the government that must be preoccupied with development. After all, it is government that is supposed to have the vision and resources to avail development. Churches are expected to be fully consumed by the quest to get as many souls to heaven; hence they must not have any business relating to development. Indeed, some political leaders in Zimbabwe have favoured such a model. They are quick to tell church leaders to retreat to their "sacred canopy" whenever they bring up issues to do with the rights, dignity and development of the people of God. Yet:

Churches play a central role in development. They motivate voluntary action and advocacy. They provide vital services to the most marginalised

and needy. They give people hope. And yet, churches themselves are also into 'development.' Like societies and individuals, churches are in a constant and necessary process of change. (James 2009: 3)

Whereas it was previously fashionable to overlook religion in discourses on development, there is a growing consensus that religion is well placed to contribute to development. Although scholars use different terms, including religion, faith-based organisations, faith institutions and others, there is a general acceptance that we need to broaden the scope when conceptualising actors who make a difference in the context of development. With the Millennium and Sustainable Development Goals providing the focus, scholars have reawakened to the urgency of understanding the contribution of the faith sector to development. Thus:

[And] many development funding agencies, national as well as multinational, such as DANIDA, NORAD, Sida, DFID, the World Bank, and various UN agencies, have formed partnerships with faith communities to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The rationale behind the belief that faith communities are vital and effective partners in international efforts to reduce poverty is their perceived closeness to poor communities and their highly motivated staff and volunteers. (Deneulin and Rakodi 2011: 45–46)

Who can forget the role of faith-based organisations in the response to HIV and AIDS? Who can overlook the role of churches in education and health in Africa? Who can ignore the voices from religions on sustainable development (Singh and Clark 2016)? It is this emerging recognition that faith is not something that is entirely inner and experiential that is contributing to the acceptance of the role of religion in development. According to Ruben (2011: 230–231),

Far less attention is usually given to the alternative view on religion as a potential driving force for overcoming poverty, enabling people to take risk and to confront the immanent conflicts forthcoming from social change. Such outward-looking approaches tend to harness people to actively involve themselves into promising pathways out of poverty. [It] considers religion as a (pooled) investment that extends substantially beyond the individual sphere and thus enables people to take appropriate risks that are associated with closer involvement in development.

Churches in Zimbabwe have contributed to development in different sectors and ways. This includes the provision of education and health, promoting peace (Bobo 2014) and national healing, addressing the rights of women, supporting income generating projects, as well as protecting the environment, advocacy for the poor and marginalised, humanitarian relief and other areas (ACT Alliance 2015). Through the coordination efforts and platforms offered by the ZCC, churches in Zimbabwe have sought to be at the forefront of efforts to bring about development.

Despite the positive rating of religion in development, one must remain cautious and balanced. Religion is clearly a positive agent in promoting development. However, it is important to accept that there have been and there are instances when religion has negated development. For example, religious fundamentalisms have curtailed women's rights (Imam 2016). In Nigeria, the Boko Haram militants have caused underdevelopment (Casmir et al. 2014). In other instances, religious leaders have become too close to political leaders and have frustrated efforts to achieve political and social transformation. Also, religion can sometimes limit young peoples' freedoms and initiative. Therefore, in reflecting on religion and development (including in this volume), it is always necessary to adopt a critical and balanced approach.

The Chapters in This Volume

In calling for the chapters, the editor placed emphasis on academic freedom and allowed contributors the latitude to express their views as freely as possible. Consequently, although different chapters are located in this composite volume, there is no pretence as to having a common view on the contribution of the ZCC to development in Zimbabwe. Thus, some authors are more positive in their evaluation of the ZCC's role in development, while others are more critical. What is more important, it could be argued, is that all these various views could be expressed in this volume.

The chapters in this volume are organised thematically. The first chapter provides the historical context in which the ZCC must located. Given the fact that the ZCC is the premier ecumenical organisation in Zimbabwe, the set of chapters that follows analyse the ZCC within an ecumenical context. This is then followed by chapters that examine the ZCC's (or ZCC-related bodies') involvement in various areas of development. The chapters at the end of the volume are reflective/constructive. They seek to

propose new ways of conceptualising religion/theology and development in Zimbabwe.

The preponderance of references to politics in the different chapters confirms the centrality of politics to development. Whereas most non-governmental organisations and faith-based organisations tend to adopt a humanitarian approach, it is clear that having a say on the politics of the country is a critical factor in development. Individual authors approached the theme of churches, politics and development from diverse positions. These different interpretations of churches, politics and development in Zimbabwe generate creative tension throughout this volume, as noted above.

In Chap. 2, Munetsi Ruzivo examines the ZCC's involvement in politics from 1980 to 2015. The ZCC has been consistent in its endeavour to level the political playing field since its inception. Ruzivo highlights how this trend continued in the period after independence. He describes the tensions in the early period after independence, as well as the call by government for the ZCC to collaborate in development. Further, he traces the ZCC's response to political developments in the 1990s and 2000s. He identifies the tensions and harmonious interaction between the ZCC and government across the different epochs. Ruzivo examines pastoral letters and responses by government and civil society to the contribution of the ZCC to political processes in the country. His chapter highlights the ZCC's role in the maturation of politics in Zimbabwe. When it is remembered that politics has definite implications for development, Ruzivo's historical focus becomes particularly important.

The ZCC is not the only ecumenical body in Zimbabwe. In order for its development work to thrive, it must collaborate effectively with other ecumenical bodies in the country. These include the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ). These three bodies come together in the Heads of Christian Denominations (HOCD) (this also includes the Union for the Development of Apostolic Churches in Zimbabwe Africa, UDACIZA, which is not covered in Manyonganise's chapter in this volume). In Chap. 3, Molly Manyonganise interrogates the nature of ecumenism in Zimbabwe and its contribution to development. She focuses mainly on the period after 2000, detailing how these bodies have sought to address the worsening social, political and economic conditions in the country. Manyonganise illustrates how these bodies have sought to address the lived realities of the citizens, alongside challenging the political elite to

become more accountable. She examines how they cooperated to map out a shared national vision in "The Zimbabwe We Want," as well as challenging abuses of state power. However, she is also critical of some of their limitations. Overall, Manyonganise demonstrates that it is only a united ecumenical movement that can bring lasting development to Zimbabwe.

Building on the theme of ecumenism, in Chap. 4 Canisius Mwandayi and Theresa Mugwidi focus on the interaction between the Catholic Church and the ZCC. Their central argument is that both the Catholics and the Protestants need to change their attitudes towards each other. When they adopt the right attitude and collaborate, they can achieve better results. Mwandayi and Mugwidi explore the historical context that has generated tension between Catholics and Protestants. However, they are convinced that by joining forces, the two can work more effectively to enhance development in Zimbabwe.

In Chap. 5, Joram Tarusarira analyses the emergence of "non-conformist" ecumenical groups that emerged due to the paralysis of the ZCC during the crisis years in Zimbabwe. He interrogates the limits of ecumenism in relation to political engagement and charges that the ZCC has not succeeded in promoting unity and cohesion. Tarusarira maintains that by withdrawing from active political engagement, the ZCC could not make a decisive contribution towards national development. He charges that the ZCC failed to implement the principles of ecumenism and ecumenics, namely, unity, dialogue, peace and reconciliation, that could provide the basis for resolving the Zimbabwean crisis. He describes how groups such as the Zimbabwe Christian Alliance (ZCA) and Churches in Manicaland (CiM) sought to contribute towards resolving the crisis. Tarusarira shows how they adopted different models and ways of working that enabled them to connect with the grassroots communities more effectively. Without glamourising these initiatives, it can be argued that they provide insights into how ecumenical bodies can contribute to development.

After the chapters on ecumenism and development, the next set of chapters consists of various case studies on the ZCC and development in Zimbabwe. In Chap. 6, and drawing from his doctoral thesis, the late Richard S. Maposa utilises insights from theology and development to examine how the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe (UCCZ), a member of the ZCC, has made a contribution to the nation. After analysing the debates on development, Maposa proceeds to describe specific projects by the UCCZ on development in Zimbabwe. One of these is the

poultry project by the women's guild and the other one is the *zadza matura* (food security) initiative. The chapter demonstrates how a specific denomination has implemented practical development programmes in a particular context.

In Chap. 7, Ashton Murwira and Charity Manyeruke focus on the ZCC's political engagement. They trace the history of ZCC's involvement in politics from the colonial to the postcolonial period. They indicate that the relations between the ZCC and the powers of the day have varied over time. For the period after independence, Murwira and Manyeruke draw attention to the ZCC's struggles in the context of polarisation. They also highlight the ZCC's role in electoral reforms, civic education and peace building. They make some pertinent recommendations regarding how the ZCC could enhance its role in development in Zimbabwe.

Often, discourses on development overlook the urgency and necessity of ethical reconstruction. In the context of rampant corruption and the absence of a guiding ethic, development efforts are futile. Tarisayi A. Chimuka reflects on the ZCC and ethical reconstruction in Chap. 8. He focuses on the meaning of ethical reconstruction, observing that it is vital for Africa to invest in this process. Chimuka argues that the ZCC has sought to contribute towards the ethical reconstruction of the nation by calling for a new society where the evils of corruption and violence would be a real scandal. He concludes by calling upon the ZCC to continue to uphold the role of promoting ethical leadership in Zimbabwe if the nation is to develop.

No real development can take place without a healthy population. Therefore, appreciating the investment in health is crucial when examining the interface between churches and development in Zimbabwe. In Chap. 9, Sophia Chirongoma analyses the role of the Zimbabwe Church Health Association (ZACH). She discusses the role of the missionaries in the provision of healthcare in the country. Further, she analyses the partnership between church hospitals and the government after independence. She maintains that during the crisis years church hospitals continued to operate when government hospitals ground to a halt. Chirongoma's chapter underscores the role of the churches in contributing to health in Zimbabwe.

Building on the focus on health as an aspect of development, Tabona Shoko and Tapiwa P. Mapuranga examine the contribution of church women's groups to the HIV and AIDS response in Chap. 9. The ZCC has played a major role in supporting church women's groups in Zimbabwe.

Shoko and Mapuranga highlight how church women's groups played a critical role in supporting people living with HIV and AIDS, particularly prior to the advent of antiretroviral therapy. They describe the churches' struggle to address HIV and AIDS, paying particular attention to the issue of sexuality. They describe the activities of various church women's groups in responding to HIV and AIDS. The chapter provides insights into the role of churches in development by focusing on the response of the churches to a specific health challenge.

Zimbabwe has witnessed a notable expansion in the tertiary and higher education sector. In particular, the period after independence has seen the growth of church-related universities. Although these church-related universities are not a product of the ZCC, it is worthwhile to critique them in the context of reflecting on the ZCC and development in Zimbabwe. In Chap. 11, Solmon Zwana analyses the emergence of church-related universities in the country. Like Chimuka in Chap. 8, Zwana approaches church-related universities from the perspective of reconstruction. He seeks to understand how these universities can contribute to development in Zimbabwe. While appreciating their significance, he also identifies some weaknesses. Zwana's contribution draws attention to the role of churches in higher education and how this contributes to development.

Development is impossible and incomplete when women are neglected. Any discussion on sustainable and meaningful development must, therefore, take women into account. In Chap. 12 Tapiwa P. Mapuranga focuses on the ZCC and the empowerment of women. After reflecting on the discourse on women's empowerment, she discusses the marginalisation of women in churches. She then describes the efforts of the ZCC to empower women. She identifies the areas of focus and identifies some of the major challenges that the ZCC has faced. Mapuranga's chapter reminds readers of the urgency of the empowerment of women in the quest for development in Zimbabwe (and everywhere else).

The last two chapters in this volume are theological reflections on the church, politics and development in Zimbabwe. In Chap. 13, Jimmy Dube recounts the history of the ZCC in the context of the prophetic mission of the Church. He maintains that during the colonial period, the organisation demonstrated exceptional courage in confronting the colonial state. The church leaders were consistent in siding with the poor and the oppressed. Dube argues that the ZCC has since muted its prophetic voice. He is convinced that it needs to recover this prophetic voice if it is to contribute to effective and sustainable development in Zimbabwe.

Greed, corruption and complete disregard for the well-being of one's neighbour have generated tension in Zimbabwe. In Chap. 14, Bednicho Nyoni proposes the theology of enough as the antidote for social ills. He is convinced that by embracing the theology of enough, Zimbabwean society can achieve sustainable development. This is a theology that equips citizens to reject rapaciousness and greed, Nyoni contends. Overall, his chapter highlights the need for the Church to equip its members, as well as the larger society, with high ethical ideals for development to occur.

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The Zimbabwe Council of Churches, Politics and Development from 1980 to 2015

Munetsi Ruzivo

INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to explore Church-State relations in independent Zimbabwe. It examines the interaction between the government and organised Christian bodies. The area of focus is on how the government sought to rally Christian representative bodies to its programmes of national reconstruction and development. At the same time, the study intends to address the response of the Christian social bodies to the government's call for partnership in development. Government and Church pronouncements will be examined in order to find out how the two related in the period under consideration. Special focus will be on the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) and where possible reference will be made to other Christian social bodies. The chapter highlights the historical context that facilitates an understanding of the ZCC's contribution to development in Zimbabwe.

M. Ruzivo (✉)
Department of Religious Studies, Classics and Philosophy, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe

Setting the Scene: Church and State in the Early Years of Independence

The Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF), the governing party at independence in 1980, evolved its own policy of religion in years leading to independence. In an interview with Sister Janice McLaughlin on ZANU PF's attitude to Marxism vis-à-vis the policy of religion in independent Zimbabwe, Robert G Mugabe, the party leader, said:

> I don't understand how the Christian Churches can be repelled by Marxism and Leninism. They may not accept what perhaps they call the ungodliness of materialism, but the basis of organising society which brings people to work together to avoid rampant individualism seems to be in harmony at least with the Catholic Church. I can't understand the Catholics saying that the basis of collective organisation is unchristian when in fact this is the manner in which they organise themselves. They work together, they live together. They do not have individual property. And this is what we precisely want to establish. (McLaughlin 1996: 321)

Mugabe's pronouncement allayed fears that once in power he would declare Zimbabwe a communist state. In events leading to the Lancaster House Constitution, religion did not feature as a contentious issue at all. The Lancaster House Constitution defined Zimbabwe as a secular state embodying religious liberty for all the citizens. In its manifesto of 1980, the ZANU PF party stated:

> The right of a person to believe in a religion is a fundamental freedom. Accordingly a ZANU PF Government will respect and promote the role of the church and avoid completely interference with the spiritual work of the church. The Church and the State must, thus feature as partners in the promotion of the welfare of human beings. (Hallencreutz 1988: 12)

The implication here was that ZANU PF was prepared to work with the churches. When Zimbabwe became independent in 1980, Mugabe's first act was to proclaim reconciliation and amnesty to all political prisoners. Those serving 18 months were released and those with longer sentences would have them slashed by half. Canaan Banana, the titular Head of State, was asked to grant the amnesty. He urged his fellow citizens to practise a new love for the nation that shunned hate. Mugabe attended an

international denominational service that left church leaders elated as they took it to be a good sign for the future of religion in the nascent nation (Montreal Gazette, 22 April 1980: 24).

The call for united effort between Church and State seems to have hit a snag in the Bishop Muzorewa camp. The Bishop accused Mugabe of organising attacks on church goers. He dismissed the new dispensation and retorted that the people were more oppressed than they were under the white minority regime. In his view, the Rhodesian Front never went into churches to drive out people from the communion table and funerals. According to him, other church leaders agreed with him but were scared to death to say it out (Glasgow Herald, July 15 1983b: 9).

There was no evidence that the Prime Minister had given such an order. The two politicians were political rivals and such tirades from the former Prime Minister were expected. Muzorewa sought to undermine Mugabe and to project him as a dangerous atheist.

Mugabe made it clear that principles of Marxism were not mutually exclusive of Christian principles. He therefore appealed to churches to become partners with the government in providing social services to the people. In September 1984 Muzorewa was released from prison (The Afro-American, September 1984: 8). The churches abroad heard the call and responded. In 1984 churches abroad combined the effort to alleviate the effects of drought in Zimbabwe. The Church World Service and the World Council of Churches raised money for this goal (Columbian Missourian Newspaper 1984: 49 May 25). Alec Smith, the son of the former Rhodesian Premier Ian Smith, arranged to raise money for Christian Care (Times Daily, 31 December 1988: 24).

David Maxwell (1995: 110) observes that the immediate challenge of the churches was to re-establish their presence in areas that they had withdrawn from due to the war. The fear was that the churches that had compromised with the old regime would be bypassed by the new regime in favour of African independent churches. However, this was hardly the case because the people of Zimbabwe had understood well the message of reconciliation by the Prime Minister. It is understood that these were simply fears of church leaders who felt guilty of betrayal. The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) for a moment seemed to have returned to its theological mandate by focusing on theological issues such as the Church and culture which were less antagonistic, not forgetting the blunder they had made by propping up the doomed Smith-Muzorewa internal settlement (Maxwell 1995: 110). Maxwell has termed this attitude self-preserving.

The backlash of the State over the great betrayal might have propelled the churches allied with the ZCC to adopt the less antagonistic attitude as they were on a weaker side whilst the State was riding on a higher moral ground. The churches came up with reconstruction programmes that were designed to see the Church as a partner of government in development and not as an antagonistic partner as in the old days of the previous regime of Ian Smith. The first President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Banana, being a pastor and a theologian, articulated a theology of the State. He had the advantage of having worked previously with the Christian Council of Rhodesia. He attended various church meetings to articulate a theology of development from the ZANU PF point of view. He, for example, patronised the Eziseni Budiriro Foundation with the purposes of articulating grassroots religious initiatives and transforming church institutions from within (Maxwell 1995: 110). It was the churches that sought to reoccupy the spaces that they had previously evacuated. Government had really nothing to do with the process of rehabilitation of the churches. Africans did not have any fear of Marxism as they could not understand how it contradicted their social life. Here, Banana was articulating what Mugabe had said in 1979 in an interview with Sister Janice McLaughlin (Mclaughlin 1996: 321).

Successive minority regimes in the country had worked closely with structured churches and the ZANU PF government was no exception as the new government did not ban churches. That the Government of Zimbabwe did not want to work with ZCC because of its chequered history is to go too far. If there was something this government needed, it was partnership with churches to help it to reconstruct the State (Maxwell 1995: 111). The ZCC was itself to blame for its complicated relations with the State. Its officials, and in particular Nyasha Watyoka, had influenced the Council to back the wrong horse. His faction continued to lead the Council after independence and at the same time he adopted an antagonistic attitude in which he accused the new government of a reign of terror over issues of over-enthusiastic ZANU PF supporters. Banana lashed out at the ZCC for adopting a wait and see attitude instead of being a partner with the State in reconstructing the country. Watyoka was eventually dismissed. His place was taken by Murombedzi Kuchera of the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe. I do not agree with Maxwell's analysis that with the departure of Watyoka the ZCC was freer in its dealings with the State. There could have been elements within the ZCC who retained their loyalty to Bishop Muzorewa. The ethnic dimension in Church and State politics can never be played down.

Churches Invited to Partner the State in Development

The new Prime Minister called upon churches to partner the government in development. It is normal in many countries that churches and civic organisations model their developmental plans along the policies laid out by the government. Mugabe's address to the Heads of Denominations should be understood in that context. The reason why Mugabe made this call was that many schools had been destroyed or vandalised during the war. In many rural areas there were few secondary schools. There existed a few elite boarding schools. There was also the need to provide safe drinking water to vast communities throughout Zimbabwe. Many communities in the rural areas were inaccessible due to the war and non-maintenance of roads. There was a need to increase the number of clinics in the rural areas. Government could not go it alone; thus, there was a need to mobilise national effort. It is true that church agencies were mobilising funds to assist Zimbabwe's reconstruction efforts. Churches abroad in partnership with ecumenical bodies in Zimbabwe raised funds to assist in the national reconstruction efforts of the Zimbabwean government. The Brother's Brother Charity organisation raised 1.2 million US dollars for Southern Africa and planned to send their representatives to assist in drought relief efforts (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 24 November 1984: 10).

Norman Thomas, who had been a United Methodist missionary in Zimbabwe and had been a member of the Christian Council of Rhodesia (CCR), observed that the Government of Zimbabwe asked the Churches' aid in helping to restore and staff the hospitals and schools. Many of them had been instituted and operated by Christian missionaries but were destroyed in the years of fighting. Thomas informs us that in the agricultural sector Mugabe had sought the expertise of the most experienced white men who had worked with the previous governments (Bulletin, 6 June 1981: 10).

The call for national reconstruction efforts was not simply targeted at the civic organisations and the churches, but at everyone in the country. The policy of national reconciliation enabled the government to call upon all people, including the churches, to participate in national reconstruction. In rural areas parents moulded bricks and transported water, river and pit sand for the construction of schools and clinics. Donors provided money for the buying of roofing materials such as planks and corrugated iron sheets or asbestos. The parents used their scotch carts to fetch water needed by the builders. Parents with expertise in roofing and building

participated in the construction of their own local schools. The ZCC, like any other church organisation, adopted a five-year developmental plan, a sure step that it heeded the State call for partnership in development.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) availed the much needed funds to ZCC to carry out developmental projects. In its report, the WCC had outlined areas that needed to be immediately looked into. Western governments were recommended by the WCC team to provide aid to areas of priority indicated by the Government of Zimbabwe. The team pointed out that the immediate priority was the acquisition of land for the resettlement of refugees and the building of infrastructure destroyed during the war. A report of the meeting of the team with relevant stakeholders pointed out that Christian Care, an arm of the ZCC, would be responsible for relief and rehabilitation. Long-term projects would be undertaken by the ZCC itself. The ZCC adopted a resolution which stated that all reconstruction aid for churches and Christian organisations for buildings and properties should be channelled through the ZCC. It was agreed that the money on disbursement would be allocated to churches that needed it for reconstruction purposes.

The ZCC priorities were to secure grants for scholarships programmes for those whose education had been greatly disturbed by the war. The ZCC appealed to the WCC to provide a total Reconstruction Aid Appeal of 5.2 million US dollars. As a Senator, Garfield Todd provided insights to the ZCC so that it could model its developmental programmes along government policies. Relations between the ZCC and the WCC were tenuous due to the fact that the WCC wished to retain the direct links with government officials that they had cultivated during the war years. This would mean close monitoring of the programmes sponsored by the ZCC.

Apart from the above tension, the ZCC had problems of its own which had to do with internal tension caused by centralisation. Watyoka wielded uncontested power. Nothing happened without him. He was the gateway to funding, scholarships and contacts with the 'high and the mighty.' Todd called for an overhaul of the whole secretariat of the ZCC. What is clear is that the donor community lacked confidence in the ZCC executive members and wanted to see it reformed and they wanted to see a person of their own in the executive council. Two German agencies clashed for an open vacancy for what would be their open post in the council. The executive council was persuaded to accept the secondment of Reverend M Stabler. The ZCC wanted to appoint their own, assisted by Reverend Stabler (Hallencreutz 1988: 159). Some

donor agencies did not channel their money through ZCC as they did not have 'their' people in the executive.

Ecumenical evangelistic campaign programmes were launched by the ZCC. At the Symposium of 16 December 1980, President Banana encouraged churches to work closely with the government. The Council moved along the path of encouraging the upholding of African values and that the Church should be a watchdog of the State. Themes of reconciliation were referred to. If the country was to have peace and reconciliation, there was need for development. Symposium speakers encouraged interaction between Christianity and African traditional religion (Hallencreutz 1988: 261). The direction of the ZCC was to raise the level of consciousness of the identity of Zimbabweans. Up to 1982 the ZCC-aligned para-church agencies and the Catholic Commission on Services and Development worked together and held joint meetings. The ZCC by 1981 had received about 5.8 million Zimbabwean dollars. The ZCC received money for its scholarship programmes. They also received money for resettlement and land redistribution programmes.

Church-State Relations in the Early Years of Independence

In the early years of independence, Banana guided the Republic of Zimbabwe's State religion. In reality, Banana was an embodiment of secular as well as religious aspirations for the alleviation of poverty for the millions of people in Zimbabwe. His view was that poverty was manufactured by the people. It was an embodiment of human decadence. Banana did not relinquish his ministerial tasks when called to do so. He assumed a new role: that of the High Priest of the nation. He frequently attended church gatherings and meetings in and outside the country. He was indeed the President theologian. When in Geneva he had been told that the ZCC was moving lethargically because it was not sure what policy of religion the new regime would pursue. This explains why he was angry at the ZCC's slow response to the government's programme of reconstruction. Upon his return he chided the ZCC for its wait and see attitude and for not moving with the changing times. According to Banana, the ZCC had not repented its sin of backing the wrong horse, namely, Abel Muzorewa (Herald in Hallencreutz 1988: 267).

The dramatic comeback of Muzorewa in the ZCC as a board member was noticed and may account for Banana's attack of ZCC after his trip to Geneva. Moreover, Muzorewa had not taken up a low profile. He kept on entertaining the foreign press, to the chagrin of Mugabe's government. Given that Muzorewa was a former Prime Minister and a Bishop and politician, his moves were always under surveillance. Accusations against the ZCC may not have been ill founded. Let us remember that Banana was a State President who was privy to security matters and could receive information from State organs on any organisation. Muzorewa's presence in the ZCC and his sympathetic elements were matters of concern to the government. Banana called upon the ZCC to put its house in order. In subsequent meetings with State functionaries it decided that the General Secretary should be replaced. It is this context that Mr. Murombedzi Kuchera became the new General Secretary. In the same year (1982) the President met Heads of Denominations to outline his policy of religion. He invited all the churches to get involved in the developmental objectives of government (Hallencreutz 1988: 268).

Tension between the ZCC and the State must be understood in the context of simmering relations between Zimbabwe's main two parties, namely, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) led by Joshua Nkomo and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) led by Mugabe in the early period of Zimbabwe's independence. In Matabeleland, Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) and Zimbabwe African National Army (ZANLA) fighters had fought running battles at Entumbane, Conemara, Ntabazinduna and Glennville and other parts of the country.

Many ZIPRA fighters defected from the Assembly points with their weapons and levels of banditry increased. In February 1982 a weapons cache in Matabeleland poisoned relations between Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo. Four cabinet ministers from Joshua Nkomo's party were expelled and two of his former military commanders were arrested to be tried for high treason. Six hundred fighters defected from the Zimbabwe National Army (CCJP & LRF 1997: 32). State reaction to small or bigger political parties and individual politicians should be considered in this context. Thus, we must situate Banana's critique of the ZCC.

The reformed ZCC came up with a project screening and development, Home and Family Ministry, Research and Programmes coordination, the Urban and Industrial Mission, Information and Communication and full-time Chaplains at the University of Zimbabwe and Development Education. With the departure of Watyoka, a new lease of life was breathed into the ZCC and a new period of ecumenical cooperation and sharing

with other ecumenical bodies in and outside the country was ushered. ZCC officials were sent to attend ecumenical meetings around the globe for its benefit. Contacts with eminent evangelical leaders such as Bishop J Dube of the Baptist Church were made. Ambrose Moyo pointed out government socialism was not against religion. Its socialist ideals were not contradictory to the gospel concern for the poor (Hallencreutz 1988: 280).

Joint steering committees were set up in 1982 in order to arrange for regional consultation conferences for churches, sharing the government's development agenda. Conferences were held in Malawi and Harare. Churches in these joint fora pledged to work closely with the government in developing the young nation. Although the conference was concerned with national development, the political situation in the southern part of the country was deteriorating rapidly. In between 1982 and 1983, 33 people had been murdered by dissidents. The Fifth Brigade was operating in Matabeleland. Nkomo had been placed under house arrest. Hundreds of people were arrested. In 1983 Catholic Bishops in March presented their concerns over the situation in Matabeleland to the Prime Minister with their letter "Reconciliation is Still Possible." In the pastoral letter, they commended the government for a good start in 1980, but were quick to point out that the government was facing the problem of dissidents that had killed, maimed and destroyed infrastructure. They were aware that they had abducted children and tourists and they stated:

> We entirely support the use of the army in a peacekeeping role. What we view with dismay are methods that have been adopted for doing so. Methods which should be firm and just have degenerated into brutality and atrocity. We censure the frightful consequences of such methods … Violent reaction against dissident activity has, to our certain knowledge, brought about the maiming and death of hundreds and hundreds of innocent people who are neither dissidents nor collaborators. We are convinced by incontrovertible evidence that many wanton atrocities and brutalities have been and are still being perpetrated. We have already forwarded such evidence to Government … These brutal methods will have the opposite effect to what the Government is intending to achieve. It seems to us that it is again the unfortunate man-in-the-middle who is being crushed in this operation more even than the dissidents or their collaborators. But one thing is certain: violence such as that being perpetrated by a certain group of the army breeds bitterness, feelings of hatred and desire for revenge, which may lead to more violence in the future. Reconciliation and unity of hearts and minds could never be achieved by crushing innocent people. 'You cannot reap figs from thistles'. (Matt 7:16) (ZCBC 1983)

The Bishops expressed concern at the Indemnity Regulations Act that was issued in July 1982. In their view, this Act would encourage soldiers to think that they were above the law. Some elements of the security forces were reported to have said that they were responsible only to the Prime Minister. Mugabe soon found an occasion to address the issue in April 1982. He outlined the Marxist-Leninist leanings of his government ideology and his belief in the working class and peasants as vanguards of the revolution. All churches were called upon to play a creative role by forming one united front with civil institutions in the national reconstruction and development of the country. Christian churches were called upon to channel the same energies they had used in confronting the Rhodesian government towards national reconstruction and development. His call was for close cooperation between Church and State. Churches were encouraged to closely follow State objectives on national development (Hallencreutz 1988: 15).

Interactions Between the Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the State in the Mid-1980s

Reverend Kuchera and other ZCC functionaries organised a series of seminars and meetings from 1983 to 1984 in which government officials were invited to outline government policy on national development. Banana addressed an organised conference on 17–19 October 1983. This was the first time that President Banana addressed the ZCC since the 1981 debacle. In his address, he emphasised that both the State and the Church were working for raising the dignity of the human person. The plea for reconciliation by Reverend Kwenda of World Vision was an indirect appeal to government to reassess the Matabeleland situation. It might have been echoing Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) concerns. Development is impossible in a society beset by conflict. The donor community was well represented (Hallencreutz 1988: 15).

The Prime Minister addressed the Heads of Denominations on 5 April 1983. He emphasised togetherness, partnership and cooperation in national reconstruction and development. He encouraged greater dialogue to ensure that church programmes were at all times in line with government development plans. He emphasised the need for well-coordinated projects so that they could relate with those of the government.

Mugabe urged churches to maintain a correct relationship with the government and to adjust to the new reality. He chided the seven Catholic Bishops whose Easter Encyclical letter accused his government of conducting a reign of terror in Matabeleland. He reminded Heads of Christian Denominations that a Senator, Mr. Paul Savage, his daughter and his wife had been murdered by a group of 30 to 40 dissidents. In his view of the harrowing murders, the government had a duty to protect all citizens from banditry (Ottawa Citizen 6 April 1983: 61). He reminded the leaders that he was not above criticism but the criticism had to be constructive.

What he did not like was the silence maintained over the killings that were done by dissidents in Matabeleland. He recognised the right of the churches to criticise him but that it be done fairly. His government officials did not take the criticism lightly. He encouraged church officials to stay out of politics. He is reported to have told journalists that Bishop Henry Karlen feared Joshua Nkomo more than God (Sarasota Herald-Tribune, 17 April 1983: 4). He called the allegations irresponsible, contrived and propagandistic and accused some churchmen of working with former Rhodesia elements. He praised the army for bringing peace to Matabeleland (Glasgow Herald, 31 March 1983a: 4).

Although the ZCC was aware of the confrontation between the Catholic Church and the State over Matabeleland massacres, they chose to remain mute over the issue. Reverend Kuchera made reference to the issue in July 1984, but no concrete steps were made to restrain the State. The silence might have been caused by the fact that the previous scuffle in 1981 and the accusation that some of their members were working with the discredited regime dissuaded them from taking any measure. In Matabeleland, Mugabe told the Bishops to stay out of politics and stop supporting the dissidents. The mute silence of the ZCC did not imply that it was doing nothing. Meetings and conferences were organised in 1984. These were designed to make sure that churches were synchronising their development plans with the government's set objectives. In order to implement its plans effectively, the ZCC focused on in-service training of church personnel in general management, financial management, stewardship, agriculture, orientation of nurses and doctors and training of communicators. In collaboration with the World Council of Churches (WCC), it organised a conference meant to discuss ways of ending Apartheid in neighbouring South Africa (Washington Afro-American, 1 October 1985: 30).

The ZCC revisited the theme of evangelism in 1984. Again, the President theologian (Banana), who had been invited to address the Urban and Industrial Mission Committee for Southern Africa, called upon the Church to dialogue with the government as it laid the foundation for its socialist philosophy. In other words, he called upon the Church to think about the inequality that existed in the nation. Reverend Sebastin Bakare, who had joined the ZCC staff, promised the State President that the ZCC was going to host conferences to discuss the issue of national ideology. One such conference was held at the University of Zimbabwe in 1984. In 1985 the Zimbabwean Speaker of Parliament informed the Southern African Christian Council Secretaries meeting that the reason Zimbabwe chose the socialist path was that it was the communist countries that had helped her to attain her independence (Hallencreutz 1988: 297). The ZCC remained silent over the violence that rocked the elections of 1985. Only the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) sent a confidential report to the Prime Minister on 23 March 1985. The report deplored the abduction of Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) officials and criticised the brutal bullying of opposition supporters and the violence which was threatening the legitimacy of the coming elections. By April, the violence had drastically subsided. The elections were characterised by intimidation and arrests of opposition supporters (Stiff 2000: 236). In the elections, ZANU PF emerged the winner. Violence by both ZANU PF and dissidents continued in Matabeleland. The ZCC remained quiet and did not chide the State for the deteriorating situation in Matabeleland. Officials of the ZCC were fully aware of what was going on.

CHURCH AND STATE RELATIONS IN THE LATE 1980S

The government came up with its five-year developmental plan, 1985–1990. The churches were expected once again to model their developmental plans along the government's five-year plans. In the same year, the World Council of Churches boosted ZCC's image by declaring that Apartheid was against the will of God. The conference called upon the Government of South Africa to lift the State of Emergency in some parts of the country. The conference made it clear that the South African Regime was illegitimate (Schenectady Gazette, 6 December 1986: 47). It was easy to talk about South Africa than to talk about Matabeleland issues. At least this is what ZCC could do, given its previous leaning towards Bishop Muzorewa.

Throughout the 1980s, churches had turned themselves into NGOs working in collaboration with the government (Bornstein 2005: 15). In the late 1980s the churches (the ZCC included) began to take interest in the democratisation of the State. International religious NGOs provided donations to further the objectives of the ZCC. Christian Care expanded its activities to all parts of the country. Christian Care collaborated with government departments in most of its outreach programmes. It collaborated with agencies from other churches in order to meet its developmental objectives. It identified churches in an area as entry points. It did assist local communities in dam construction, small irrigation schemes, building of water harvesting tanks and providing relief service to the locals. In most remote parts of the country, development work was mainly done by church-related organisations that worked or collaborated with the ZCC. The government adopted the colonial strategy of working closely with church-related organisations for the development of rural Zimbabwe. Missionaries were partners with the State in development.

After the defeat of Abel Muzorewa in 1980 and the Unity Accord of 1987 that brought the main nationalist parties, ZANU and ZAPU, together, all other political parties became less threatening to ZANU PF. The only party to threaten ZANU PF was the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) formed in 1989 by the former ZANU PF's Secretary General, Edgar Tekere. But even ZUM was eventually reduced to a nullity by ZANU PF and once again the political terrain was dominated by ZANU PF. In regional politics, Nelson Mandela had been freed from prison and South Africa was on its way to independence. Namibia got its independence with UN backing in 1990. The civil war in Mozambique came to an end in 1992. Zimbabwean forces would soon be home. In Angola and the Congo, wars were still ongoing, but even there overtures of peace were on the horizon. In 1995 Margaret Dongo had challenged the ZANU PF party which she was a part of and won against the imposed Vivian Mwashita in Sunningdale elections. The same Dongo had revealed to the war veterans the looting of the War Victims Compensation fund (Bornstein 2005).

At this point in time churches decided to induce debates on the democratisation and widening of political space by initiating pressure groups such as the Forum for Democratic Reform Trust (Forum) and the Open Forum, the former in Harare and the later in Bulawayo (Von Holdt 1992, Southern African Report: 30). The two forums consisted of clergymen, professionals and business people. The aim was to educate people about democracy and

induce people to debate about political issues In the 1990s more international NGOs came to Zimbabwe. Bornstein (2005) observes that due to the fact that the international organisations did not trust the socialist leanings of the State, aid bypassed the State, going straight to church NGOs or para-church agencies. The State was greatly weakened in terms of resources. NGOs were co-opted into the developmental programmes of the State. The implication was that the ZCC was co-opted as well and would no longer be critical of the State. But with adoption of the Structural Adjustment Programme forced on Zimbabwe by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, relations between the ZCC and the State began to be strained. The impact of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme caused the ZCC to take a position with regard to the massive retrenchments that were ongoing. Donations from the donor community made it possible for the ZCC to engage itself in policy advocacy, civic education, voter education and election monitoring. It is in this context that the Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Committee was put in place by the ZCC in 1993. Its role, according to the ZCC, was of midwifery. After the elections of 1995 the ZCC and the CCJP formed the Church/NGO Civic Education Project. This midwifery rhetoric was used to protect the ZCC from being accused of political interference by the State. At the same time, it enabled the ZCC to delve into political issues (Dorman 2002: 81). The ZCC provided the forum with space for political think tanks and aspirants to meet far from the eyes and shadows of the State security apparatus.

The ZCC worked closely with the Advocacy and Lobbying Group, civic groups and para-church agencies in mobilising people to have a say in the second version of Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) known as the Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST). The government did not cooperate with the ZCC and its partners. The ZCC lost interest as a result and its attention was turned to other pressing issues of the time. Zimbabwe was now heading for more general strikes because of the devastating effects of ESAP. The external markets had become increasingly difficult for Zimbabwe and other African countries. Government needed money to run its programmes. The world market prices for primary commodities had dropped drastically over the last decade and coupled with this was the problem of external debt (Balleis 1992: 1). The effects were chilling and many industries closed down. Many mines closed and a number of government parastatals were privatised. Balleis (1992: 11) condemned ESAP as a practice of human sacrifice to the gods of market forces.

Church-State Interactions from the Mid-1990s

One major event in the 1990s was the elections scheduled for 1995. The ZCC, as already noted, had its teams ready to observe the elections. These elections were the least contested because by then the Zimbabwe United Movement (ZUM) had greatly weakened as had the Forum party. The United African National Council (UANC), ZANU Ndonga and ZUM tried to contest the elections as the United Parties (UP), but they boycotted at the last minute. In the end, only ZANU PF contested in the elections. There were complaints of ZANU PF imposing candidates in constituencies. Harare South emerged as one of the most hotly contested constituencies. Dongo challenged the election results of Harare South in which she had grappled with Vivian Mwashita. The court verdict was in her favour but she had fallen out of favour with ZANU PF leadership (http://www.margaretdongo.com//07/01/16).

ZCC's major contribution was in monitoring the elections. The ZCC was critical of the government. Encouraged by the rejection of Apartheid by South African Churches, the ZCC organised a regional conference which crafted a Kairos document for Zimbabwe in 1996. The Kairos document was meant to give the churches a platform to organise and oppose ESAP and complain about the Matabeleland crisis of the 1980s, governance issues, sexuality and youth and gender. Bishop Patrick Muchabaiwa of Mutare was the most prominent cleric in the meeting. He suggested that the document be sent to the President before its publication and circulation. He reminded his colleagues that they were a Church and not an opposition party.

In the following year, the ZCC through its lay staff convened a meeting which resulted in the formation of the National Constitutional Assembly. The ZCC and the ZCBC provided venues for such meetings. Both the ZCC and the ZCBC were indirectly connected with the formation of the opposition, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), in 1999. Meetings held under the auspices of the ZCC and the ZCBC resulted in the formation of the Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network in 2000. NGOs were encouraged to participate in voter education and election monitoring. In 1997 the ZCC withdrew from the then National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) as it had become too vocal and critical of the government. Civic groups and NGOs were mobilised by the NCA to back the move for the drafting of a new constitution for the country. Government responded by hijacking the new constitution initiative. The

Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was formed two years after the formation of the NCA, that is, the MDC was formed in 1999. In the fully drawn out tussle between the government and the NCA a new constitution draft was rejected in the referendum of 2000. This was taken as a sign of rejecting President Robert Mugabe's rule by the war veterans. Farm occupations were a consequence of this rejection (www.youtube. com/watch?v=6inYgCSZ3s4).

The MDC won 57 out of the 120 seats. This was the real opposition to ZANU PF in post-independent Zimbabwe. Farm invasions were followed by company invasions and turning rural areas into prohibited areas for the NGOs and opposition parties (Muchena 2004: 261). The years 2000–2004, in Muchena's view, were marked by excessive violence: murder torture and rape by ZANU PF supporters who, he thinks, for the most part remained loose.

In August 2001, the ZCC issued a pastoral letter which addressed the political situation, the economy, land, law and order, constitution and presidential election, HIV/AIDS and information in society. The ZCC informed the public that violence and lawlessness in the country had become endemic and therefore it felt that the issue needed to be addressed. Violence was in the form of rape, murder, torture and abductions (ZCC 2001: par. 5). On the economy, the ZCC observed that there was massive de-investment, job losses, high inflation and shortage of fuel, foreign currency and electricity (Ibid.). The government's lack of fiscal prudence and discipline was a matter of concern to the ZCC. Financial indiscipline resulted in the shrinking of the tax revenue base. Government, therefore, was called upon to be transparent on the use of the tax payer's money. On the land reform programme, the ZCC called upon the government to respect the rule of law and avoid the chaos which was characterising the resettlement programme. On the rejected constitution, the ZCC encouraged the government to allow the Zimbabwean people to dictate the pace in the writing of a new constitution which they would vote for. Finally, the ZCC called upon the government to come up with a mechanism that would enable people to have free and fair elections in a peaceful environment. The pastoral letter touched on issues such as access to information, thus enabling people in becoming informed and making informed decisions. On HIV/AIDS, the ZCC called upon government churches and community leaders to mobilise against the pandemic. It noted with concern the ever increasing numbers of orphans who were now a burden to the elderly (Ibid.).

At the political level, the observer mission comprising the All Africa Conference of Churches and the World Council of Churches fell short of proclaiming the Zimbabwean elections free and fair (https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/zimbabwean-presidential-elections-universal-transparent-fair-and-free14/01/16). Since the publication of the pastoral letter in 2001, church leaders had frantically sought to meet the President. He finally agreed to meet them in August 2003. After the meeting, Reverend Peter Nemapare and Mr. Densen Mafinyani allowed the President to lecture them on how the Church should relate to the State. Reverend Nemapare said: "We know we have a government that we must support, interact with and draw attention to concerns. Those of us who have different ideas about this country must know we have a government which listens." Mafinyani voiced the same concerns and reiterated that the Church should work closely with the State and that the Church also needs land (http://www.thestandard.co.zw/2003/08/01/werenot-part-of-this-apostasy/14/01/16). The Zimbabwe Christian Alliance (see the chapter by Tarusarira in this volume) disagreed with them and scoffed at them saying that they were not part of that apostasy. The Christian Alliance castigated Mafinyani and Reverend Nemapare as having betrayed the people and the principles of Christ which the Church stands for (Ibid.). As relations between the MDC and the ruling party ZANU PF continued to slide, officials from the ZCC, the ZCBC, the EFZ and the Heads of Christian Denominations brought representatives of the conflicting sides together in 2005.

In March of 2005 the MDC made a very strong showing in the elections, although ZANU PF emerged as the victor. The European Union (Union) condemned the elections as not free and fair. ZANU PF hegemony was slowly being challenged by the urban populace. There were fuel shortages in the country and a shortage of foreign currency. Price controls were imposed on shops and retailers. The country was experiencing food shortages. On 19 May 2005 the Chairperson of the City of Harare Commission, Sekesai Makwavarara, announced that the City of Harare in conjunction with the police would embark on a clean-up exercise code named Operation Murambatsvina or Operation Drive Out Trash. According to her, it was meant to enforce city by-laws by stopping all illegal trading, vandalism of infrastructure, touting, prostitution, stock theft and harassment of commuters by rank marshals (Herald, 19 May 2005: 5). The Operation was effected on the 25th of May in all major cities of the country. Flea markets, vending markets and illegal housing structures

were all bulldozed. Sometimes residents were forced to self-inflict punishment by destroying their own properties. Close to 700,000 people were left homeless and without any way of self-fending. Churches promptly responded to the unfolding situation. The Zimbabwe Council of Churches noted:

> The clean-up operation has resulted in untold suffering where families are left in the open air in this cold wintry weather. The misery that this operation has brought upon the affected people is unbearable. We are witnessing the total loss of livelihood for whole families for some people who were operating within the parameters of the by-law.

The EFZ chided the government for wanton destruction of property belonging to innocent people. It also criticised the government for failure to provide adequate alternatives as a form of compensation. The EFZ expressed dismay at the government's lack of due consideration towards highly vulnerable groups such as the terminally ill, the aged and all affected by HIV/AIDS. According to the EFZ, the Operation was a piecemeal and cosmetic approach to the chronic critical political, economic, social and health conditions that Zimbabweans were facing (EFZ Press Release, 9 June 2005).

Catholic Bishops registered their dismay at the Operation which was carried out without enough warning and without the government offering adequate accommodation and sources of income to the affected people. The government statement that those whose homes were demolished were supposed to go where they came from was deemed unfortunate by the Bishops because it was based on the false assumption that everyone had somewhere to go. They deprecated the use of violence by law enforcement agents (ZCBC Press Statement, 2 June 2005). This was followed by a more elaborate Lenten pastoral letter titled "The Cry of the Poor" in which the ZCBC made it clear that there was no concern for the poor and the needy in the Operation (ZCBC Pastoral Letter, 20 June 2005).

There were many questions raised as to the motives of the Operation. Was it sincere that government wanted to bring sanity to the once 'Sunshine City' of Harare? Was it a political move to debilitate the Movement for the Democratic Change? Many thought that the urban dwellers were being punished for voting for the MDC, but Mugabe said that the government wanted to carry out the Operation before the elections but felt that the MDC would feel that its supporters were being targeted in order to make

it lose the elections. In 2006 the ZCC expressed concern at the high levels of corruption, domestic and international debt, high levels of inflation, devaluation and the continuous land occupation and underutilisation of land by the new farmers (ZCC, 23 March 2006). In 2007 civil society organisations and churches and labour unions coordinated by the Christian Alliance organised the Save Zimbabwe Campaign. A prayer rally was organised in Highfield. The police stormed the grounds and arrested leaders of the opposition parties and of civil society. Morgan Tsvangirai, the MDC leader, was severely assaulted. It is this event that forced the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to appoint Thabo Mbeki as a mediator of the political crisis in Zimbabwe (ZHRNF 2010: 10). The ZCC released a press statement on the event. The ZCC said:

> The *Zimbabwe Council of Churches* (ZCC) notes with dismay the escalation of politically motivated violence countrywide that has been witnessed in the past few days especially in the Machipisa area of Highfields. This orgy of violence which can be attributed to the ban on political gatherings in Harare Metropolitan Province is provoking this ugly face of violence in the provinces, especially at this strategic moment when political parties are preparing for the 2008 Presidential Election as per our constitution. We feel that the police should have engaged all stakeholders as provided by Section 27(2)b of the Public Order And Security Act before deciding on the ban. (ZCC, 16 March 2007)

Towards the elections of 2008, the ZCC issued a press statement on 23 February 2008. The ZCC called upon the government to provide a level playing field for all political parties seeking political office. All politicians were called upon by the ZCC to exercise maturity, tolerance and power through the ballot. Law enforcement agents were also called upon to act in a non-partisan manner when applying the law. They were also called upon to safeguard property and life (ZCC, 23 February 2008). When the elections took place in 2008, it took two weeks for the results to be announced. Bishop Trevor Manhanga and Bishop Mutume discussed the issue with Justice George Chiweshe. Bishop Manhanga appealed to people to remain peaceful as he was confident that the results would be announced reflecting the wishes of the voters. They expressed their concerns over the delay of the election results. Justice Chiweshe informed them that he could not discuss the issue with the Bishops because it was before the courts (http://panafricannews.blogspot.com/2008/04/zimbabwe-news-bulletin-ministers-to.html).

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the State During the Inclusive Government and Beyond

The election results were announced on 2 May 2008. Election results showed that there was no clear-cut winner as required by law. The law required that the winner should win with a 50% plus one vote. The opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, got 47.3% and Robert Mugabe 42%.

In line with the law, a run-off was scheduled for 27 June 2008. An unprecedented degree of violence characterised the election; Tsvangirai, the opposition leader, escaped arrest by getting into the Dutch embassy but scores of his supporters were reported to have been arrested (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DbLHuKB7fcs).   He   announced   that he was pulling out of the elections, but the ZEC Chairperson, Justice George Chiweshe, informed Tsvangirai that his notice of withdrawal had no legal effect, and therefore the presidential run-off would proceed as scheduled. Widespread arrests, detentions and violence unleashed on the MDC decimated its structures. Local, regional and international bodies condemned the elections. Tsvangirai appealed to the SADC and the African Union to intervene. It is in this context that Mbeki's mediation efforts led to the Global Political Agreement (GPA) of 15 September 2008 which was signed by three parties, namely, the MDC T, ZANU PF and MDC M. The agreement paved the way for the Government of National Unity (GNU). In 2009, the ZCC in its pastoral letter to the nation pointed out that some aspects of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) had not yet been complied with, especially the appointment of Governors, and a Minister of Agriculture, the manipulation of the media by one political party, selective application of law by State agents and lack of willpower to progress in constitutional reforms. They also noted with concern the attempt to disengage from the GPA over issues of non-compliance (ZCC, 7 November 2009).

The GPA brought respite to many Zimbabweans. It brought an end to the hyperinflation and the shortage of goods and commodities in the shops. Fuel, sugar and other foodstuffs suddenly became available in the shops. Queues which had characterised Zimbabwean daily life disappeared. Market systems retained their confidence. ZANU PF and the MDC formations had to accommodate each. The ZCC and its civil society partners acknowledged the strides that had been made by the Government of National Unity (GNU). In 2009 the ZCC and its civil society partners sought ways of partnering and cooperating with the government over the issue of national healing and reconciliation. They formed the

Zimbabwe Church and Civil Society Forum. Besides engaging people on the need for setting up an infrastructure for peace framework and the inclusion of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission in the new constitution not much was achieved in reconciling the nation (www. ccsf.org.zw/areas-of-work/violence-prevention-mechanisms/articles/ towards-development-national-peace-and-0).

In 2010, the ZCC and its partners made a review of the years of the Government of National Unity. They did note the achievements that were made and the challenges that lay ahead. They particularly pointed out the stabilisation of the economy but were, however, concerned about food shortages for the majority of the people who had no access to the US dollar, the deepening widening poverty, the high unemployment rate, resurgence of political violence, school dropouts and poor service delivery in the cities and rural areas. In 2011, Bishop Levee Kadenge said that the Organ on National Healing and Reconciliation was a waste of time. In his view, it was an impediment to reconciliation since the politicians were not even committed to it. The churches, for him, had tried hard to make it work but there was no political will (http://bishopkadenge.blogspot. com/search?updated-min=2011-01-01T00:00:00%2B02:00&updated-max=2012-01-01T00:00:00%2B02:00&max-results=33). In the same year, the Heads of Christian Denominations called upon the principals to implement aspects of the GPA. They pointed out the key issues in the constitution making process and made it clear that they were willing to facilitate and support dialogue on the constitution. They expressed concern at the timing of the next coming election and called upon the security forces to avoid being partisan in the application of the law (http://relzim. org/news/46/).

In 2012, the ZCC held prayer meetings in the country and often invited politicians to speak on reconciliation. In their pastoral letter published in 2013, the ZCC took stock of the years of the GPA. The ZCC pointed out in the letter that there was a general unwillingness on the part of politicians to fulfil some aspects of the GPA such as the Organ on National Healing and Reconciliation and constitutional and media reforms. Emphasis was placed on the deterioration of local services and the pressures exerted on the family by social, economic, technological and political factors. The importance of the family, as the nucleus of society, was highlighted.

The year 2013 was an election year. The ZCC set aside the 21st of July as a day for preaching peace in all churches. In 2013, the ZCC issued

a pastoral letter with the title "*A call for peace to the nation during election season*." In it, the ZCC congratulated the President for signing into law the new constitution. Zimbabweans were encouraged to be peaceful as they approached the elections of 2013. The ZCC called it a Kairos moment meaning a time for the people of Zimbabwe to seek God's guidance as they made life changing choices (ZCC, July 17 2013). Reverend Goodwill Shana, addressing journalists in Harare on 25 July 2013, said that his organisation had received reports of violence in some parts of the country but was doing everything necessary to make sure that the situation would not resemble that of 2008. Reverend Shana said that the Heads of Christian Denominations had met the President, Mugabe, Tsvangirai and Mr. Simba Makoni, Mavambo leader (http://mg.co.za/article/2013-08-03-zimbabwe-church-leaders-call-for-dialogue-between-parties).

The ZCC deployed its election observers, local, regional and international, to all provinces of the country. When ZANU PF was emerging as winner of the elections tempers were running high and the Heads of Christian Denominations had to appeal for calm. The church leaders urged the contestants to accept the results and if aggrieved to use lawful means to seek redress (http://mg.co.za/article/2013-08-03-zimbabwe-church-leaders-call-for-dialogue-between-parties). The ZCC in fact endorsed the elections by making an argument that those who had questions regarding the results had to address them through appropriate and legal channels.

Conclusion

The ZCC has over years increasingly focused more on issues that politicians see as sensitive. Issues such as corporate governance, corruption and lack of accountability often make politicians complain that the Church is intruding into the political domain. The ZCC has been most visible during turbulent election times. It has exercised its prophetic voice by strongly censoring the State where it errs. The Church as an institution can only voice its concerns through the legal channels. The State in Zimbabwe wields immense powers as it has coercive machinery at its disposal to enforce laws or pronouncements. The ZCC power comes from its membership's massive investment in the health and education sectors, ownership of orphanages and other vocational training schools. More so, its members exercise enormous influence on their followers. The ZCC uses its historical and institutional influence in an attempt to mitigate the

excessive powers of the State. Let us also remember that some State functionaries are Christians who are devoted members of churches that constitute the ZCC. Sometimes influence on some State functionaries is by way of informal meetings at churches or dinner parties. In challenging the State, the ZCC has contributed towards development in Zimbabwe.

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Together for Development? The Zimbabwe Council of Churches, The Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe

Molly Manyonganise

Introduction

This chapter looks at the collaborative efforts between the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) in Zimbabwe, especially from 2000 to the time of writing. The chapter intends to bring out the ecumenical relationship that exists and how this provides the framework for development. By definition, ecumenism signifies the work towards cooperation and mutual understanding going on between different Christian churches and denominations (http://www.uppsalacathedral.com/). The assumption is that a divided Christian movement is not

M. Manyonganise (✉)
University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy, Zimbabwe Open University, Harare, Zimbabwe

able to make an effective contribution towards individual and national development. Therefore, the chapter probes the extent to which the different Christian bodies have been united in their efforts to bring sustainable development to Zimbabwe.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to give a historical background of the ecumenical church bodies, except to highlight when they were formed. The EFZ was the first to be formed in 1962, as a fellowship of churches, church-related organizations and individuals who share a desire to express unity, fellowship and combined action among churches and organizations of evangelical persuasion (Ruzivo 2008: 11). The ZCC was founded in 1964 as a fellowship of Christian denominations and church-related organizations. It emerged as a result of a largely inspired African movement to create a forum where Christian leaders from different denominations could tackle matters of their mutual concern in an increasing tense political atmosphere (Ruzivo 2008: 4). On the other hand, founded in 1969, the ZCBC is an association of local ordinaries other than the vicar generals, coadjutors, auxiliaries and other titular bishops who perform a special work entrusted to them by the Apostolic See or the Conference itself (Randolph 1978: 12 cited in Ruzivo 2008: 8).

Collaboration Between the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe

From the time of their formation, the three main church bodies had sought to operate independently of the other's influence. It is, however, important to note that the ecumenical groups were founded almost at the same time as the emergence of African nationalism. In this case, the participation in politics by the ZCBC, which was then known as the RCBC (Rhodesia Catholic Bishops Conference), and the ZCC is not surprising. The liberation movement in Zimbabwe in particular facilitated the conception of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) (Manyonganise and Chirimuuta 2011: 290). The Commission needs to be commended for documenting the injustices of the liberation struggle, as well as issuing statements and pastoral letters condemning the war atrocities (Badza 2010: 56). The Evangelical Fellowship had sought to remain quiet on the issue of politics.

After the attainment of independence, the church in Zimbabwe pulled away from the political scene and concentrated on socio-religious issues. According to Manyonganise and Chirimuuta (2011: 291), "what is most conspicuous about the church regarding politics in the post-colonial era situation is that it slowly faded out and religious leaders, as well as their followers, retired into their religious shells, where they adopted a non-involvement-in political affairs attitude."

However, the immense human suffering, deepening national crisis, attacks from the state and criticism from church members and partners in the post-2000 era pushed the Zimbabwean churches to a point where common reflections and action were the only answer (Zakeyo, http://www.academia.edu). The 2000 land reform programme plunged the nation into a political crisis which further gave birth to other crises in the economic and social fronts. For example, up to the time of writing, the failure by the government to feed the hungry population was being blamed on the 2000 land reform, though Chitando (2013: 88) is of the opinion that such blame may be turning a blind eye to the fact that even before this exercise, some people went to bed hungry. The crises were exacerbated by the 2005 *Operation Murambatsvina* in which perceived 'illegal' structures were demolished leaving hundreds of thousands of people homeless. It is *Operation Murambatsvina* that awakened the church from its slumber (Manyonganise 2013: 146). Having been confronted by the 'chaotic' land reform programme and the 'heartless' *Operation Murambatsvina*, the church leaders in Zimbabwe had to find ways of becoming politically relevant in a context where the poor and the voiceless were becoming more and more vulnerable. Thus, from the year 2000, the ZCC, ZCBC and EFZ collaborated more closely in the democratization process as well as the humanitarian crisis that was unfolding in the country.

The three church bodies will go into Zimbabwe's history books as the ones that initiated dialogue between the major political parties in the country, that is, ZANU PF and MDC. According to Chitando (http://www.osisa.org/sites/), leaders of these church bodies in the name of Patrick Mutume for ZCBC, Sebastian Bakare for ZCC and Trevor Manhanga for EFZ "held meetings with the political leaders of the two main political parties and encouraged them to shun divisive attitudes and to promote a national agenda." It was the church leaders who "pleaded with the politicians to consider the welfare of ordinary men, women and children—and they maintained that there was more to unite the different political actors than to divide them" (Chitando, Ibid.) They called for a

compromise in political ideologies and challenged the political leadership of Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) to set the stage for national reconciliation in a deeply polarized country (Muchena 2005: 265). In this case, the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) that governed Zimbabwe from 2009 to 2013 could also be attributed to the efforts of these men, alongside initiatives by other players.

In their collaborative efforts, the ecumenical bodies published quite a number of joint pastoral letters. Chitando (http://www.osisa.org/sites/) notes that the "pastoral letters were hard-hitting and exposed the falsehoods that were being peddled by the official media." According to Chitando (http://www.osisa.org/sites/), the pastoral letters were meant to encourage the government to respect civil liberties as well as to challenge the government to tackle the severe economic crisis with greater creativity than the endless printing of the local currency. What the pastoral letters confirmed from Chitando's point of view is the fact that "the mission of the church was not merely to preach the gospel, but to stand shoulder to shoulder with ordinary people in their hour of need." Such a stance was a challenge to the dominant narrative of the time which had sought to separate the political from the religious by maintaining that the church had nothing to do with politics. To this end, Manyonganise and Chirimuuta (2011: 294) contend that religion and politics are interrelated and interdependent and that the church's participation in the Zimbabwean political field is not a privilege, but a responsibility.

A Call to Conscience: Calling the Nation to Account for Its Actions

One of the collaborative efforts among the ecumenical bodies was the publication in 2005 of a joint pastoral letter entitled '*A Call to Conscience—Zimbabwe Silver Jubilee 1980–2005.*' In biblical times, jubilee was a time for freedom for those that were captive (slaves), the poor and the downtrodden. The publication of this pastoral letter was timely. It came at a time when the citizens felt that they had been enslaved by the political leadership. The pastoral letter charged that 'a house of fear' had been built in Zimbabwe and the majority of the people were afraid of speaking their mind. In their own words, the church leaders said Zimbabweans had lived each day like "prisoners in a concentration camp from the Zambezi to the Limpopo" (Ibid.: 5). Describing Zimbabwe as a prison was in contradiction of the nationalist ideological narrative which had encouraged all

Zimbabweans to ignore their sufferings and uphold their independence. They were being forced to chant slogans such as 'Zimbabwe will never be a colony again,' yet black political leaders had turned it into their personal possessions. Probably a good reminder is President Mugabe's famous "Blair keep your England and let me keep my Zimbabwe' rant." Such statements are unfortunate because they show that the politicians cease to view the nation as 'our' collective responsibility, a nation in which we are all equal regardless of our race, ethnicity or class. Hence, the need to respect even those we regard as minority groups in Zimbabwe (ZCBC, ZCC & EFZ 2005: 7).

The title of the pastoral letter presupposes a nation that had chosen to ignore its conscience. In fact, the church leaders blamed Zimbabwe's challenges to a 'death of a conscience' (Ibid.: 5). They contended that people had chosen to bury their conscience because they could no longer bear living with it, yet the same was crucial for them to choose the good from the evil.

A critical analysis of the pastoral letter shows that the ecumenical bodies had noted a variety of anomalies that were prevailing in Zimbabwean society at the time. For example, they appraised the achievements of the early years of independence which seem to have disappeared by 2005. They pointed out the vices of the day which were the deterioration of homes, schools and hospitals, the fast decline of the value of money, hunger and lack of planning for the future, among other things. They also condemned the culture of violence that had characterized Zimbabwean society. The use of violence during the land reform programme, the 2002 presidential elections, the 2005 parliamentary elections and *Operation Murambatsvina* had polarized Zimbabwean society. The occurrence of such violence in post-independent Zimbabwe was proof of the fact that independence from colonial rule did not bring with it the fundamental freedoms which the Zimbabwean people yearned and are still yearning for.

In their analysis of the situation, the church bodies noted that the attainment of independence did not bring freedom. They said, "freedom has been won but it is like a parcel that is held up in customs. You know it is there but you cannot have it" (ZCBC, ZCC & EFZ 2005: 6). The above statement is very striking in that it accuses the political leadership of withholding the only thing that the liberation war was fought for, which is freedom. The other greatest challenge that Zimbabwe had was that of some people infringing on the freedom of others. In this regard, the church leaders called for accountability for the failures encountered in

Zimbabwe and warned against always blaming 'our' failures on others. They argued,

> We have to accept responsibility for the path we have walked. If we go on denying the part we played in the present failures and blaming others for our problems, we are only postponing the day of recovery. Without repentance we waste energy trying to justify our faults. We have to admit that in the assertion of our dignity we have asserted our power; in asserting our own freedom, we have trampled on the freedom of others; in safeguarding our own security we have taken away the security of others; in proclaiming our own message we have closed our ears to the message of others. Through strong-arm tactics we may have attained what we want in the short term, but by alienating other people in the process, we may eventually lose all. (ZCBC, ZCC & EFZ 2005: 6)

In this instance, the church leaders were exposing the selfishness of Zimbabwe's political leaders who blamed everybody else except themselves and desired that all the attention should be placed on them. For example, 34 years after independence, politicians continue to blame colonialism and sanctions as the major impediments to Zimbabwe's development. In this scheme, we definitely cannot blame colonialism for the Gukurahundi massacre and neither can we blame sanctions for the rampant corruption that has characterized Zimbabwean society today.

What the church leaders were doing back then in 2005 was to call on the nation to introspect and accept that as Zimbabweans, there were certain things that [we] were failing to do right, not because of any external forces, but by our failure to listen to our conscience. Thus, Mpofu (2008: 22) posits that the "pastoral letter reminded the nation to be oriented toward peace through word and action by 'listening to our conscience'" (2008: 8).

'The Zimbabwe We Want' Document

The other notable undertaking by the ecumenical church bodies was the publication of the National Vision Discussion Document (NVDD), *The Zimbabwe We Want*. From the church leaders' point of view, Zimbabwe's major challenge was that it lacked a common vision since 1890. The NVDD sought to come up with this common vision after national consultation. As one reads the document, one gets the feeling that the church leaders had managed to diagnose the real problems that Zimbabwe faced

at the time, some of which it still faces today. Chitando (http://www.osisa.org/sites/) is of the opinion that "the document undertook a penetrating and honest assessment of the achievements and failures of independent Zimbabwe. It did not spare the church from criticism and invited Zimbabweans to work towards developing a shared national vision."

While the vision of the ecumenical bodies was noble, a lot has been said about the weaknesses of the document, weaknesses which are mainly a result of the process by which it was produced. Manyonganise (2013) has undertaken a critique of the document and one of the major weaknesses of the document which she highlights is the close interaction between the church leaders and the politicians during the production of the document. In fact, the whole process seems to have been hijacked by the government of the day which then tried to impose a national vision on the people. It was the same politicians who had taken the country to where it was, and to then trust the same people to come up with a vision which would take the nation from the quagmire was like entrusting a lion with the care of its prey. The CCSF (2012: 31) argues that:

> There is a strong feeling that the NVDD process was infiltrated by the state agencies as government did not want the church to be powerful and expose its failures. Resultantly, the ownership of the document was an issue at stake, putting the church under political pressure to say statements that were not negative towards the ruling party. The document's initial message and tone was toned down to suit government perspectives, thus rendering the document of less impact.

Thus, having made a correct diagnosis of Zimbabwe's problems and suggesting a prescription for its healing, the church leaders failed to lead in the administration of their suggested prescription. They allowed the politicians to lead, which resulted in the dismal failure of the initiative. The CCSF (2012: 32) is not wrong in its analysis when it says "the NVDD process ended with its launch and there was no implementation game plan and resources to take it forward" and Reverend Kadenge (interviewed by Manyonganise 2013: 154) is correct in viewing the document as "beautiful archival material." At the launch of the document, Robert Mugabe, the President, made it clear that there were certain issues that had been raised in the document which were not to be discussed at all (Manyonganise 2013: 152). For example, he made it clear that the issue of the constitution was not negotiable. In this case, leaving politicians to dictate what was

to be tabled for discussion shows that the church leaders were not in charge of the process. With no resistance at all, the church leaders had allowed the political leadership to launch a document which they knew did not contain most of the issues they had raised before it was edited. They allowed the only moment they had to bring the politicians to account for their actions and failures to slip through the fingers. Manyonganise (2013: 151) argues that the church leadership of the ZCC, ZCBC and EFZ "lost the plot" in the process of coming up with the NVDD and left room for manipulation by the state. In other words, they ended being spectators of an initiative they had started. Hence, Zakeyo (http://www.academia.edu) argues that "a process that started with much promise was to be compromised … to appease President Mugabe." This, in Manyonganise's view, was a result of the church's failure to understand the dynamics of Zimbabwean politics (2013: 155).

There are other endeavours in which the three ecumenical bodies joined hands for the improvement of how politics was done in Zimbabwe. For example, the three were founding members of the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) and the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP). The ZCC and EFZ later withdrew from ZPP. According to CCSF (2012: 38), ZESN conducts voter education, monitors and observes elections and advocates for violence-free and fair elections and continuous electoral reforms. On the other hand, the ZPP documents all politically motivated acts of violence. In the 31 July 2013 elections, ZESN had the largest number of election observers. After the elections it produced a damning report on how the elections were conducted and refused to endorse the elections as free and fair.

The Ecumenical Voice Through the Heads of Christian Denominations

The Heads of Christian Denominations (HOCD) was formed in 2003 in which the ZCC, ZCBC and EFZ are members. This was extremely important as it provided the three church bodies with a platform to not only collaborate but present a united front which would then unanimously speak from a Christian point of view on issues they felt were affecting the general populace. The *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom* describes the HOCD as a pragmatic association of Catholics and other Christian denominations that has no spiritual or theological emphasis, which was created to enable collaboration among Christian groups and

the government, and it provides a platform for churches to speak to the government with a common voice on policy issues. For example, in 2004, the HOCD's first noticeable joint act was its fight against the introduction of the NGO bill which was meant to restrict the powers and participation of the NGOs and churches in political issues and ensure that they would not enter into politics (CCSF 2012: 5).

The HOCD has produced quite a number of pastoral letters and has issued press statements encouraging the nation not to use violence against one another and to uphold values of justice and peace. For purposes of space, I will look at two pastoral letters and one press statement. After the 29 March 2008 harmonized elections, HOCD published a pastoral letter entitled '*Concern over the Deteriorating Situation in Zimbabwe: Message from the Heads of Christian Denominations in Zimbabwe.*' The pastoral letter was published at a time when the political situation in the country was deteriorating because ZANU PF had been beaten in the parliamentary elections by the MDC-T. The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) had delayed in announcing the results of the presidential election. In Zimbabwe's rural areas and high-density urban areas, people were being beaten, killed, raped and maimed for having voted 'wrongly' in the elections.

In the pastoral letter, the church leaders in the HOCD designate themselves as the shepherds of the people. In other words, they had the responsibility of looking out for the welfare of the people. In this regard, they condemned the organized violence that was taking place. They also condemned the deterioration of the humanitarian situation by highlighting that the cost of living had skyrocketed and had gone beyond the reach of many. People were hungry and the health system had crumbled. Having noted these challenges, the HOCD encouraged the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to intervene and warned that Zimbabwe was at the brink of a genocide. It called on the government to stop the violence against opposition supporters and ZEC to release the presidential poll results. Furthermore, it urged citizens to refuse being used by politicians and to embrace political tolerance.

In February 2009, the HOCD issued a press statement on the political situation obtaining in the country at the time (http://www.kubatana.net/). In this statement, it congratulated the nation for the formation of the Inclusive Government (IG). It urged those in the IG to take cognizance of the fact that the arrangement was short term, hence the need to work hard towards the accomplishment of the goals of the IG which were,

from the point of view of the HOCD, coming up with a new constitution, granting citizens their fundamental freedoms, revamping of the economy, ensuring political participation by every citizen, the equitable distribution of land among others. The church leaders condemned the violence that was taking place after the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) and called for national reconciliation and healing.

In 2013, when the nation was preparing for the referendum and national elections, the HOCD published a pastoral letter entitled '*Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called Children of God*' (Matthew 5:9). Since Zimbabwe has always been described as a Christian country, with 80 per cent of the population claiming to be Christians, the letter is addressed to all Christians of goodwill. It reminds the nation that Zimbabwe's political terrain is characterized by political tension and violence. The church leaders revisited the political violence of 2008 and highlighted its consequences. The HOCD took its time to tell the nation what it was doing to help victims of political violence through its various arms which included church-related organizations, hospitals and the clergy. It also explained its involvement in the national healing and reconciliation programmes which were meant to bring unity and lasting peace in the country.

It is in this pastoral letter that the HOCD announced the formation of the Ecumenical Peace Observation Initiative in Zimbabwe (EPOIZ). In a statement, the HOCD said, "EPOIZ is our joint initiative which signals our intention and commitment to having a united advocacy voice and coordinated programs for monitoring and responding to violence and human rights abuses." EPOIZ has objectives which are listed as:

- To promote peace in Zimbabwe and overcome the culture of intolerance, intimidation and political violence.
- To facilitate forgiveness, national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe.

In attaining these objectives, the HOCD viewed the church as the institution which has the potential to lead in the peace efforts in Zimbabwe.

What is noticeable in the above analysis is that since its formation the HOCD has basically grappled with the same issues, issues that have to do with the opening of political space, political violence due to intolerance, improvement of the national economy, national healing and reconciliation. These are issues that continue to trouble Zimbabwe today. The nation seems to be drifting further apart, the economy is deteriorating at

an alarming speed and violence continues unabated. The ecumenical bodies need to work together more in arresting the situation before it gets out of hand.

It is also noticeable that the ecumenical bodies have been silent on the feminization of violence in Zimbabwe in most of their endeavours. Probably it is their general assumption that men and women in Zimbabwe experience violence in the same way. However, while accepting that both men and women in Zimbabwe have been victims of political violence, women have been affected more. In its pastoral letter published after the 2008 March elections, the HOCD is silent on the rampant sexual abuses that women experienced as punishment for having voted for the opposition. A report by AIDS Free World (http://www.aidsfreeworld.org) has shown how women in Zimbabwe have been victims of politically motivated rape since 2000 and how, in some instances, these rapes have resulted in women contracting the HI virus. Therefore, the church bodies need to be reminded of their responsibility of treating women's issues with the seriousness they deserve and to embrace the fact that national healing and reconciliation is possible when in its endeavours, the church prioritizes women's experiences of political violence in Zimbabwe. This, therefore, calls on the three ecumenical church networks to include women in their executive bodies. Chitando and Manyonganise (2011: 107) criticize them for their failure to recognize the importance of women, which is evidenced by the fact that their gatherings are almost always exclusive to men.

Points of Divergence

Chitando and Manyonganise (2011: 107) are of the view that "while the different church bodies have come together regularly in response to the Zimbabwean crisis, the level of ecumenical sharing and partnership still leaves a lot to be desired." There are times when one feels that the ecumenical bodies want to maintain a visible identity as individual organizations. For example, Manyonganise (2013: 152) notes that less than a year after the launch of the NVDD, the ZCBC published a pastoral letter, *God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed*, in which the bishops categorically blamed the national political leadership for the various crises the nation was going through. This is something that the three ecumenical bodies had failed to do in *The Zimbabwe We Want* document. Manyonganise (2013: 153) argues that "the pastoral letter was a reaction to the failure by the ecumenical document to blame those that were responsible for the [crises]."

However, the ZCBC pinpointed bad governance and corruption as the major weaknesses of the political leadership of that time. Chitando (2013) analyses the pastoral letter and concludes that it spoke truth to power through the use of blunt language. What the pastoral letter achieved despite its weaknesses was to suggest to the political leaders that they had lost the moral stature required to guide a modern nation-state (Chitando 2013: 88). Such an incisive analysis of the crises coming less than a year after the publication of the NVDD shows that the ZCBC was breaking ranks with its ecumenical partners. It sought to correct what the NVDD had done, that is, blaming the victims together with their victimizers for issues which they felt the victimizers should take responsibility of and account for. Manyonganise (2013: 153) criticizes the NVDD for its pietistic diagnosis of the crisis that prevailed in Zimbabwe then. She says,

> This pietistic diagnosis was not very appealing, especially when the majority of Zimbabweans knew that they had not done anything to contribute to the crisis except that they had found themselves as victims of a regime that had become insensitive to the plight of its citizens.

To always look for consensus between the church bodies would not only be naïve but unrealistic. Probably what needs to be noted is that these church bodies are bound by different doctrinal beliefs which at times may militate against always agreeing with one another. For example, Dr. Shana likened the task of getting the consensus of the three church networks to getting three elephants to dance. He further reveals that more often than not, one network feels safe to act alone without others (CCSF 2012: 44). What one gets from this revelation is the fact that despite the collaboration, each of the three church bodies is cognizant of the need to maintain an individual identity. This is particularly important if the three church bodies are to continue being relevant to their individual funders and respective constituencies. It appears that the church bodies have noted that in their ecumenical efforts, there is always a danger of one being overshadowed by the other.

CONCLUSION

The chapter has analysed the collaborative efforts of the ZCC, ZCBC and EFZ. The activities that have been carried out by the ecumenical church bodies, some of which have been discussed above, have brought to the

fore the fact that the church in Zimbabwe is a critical player in the socio-economic as well as the religio-political life of the nation. Despite attempts by politicians to silence the church, it has been shown in the above analysis that the church through the ZCC and its partners has spoken loudly against the various misdeeds of political leaders in Zimbabwe. They have condemned corruption, unaccountability, political violence, mismanagement of state resources, oppression of Zimbabwean citizens only to mention a few. The various pastoral letters published have served to show the politicians that they are not free from scrutiny. I have also shown in this chapter that the church's political participation in Zimbabwe has been full of challenges, which at times have led the ecumenical partners to break ranks and issue individual statements. On the whole, the chapter has encouraged the ZCC, ZCBC and EFZ to prioritize women's experiences of political violence in their future endeavours towards national healing and reconciliation. With greater coordination of focus and activities, the ecumenical movement can promote sustainable development in Zimbabwe. Division and lack of collaboration will frustrate this important goal. Therefore, the ecumenical movement must embrace the prayer by Jesus for unity and spearhead development efforts in the country.

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Quo vadis the Catholic Church and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches? Exploring the 'Mine Is Right' Dilemmas in the Path to Christian Unity in Zimbabwe

Canisius Mwandayi and Theresa Mugwidi

INTRODUCTION

Since the formation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948 at Amsterdam, in Netherlands, the Catholic Church has refused to enrol as a full member of the WCC, preferring rather the position of being an observer. This tendency to distance itself from other Churches characterizes the Catholic Church almost everywhere it is found. In Zimbabwe, for example, the Catholic Church has not been forthcoming to fully communion with other denominations, as evident in its distancing from other Christian bodies such as the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC). As the latter celebrated its golden jubilee, one was tempted to think every

C. Mwandayi (✉)
Department of Religious Studies, Midlands State University,
Zvishavane, Zimbabwe

T. Mugwidi
Sisters of the Infant Jesus, Gweru, Zimbabwe

denomination in Zimbabwe would see this as a grandiose occasion to celebrate unity of faith. What, however, boggles the mind is that to Catholics this may appear as not so important an event given that they are not in full communion with the ZCC. Such religious bigotry among Christian denominations, yet all claiming allegiance to Christ, has generated interest for us to examine the dilemmas of the 'mine is right' position. It is our assumption that the 'mine is right' position is the major evil bedevilling efforts towards Christian unity. Looking at the Catholic Church in particular, the questions that automatically come to one's mind are 'Till when shall the Catholic Church maintain its tendency of refraining from more active communion with other Churches?' 'Is the Church not contradicting itself by refraining when actually in one of its Official Vatican II Documents, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, it calls for the same unity among the Christian Churches?' It is the central contention of this chapter that for sustainable development to occur in Zimbabwe, the unity of the Church is critical. There is strength in unity and efforts by the ZCC and the Catholic Church to find common ground must be promoted. It is only when Churches work together that they can make more effective contributions to development.

RELATIONS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH WITH OTHER DENOMINATIONS

Prior to Vatican II (1963–1965), the Catholic Church had severed relations with other denominations. Bruised and shocked by the devastating effects of the Reformation,[1] the Catholic Church stuck its guns to the age-old axiom: *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* (outside the Church there is no salvation). Members of other denominations were made to believe that they were destined for hell by refusing to be part of the Catholic communion or after having been anathematized. Having been pressed

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[1] Reformation is the term for the religious movement which made its appearance in Western Europe in the sixteenth century, and which, while ostensibly aiming at an internal renewal of the Church, really led to a great revolt against it. It was inaugurated in Germany when Luther affixed his celebrated theses to the doors of the church at Wittenberg on 31 October 1517. The first impulse to secession was ignited by the promulgation by Leo X of an indulgence for contributions towards the building of the new St. Peter's at Rome. From Germany, the movement spread to other European countries with other reformers following in the footsteps of Martin Luther or propounding their own new ideas and doctrines.

into a corner, members of these other denominations had no other option except to counter-attack the Catholic Church in various ways, a residue we see in our times of regarding, for example, the pope as the Beast warned against in the book of *Revelations 13: 11–18.*

While holding firm to her teaching that all salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church which is his Body, Vatican II recognizes the place of non-Catholic Christians or those who have come to be generally referred to as the 'separated brethren.' As reflected in the *Decree on Ecumenism, Unitatis Redintegratio* (1964), the Church teaches:

> The children who are born into these Communities and who grow up believing in Christ cannot be accused of the sin involved in the separation, and the Catholic Church embraces upon them as brothers, with respect and affection. For men (and women) who believe in Christ and have been truly baptized, are in communion with the Catholic Church even though this communion is imperfect. The differences that exist in varying degrees between them and the Catholic Church—whether in doctrine and sometimes in discipline, or concerning the structure of the Church—do indeed create many obstacles, sometimes serious ones, to full ecclesiastical communion? The ecumenical movement is striving to overcome these obstacles. But even in spite of them it remains true that all who have been justified by faith in Baptism are members of Christ's body, and have a right to be called Christian, and so are correctly accepted as brothers by the children of the Catholic Church.

This was indeed a climbdown from the spirit of defence and counter-attack which had been ignited most particularly by the Reformation (1516–1563) and cemented by the Council of Trent (1545–1564). In opening, however, her windows to let fresh air blow in, the Church during Vatican II began to see and appreciate the value of these once anathematized Churches. Expressing further her perception of these Churches, the Church in the *Pastoral Constitution Gaudium et Spes* (1965) says:

> In addition, the Catholic Church gladly holds in high esteem the things which other Christian Churches and ecclesial communities have done or are doing cooperatively by way of achieving the same goal. At the same time, she is convinced that she can be abundantly and variously helped by the world in the matter of preparing the ground for the Gospel. This help she gains from the talents and industry of individuals and from human society as a whole.

Despite the positive move to embrace other denominations, some developments in Christianity have continuously stood as a test to the Church's commitment to what she proclaimed in the wake of Vatican II. At the time when the Church ratified its commitment to Christian unity in *Unitatis Redintegratio* (1964), efforts towards unity in the whole Christian movement had since crystallized in the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948. Naturally, one would have thought the Church should have seized her new position expressed in *Unitatis Redintegratio* as a fitting opportunity to join fully the bandwagon of the WCC, but this was not the case. Surprisingly enough, the Catholic Church maintained its position of featuring at the WCC meetings as 'mere' observers and up to the time of writing that position has not changed. Surely one would be pushed to ask: was the Catholic Church genuine when it committed itself to embracing other denominations 'as brothers [and sisters], with respect and affection'?

The Local Zimbabwean Context

The local Zimbabwean context offers opportunities for more progressive relations between the Catholic Church and other denominations. Way back in the 1960s, the Christian Church in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) saw it proper to put heads together and address issues that were affecting the nation through the formation of the Rhodesia Council of Churches (RCC) in 1964. The RCC was to become the ZCC at independence in 1980. This finds echo in Hallencreutz (1988) who argues that the RCC emerged as a result of a largely inspired African movement to create a forum where Christian leaders from different denominations could tackle matters of mutual concern in an increasing tense political atmosphere. Shedding more light on what on was obtaining then in the Christian Church of Rhodesia, Bishop Emeritus, Rt. Rev. Jonas of the Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe and former president of the ZCC, says:

> The ZCC was formed as a result of disagreements among the black and white leaders in the former Southern Rhodesian Christian Conference (SRCC) in 1964. Some white church leaders felt that it was not the duty of the Church to speak against the government on political matters. It was then decided to form another organisation called the Christian Council of Rhodesia. (Jonas cited Gundani 2001: 80)

The local Catholic Church in Zimbabwe saw this as a noble cause and so joined this Council of Churches as a full member. While the position taken by the early Christian missionaries had been that of complicity with colonial rule, the role of the churches from the 1950s onwards generally was to win back many hearts and minds of the local alienated peoples. This saw many Churches contributing in various ways towards the nationalist liberation struggle. A detailed report on the contributions of these Churches can be obtained from the works of Ian Linden (1979) and Janice McLaughlin (1996) on the Catholic Church, Ngwabi Bhebe (1999) on the Evangelical Lutheran Church and M.L. Daneel (1999) on the African Independent Churches. It needs to be noted, however, that not all Christian Churches during this period of national struggle for independence supported what African nationalists were pushing for. Churches falling under the Evangelical strand chose not to speak out against Ian Smith's regime; they rather interpreted the armed struggle in terms of the advance of communism and Russian influence (Ruzivo 2008). Such a position saw them backing the Rhodesian government as a legitimate hegemony and prayers were made for the vanquishing of 'terrorists' and safety of the Rhodesian security forces (Bhebe 1999).

The other Christian bodies in Rhodesia, that is, Rhodesia Catholic Bishops' Conference (RCBC) formed in 1969 and the Rhodesian Council of Churches (RCC), remained united in denouncing the atrocities of the Rhodesian government and continued to support the aspirations of the African nationalists until independence in 1980 and even well after independence.

Some fissures within the main body of the Zimbabwean Christian Church began to be seen from the year 2000 onwards when the political and economic stability of Zimbabwe took a sharp knock. In February 2000, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) suffered its first poll defeat when Zimbabweans rejected the new Draft Constitution which had been crafted by party loyalists. In response to the humiliation, a wave of state-sponsored political violence was unleashed on the people. War veterans in conjunction with ZANU-PF youth went on a rampage, invading mostly white-owned commercial farms, attacking farmers and workers (Zakeyo 2012). Fearing a repeat of what had happened with the Draft Constitution in February, the ZANU-PF went on a violent campaign so as not to lose again in parliamentary elections which were to be held in June the same year (Fischer cited in Zakeyo 2012). ZANU-PF

upped its violent campaign during the presidential elections which were held in 2002. In a report availed by the US Department of State, civic society organizations in Zimbabwe reported numerous incidents of beatings, abductions and assault, with more than 50 activists also being reported as killed after months of intensive political violence (Zakeyo 2012).

With the exception of the Catholic Church, the response of other Churches to this violence was very slow. Many at home as well as those who were abroad began to criticize the Church in Zimbabwe for losing its prophetic voice and remaining silent and cowardly in the face of grave human rights violations and contested rule of ZANU-PF (Zakeyo 2012). When other Christian bodies began to awaken to the calls for more action, the daunting challenge which faced them was the lack of unity, confidence and courage. The ZCC, as noted by Zakeyo (2012), was almost paralysed by a crisis of leadership and increased isolation from local and international partners. Wary of being seen to be challenging the government, the ZCC had in 1998 abruptly pulled its support from the National Constitutional Assembly, an organization that had been formed and housed at its premises (see the chapter by Ruzivo in this volume). While the ZCC had earlier taken a lead in the development of civil society, campaigns for democracy, constitutional reforms and economic justice, it had practically retreated from such work by the end of the 1990s. Thus, when the wave of political violence was unleashed on Zimbabweans, the ZCC was unprepared and failed to speak up on behalf of survivors and victims.

It was around this time when the ZCC was wary of being seen to be challenging the government that the local Catholic Bishops decided to withdraw their active involvement in the ZCC. Instead of fearing to jeopardize its relations with the government, the Catholic Church maintained its prophetic voice and took the side of the oppressed and marginalized, thus remaining consistent in its public actions for peace and democracy in the country. It felt that it had adequate resources (theological, infrastructural, human, international connections, etc.) to go it alone. From then onwards, the local Catholic Church decided to participate at the meetings of the ZCC as mere observers, more like it does at the WCC. Even later, when the ZCC awakened from its slumber during the June 2000 parliamentary elections, its commitment was not convincing enough to pull back the Catholics to more active involvement. What indirectly bolstered the new stance that had been taken by the Catholics was that the actual participation of the ZCC during the June 2000 elections was not a local initiative; it was rather more of an external push from its international

partners (Zakeyo 2012). Were it not the issue of being lobbied by its international friends, the ZCC had almost become an instrument of the government to whip other Churches into conformity with the interests of the ruling party, ZANU-PF. Such an inclination of the ZCC towards the interests of ZANU-PF is reflected even in the final assessment of the electoral process and the accompanying violence provided by the then ZCC General Secretary, Densen Mafinyane, when he said:

> We were very impressed by the dignity and maturity displayed by our voters during the election days and we would want that spirit to prevail. In the meantime we are appealing once again to all political parties (party) leaders to urge their supporters to accept the election results. (Mafinyane cited in Zakeyo 2012)

Despite signs of awakening by the ZCC to the wave of political violence, no further frantic efforts were made by the local Catholic Church to be more fully engaged in ZCC affairs, although the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference interacts with the ZCC within the Heads of Christian Denominations (HOCD). A sign of not fully pulling together though speaking almost the same language was evident even in the events leading to the harmonized elections of 2008. The ZCC issued the following statement which we cite at length:

> Government should provide a level playing field for all those seeking political office. Let justice flow like a stream and righteousness like a river that never goes dry (Amos 5:24). All political parties, candidates and their supporters to exercise maturity, tolerance and to seek power only through the ballot. To campaign in a peaceful and honourable way, shun all forms of violence, to observe and encourage peace at all times. The law enforcement agents should execute their duties in an efficient, effective and non partisan way to protect life and property. To apply the law without discrimination or favour, for God hates all forms of injustice. The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission to adhere to the SADC norms and principles and other international best practices in the conduct of our elections. The media as a major stake holder in the election process, to give objective and balanced reports and fair coverage to all political players and strive to influence and promote peace. All eligible voters should exercise their democratic right to vote. The nation to seek peace and pursue it and invite all people to come and reason together as we undertake this process of electing our representatives at different levels. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God. (Matthew 5:9) All people of faith to prayerfully promote peace, love, justice and respect for diversity. (kubatanaarchive.org)

As a sign that its voice was not part and parcel of what had been said by the ZCC, the Catholic Church went on to issue its own statement:

> Past elections have been marred by controversy and violence. This time, we urge Government, and all the contesting parties, to create a social, political and economic climate that enhances moral integrity. We urge those responsible for organizing the elections to establish a credible electoral process, whose outcome will be free and fair and with local and international recognition. The Church looks beyond political parties and derives its ethos from the eternal Kingdom of God, a kingdom of love, truth, justice, freedom and peace. The Church therefore aims to build the foundations here on earth of that Eternal Kingdom. (www.kubatanaarchive.org)

While the two Christian bodies have something in common, namely, preaching the gospel of Christ, trying to forge a relationship between them is fast becoming like an attempt to mix water and oil. Given such a scenario one is forced to further probe what is really at stake with the efforts towards fully achieving unity within Christianity. Is the Catholic Church right in maintaining its position of keeping a distance from the ZCC? Could other denominations be wrong in refusing to be bulldozed by the Catholic Church and right when they are seen spearheading their agenda with or without the Catholic Church?

Exploring the Dilemmas of the 'Mine Is Right' Position

As reflected earlier on in the discussion, the Catholic Church prior to Vatican II was largely driven by the *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* mentality in its dealings with other denominations. Vatican II fought hard to suppress this mentality but could not completely pull it off. The residue elements of such a spirit are reflected in the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, No. 14 (1964): "Hence they could not be saved who knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it." Aware that their message could be read as not far different from that of the period prior to Vatican II, the Council Fathers went further to qualify that the unevangelized yet seekers of God through the dictates of the conscience merit salvation also. *Lumen Gentium*, No. 16, (1964), spells this out well when it goes on to say,

Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience—those too may achieve eternal salvation.

While Vatican II has also taken a step further to assert that "all who have been justified by faith in Baptism are members of Christ's body, … and so are correctly accepted as brothers by the children of the Catholic Church" (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, 1964) and that Catholicism "gladly holds in high esteem the things which other Christian Churches and ecclesial communities have done or are doing cooperatively" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1965), there still appears to be a hidden feeling within Catholicism that it is 'the' Church. Notwithstanding the highly commendable position of the Catholic Church in regard to other faiths and denominations as reflected in Vatican II Documents, walking the talk still appears a great challenge to Catholicism as there is often a tendency to lean on the position of the pre-Vatican II era. While it was indeed a great move when Pope John Paul XXIII on the eve of Vatican II wrote: "I wish to open the Church's window so that we may see what is happening outside and so the world may see what is happening within" (John Paul XXIII cited in Thuburn 2014), conservatives within the Church have not been so comfortable with the wave of reforms that Vatican II brought, and hence tend to put some brakes to this reform spirit. A closer look reveals that behind such a move is the comfort some Catholics tend to take in the traditional ways of looking at the Church as well as in the traditional ways of perceiving other faiths and denominations.

While doctrinally the Catholic Church sounds very ecumenical in orientation as reflected in *Decree on Ecumenism, Unitatis Redintegratio* (1964) and in the *Pastoral Constitution Gaudium et Spes* (1965), behind such a position one can read the socially constructed 'big brother' attitude of the Church in her dealings with later established Churches which are perceived as juniors, in terms not only of history but also of having developed and refined doctrines. Generally, the big challenge facing ecumenical effort and debate is that older Churches hardly hear what the *mafikizolo* Churches ('recent Churches') have to tell them. Older Churches, in other words, are not so ready to appreciate anything from new and younger Churches, most of which are found in the global South. In addition to that, older Churches do not want to lose their identity by bowing to what

younger Churches would have said. Just as in a natural family set-up, by virtue of being older, an elder brother is usually reluctant to be corrected or taught something by his junior brother. Younger Churches have since realized this and from the look of what is obtaining on the ground, they have since resolved not to be taught what faith in Christ is but proudly and confidently continue to roll out programmes that edify their Christian faith regardless of what the Catholic Church says or thinks.

What the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe seems satisfied with for now is pushing on independently of ZCC, only making occasional appearances at ZCC meetings, just as an observer. Here and there, it collaborates with the ZCC in some projects, like when they produced the document "The Zimbabwe We Want: Towards a National Vision for Zimbabwe by the Churches of Zimbabwe" in 2006. By and large, however, the ZCC has its own operations, while the Catholic Church, on the other hand, also runs its own operations. The government of the now late President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe often took advantage of this lack of unity among Churches. As noted by Ruzivo (2008), during state functions, mainline Church leaders who were perceived to be reactionary were side-lined and Mugabe chose to rather relate with those who were less critical of his rule. This became obvious when he found solace in Nolbert Kunonga, the former Bishop of the Anglican Church. Kunonga defended Mugabe's policies in every forum where he was given the chance to speak and described him as God's messenger sent to redeem the people of Africa (Zulu 2014). Added also to the list of Mugabe's friends was the Destiny for Africa Network President, Rev. Obadiah Msindo. Despite the controlled and heavily restricted access to broadcasting, Obadiah Msindo was given a platform to air his Destiny for Africa Christian Broadcasting Network on national television and he took that chance to condemn white farmers and proclaim Mugabe as the channel chosen by God to bring prosperity and dignity to Zimbabwe (Chitando 2005).

Engaging with the Catholic Church

As a reaction to the intransigence of the Catholic Church, some pastors from younger Churches propagate and pursue doctrines and teachings which attack the former. We have, for instance, the description of the pope as the Antichrist mentioned in the Book of Revelation. A number of Protestant leaders actually viewed the pope as the Antichrist. We have, for example, Martin Luther, the leading reformist, describe the pope in the following way:

> We here are of the conviction that the papacy is the seat of the true and real Antichrist … personally I declare that I owe the Pope no other obedience than that to Antichrist. (sermon on 18 Aug 1520, cited in Johnson 2013)

Following the footsteps of Luther in propounding the same view that the pope was the Antichrist is John Calvin. He devoted an entire section of *The Institutes* to this topic (Book IV, "Of the Popish Mass"). In addressing his readers, Calvin wrote:

> Let my readers understand that I am here combating that opinion with which the Roman Antichrist and his prophets have imbued the whole world—viz. that the mass is a work by which the priest who offers Christ, and the others who in the oblation receive him, gain merit with God. (Calvin cited in Johnson 2013)

Zwingli too was no exception. Referring to the Catholic Church and the pope he wrote: "I know that in it works the might and power of the Devil, that is, of the Antichrist" (*Principle Works of Zwingli*, Vol. 7, cited in Johnson 2013). These leading reformers and others who followed them bombarded the Catholic Church in such a way that they wanted people to believe that it is a mere human institution whose origins are highly suspect. Instead of winning over the hearts and minds of Catholics to what they purported is the 'true church,' what these reformers and those who followed them have often caused is the hardening of the Catholic stance, thus further jeopardizing chances of Christian unity in the foreseen future. However, behind the attack on Catholicism is the purposive refusal by these Churches to acknowledge the inauguration of the Catholic Church by Christ and that it is the mother Church from which all other Churches split.

To salvage the situation, there is a need for commitment on both sides. The Catholic Church probably needs to realize that boasting of a long tradition is not the only fact that matters, but the experience of faith in Christ. The manifestation of the Holy Spirit in various denominations other that the Catholic Church has been used as a form of proof that the experience of faith in Christ is what matters most. The realization and admittance of the apostles at the word of Peter that the Gentiles had also received the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:13–18) should stand as a constant reminder to Catholics that God is not bound by human categories and cultures. The Catholic Church needs to open itself to the spirit with which

it ratified the call to ecumenism in *Unitatis Redintegratio*, otherwise its teachings will remain redundant. While we acknowledge and appreciate recent efforts by the Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denominations, a group made up of the ZCBC, ZCC, EFZ and the Union for the Development of Apostolic Churches (UDACIZA), in issuing a joint statement in matters of concern to the nation, like, for example, when they called for a seven-year political Sabbath, more needs to be done towards achieving greater unity.

As for the younger Churches, instead of just being on the defensive, they need to tap something from the experience of the Catholic Church which has been in existence since the inception of Christianity by Christ during the first century AD. One thing they need to keep in mind is that no matter how they shout and tease the Catholic Church, its seniority in terms of history is a fact which no person or historian can afford to ignore. Just as even in a family set-up, no matter how a younger brother/sister surpasses the elder brother in wisdom or any other material pursuit in this world, the elder brother/sister cannot relinquish his or her position of being an elder in the family and the junior as junior in that family set-up.

Conclusion

Considering the way the ZCC has stuck to its goal of creating a forum where Christian leaders from different denominations can tackle matters of mutual concern in volatile political situations, not ignoring of course the time it has not been that proactive, it indeed sounds justifiable for the organization to be celebrating its golden jubilee after walking such a journey. However, while there is every reason to celebrate, there is an urgent need to find ways of unifying all Christian Churches in Zimbabwe. The nature of the prevailing political, social and economic situation in Zimbabwe demands that Churches speak with one voice. Such a voice has been lacking as the different Christian bodies in Zimbabwe, namely, the ZCC, the ZCBC and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), all appear to be singing from different podiums. Drawing a lesson from the gospels, we hear that a house divided against itself is bound to fail (Matthew 12:25) and this possibly answers why the Christian Church in Zimbabwe is failing to deliver lasting solutions to Zimbabwe's problems. The Catholic Church, on one side, is called upon to review and possibly renew its full membership with the ZCC and cease to be just a mere observer in matters pertaining to the ZCC. Other Churches too are called upon to desist from

trying to be referees of the Christian faith and stick to the core business, which is to preach the gospel of Christ and be the voice of the voiceless, given the political and economic uncertainty that hangs over Zimbabwe. They too need to guard against being stooges of the government of the day and always remember that they have a duty to be the 'salt' and 'light' of the world (Mt.5:13–16; Philippians 2:14–16). United Christians are better placed to achieve development.

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The Zimbabwe Council of Churches and 'Crisis' Ecumenical Groups

Joram Tarusarira

Introduction

This chapter discusses the dynamics of the relationship between the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) and what shall be referred to as 'crisis' ecumenical groups in Zimbabwe. Crisis ecumenical groups are defined as those groups that seek to rally Christians across doctrinal divides in pursuit of broader socio-economic and political objectives in the context of a crisis-ridden Zimbabwe. The chapter notes that while the ZCC was not a political body, its formation was prompted by the desire to address the political crises that had befallen Zimbabwe against a non-responsive Southern Rhodesian Christian Council during the colonial era in Rhodesia. Addressing social justice became a key task of the ZCC since its formation. On that basis, this chapter seeks to investigate the extent to which the ZCC has lived up to that responsibility. It takes a sociological approach in examining how religious structures function and are positioned to address crises within given contexts and seeks to examine the relevance of ecumenism during times of crises. From that vantage point, it

J. Tarusarira (✉)
Centre for Religion, Conflict and Globalisation, University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands

examines how the ZCC as an institution has operated over time and how its structures have been enabling it in responding to the socio-economic and political crisis in Zimbabwe. The chapter argues and concludes that the ZCC as an ecumenical body has not been spared the limitations of ecumenical institutions, especially when faced with socio-economic and political crises. Consequently, crisis ecumenical groups emerged to fill the gap to facilitate transformation. The limitations of the ZCC and the consequent emergence of crisis ecumenical groups is, however, not meant to argue that ecumenism should be discarded. The emergence of crisis groups which conglomerate ecumenically affirms its [ecumenism] strategic position. But the ecumenical agencies can be more effective if they can change and reform, to adopt new strategies and tactics relevant to the needs of the times.

FORMATION OF THE ZIMBABWE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AND ITS POLITICAL CONNOTATIONS

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) was founded in 1964 with the following objectives: 'increasing mutual understanding and to develop more effective ecumenical witness and action on local, national and international level; to foster close unity through joint action and service, and by ecumenical studies in faith and order, life and work, to encourage reunion of the denominations, to stimulate and facilitate development of evangelistic and sustainable development programmes' (Verstraelen 1998: 5; Hallencreutz 1988: 56). The churches belong to the Protestant tradition, with some being African Independent Churches. The ZCC has specialised units such as Justice, Peace, and Reconciliation, Church and Development, Leadership Development and Ecumenical University Chaplaincy (ibid.). While the formation of the Christian Council of Rhodesia (CCR), which subsequently became the ZCC, was defined in religious and ecumenical terms, it had political connotations as well. It was formed due to a disagreement between black and white leaders in the former Southern Rhodesia Christian Council (SRCC). Some white church leaders felt it was not the duty of the church to speak against government on political matters. The Council emerged as largely an African-inspired movement to create a forum where Church leaders from different denominations could tackle matters of mutual concern in an increasingly tense political situation. Its significant activities then include condemnation of

the Unilateral Declaration of Independence and opposition to the racist Land Tenure Act of 1970 (Ruzivo 2008: 4–5; Hallencreutz 1988: 60). As this chapter shows, it seems that the longer the ZCC has lived, the more it has lost its political memories and as a result has become less inclined to, less able to change and reform, to adopt new strategies and tactics, and hence the emergence of new ecumenical groups. To understand how effective the ZCC has been structurally, it is illuminating to outline the general structure of religious organisations and how that influences their effectiveness in the public sphere.

Religious Structures

The institutional structure of religion and how these structures function influences its role in the public sphere (Marty and Moore 2000: 73–127). Institutional structure refers to the characterisation of religious groups as ecumenical agencies, denominations, congregations, special interest groups and networks. In this chapter, I will focus on ecumenical agencies, special interest groups and networks because they represent the structures under discussion, namely, the ZCC and the 'crises' ecumenical groups. The hypothesis is that flexible structures have a greater transformative potential to play a prophetic role and facilitate social change in times of crisis. The majority of official churches are often restrained by their own internal bureaucracies. They are also constrained by cosier relationships with state power or with the economically and politically powerful elites; hence 'unofficial' interventions are more likely to contribute to dealing with political crises (see Tarusarira and Ganiel 2012).

Ecumenical agencies are inspired by the ecumenical movement. The ecumenical movement is the quest of Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican and most Protestant churches for reconciliation and restoration of their visible unity in faith, sacramental life and witness in the world, against a backdrop of divided churches. It is traceable to the early decades of the twentieth century. The World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910 opened the eyes of many to the tragedy of disunity and competition among churches. Characteristic of the ecumenical movement and important for the argument of this chapter is that the ecumenical movement has always been dominated by the representatives who happen to be the leaders of the churches represented. By the fourth century the word *oikoumene* (the inhabited world) from which the word ecumenical is derived referred to Ecumenical Councils, composed of bishops and other

theologians who gathered in particular cities and at certain times to address issues of Christian faith that needed attention to enhance the unity of the Christians. This understanding has persisted and in recent times the word refers to those meetings and councils bringing together the representatives of various Christian churches. Ecumenism should not be confused with interdenominational or interconfessional, which have normally been used to describe relationships among Protestants (Fitzgerald 2004: 2–4). Ecumenical agencies are often the preserve of high-ranking officials and theologians. They are not readily accessible to the grassroots people (Ganiel 2008: 26). They normally speak through pastoral statements couched in high intellectual and theological language which is divorced from and unintelligible to the grassroots ordinary people. While carrying authority, 'their pronouncements may be quite remote in sentiment and theology from what one finds in local churches and its actual authority to effect change is limited' (Marty and Moore 2000: 78).

In relation to political conflict and ecumenism, the Irish School of Ecumenics has developed 'Ecumenics' as a field of study. It argues that this is about more than Christian unity, but a multidisciplinary field of study concerned with dialogue, peace and reconciliation. It has three strands: intra-Christian (inter-denominational), inter-religious and international peace and reconciliation. David Ford (2008: 18) states that the concept of 'ecumenics' is distinct in that it 'combines the inter-church, the inter-faith and the tasks of reconciliation and peacemaking in the whole of society … Since the term in origin refers to the whole inhabited world, there is no philological reason to limit it to Christians.' This vantage point allows for the deployment of the sociological features of ecumenism beyond the quest for unity strictly between Catholics and Protestants which is often the tendency to include intra-church and interdenominational/interconfessional unity. This approach is useful in examining the extent to which interdenominational or interconfessional unity or lack of it has impacted on churches' response to the Zimbabwean crisis, without us being entangled in terminological intricacies.

Religious special interest groups and networks are established to address particular issues. They publicise their work in the public sphere. They draw supporters from various denominations, and claim to speak on their behalf. This chapter argues that they are more responsive to issues on the ground than ecumenical groups and denominations. They are prophetic by design, dynamic and changing, constantly adjusting their message and methods to be more effective. They are fluid and marked by pooling of

resources, personnel and ideas. By virtue of this, they have a better chance to be transformative and prophetic. This is further strengthened by their willingness to work with secular civil society organisations (Ganiel 2008: 28), because they have specific goals to accomplish, and are not focused on doctrines.

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the Limitations of Ecumenism

The ecumenical movement believes that the divisions of churches are a scandal and impediment to the implementation of the Christian message. They have contributed to divisions among peoples and nations. Hence the search for the unity of Christians is not simply for mutual toleration of differences or voluntary cooperation. Rather, it is a sign of hope in contexts of conflict, divisions, polarisation and crises such as post-colonial Zimbabwe, especially in the last two decades. Hence 'for the churches to come divided to a broken world is to undermine their credibility when they claim to have ministry of universal unity and reconciliation' (Fitzgerald 2004: 5–7). Unfortunately, the churches in Zimbabwe seem to have lived up to the old and cynical remark that 'the churches will say and do anything about unity except unite'.

The ZCC has been characterised by divisions and polarisation, undue hierarchy, bureaucracy, co-option and elitism whose attendant challenge is alienation of the lay and ordinary people. This in part is traceable to the training institutions of the leadership such as the United Theological College which are not spared the ills of ethnicity, regionalism, denominationalism and historical backgrounds (Zwana 2008: 292; Matikiti 2009: 11). This makes the churches susceptible to co-option, silence and non-responsive to the crisis in Zimbabwe. These limitations have also compromised the key characteristics of ecumenics which are vital in dealing with crises, namely, dialogue, peace and reconciliation. In 1980, after being convinced of the role it had played during the liberation struggle, the ZCC left the realm of politics to the politicians and concentrated on supplementing government programmes. This proved a disastrous error of judgement which drew the churches close to the state, incapacitating them to be prophetic and speak truth to power. The ZCC, for instance, was conspicuous by its silence during the Gukurahundi period in the early 1980s when the government tried to deal with the so-called dissident

problem in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces resulting in the death of an estimated 20,000 people.

In post-colonial times, the state constantly reminded churches, unions and organisations of the importance of inclusion as the route to peace and prosperity. This strategy got organisations such as the ZCC to accept the benefits of inclusion and the cosy relationship with the state. When the Private Voluntary Organizations Act (PVO Act), for instance, was introduced to monitor and control activities of NGOs, the then ZCC Secretary General saw no reason to resist the move. He said, 'I am not really very worried about it … the basic welfare operations will remain the same … so I am not going to spend my time and energy trying to look at the dots and full stops … what difference does it make?' (Dorman 2003: 847; see Chitando 2005: 220–239).

When the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) was formed in 1997, under the auspices of the ZCC, discussing the constitution was viewed as an apolitical way of discussing politics. There was debate among the stakeholders on whether to keep the NCA under the ZCC or let it be a free-standing body. Some felt keeping it under the ZCC gave it a sacred canopy, thereby protecting it from attack by the government. As Dorman (2002: 14) records, 'ZCC was willing to cooperate only as long as NCA was seen to be providing merely civic education.' The ZCC has always watched its political intervention, preferring to enjoy the benefits of inclusion by the state rather than confrontation. It opted out of a march that was organised by the NCA against the unbudgeted involvement of the Zimbabwean army in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The withdrawal by the ZCC lifted the sacred canopy from the NCA, gave the police the opportunity to declare the march cancelled and an excuse to attack the marchers. This marked the end of the marriage between the NCA and the ZCC. The leadership of ZCC claimed that 'as churches we had to take issues that don't raise too much dust or rock the boat too much, but the boat was rocking'. The decision by the ZCC to abandon the NCA was taken at the highest level of the churches with no consultation with representatives of church members and staff (Dorman 2002: 14).

As the constitutional debate proceeded, the government responded by setting up its own Constitutional Commission (CC). The ZCC key church men joined the government-sponsored CC. The Anglican Bishop of Harare was Deputy Chair of the CC. He did not allow the NCA to hold its meetings on his premises (ibid.: 16). Bakare (2013: 11–12) calls pro-government groups 'latter day saints', adapting a term normally reserved

for the Mormons. He says the term in lower cases depicts those religious groups that were on the side of the Rhodesians during the liberation war but have now emerged as functionaries of the political elites. The Salvation Army is a case in point. During the liberation war it disapproved of the support given to the liberation movement by the ZCC and the World Council of Churches, but today it is parading in front of the politicians. Some mainline church leaders such as the deposed Anglican Archbishop Nolbert Kunonga (Gunda 2008: 299–318) buttressed nationalist rhetoric at state functions. Bakare (2013: 28) is of the opinion that the ZCC today has gone into hiding like Jonah of the Old Testament and has abandoned its legacy, such as the support for liberation movements during the liberation struggle.

A divided and weak body is susceptible to the politics of inclusion and exclusion and politics of coalition building (Dorman 2003: 46). A united body would minimise fears of isolation and victimisation and hinder politicians from taking advantage of the divisions to further their agendas (Chitando and Manyonganise 2011: 107). Divisions and ambivalent positions in the churches weakened the churches' response to the crises. Makwasha (2011: 236) lamented the divisions saying 'because of the lack of strong ecumenical cooperation, the ZCC, the Evangelical Alliance and other church bodies have not been really influential in the formulation of government policy'. The state deployed a divide and rule, inclusion and exclusion approach, which saw it selecting some clergy members to speak on behalf of the church. Wermter (2003: 71) articulates the effect of inter-church division as follows:

> A deplorable lack of unity between Christian churches is exploited by the government and its media: the latter never seem to have a problem finding some pastor presented as 'speaking for the church' who will support government positions and denounce truly Christian voices as being 'spiritually misguided'.

A glaring example of internal church division has been demonstrated by the Anglican Church in Zimbabwe. The Anglican church led by Nolbert Kunonga in Harare and Elson Jakazi in the Manicaland diocese withdrew from the Church of the Province of Central Africa (CPCA), which is part of the worldwide Anglican communion world union, on allegations that the latter promoted homosexuality. This line of argument dovetailed with Mugabe's position on homosexuality (Gunda 2008, 2010). The Anglican

sides led by Kunonga and Jakazi appealed to the state which vigorously supported them using state apparatus such as the courts and riot police. The year 2008 saw the persecution of the members of CPCA Harare and Mutare dioceses at the hands of the police as they were chased out of their church buildings. This conflict was fanned by political interests, but there was no coordinated support by other churches. This lasted for five years. The saga ended when the High Court eventually in May 2010 ruled in favour of the CPCA. This ruling was upheld by the Supreme Court in February 2013 following an appeal by the Jakazi faction.

Admittedly, the mainline churches have done something with regard to the Zimbabwe crises. They participated in the constitutional process of 1999, and have issued fearless pastoral statements, which have irked political elites (Chitando and Manyonganise 2011: 83–86; Ruzivo 2008: 4–14). The ZCC issued a statement following the formation of the inclusive government bemoaning the manipulation and closure of democratic space and selective application of the law. Together with the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC), the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) and the Heads of Christian Denominations (HOCD), the ZCC also issued a statement calling the nation to conscience in 2005 and asking for people's freedoms to be observed (Chitando and Manyonganise 2011: 85). Despite these efforts, as Dube (2006: 46) argues, the bodies that churn out the statements are not grassroots based. No matter how polished the statements, they cannot dissuade people from aligning themselves with perpetrators of violence. They are far removed from the people with their offices located in inaccessible big cities. Chitando (2005: 143) questioned the efficacy of pastoral letters saying, 'How much of pastoral letters trickle through to the common people in the work place, families and even the local Christian communities?' Matikiti (2012: 303) challenges this approach as alienated from and alienating for ordinary Christians.

CRISIS ECUMENICAL GROUPS AND POLITICAL CRISES IN ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe has been engulfed in crisis since independence in 1980, but more conspicuously over the last two decades. There have been economic, political and social crises that have plunged the country into poverty and instability, threatening the human security of its citizens. There is an extensive catalogue of examples of the crisis to which a united church

voice had been expected to respond: *Gukurahundi* ('the wind that blows away the chaff'), the mass killing of an estimated 20,000 people in the Midlands and Matabeleland provinces (Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace 2008), Operation Restore Order/*Murambatsvina* ('clean the filth'), when allegedly illegal houses and market stalls in urban areas were demolished by the government, political violence around election periods since 1980 to the present and Operation *Wavhotera papi* ('for whom did you vote'), through which those accused of having voted 'wrongly' received retribution from political parties. This is to mention just a few.

The ecumenical bodies, including the ZCC, failed to effectively implement the principles of ecumenism and ecumenics, namely, unity, dialogue, peace and reconciliation, necessary to respond to the Zimbabwean crises. The failures of institutional churches resulted in new 'extra-institutional' initiatives (Ganiel 2013) or crises ecumenical groups, which emphasise flexible accessible structures as well as an ecumenical and grassroots approach to responding to the crisis. Examples of such crisis ecumenical groups in Zimbabwe include the Zimbabwe Christian Alliance (ZCA) and Churches in Manicaland (CiM), on which I conducted research in 2012–2013. These groups represent a pattern of religious groups observable in Zimbabwe especially from the year 2000 when the political instability increased. They indicate the general operations that are present in numerous similar organisations in the country.

The ZCA describes itself as a Christian faith-based organisation having its foundation in Biblical principles. Its mission is to bring about social transformation in Zimbabwe through prophetic action. An official of the ZCA spelt out its formation as follows: 'It is a network of faith based groups that were already involved in peace and justice work, but it also targeted Christian leaders that have a calling in issues of justice.' CiM is an 'ecumenical' gathering of members from Christian denominations and organisations in the province of Manicaland. It was formed in 2000, with the aim to 'seek guidance of the Holy Spirit in taking action to promote tolerance in society, to give direction to public decision-makers and to enable our people to live Gospel values and principles' (Churches in Manicaland 2006). It describes itself as 'strictly non-partisan in regard to party politics and are available to all for counselling, pastoral care and the building of a Christian vision for […] society' (ibid.).

The ZCA is consciously an ecumenical framework that is motivated by an understanding of faith that transcends doctrinal specifications. Members are free to get back to their denominations. It does not define itself as a church; hence it does not report any doctrinal problems. While it

emphasises working with Christians, it does not exclude non-Christians. A respondent said the following:

> When we engage in action, we work with non-church organizations like the prayer meeting that we organised on the 11 of March 2007 when leaders of political parties and civil society were thoroughly beaten up. We organised that with civil society organizations, not necessarily Christian, and this is where we add value. We do not work in isolation. We believe the struggle for democracy should not be compartmentalised, but we must make an effort to reach out to other organizations that are not necessarily church organizations but that we share a vision with. So we are always open to share platforms with non-Christians.

Through the preceding conception of membership, the ZCA incorporates traditional methods of peace building, conflict resolution and reconciliation. A member argued: 'Even though we are a Christian organization, we don't nevertheless limit ourselves to Christian ways of handling trauma and conflict. There are traditional means that are not contrary to Christian practice, and we allow people to use them, there is no problem.' This is the entry point for engaging traditional leaders who are custodians of traditional culture and entrusted by the community with the responsibility to ensure community cohesion.

Critical in the membership of the ZCA and the CiM are grassroots people and the laity. This is against the background of an ecclesiology that privileges ordained men and a few women in Zimbabwe (Togarasei and Chitando 2011: 224). It has what it refers to as 'hubs'. These are branches or chapters of ZCA. They are made up of grassroots small groups of people who come together, because they identify with the ZCA and discuss issues to do with faith and action within their locality, but also looking at demands at the national level, and how Christians can respond to those demands. To this effect a ZCA member said, 'By and large the church in Zimbabwe has been clergy oriented […] so we need a well-equipped laity. So that was also bought in, the laity became a critical component.' On 26 January 2007 the ZCA members were arrested at the launch of a chapter of the organisation in Kadoma as part of a nationwide drive to establish Christian leaders' networks in the country's ten provinces. More than 500 church leaders and Christian lay people were in attendance. The aim of establishing these networks is to create local Christian Alliance chapters as platforms to equip Christian leaders on church-based advocacy and peace building (Zimbabwe Network, 26 Jan 2007).

The CiM is open to everyone who subscribes to its mission and vision and is ready to contribute to the realisation of the objectives. The organisation was formed by a charismatic and prophetic clergy with the aim to serve the grassroots people. In an email communication a founding member of the CiM wrote: 'CiM was initiated by a few individuals who were more in leadership positions in their churches […]. But they were trying to serve the grassroots who were affected by the threatening social, economic and political disintegration.' In a demonstration of its grassroots and practical approach, the CiM states that its Compendium of Christian Social Teaching '*The Truth Will Make You Free*' (2006: v) is 'intended that Christians, and people of good will, will reflect on these teachings either as individuals, or preferably in small groups where individual sharing enriches group members'. Ordinary members in the CiM participate in formulating statements and publications, and everybody who is present is allowed to make a contribution. Every member is invited to participate at the level he or she is comfortable with as long as it is in line with the objectives of the organisation. An example is given of a pastor who wanted to participate but sometimes felt issues got too political. He was asked to be in charge of the prayer life of the organisation since that is what he was comfortable with. As with the ZCA, there is no register of membership. It is just a platform.

Participation in the CiM goes beyond doctrinal boundaries to being ecumenical. A respondent answered that there is no denominational theology involved. He said:

> There is nothing to do with doctrinal theology there. There is a simple theology of Jesus Christ, that you do to others as you would want them to do unto you. Whether you are Anglican, Methodist, Catholic, it applies.

This is because there is a common challenge, and therefore the members spent their time and energy interrogating the problem that affects everyone. 'When violence does erupt, it has nothing to do with religious affiliation. It affects people just as people. It does not consider the denomination from which one comes. Therefore, we have not had any problems,' asserted a member of CiM. However, facing hard political issues has not been easy for all religious groups. This results in irregular participation. A leading member of the CiM lamented that being a forum comes with mobilisation challenges. There is no obligation to participate. Neither are there sanctions or incentives for participation. He cites that one Pentecostal church has withdrawn. At the beginning it was interested, but withdrew when the CiM began to deal with hard political issues. Zald

(1982: 322) observes that social movements are plagued with the free-rider problem. Its goods are collective. A success such as changes in law benefits everyone; hence there is no push to participate. This is a problem for the CiM, as it is for the ZCA.

The importance of grassroots people for the CiM is against an observation that the mainline churches have not paid adequate attention to the ordinary people. This is despite the fact that the laity constitutes the bigger part of the Christian community and is the most vulnerable and hence forms the majority of victims of political violence. That is why the use of the term church by the CiM does not mean buildings or institutions but those people who would not be able to speak at high platforms (Mkaronda 2003: 30).

CONCLUSION

In principle, ecumenism stands strategically positioned to facilitate how effective ecumenical agencies can be in times of crises. The foundation of the ZCC as an ecumenical group and the objectives it set out for itself as well as the emergence of groups that adopt an ecumenical character prove the point and demonstrate that when ecumenical groups fail to facilitate change, it is not ecumenism that is the problem. Rather, it is the resistance to change and reform to adopt new strategies which adequately respond to the needs of the times. Against a crises-ridden Zimbabwe, the chapter observed that institutionalisation can suppress the transformative potential of ecumenism. While it is necessary for the continuity of initiatives and maintenance of founding principles, if not kept in check it can be a hindrance to the dynamism and creativity of the agencies as well as its members who may feel compelled to start new initiatives. The institutional structure of ecumenical agencies is susceptible to domination by the leadership at the expense of the ordinary people, corruption of leadership not to act when it should as well as the comfort with power and authority resulting in being inflexible. These challenges account for the emergence of crises ecumenical groups.

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The Church, Praxis Theology and Development in Zimbabwe

Richard S. Maposa

Introduction

This chapter is a historical-theological analysis of the experiences of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (hereafter, ZCC) in light of the role of theology to development as manifestations of the Christ's gospel in Zimbabwe. It evaluates the activities of one of the ZCC's original affiliate member church, the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe (hereafter, UCCZ). Broadly stated, the UCCZ provides a prototype African church whose historical mission matches the grand vision of the ZCC which is the pursuit for the transformation of society. Notwithstanding, it must be pointed out at the onset that the UCCZ saw, judged and acted her praxis, that is, 'doing theology' contextually. The chapter investigates the role and linkages of the praxis theology in the context of the quest for community development in Chipinge District, southeastern Zimbabwe. From its inception in the mid-1890s, the UCCZ grappled with the need to bring development to uplift the lives of the marginalized people in

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R. S. Maposa (Deceased)

Zimbabwe. The chapter argues that the engagement of the rural communities in development is buttressed by the power of a practical theology, which we term praxis theology. Today, one of the common assumptions of secularism is that theology is confined to the private sphere of life. Nevertheless, the reality of human life must re-deploy theology to the public domain of society in the quest for development (Deneulin and Bano 2009: 6). Thus, the chapter is specifically a historical-theological inquiry on the critical issue of doing praxis theology and development under the auspices of the ZCC, as an ecumenical movement in Zimbabwe, since 1964.

Highlights of the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe and the Objectives of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches

The UCCZ is a metamorphosis of what was formerly known by several names (File, 2/173 1973: 4). For instance, it was the East Central African Mission in Gazaland (ECAMG), Northern Branch of the American Zulu Mission in Southern Africa (NBAZMSA), Rhodesian Mission of the American Board (RMAB), American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions (ABCFM). The UCCZ was an outreach movement that made up the Disciples of Christ in the US and Canada. The historical alteration of ABCFM into the United Church of Christ (UCC) came on 25 June 1957 at Cleveland in Ohio (US). The essence of the UCCZ mission was captured in the Draft Policy Statement of 1906 thus:

> The object is the redemption of a people … a race. This means that we cannot consider the salvation of each individual apart from that of his people. Were we to do this, we should probably decide, as each individual comes to us to remove him from his present surroundings to those more favorable. (Thompson 1907: 4)

This policy statement shows that the American missionaries of the UCCZ wanted to bring sustainable development that would transform the marginalized communities in Zimbabwe. This historical vision is contained in ZCC's broad aims and objectives. Briefly, and in part, the ZCC's major aim is to bring the affiliate member churches and other faith-based organizations for united action and coordinated witness to the socio-economic and political challenges facing Zimbabwe at any given moment. It must be

noted that in 1964 the country was reeling under colonialism, and as such there was the need for ecumenical response to deal with this colonial peril. Accordingly, the ZCC (initially as the Rhodesian Council of Churches (RCC)) was established to encourage the affiliate member churches to carry evangelistic and developmental services for the propagation of the gospel of Christ. Furthermore, the ZCC was to assist the member churches to work for the common responsibility for liberation, reconciliation and justice so that the Kingdom of God reigns on earth. Therefore, the chapter set out to discover the ways these aims and objectives were fulfilled by analysing the activities of the UCCZ as an example of the original affiliate member of the ZCC since 1964. It is imperative that we outline, first, some operational frameworks that guided the activities of the UCCZ.

Praxis Theology of Liberation

Praxis theology is a transmutation of liberation theology. It grows from the existential social, economic and political challenges inherent in the structures of the disadvantaged communities. Praxis uses the hermeneutical processes of *seeing*, *judging* and *acting* (Gutierrez 1971). It takes cognizance of the fact that the poor and oppressed people are both agents and beneficiaries of the social analysis and social change. In its classical and contemporary modes, praxis theology can enhance the church as part of the pastoral ministry. The church has to cater for the welfare of the people which tallies with the liberative motif of the 'preferential option for the poor'. It is critical in the context of Zimbabwe to consider the extent to which the ZCC and ultimately the UCCZ associated themselves with the lowly after 1964 (cf. Rom. 12:16b). But, with whom has the ZCC or the UCCZ expressed solidarity? Is it with the powerless or with the powerful? It is instructive that a number of case studies will be highlighted to show the extent of ZCC's/UCCZ's identity with the marginalized people in Zimbabwe. Crucially, development in Africa must contend with the role of women and youth (Kamaara 2005).

The Church and Development

The theme of 'church and development' continues to grow in African studies. There have been claims that development in postcolonial Africa represents the 'decisive encounter' between the African church and the African continent itself. For instance, Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya and Malawi

owe much of their development thrusts to the Christian church as a historical movement (Geffre and Luneau 1977). The African Christian churches have exerted their foothold deeper in the nutritive lives of the local people. The long-term effect is that the churches are indigenized to the extent that they are intrinsically linked to the overall processes of nation-building. For example, in the provision of education facilities, health institutions, business opportunities and commercial agriculture, the African Christian churches have made an enduring mark. These issues provide the conceptions in the way praxis theology could be deployed to the terrain of development, thereby providing the key indicators of a transforming society.

The chapter argues that if the Zimbabwean government would manage the economy well, it would need to take cue from the past lived experiences of the African Christian churches. Whereas the Christian churches sometimes behaved like handmaidens of colonialism, they envisioned uplifting the existential status of the indigenous Africans. From its inception in 1964, this was the vision that constituted the mission of the ZCC. Accordingly, as a member church, the UCCZ was picked (for this chapter) to assess the extent of the relationship between the praxis theology of liberation and development in society. In our view, every situational praxis theology, when exercised within every lived experience, shapes the totality of humanity. Moreover, every lived theology possesses the power to effect changes when engaged in a more responsible manner. Meaningful change is based on three interlinked indicators. Firstly, every scheme of change is an outcome of realistic objectives and leading to results. Secondly, change must reveal a break with the past. Aspects of the past must not exert a ubiquitous role in the lives of communities. Thirdly, every change must be anchored on the emergence of new behaviour and new values for humanity. These components of change provide the panorama of a liberative praxis theology that leads to development (Kammer 1988). In fact, the relationship between the African church and development continues to be vital to the analysis of socio-economic change (Bornstein 2005). Thus, it is imperative that the experiences of the UCCZ as a prototype of an African church be evaluated in order to better appreciate the development of society. It is prudent to evoke the insights of Walter Whitman Rostow (1916–2003), the leading American economist at MIT. Rostow vocalized to fascinate the world in 1960 with his famous ideas on the five linear stages of economic growth that all countries must undergo in order

to develop. For too long, the Rostowian economics influenced the African church, and by extension the ZCC, on development.

The basic question relevant for the study is 'How does development appropriate theology in engaging people in development programmes?' In the past, and using Marxist categories of social analysis, it was assumed that religion, and by extension theology, is the 'opium' of the oppressed classes in society (Marx 1976: 494). This chapter demonstrates that the Marxist perception is now a cliché. Within the corridors of the European sociological scholarship, the German sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920) realized it first and pronounced the Marxist notions of religion as mistaken. Weber (1963: 26) asserted that religion could be very influential in the quest for development. In fact, there is a convergence of the secular and the sacred. This is a fresh perspective that sees some correlation between a lived theology and development. It is prudent to draw a conceptual line between the old perspective on development and the school of modernity.

Trajectory of the Development Debate

The issue of development is, arguably, the most important one to face humankind, particularly in the Third World. The old debate generally posited that development is innate and inevitable for all nations. Preston traced the origins of the development discourses to the writings of the Scottish political economist Adam Smith (1723–1790). Deneulin and Bano (2009: 28) situate the birth of the development debate in the US to President Harry Truman's Inaugural Speech in which he called for assistance to improve the lives of the poor people. Nevertheless, we have decided to focus on some contributions made in the post-Second World War (1939–1945) period.

The old debate on the intricate issue of 'the church and development' is drawn from the writings of the French-Canadian economist Louis Joseph Lebret (1897–1966) during the early 1950s. Arthur Lewis' book, *Theory of Economic Growth* (1955) provided the next key contribution that dominated some development discourses in the West. The book carried an extensive discussion of the role of religion and by extension theology in fostering development (Deneulin and Bano 2009: 29). Lewis (1955) argued that religion could encourage economic growth if it inculcates positive attitudes towards work. Religion or theology can also be a hindrance when infusing in people certain negative attitudes towards the

creation of economic opportunities in society. The way theology is linked to development by Lewis (1955) follows almost the same logic as Max Weber's pioneering critique of the role of religious ideas in capitalist development. Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1963) is a classic book that has deeply influenced humanity's understanding on the role of religion in development. For instance, Weber (1963: 26) argued that there are doctrines, beliefs and practices that provide obstacles to development and others that are profoundly conducive to it. Nevertheless, serious debate was raised in the latter half of the 1960s, especially in the period between 1968 and 1971 when the connection between religion and development was highlighted. In 1966, the World Council of Churches (WCC) was steeped into the development debate and evaluated its theological implications (Moltmann 1969: 70). At a Conference held in 1966 in Geneva, Switzerland, on the theme 'Church and Society', the WCC registered deep interest in the development discourses through its report entitled 'Christians in the Technical and Social Revolution of our Time'. In 1967, Pope Paul VI took the issue further in his Encyclical letter, *Populorum Progressio*. The Zagarst Consultation held in Moscow, then Soviet Russia, in 1968, followed up this Conference. In each case, the Christian churches were increasingly evolving a new praxis theology. Beginning 1968, a body that was jointly formed by the Pontifical Commission for Justice and the WCC produced an interesting work that stimulated practical participation through projects to develop the marginalized communities. In a nutshell, the old debate claims that it is only necessary to engage a triangulation of situational praxis theologies, relevant theories and sound policies for societies to create wealth and having high living standards as though that were El Dorado, the land of gold. The soundness of this development 'prophecy' was reinforced during the twentieth century by a tide of technological inventions that gave rise to what could be called 'epistemological optimism', leading humankind to suppose that all existential challenges could be solved by the scientific inventions of the modern era. This background influenced the Rostowian theory on economic development.

Nevertheless, we need to underscore the issues concerning the development debate by raising three pertinent questions. First, we are decisively inquiring *what is the motivation for development?* Motivation presupposes principles that stimulate and urge Christian churches to participate in development. In our view, the standard reference to any of the local church's pronouncements on development is anchored in strong biblical

affirmation of social justice as particularly seen in the Old Testament and mirrored in the teachings of Jesus' ministry. A hermeneutical mediation and application of these basic biblical references are relevant in light of the UCCZ development packages. The second question is objectively asking, *what are the goals of the envisioned development?* In our opinion, goals, as aims, are short or medium or long range in scope. All goals, by their nature, determine the use of resources, whether material or human, to initiate and sustain development. The UCCZ understood its conceived goals in the light of Christian conceptions of creation and deepened through the incarnation of Christ Jesus. These twin conceptions have provided a framework for setting goals for development in order to usher in the perceived transformation of society. The third question is critically probing: *what is the method(s) to be used in development?* This is a burning issue about ways by which goals of development are implemented. When evaluated critically, the UCCZ as a prototype of the African church and as an organic institution must be perceived to be a Church in Development (CID) rather that a Church for Development (CFD). This is how the UCCZ fits in the broad ZCC vision of development in Zimbabwe. This brings us towards a modernist critique of the concept of development.

The Modernist Critique of the Concept of Development

The new critique on development was generally initiated by the writings of Wilber and Jameson in the 1970s. These writers suggested four linkages between religion (also theology) and development as religious attitudes towards work, religion as the moral basis of society, religion/theology as a positive impulse towards development and religion as a transnational political force in global affairs. The new critique was given vigour by the Brundtland Commission of 1972 (http://www.heldref.org/env.phpsustainabledevelopment). Development was perceived in terms of sustainability, that is, development has to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This definition sees development as having a major focus on peace, freedom, justice, accountability and equitable distribution of resources   (http://www.heldref.org/env.phpsustainabledevelopment). The Brundtland Commission (1972) defined development in two phrases. First, development must be sustainable. Second, development must have a

lasting impression for future generations. The chapter adopts the Brundtland Commission's (1972) definition. This is the kind of development envisioned by the ZCC and embraced by the UCCZ to sustain the lives of the poor people in Zimbabwe.

In this chapter, we can divide the UCCZ's programme of development into three main categories: *kerygma* (preaching the gospel message), *koinonia* (pastoral teaching and fellowship) and *diaconia* (humanitarian service to others). These human categories are still visible in the UCCZ's operations that resonate with nation-building in Zimbabwe. Beginning from the heydays of colonialism, the UCCZ was based on the vision towards the creation of a society which is founded on universal values, among them justice, equality, honesty and respect. The growing socioeconomic and political awareness led to a concentration on efforts to bring about integral development that would yield to social justice. In the quest to achieve this, the UCCZ as an African church was guided by the three principles. Firstly, there is a traditional principle that concentrates on the level of service to the people. Normally, programmes on community development, such as the construction of clinics, schools and relief aid, constitute examples of service to the people that provide massive employment. Secondly, there is the principle of social reform, targeted towards transforming the conditions of the marginalized people. In the spirit of the social gospel, the church is involved in societal re-organization at the micro local level, but in the hope that such changes will accelerate changes at the macro national level. Thirdly, there is the liberative principle undertaken as a collective enterprise. The principle of liberation is patterned to overcome the structures of dependence and achieve community development based on self-reliance (Beck and Cowan 1996: 6).

Putting Community Development into Proper Perspective

The idea of community development is a contested concept in postcolonial studies. In the Zimbabwean context, community development is generally associated with village development done in contradistinction to urban community improvement or organization. Some scholars define the term 'community' as a geo-collective entity where people are tied together by the principles of solidarity. From an ethnological perspective, a community refers to a group of people who live together and share common

existential values, traditions, culture and history. In the Old Testament, for instance, the Israelites were a community together because of sharing common traditions and history. The perspective on the community upheld in the chapter abhors the post-modern individualistic personality guided by the ethos of economic graft and human aggrandizement. We envision a community in which people exist together and are guided by the values of universal goodness and collective citizenship. This is the community upheld in the philosophy of *ubuntu*, which prizes the existence of the 'total person' anchored in the purity of profound spirituality. From a geographical perspective, a community of people possesses a physical space in which people share common material goods and services and make some decisions concerning the socio-economic and ecological challenges within certain contexts. Again, in the Old Testament, the Israelites participated in the Exodus events because they wanted to settle in Canaan, a common geographical space that manifested their collective identity. This territorialism is the basis of a boundary line which delineates a 'playing field' for the UCCZ to undertake community development (hereinafter, CoD) in Zimbabwe. We perceive this panorama as reflecting the spirit of a praxis theology initiating micro development at the grassroots level (Williams 1978; Max-Neef 1991; Jibowo 2000).

The chapter holds that the CoD is the antithesis of the Development of the Community (hereinafter, DoC) that was shaped by colonialism. Whereas DoC implied that the colonialists were responsible for uplifting 'poor blacks', CoD places emphasis on the agency and capacity of indigenous communities to improve their well-being using their own resources. The British Colonial Office in London first formulated the concept of the DoC more seriously in 1952. The DoC was a subtle project meant to bring about separate development along the South African Apartheid philosophy. Apartheid emphasized the establishment of a 'string' of poor communities, rather than genuine transformation of community potentialities and resources. In 1958, the white settlers in colonial Zimbabwe uncritically adopted this policy. Their concern was the development of poor communities for the blacks. The colonial tone decidedly surrounded the need to build a community of people rather than improve the lives of the people. The DoC was a systematic scheme that marginalized the blacks and was a dependent top-bottom theory. It assumed that the colonized blacks do not have the technical expertise and potentialities to mitigate their existential poverty. This insight is captured thus:

> Development geared to the satisfaction of fundamental human needs cannot, by definition, be structured from the top downwards. It cannot be imposed either by law or decree. It can only emanate directly from the actions, expectations, and creative and critical awareness of the protagonists themselves. Instead of being the traditional objects of development, people must take a leading role in development. (Max-Neef 1991: 38)

The foregoing citation is relevant to this chapter and it is prudent that we explain the notions of the CoD. The CoD is guided by the policies of the black government in Zimbabwe after 1980. The chapter sees the notions of the CoD to have been inspiring to the activities of the UCCZ in both colonial and post-independent Zimbabwe. The thrust of the CoD is to bring about the social transformation and human liberation by focusing on the micro-level development and poverty mitigation 'with the people and for the people'. According to Ife (2002), the essence of the CoD is that it is a community-based initiative and founded on the philosophy of pragmatism. Below, let us demonstrate such laden insights with the UCCZ's social gospel record, as an affiliate member of the ZCC.

The United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe and Community Development

In this section, we evaluate specific basic case studies exemplifying the extent of the UCCZ commitment to community development after 1964. The UCCZ initiated considerable developmental projects in line with the mandate of the ZCC. Exactly how did the UCCZ transform the community? Below, we let the case studies speak for themselves.

Case Study 1: *Huku* (Poultry Project)

The Poultry Project was established in August 1970 at a time the country was reeling under colonialism. The UCCZ Ruwadzano (women's group) united to initiate the *Huku* (poultry) project at Mt. Selinda and Chikore Mission. The aims of the project were to promote trade between the two missions and village communities, improve human nutrition for the village folk and act as a platform to evangelize the gospel. Some 625 *zvitiyo* (chicks without mother) were bought by Mrs. Lowe and distributed equally to 84 Ruwadzano women in both Chikore and Mt. Selinda mission stations. As part of the incentive, every woman was given chicken

mash. In due course, every beneficiary was made to pay 42 eggs back to the common coffers. In the process, the participants intensified and deepened in scope their numeracy and literacy skills. The aggregate impact was that the book-keeping transactions were crucial to sustain the durability of the new business entrepreneurships that merged with this kind of community development. From the ZCC's ecumenical perspective, the UCCZ was succeeding in mitigating poverty. Yet, the ultimate purpose was theological thus: 'Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house, and try me now … If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessings' (Malachi 3:10). Therefore, the UCCZ used the spirit of the cooperative movement to inculcate the Christian principle of tithing which emphasized giving back to God what belongs to God. The vision was to institute the universal values of honesty, love and integrity as a way of inculcating the ethic of moral citizenship amongst the people.

Case Study 2: *Zadza Matura* (Food Security)

The term *zadza matura* refers to capacity building on food security for people in their communities and the country as a whole. It further implies that people must work to ensure that there is no food crisis and halt the challenges of malnutrition. The vision is that people must not suffer from a dependency syndrome. In fact, *zadza matura* was perceived as part of reconstructing shattered communities. This is how praxis theology, better known still as Reconstruction theology, has special affinity towards development. From 1981, the reconstruction process through the *zadza matura* programme was meant to address and redress the past colonial imbalances on the land management system. Historically, agricultural production in the rural communities was particularly shattered during the Second *Chimurenga* war. The white regime, since the Land Tenure Act of 1969, had sought to ensure that peasant producers could not compete with white commercial producers. For instance, in 1977 whilst the blacks were suffering from landlessness, the country got Rhodesian $122,000,000,00 from exports largely produced by white commercial farmers. Auret (1992: 6) indicated that 59,000 tonnes of meat, 507,400 tonnes of maize, 104,500 tonnes of raw sugar and lesser amounts of tea and coffee were exported abroad. The white farmers increased the agricultural output due to exploiting black labour. There were systematic methods put in place that favoured the whites and which resulted in the downward fluctuation

in peasant production for much of the heydays of colonialism in Zimbabwe. The conditions worsened after 1975 when most of the peasants were condemned to live in the concentration fences called 'keeps' on account of the escalation of the armed struggle. These keeps resembled squalid camps and governed through curfew regulations in which people were allowed to move out for only a few hours every day. For example, the people could move out of keeps only at sunrise, 0600 hours, and were compelled to come back at sunset, 1800 hours. The people walked several kilometres to and from their fields. This meant that they could till their fields in only few hours per day. As a result, there was low agricultural yield for the duration of almost four years that black civilians were held ransom in the 'keeps' between 1976 and 1980. In the backdrop of the foregoing scenario, therefore, the UCCZ contributed to the agrarian programme because it was part of ensuring food security and decongesting rural communities in Zimbabwe. In August 1981, the UCCZ sourced funds from the World Vision International (WVI) to undertake land reform within its mission farms (Mundeta et al. 1995). The dynamics and mechanics of re-settling the landless peasants were to buy seeds and fertilizers for the tenants as free incentive to boost production, buy farming implements for tenants on a loan basis, educate tenants about scientific farming methods and train agricultural Extension Officers to monitor and manage production. The UCCZ was doing all this as part of reconstructing the shattered communities. Hence, this is one of the ways that praxis theology was engaged by the UCCZ to empower the marginalized people, within the framework of ZCC's vision in Zimbabwe.

Case Study 3: *Hama Maoko* (Vocationalism)

Vocational projects, known as *Hama Maoko*, were commenced as community empowerment initiatives between 1981 and March 1994. The Shona term *maoko* (human hands) is anchored on the philosophy of the spirit of solidarity. The spirit believes that if people use their own hands by working together, regardless of gender differences, they would be productive to improve the quality of lives as individuals, families and communities. Accordingly, people would manifest their fellowship together by following the New Testament patterns (Acts 4:32). This is the communitarian spirit that shaped the UCCZ's praxis theology in rendering humanitarian service in Zimbabwe. In 1981 the UCCZ embarked on the piggery, poultry, grocery and carpentry projects. The aims of these projects were to

assist the people to acquire technical skills of self-reliance through cooperatives, to reduce unemployment in the communities and to open the trainees to the Christian faith (for instance, see statistics of participants in the projects below). The duration of the training was three years. The maximum carrying capacity, in view of training space and other infrastructure per given intake, was 30 trainees. The most durable *Hama Maoko* programme ever to be initiated by the UCCZ in post-independent Zimbabwe was the carpentry project in 1984. This project was the brainchild of two German missionaries, Robert B. Thelin and his wife, Nelda, who were posted in Zimbabwe. The vocational projects had a wide range of impact in the communities. Early in 1984, for instance, Colleen Morna, a journalist with International Press Services (IPS), then interviewed Kenneth Dundu, a long-time resident of Chikore Mission, on how the multifarious community vocational projects had helped him. It was how Dundu showed the visiting journalist his many *mbira* (rabbits) [sic] and *huku* (hens). Furthermore, it was told that Dundu stretched his right hand and showed the journalist his *chibaya chemombe* (cattle pen) in which he boasted of four cattle (*mombe huru*) plus one calf (*chikonyana/mhuru*) which 'sleep' inside the pen every night. Lastly, Dundu pulled out a wooden chair that he had made two years before at the Chikore Mission cooperative and exclaimed thus, '*Ndaramo nemuzi wangu zviri pamaoko angu nevamwe vangu vandinoshanda navo mundau ino. Urombo ndakadzinga ngekuti hama maoko*'. Literally, 'You see, the community development project is all over my life and home. I am no longer a poor person anymore because I have used my hands well'.

Case Study 4: *Mombe yeMukaka* (Heifer/ Milk Project)

The *Mombe yeMukaka* (Heifer/Milk Project) was commenced in 1984 as an ambitious empowerment project. Funds were from Heifer Project International. The aims were to alleviate malnutrition, alleviate poverty, provide source of draught-power when planting crops and re-stock national herd (of cattle) in the country. What happened was that padlocks were erected within the mission farms. The first batch of heifers was distributed in November 1984 at Chikore Mission. It was only after June 1987 that heifers were distributed to communities at Zamuchiya, Chisumbanje, Rimbi, Goko and Madhuku. Around Mt. Selinda Mission,

the beneficiaries of the heifer project were located in the villages of Msirizwi, Southdown, Gwenzi and Mapungwana. Many communities received the heifers without paying any money. A heifer was passed on to the next family once it had a calf. One heifer was passed on to an average of five families. Below are the numbers of beneficial families from the heifer project:

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches/United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, Theology and Development: Reflecting on the Triangulation of Planned Change

The 'church', 'theology' and 'development' are correlated terms in post-colonial studies. When these are inclusively engaged, they can bring about planned change in communities. Praxis theology that characterized the UCCZ represents the aorta of the mission and vision of the ZCC in Zimbabwe. The faith-based development is not the appendage to the prophetic mission of the African churches, but the *causal nexus* of their social gospel, which is Christ's gospel in its totality. As we have seen, the chapter underscored the fact that community development is about people working together, and in the process, new existential values emerge in order to knit the people together. This insight is at the heart of a praxis theology of liberation in the Zimbabwean context. This is how the African churches, or, better still, the ZCC, constitute empowering agents of marginalized communities in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean case studies contained herein exemplified the foregoing thesis. Hermeneutically speaking, the philosophy of vocationalism underlined community transformation through planned entrepreneurship in which people participated and shared solidarity together to inaugurate the new social order. This analysis was also captured by James D. Wolfensohn, former President of the World Bank (1995–2005), when he stated that every Christian church which engages a relevant theology becomes 'a seamless part of life and a driver of change' when considering issues of development in any community, the world over. This is why the African church cannot be excluded from the development matrix in contemporary discourses. Accordingly, the UCCZ learnt to re-define its theology in a hermeneutical way that provides the praxis and missiology at the practical micro-macro levels in order to assess the implications of the gospel of Christ. An authentic African church must engage a lived theology, that is, the praxis theology of liberation relevant enough to serve the interests and aspirations of the people as they

continue to yearn thus: 'Faithful God, living God, guide us to a blessed future' (Deut. 7:6). This has always been an inspiration so located at the heart of the ZCC's dynamic ecumenism since 1964. This is the situation that potentially makes 'African Christianity' relevant and sustainable in Zimbabwe: yesterday, today and tomorrow!

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Church-Politics Nexus: An Analysis of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) and Political Engagement

Ashton Murwira and Charity Manyeruke

INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyses the relationship between Church institutions and politics in Zimbabwe. The chapter pays attention to the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) engagement with the government from the colonial period up to the present day. The first section discusses the emergence of the ZCC and its role during the colonial period in liberation politics. The second section pays attention to the postcolonial era, unpacking the role of the ZCC in nation building exercises, national reconciliation, constitution making and national crisis.

There have been varied interpretations and understanding of the role of the ZCC in political developments in Zimbabwe. During its fifty-year period of existence, that is, from 1964 up to 2014, and up to the time of writing, the relations between the ZCC and the state have been changing from sour, mild to sound. The changing relations have thus affected the effective interaction of the organisation with the state and political players

A. Murwira (✉) • C. Manyeruke
Department of Political and Administrative Studies, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe

on national issues. The chapter assesses the interpretations and misinter-pretations of the role and position of the ZCC in Zimbabwe's political discourse. Expressions and the branding of the ZCC as a partisan and weak faith-based institution have been raised by different actors and commentators. However, this chapter analyses the journey that the ZCC has walked in Zimbabwe's politics and draws conclusions and recommendations from the pastoral letters, speeches and statements made by the ZCC.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter extensively relies on qualitative methods. These include documentary search of academic journals, pastoral letters, newspaper articles and e-research. Interviews with key informants were conducted with academics, church leaders and government officials. Content analysis and discourse analysis were made use of in generalising and unpacking the ZCC and political engagement in Zimbabwe.

THE MANDATE, ROLE AND POSITION OF THE CHURCH DURING THE COLONIAL EPOCH IN ZIMBABWE

The ZCC's image and role was visible since the 1960s. It emerged as a church organisation that decided to stand and fight for the rights and privileges of the oppressed black majority from the white minority hegemony. Reverend Jonas, Bishop Emeritus of the Lutheran Church and former president of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), says:

> The ZCC was formed as a result of disagreements among the black and white leaders in the former Southern Rhodesian Christian Conference (SRCC) in 1964. Some white church leaders felt that it was not the duty of the Church to speak against the government on political matters. It was then decided to form another organisation called the Christian Council of Rhodesia. (Gundani 2001: 80)

Furthermore, Ruzivo (2008) argues that the founding of the ZCC constituted a turning point in the Christian perception of Church-state relations as well as in the overall responsibility of the Church to society and its modus operandi. There had been tensions in the SRCC that resulted in the formation of the black-dominated ZCC. It therefore follows that the formation of the ZCC coincided with the wave of African

nationalism that was sweeping across the continent, in particular, Rhodesia. The relationship between the ZCC and the nationalist movement at its formative time was sound as they were fighting for the same cause of liberating the oppressed black majority. It became a bond where the ZCC used prayers and moral support whilst the nationalist movements used the barrel of the gun to fight against colonial injustices.

One of the major events that cemented this marriage was when the first president of the Rhodesian Council of Churches (RCC), Bishop Skelton of the Anglican Diocese of Matabeleland, resigned from his post as Bishop in protest against the Rhodesian racist policies (Ruzivo 2008). In line with this, the Church institutions should strive to support policies that are representative and are in the interest of Zimbabweans as they did when they opposed colonial anti-black majority policies and laws such as the Law Order Maintenance Act (LOMA).

According to www.zcc.co.zw, one of the major objectives of the ZCC since its dawn has been to:

> unite and have a common response to the political and socio-economic problems, participate in forming an enlightened public opinion of national importance affecting the people in the country by serving as the representative body that can after study and investigation express the conscience of the Christian community.

As such, it is essential to trace and understand the historical role of church institutions in Zimbabwe from the colonial period. The past events have a bearing on the relations between church institutions and political actors and institutions on national matters.

Ruzivo (2008) asserts that

> in many parts of Africa, Christianity has always been a factor in Africa's democratic processes, as in the case of Zimbabwe's politics from the 1960s to the present. The Church castigated and challenged the repressive government of the Rhodesian Front Party (RFP). After independence the same Churches challenged the government of the Zimbabwe African People's Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF), a sure sign that the Church has endeavoured to live its prophetic call of being a custodian of a moral and just society.

Given the narrative that missionaries used Christianity as a device to colonise some African states, the liberation movement regimes of today are cautious of the role that the Church plays in national political issues.

It follows that some within the circles of liberation movements-led regimes view the Church as agents of neo-colonialism in cases where the Church acts as mouthpieces of their funders and founders. The relations, however, have been cordial in cases where the Church organisations have advocated and preached messages that reflect and represent the national interests largely. It is against this background that the ZCC has found itself in some instances in cordial to sour relations with the government of Zimbabwe since independence.

The colonial and postcolonial periods in Zimbabwe have seen Church organisations acting as the voice of the voiceless on human rights issues of the people. These include social, economic and security rights. The ZCC is thus charged with playing a moral role in promoting peace and castigating acts of human rights abuses by the government. The involvement of the ZCC in the constitution making process, elections, as well as nation building exercises shall be analysed.

Post-Independence Phase and the Place of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches

From the period after 1980 up to the time of this writing, the ZCC has been engaged actively in nation building exercises, based on national values for the realisation of the fruits of the anti-colonial struggles. It follows that:

> after independence, the ZCC arrogated to itself the task of national reconstruction of the country, beginning the engagement of the ZCC with the political leadership of the country. In the eyes of government officials, ZCC was a suspect because some of its members had supported the Internal Settlement in 1978. The Rhodesian Front and the opposition political parties, that did not have armies fighting for the independence of Zimbabwe, initiated the Internal Settlement. (Ruzivo 2008)

These developments coloured the trust of the ZCC in the eyes of the government with regard to national politics. On the one hand, it was viewed as an agent of the former colonial masters, whilst, on the other hand, it remained in the trenches of defending the gains of the liberation struggle.

The ZCC went on to be actively in opposition politics against the ruling party in the post-independence era. According to Ruzivo (2008):

the ZCC participated in the democratisation of the country mostly through its agencies and through Heads of Christian Denominations. Indirectly, ZCC supported the formation of the Forum for Democratic Reform which was launched in May 1992 as a pressure group in Bulawayo and was later reorganized as a political party. The pressure group was led by former Zimbabwean Chief Justice Enoch Dumbutshena. Heads of Christian denominations were visible in this pressure group that was designed to challenge the hegemony of the ruling party.

Evidently, the ZCC, in the eyes of the government, was no longer a Church organisation that sided with the vision of black nationalists, but had become an opposition arm or political organisation. This meant that the government had to engage the ZCC cautiously in matters of national development. The ZCC, thus, had shifted from being a supporter of nationalist government but had become a threat to the political power of ZANU PF.

Mpofu (2008) notes that in the 1990s the ZCC began to be active in democratic reform programmes nationwide. These included voter education workshops, legal aid projects and human rights awareness workshops. Such programmes on the promotion of good governance gave birth to the call and demand of a new and democratic constitution. In this respect, the ZCC had broadened its activities from social, economic empowerment projects to political issues. It can be argued that the ZCC set the foundation for a call of a new constitution and, later, the birth of critical civil society organisations such as the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA).

From one angle, the ZCC had become the breeding ground for producing opposition movements and groups against the ZANU PF government. In such cases, it was viewed not as a developmental partner but as a destructive force of the government's power. According to Ruzivo (2008):

> The National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) was a brainchild of Tawanda Mutasa who was an employee of the ZCC. He discussed his ideas with Lovemore Madhuku, Depros Muchena, Tendai Biti, Welshman Ncube, David Chimhini, Everjoice Win, Priscilla Misihairambwi, Dr. John Makumbe, Morgan Tsvangirai, Mike Auret, Brian Kagoro and many others including his own superiors at ZCC.

The NCA and some of the members later emerged as a strong opposition force in 1999 when they formed the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). Unfortunately, this was also a period when the

government launched the Third Chimurenga/Fast Track Land Reform Programme and the ZCC appeared to be going against the ZANU PF government. However, the inconsistency of the ZCC was noted when it abandoned the new constitution drive, which was later picked up by the NCA. This was the backsliding of ZCC in fulfilling its moral and social responsibility of creating a democratic and just society.

Despite the backsliding of the ZCC, such a development widened the crack between the ZCC and the ZANU PF-led government in 1999. It became crystal clear in the lenses of the ZANU PF government that the ZCC was no longer the ZCC of the 1960s as they were now fighting in the trenches of the former colonial masters. To some extent, the ZANU PF government branded such religious organisations as agents of neo-colonisation. This meant that their participation in national affairs was to reverse the gains and make the sweat and blood of the nationalist brothers, sisters and movements irrelevant.

Positively, the ZCC was heavily involved in the economic programmes that aimed at empowering people from the period of independence. Such programmes came in the form of manpower training courses, youth empowerment programmes, women empowerment programmes and other such programmes. This thrust clearly made the Council of Churches a partner in societal development. The relations of the ZCC and the government were developmental towards the well-being of the citizens. Notably, the two shared the common vision of improving the livelihood of the masses.

Polarisation and Its Impact on the Zimbabwe Council of Churches' Political Engagement

The 1999–2000 political birth and growth of the strong opposition, the MDC, created two camps and ideologies that shaped the political landscape in Zimbabwe. On the one hand, the MDC had strengthened the wave of democratisation. On the other hand, ZANU PF stood by sovereignty, empowerment and total liberation of the majority. Polarisation became a hindrance to the operations of civil groups and political activists in the country. Sadly, the ZCC was caught up with this drawback. The political players had drawn a conclusion that "it is either you are with us or you are against us." What this meant was that if the ZCC actively advocated for democracy and human rights, it was against the ZANU PF and

became associated with the MDC. The reverse was true when the ZCC supported the government. For example, the president of the ZCC, Bishop Peter Nemapare, was said to be a staunch supporter of Mugabe.

In addition, the ZCC was accused of implementing a "too quiet diplomacy" policy in its engagement with the government. For instance, if the ZCC was mum on social deficiencies that were prevailing in the country, it was packaged as a supporter and sympathiser of ZANU PF. On the other hand, the fact that the ZCC became active in political reforms and a force which brewed demands for social and political reforms meant that it followed or was siding with the opposition political movements and parties. Thus, political polarisation made and makes it difficult for the ZCC to air out the social, economic and political realities of the day. For an effective engagement, the ZCC had and has to be neutral and air out its concerns as a mirror of the national plight of Zimbabweans and in the interest of the Zimbabweans. In so doing, the ZCC needs to embrace constructive criticism in accordance with its mandate and what the Holy Scriptures say.

The effects of polarisation had adverse implications on the operations of church institutions. It also led to internal divisions within Church organisations as some people were now making contradictory statements on matters affecting the nation politically. Chitando (2011) articulates that divisions compromise the efforts of the Church in their political engagement. The fractions over political issues reverse one of the objectives of the ZCC of uniting and coming up with a common response to socio-economic and political problems. Thus, the pressure, voice and concerns of the ZCC over national issues become diluted, which makes their fight and advocacy less relevant.

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches and Election Reforms

Given that the nation had experienced and had scars of the June 2008 elections, the ZCC thus had a recognisable role to play in the post-election national healing processes. Various churches and church organisations preached and held national prayer days for a peaceful political environment in preparation of the 2013 harmonised elections. This support was necessary and plausible for establishing a healthy and stable nation. In the events leading to the 2008 harmonised elections, most church

organisations (the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conferences [ZCBC], Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe [EFZ], and the ZCC) continued to speak against violence. The ZCC thus issued the following statement:

> Government should provide a level playing field for all those seeking political office. Let justice flow like a stream and righteousness like a river that never goes dry (Amos 5:24). All political parties, candidates and their supporters to exercise maturity, tolerance and to seek power only through the ballot. To campaign in a peaceful and honourable way, shun all forms of violence, to observe and encourage peace at all times. The law enforcement agents should execute their duties in an efficient, effective and non-partisan way to protect life and property. (www.zimbabweinstitute.net)

In essence, the ZCC holds the belief that there is an organic link between democracy, peace, stability and the development of a nation. The organisation thus took charge of fighting for democratic space through electoral reforms and respect for human rights. According to McGrath (2013), the ZCC played an active role of peace-making during the times of political instability. However, in some cases critics charged that the strategies that the ZCC implemented in its campaigns somehow strained its effective engagement with the government, for example, elements of political party biasness.

It preached and advocated for non-violence, transparency and tolerance. Some of its campaigns were, however, supported by international aid agencies such as the Act of Peace based in Australia. Unfortunately, some of the funding partners of the ZCC had sour relations with ZANU PF due to sanctions. This, in the eyes of ZANU PF, meant that such organisations externally funded by the West became agents of regime change, just as they viewed the MDC as a Western project.

The downside of this external funding led to a view that the ZCC had removed the robes of a Church garment and clothed itself in political party regalia. Thus, in as much as the ZCC might be genuine in its messages over democracy and human rights or socio-economic realities, its source of funding becomes questionable if it does not reflect the interests of Zimbabweans at large. Or else, there are bound to be suspicions that they will be acting as mouthpieces of their funders. In addition, one of the objectives of the Act of Peace is that they support programmes such as constitutional reforms. Constitutional reforms should be understood as an internal issue with implications on the sovereignty of a nation and as such they have to be drawn and driven by the people themselves. The Church

organisations should demonstrate that they are apolitical and reflect the goodness of the nation as a whole regardless of political or religious positions.

The ZCC played a role as a reminder to the government on its actions and visions. In other words, as a watchdog or whistle blower, the ZCC challenged the government to be accountable. Given that the ZCC (as RCC) was there during the colonial era where it also fought against the white oppressors, the organisation therefore continues to question and remind the government to be conscious of the national vision and plights. It continues to push the government to fulfil the promises it made during the struggle and on Independence Day in 1980. Thus, the state should also view and treat the ZCC as a partner, not an opposition force, as its role is simply to stand by the genuine interests of all the Zimbabweans as it did during the liberation struggle.

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches as a Peacemaker and Peacebuilder During the Government of National Unity (GNU)

As a faith-based institution, the ZCC has been involved in peace-making efforts, that is, trying to reconcile issues affecting warring parties through negotiations. It also goes further in its purpose to build durable peace after a conflict has manifested, as it did after the violent 2008 elections. Accordingly, the ZCC plays a peace-making and peace-building role on political issues. The ZCC facilitated for dialogue amongst the contending political players in Zimbabwe. One notable contribution is that it encouraged ethical conduct of non-violence in resolving ideological differences as well as election-related disputes. This laid the basis for political dialogue between the ZANU PF and MDC-T after the 2002 presidential elections. Bishops Sebastian Bakare, Trevor Manhanga and Patrick Mutume facilitated this (Chitando and Manyonganise 2011). Even though the 2002 facilitation did not yield a concrete result, it sowed the seeds of dialogue, which later manifested in 2008 when the political parties engaged in talks which gave birth to the GNU.

Despite the failed efforts of the Church institutions in 2002 in fostering negotiations, the organisation played a crucial role in post-conflict reconstruction. After the violent presidential elections of 2008, the ZCC was actively involved in reconciliation exercises. Accordingly, churches preached against political violence, trying to show that when the

politicians fight it is the grass that suffers and when they are hugging it is the grass that again suffers. By so doing, the Church organisations built communities of peace at the local level. At the national level they also went on to organise national days of prayer. The ZCC thus countered and later influenced the political party's campaigns in denouncing violence and intimidation. The gospel of anti-violence later led to the Ministry of National Healing and Reconciliation engaging the church in their public campaigns of promoting peace and tolerance.

A culture of political tolerance was also spread by the ZCC in its pastoral letters. Given that the people had embraced a culture of violence in resolving political differences, the Church took the role of nurturing a culture of forgiveness and tolerance in line with the national vision.

The call for peace was prophetic, as, later in 2008, the gas tap of intolerance had been left open for too long and this led to widespread violence. The voices of the Church in 2006 were echoed or became a chorus during the GNU era when political parties and their leadership began to shun violence, encouraging peace. Messages or slogans such as "Peace begins with you, peace begins with me and peace begins with all of us" could be heard at ZANU PF rallies and campaigns. This resonates well with the message in "the Zimbabwe We Want" discussion of 2006. As such, the statements from church institutions sent messages to the political players, leadership and all the citizens that everyone needs to embrace the spirit of national consciousness for the good of the nation. This becomes a viable platform for development in all its forms.

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches and Civic Education

As part of ensuring a healthy Zimbabwe through the conduct of elections, the ZCC also wore the robe of a civic educator during the pre-election phases. The process of civic education involves educating the citizens on their rights, for example, exercising their voting rights to choose political leadership. This ensures that citizens are actively involved in the political processes which lead to a participatory democracy. The ZCC was involved in voter education, which is one of the cornerstones of an electoral cycle, hence their role becomes critical for the development of the nation. Of importance to note is that churches possess structures, institutions, systems and personnel that contribute to national transformation and

development (Kaulemu 2010). Thus, the ZCC's involvement in politics and elections becomes credible and relevant. The ZCC has been actively involved in voter education, election monitoring and coordination of church organisations (Chitando and Manyonganise 2011). The impact of the church cannot be underestimated in that society views the church as an apolitical institution and tends to pay attention more to what they say than any other civil society or group. Therefore, the government, especially electoral management bodies (EMBs), should engage church institutions quite often in the electoral cycle as it leads to high voter turnout, as well as creating a peaceful political environment.

However, though the efforts of the ZCC were plausible in investing in ensuring that the playing field was equal by paying attention to the legal framework, voter education and denouncing violence, there were some misgivings. One political commentator noted the following in an interview:

> The institution (the ZCC) was, however, mum on sanctions, which on the ZANU PF and some sections of Zimbabwe did not lead to a fair playing field. In fact, sanctions hurt the ordinary citizens as they are paper bombs and the Church did not do justice to the issue. This raises the idea that the fight for democratic space is more important than fighting the sanctions. In the 2008 elections people voted because of the politics of the stomach rather than demonstrating their true choices.

Therefore, for effective political engagement and involvement, the ZCC needs to be balanced and objective on issues that will be affecting the well-being of the nation as a whole. It follows that Church institutions have to address the issues of the two contending parties equally in the interests of all Zimbabweans.

The Way Forward

There is a need for rebranding the ZCC as a constructive developmental partner with the government. The ZCC has to be neutral and has to stand for the truth. The institution should avoid partocratic relations with different political parties within the state. Being politically inclined towards a certain party can affect democracy in the country. If the Church institutions support a political party, chances are high that the followers of that Church/institution will support or vote for that party due to their loyalty. This, however, erodes the independent democratic choice of an individual

as they will be influenced by the positions of the Church bodies. Thus, it more encouraging for the Church bodies to speak and walk messages of peace, tolerance and respect, which their followers are likely to imitate and live, which in turn is crucial for the development of the nation.

As a faith-based member of civil society, the ZCC should advocate and preach the message of unity and harmony. In so doing, it cultivates the spirit of non-violent engagement in resolving disputes and differences. There is need for the ZCC to continuously call for dialogue among political actors. Even though it attempted to facilitate for dialogue after the end of the 2002 presidential elections, the ZCC should move a step further in its efforts.

In addition, the ZCC should start self-sustaining projects in particular in a polarised political environment to ensure that it can fund its campaigns independently. This will minimise the influence of the external funders on the national programmes that the ZCC might want to embark on.

Church institutions should strike a balance between democracy and other national developmental issues such as empowerment programmes. The balance will erase some of the suspicions that the organisation is ideologically biased towards certain political players or parties.

The ZCC should not (only) be heard or seen when a crisis erupts. The ZCC should not wait to address symptoms of the problem, but should be proactive and find mechanisms that can prevent a crisis. In the event that a crisis has erupted, the ZCC should be part of the solution and not part of the problem. It should be ever-present for the interests of the people. They should act and preach against immoral issues, corruption, sanctions, reaching out to the marginalised groups, for example, the San, Tonga and Doma communities and people living with disabilities. In essence, the church organisations should not be urban-centric but should be broad and include the rural communities as well. They should be seen supporting food for work programmes, educations, books, paying school fees and supporting the elderly.

There is a need to strike a balance on social, economic and political issues rather than concentrate on politics alone. The ZCC should be a mirror of the society and walk, talk and defend the national interests of Zimbabweans. The ZCC needs to fill in the gap left by the government, political parties and individuals in addressing people's plights.

The state should take criticism in the right spirit. The ZCC and other church bodies should have a critical spirit, which is constructive on ideals

of Zimbabweans, and not a criticism spirit, which is destructive and anti-progressive. For example, the pastoral letter "God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed" (2007) raises critical issues on the continued manipulation and closure of democratic space and the selective application of laws such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and Access to Information and Privacy Act (AIPPA). The statement raised signs of fearing that the state was acting in an anti-democratic spirit, which infringed on the freedoms and rule of law that was fought for by the people.

The ZCC must be a Church organisation of Zimbabwe and not a Church organisation in Zimbabwe. A Church organisation in Zimbabwe is an organisation which operates in Zimbabwe but is controlled from outside and serves the interests of the funders and founders, which is detrimental to the development of the nation and effective political engagement.

Conclusion

The journey that the ZCC has sailed through in Zimbabwean politics demonstrates that church institutions indeed have a crucial role and important place to play in development and other national issues. This has been demonstrated by the institution standing for the rights of the oppressed from the colonial times up to the time of writing. The ZCC has been the voice of the majority of Zimbabweans as noted in their pastoral letters where they advocate for peace, tolerance and reconciliation. In its agendas it can be observed that the ZCC has been a developmental partner on social and economic issues. However, the polarised political terrain in Zimbabwe has posed challenges to the effective engagement of the ZCC. Despite its efforts, criticism has been laid on its impartiality and objectivity. In some cases, it has been viewed as a sympathiser of the ZANU PF-led regime and not a sympathiser of Zimbabwe. From another angle, the ZCC has been branded a neo-colonial agent of the West due to its sources of funding. All these developments led the government of the day to be cautious and suspicious when engaging the ZCC. Thus, in the spirit, in pursuit and defence of the interest of Zimbabweans, the ZCC following the above recommendations should continue to be actively and constructively involved in national issues.

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The Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the Ethical Reconstruction of Zimbabwe

Tarisayi A. Chimuka

Background

This chapter examines the activities, programmes or projects of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) aimed at promoting moral rectitude over the last half century. This has to be explored in the general context of church-state relations.[1] The chapter also suggests new ethical directions in the promotion of the ethical life among ordinary citizenry of Zimbabwe. This shall be done through a prospective interpretation of 'ethical reconstruction'. The chapter is premised on the idea that the church cannot stand aloof when society is faced with glaring socio-political challenges.

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[1] The activities of the Church in Zimbabwe cannot be fully understood outside its relationship with the state.

T. A. Chimuka (✉)
National University of Lesotho, Roma, Lesotho

Introduction

This chapter is an appraisal of the role of the church in general and of the ZCC in particular in ethical reconstruction. The argument to be advanced is that the church in general has played the role of 'emergency responses to crises'; hence, some effort needs to be made to do Social Structural Construction (SSC). It is envisaged that such an approach will enable the ZCC to contribute towards national development.

The main focus of the chapter is not so much on the economic or political forms of reconstruction as on values. Many of the efforts aimed at renewal have dwelt on economic progress (Edigheji 2007), political success and/or technological development (Ogungbure 2011). Little attention has been put on Africa's moral development in the face of all these challenges. This is where the ZCC and other faith-based organizations come in. They bring into the fray a salient dimension of reconstruction in the twin spheres of theology and ethics. In pursuance of this objective, the chapter is divided into three sections. The first shall examine the idea of 'reconstruction' in general and 'ethical reconstruction' in particular. The second shall assess the role played by the Zimbabwe Council of Churches in ethical reconstruction. The third and final section shall glean future possibilities for Africa's well-being and moral tone.

Understanding Ethical Reconstruction in the African Context

The term 'reconstruction' has had many renderings. Historically, it has been associated with 'economic development' or development in general (Etzioni 2007: 27). However, Etzioni restricts 'reconstruction' to "restoration of the condition of the assets and infrastructure of an occupied nation or territory to the same or similar state in which they found before the outbreak of hostilities" (Ibid.: 27). An example is the reconstruction of America after the Civil War or reconstruction in Iraq after the Gulf War. In Africa today, the need for reconstruction cannot be over-emphasized as there are many issues requiring urgent attention. Reconstruction is required in light of the many civil wars in Angola, Mozambique, Rwanda, Nigeria or the Darfur region of Sudan (Mateos 2010: 25–27). Serious efforts are required to diffuse Africa's many intra-state conflicts (Bujra 2002). There is also an urgent need to address political (Mamdani 2002) and electoral violence (Bekoe 2010; Motsamai 2010), sexual and

gender-based violence (Chitando and Chirongoma 2013) and corruption (Pillay 2004). Even in those countries where there are no open hostilities and strife, a lot of vice is manifest. This too has to be resolved.

For much of the time, Africa was engaged in struggles for political and economic liberation. The preoccupation with matters of emancipation has spilled into the post-colonial period. African eyes stayed on freedom. From the 1990s there arose a movement, sparked by theologians, calling for reconstruction. They argued that the paradigm of liberation had run its course and needed to give way to reconstruction. The chief architect of this line of thought has been identified as Jesse Mugambi among others. As late as the 1990s, Mugambi had been arguing that Africa needed renewal in terms of her key values:

> Reconstruction is the new priority for African nations in the 1990s. The churches and their theologians will need to respond to this new priority in relevant fashion, to facilitate this process of reconstruction. The process will require considerable efforts of reconciliation and confidence-building. It will also require reorientation and retraining. (Mugambi 1991: 36)

Mugambi maintains that the twenty-first century should be one of rebuilding and renovation. For Mugambi, this awakening in Africa is comparable to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Europe where the Renaissance and the Reformation took place. Villa-Vicencio (1992) also ropes in the idea of reconstruction. He adopts the idea of the Israelite post-exilic mode of life characterized by rebuilding to the situation in Africa. Vellem (2007) also gives a unique perspective into the understanding of reconstruction in black theology. For him, the concept reconstruction translates to *umvuselelo* in Zulu (Ibid.: 13). I suppose this would be synonymous to *rumutsurudzo* (reawakening) in Shona. Seasonal plants such as *furi* or *mufandichimuka* (resurrection bush) best depict the idea of reconstruction as they have unparalleled propensities for rejuvenation. These plants rejuvenate during spring but go scotch dry during the hot and dry season. Africa too, the imagery goes, like *furi/mufandichimuka* (*resurrection bush*), is undergoing renewal and rebirth. In short, Africa has commenced on a process of reconstruction. There is a need to confront oppressive economic and political structures in Africa as this is a sure way of reconstruction. Thus, in reconstruction theology, we see a lot of effort to promote the African renaissance. Africa has been depicted as simmering in crises of sorts. According to Chitando:

The continent has continued to languish under the label of "underdeveloped countries" that are euphemistically being (re)classified as "emerging economies". Instead of emerging, most African economies are submerging under the deluge of globalization, mismanagement, corruption and a litany of other problems. Poverty, extreme human rights violations and civil unrest appear to have attained permanent resident status in Africa. (Chitando 2009: 133)

Arguably, reconstruction theorists have a different tenor in their approach to the subject. However, in all these various ways, there is a core belief that the churches can make a meaning contribution to the African future. This future is painted with bright colours! These are manifest in social, political and economic life. It is in light of the above that the activities of the ZCC in promoting positive social values will be assessed. The section below devotes some attention to this.

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches in Ethical Reconstruction Efforts

It is a mammoth task to assemble all church groupings in Zimbabwe. However, one can understand these churches through their affiliation to ecumenical agencies such as the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC), the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) or the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC). Notwithstanding the problems of nomenclature, there is a sense in which one may construe the ZCC as a fellowship of Christian Churches and faith-based organizations that worship God through Jesus Christ based on the Holy Scriptures.[2] Its founding goal since formation in 1964 has always been "bringing together churches and Christian organizations for joint action, witness and coordination, particularly to adopt a united common response to the political, socio-economic challenges".[3] From the aims alone, one can decipher that the ZCC is action-oriented, and by implication ethical, since all actions may in the end be judged as good or bad, right or wrong to the extent that these actions are evaluated as impacting on the vision of either the good life or the life of happiness. The membership list of the ZCC is quite extensive.[4]

[2] See caption on the ZCC homepage at www.zcc.co.zw.
[3] See aims of ZCC at their homepage at www.zcc.co.zw.
[4] Here is a list of the member Churches—(1) African Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, (2) African Methodist Episcopal Church, (3) African Independent Church, (4) African Reformed

What has the assemblage of churches been doing in the last 50 years in the reconstruction of the country's moral values? Admittedly, the Zimbabwean Church's involvement in socio-political issues in this country has a considerably long history dating back to the liberation struggles. The church has voiced its concern over oppression of citizens by the Rhodesian government. This involvement is still pertinent in the present and it is hoped that it will continue in the future. However, in this chapter, the ZCC's participation in ethical reconstruction needs to be placed under the spotlight.

Ethical reconstruction has been restricted to refer to the restoration of certain moral values that were probably lost due to certain social upheavals. Ethical reasoning has basically been divided into two broad groupings—those which promote the well-being of other people and those that weaken the well-being of others (Paul and Elder 2005: 4). Ordinarily, actions of the first category receive our praise but those of the second our criticism if not outright condemnation.

The ethical considerations in question are those of a global or structural nature. They are important to us because they affect the well-being and quality of life of citizens. These include issues of social justice, that is to say, the processes and distribution of social goods produced by society.[5]

Are these production and distribution processes fair? Are social inequalities and deprivations in the said processes unavoidable?[6] Whereas some theorists have underlined the goals of ethical reconstruction as the need to uphold the Christian twin ethical values of integrity and faithfulness

Church, (5) Anglican Diocese of Central Zimbabwe, (6) Anglican Diocese of Harare, (7) Anglican Diocese of Manicaland, (8) Anglican Diocese of Matebeleland, (9) Anglican Dioceses of Masvingo, (10) Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe, (11) Christian Marching Church, (12) Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, (13) Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, (14) Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (Eastern Diocese), (15) Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (Central Diocese), (16) Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (Western Diocese), (17) Independent African Church (Mushakata), (18) Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, (19) Presbyterian Church of Africa, (20) Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, (21) Salvation Army, (22) United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, (23) United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, (24) United Methodist Church, (25) Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, (26) Ziwezano Church (adapted from the ZCC website).

[5] This idea is discussed in the document published in 2006 by the International Forum for Social Development entitled "Social Justice in an Open World: The role of the United Nations", pp. 1–157.

[6] Ibid., p. 1.

(Kaulemu 2014), others have advocated for the complete elimination of corruption (Stuckelberger 2010). Even though the political arena has been constructed for politicians, some theorists see the need for the church's role in ethical reconstruction. As a matter of fact, the churches are indeed involved in politics. Where violent conflicts would have erupted, the church needs to play a role in reconciliation (Bloomfield et al. 2003). From the foregoing definitions, it is evident that ethical reconstruction has a wide spectrum. The zone of values is quite loaded. As such, when ethical reconstruction is taken seriously, there is a need to ask whether Zimbabwe may be regarded as a 'community of values'.

For the 50 years of its existence the ZCC has done a tremendous amount of work, all emanating from its key founding values. From its inception, the ZCC, in collaboration with other faith-based organizations, has been involved with advocacy work. The major goal was to make Zimbabwe habitable to all citizens. This idea was reiterated by the Heads of Denominations Declaration:

> We, the Churches in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC) and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) reaffirm our conviction that all human beings are born with God given inalienable rights. It is therefore the duty of every Government to ensure that conducive environments are created so that citizens are able to exercise these rights and in the process to attain their potential. The church has a mandatory call to be the voice of the voiceless, to offer pastoral services to the nation and be part of the reconstruction process.[7]

The advocacy wok is quite wide, ranging from human rights to peace, from advocating for political participation to reconciliation, from democracy to economic development and so forth. The role of advocacy played by the ZCC is seen more conspicuously in the establishment of Justice for Peace Advocacy (JPA) in 1994. The main function of JPA was the training of the populace on civic issues. It also provided economic, political and legal assistance to less privileged citizens. The Justice for Peace Advocacy unit's chief aim is to create total awareness among citizens on matters of human rights as well as encourage the populace to participate in civic affairs.

[7] See a press statement by the Head of Christian Denominations at http://masvingo.anglican.org/pdf/epoizstatement.pdf.

There were times, however, in between when the ZCC and the other churches were silent in the face of government intolerance to opposition parties. A case in point was the occurrence of politically motivated crimes between January and July of 2000 during the run-up to the parliamentary elections and the presidential elections of June 2002. The church was initially quiet in the wake of these acts of violence, perhaps due to fear or disunity. In this respect the church may be criticized for failing to promote its prophetic role (Zakeyo 2012: 8). What explains this silence? According to Zakeyo, the ZCC was paralysed by its own internal leadership squabbles and increasing isolation from partners both locally and internationally (Ibid.: 9). The net effect was that the ZCC had become incapacitated to the extent that by the 1990s it had to stop its promotional campaigns for democracy, constitutional reforms and economic justice. In 1998, the ZCC stopped supporting the National Constitution Assembly (NCA), an organization which had been formed and housed at its premises! So, when the wave of violence broke out in 2000, the ZCC was in no position to condemn it from a position of impartiality.

The ZCC picked itself up and led an international peace observation mission for the parliamentary elections in June 2000. Through its spokesperson/General Secretary, Densen Mafinyane, the ZCC observed that the electoral process was conducted in a mature and peaceful manner. He also stressed that the conditions were conducive for a free and fair election (Ibid.: 10). In his words, Mafinyane said:

> We were very impressed by the dignity and maturity displayed by our voters during the election days and we would want that spirit to prevail. In the meantime we are appealing once again to all political parties (party) leaders to urge their supporters to accept the election results.

This was way after the violence had taken place and the damage had already been done; some citizens had been assaulted or crippled, and in other cases lives had been lost!

However, in 2005, the ZCC together with others took a stance against Operation Murambatsvina (Sweep clean all dirt). The organization decried the wanton destruction of property and the ill-treatment of the poor. It is in this context that the ZCC, the EFZ and the ZCBC joined forces to become Heads of Christian Denominations to promote a joint ecumenical front. Together in 2006, they produced the Zimbabwe We Want document which sought to spell out the national vision.

The ZCC, in conjunction with others, has also been very vocal against election as well as sexual and gender-based violence. These efforts have been premised on the understanding that the church cannot remain idle when situations are getting out of hand:

> In both colonial and independent Zimbabwe, the churches have sought to avert violence and promote peace using various mechanisms of engaging with both the perpetrators and victims of violence. The three major church groupings of the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) and the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC), as well as their partner organizations have denounced violence against a background of state leadership and media that have always felt that the clergy are playing a dangerous game that they should not indulge in. Church action and initiatives have to a large extent demonstrated the church's courage to confront government on violence matters as well as confirmed that the mission of the church is not merely to preach the gospel, but to stand with ordinary people in their hour of need. (CCSF[8] 2012: 1)

It was in this context that the church, which includes the ZCC, mastered the courage to confront political leaders and the government, even when the latter felt offended by the move. Media houses were awash with stories about violence. The violence in question cut through the marrow of society into families and personal relationships. Regrettably, some of the members of the churches were involved; hence the ZCC and other faith-based organizations could not just fold their arms and watch. In 2011, for example, an arm of the War Veterans Association led by Jabulani Sibanda went about in Masvingo beating up people. In other instances, the media would report of the rowdy behaviour of the Mbare-based Chipangano shadowy group. In Bulawayo, there were media reports of intra-party violence at an Movement for Democratic Change Congress. In Mashonaland Central and other provinces, 'political bases' were established where torture was meted on people suspected of defecting to the opposition political parties. At these bases also, there were reports of human rights violations including the sexual abuse of young women (CCSF: 2). So, the ZCC and others had to intervene to try and quell the violent activities which threatened its members and the Zimbabwean society at large.

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[8] This is an abbreviation of the Church and Civil Society Forum—an affiliate of the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO), based in Harare.

The ZCC worked tirelessly to attack rampant corruption in government. In a Pastoral Letter of March 23, 2006, the organization admonished the government to take responsibility and be accountable for all its decisions and actions. Part of the letter read:

> The majority of our people now live in abject poverty, are unemployed and are severely threatened with hunger and diseases. God bestowed enough wealth in Zimbabwe to enable His people to live life in its fullness; hence we call on Zimbabweans who are the stewards of God's wealth to avail it for all Zimbabweans. In instances where investigations have been done to establish the cause of our situation the results have pointed to bad governance, unjust laws, corruption, lack of integrity and the unfair distribution of resources as some of the root causes. (ZCC Pastoral Letter, March 23, 2006)

Speaking specifically against the vice, the Pastoral Letter observed that corruption thrived in an environment of religious and moral laxity. It also thrived where there was weak or no application of the rule of law and the offenders had the impression that they were safe and could easily get away. Yet, the impact of the scourge on the national economy was momentous (ZCC Pastoral Letter, 2006).

In the document "The Zimbabwe We Want" (HOCD 2006), the churches laid bare a vision of a better Zimbabwe. Beginning with a prognosis of the Zimbabwean crisis, the heads of Christian Churches noted that the government of the day lacked a vision of a better Zimbabwe and was blighted by oppressive laws, economic mismanagement, corruption as well as weak government policies (8–11). The church leaders thus advocated for respect of human rights, good governance, justice, promotion of the common goods among others (28). The leaders emphasized the need for recognition of certain core values necessary for national reconstruction. In this regard, they recognized the centrality of ethics in the reconstruction of Zimbabwe. As they put it:

> Values are fundamental convictions and standards by which particular actions are judged as good or desirable and which therefore act as general guides to behaviour. Values help us to decide how we as Zimbabweans should live and what we should treasure. (17)

The values encapsulated in the documents include promoting the integrity of both individuals and the nation (17), toleration of difference (18), peace, respect for persons and their freedoms (19), good

governance, justice and the rule of law (25). The church leaders implored political leaders to promote a national programme for development irrespective of political affiliation. As Chitando puts it:

> The church leaders pleaded with the politicians to consider the welfare of ordinary men, women and children—and they maintained that there was more to unite the different political actors than to divide them. (Chitando 2011: 44)

Ethical Reconstruction, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the Future of Zimbabwe

The ZCC has for the last 50 years been working tremendously to build a Zimbabwean citizenry according to sound theological and moral principles. As attested already in the preceding sections of this chapter, the road to this end has been winding, bumpy and at times blocked. However, a conspicuous element in the capital of religion that the ZCC also taps into is resilience (Ter Haar and Ellis 2006: 351). The church in general and the ZCC in particular remained resolute in their demands for a better Zimbabwe. As a result, we ended up with a chequered of history church-state relations. Departing from the traditional paradigm of meek compliance, the church began to make serious moral demands on the government. In this respect, clashes were inevitable!

Since the ZCC has been channelling efforts to building a citizenry worthy of a Christian way of life, it would be prudent to shed light into the moral point of view that they aspire to achieve. Biblical ethics in general or Christian ethics in particular deals with the nature of goodness as prescribed by scripture and ends with God.

In so far as the ZCC was advocating for justice and the respect for human rights in an emerging democracy such as Zimbabwe, the organization was promulgating the good life in Christ. Jesus Christ once announced that he had come to give a more fulfilling life (John 10:10). Freedom is a fundamental Christian value, which the church in general and the ZCC in particular are promoting. Free individuals, worthy of respect and leading meaningful lives, make good and dependable Christians. Thus the state has a moral duty to make this happen. Assuming that Zimbabwe is willing to promote liberal democracy in the running of state affairs and

notwithstanding the conflict between Christianity and liberalism,[9] it follows that the efforts by the ZCC to foster liberal values in Zimbabwean society need to be commended. Historically and in a general sense, liberalism has meant recognizing the autonomy of individuals to pursue their life projects unhindered by excessive government controls (Siegel 2011: 7). Any genuine liberal democracy, as John Dewey would say, must respect the moral significance of active individual citizens (Dewey 1948: 181). It is when these free individuals interact practically that they develop a shared vision of life and find means of communicating this shared reality (Phillips et al. 2004: 635). In other words, citizens must to be free to participate in the affairs of the state in so far as their lives are impacted on by such affairs and to the extent that they find meaning in these affairs (Chimuka 2013: 65). Thus, the ZCC envisions a state of affairs where individuals are free to worship God and to lead full and meaningful lives.

Apart from the individual, the social environment needs to be conducive for the good life. In this regard the state and all social institutions must have moral foundations. Some theorists, notably the monists, identify just one value—say justice or virtue—to be the foundation of all morality, but others, the pluralists, allow for a plurality of values.[10] We need not forget theorists who adopt the perspective of culturally specific moralities (Morton 2008: 6). The state as an institution or its subsidiary units is a moral entity in which citizens are supposed to lead meaningful lives. It too must be founded on sound moral principles and/or values. Inasmuch as the ZCC would be promoting the holding of fair elections, maintenance of the rule of law, the production of a people-driven constitution and clamouring for good governance and the putting to an end of state-sponsored violence, the organization would be calling on the state to be moral. The call for the state to be moral would be indicative of the church's bid to make Zimbabwe an ethically constituted entity, where morals in general and Christian values in particular run through the fabric of the entire society.

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[9] J. Gresham Machen, the late professor of the New Testament in Westminster Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, on November 3, 1921, reflected on the controversy between Christianity and Liberalism. The primary problem, he noted, was that liberalism subscribes to naturalistic theories of human nature whereas Christianity ascribes all human endowments to God the creator.

[10] In the work *Moral Foundations Theory*, Jesse Graham, Jonathan Haidt, Sena Koleva and Matt Motyl claim that pluralism is the best scientific foundation for moral values. See their view at www.bcf.usc.edu/~jessegra/papers/GHKMIWD.inpress.MFT.AESP.pdf.

However, in carrying out the duty of promoting morality in society there has always been the danger of division in the fraternity of the church. Some church groupings took radical steps in denouncing government failures, but others were very conciliatory and cajoling smoothly. In the end the church and indeed the ZCC could not stand as a united front against the government's moral failings. There was also the constant threat of government repression. As Chitando has noted, disunity amongst the Christian denominations has meant the impossibility of speaking with one voice against government (2011: 46). Fear of victimization by the government also hampered the efforts of the ZCC to deliver. In such a scenario, would the ZCC be expected to be effective? Now, if the ZCC or the church gets intimidated and in turn abrogates its duty of moral censorship in society, who, then to use Juvenal's phrase, "will guard the guardians"?[11]

Conclusion

In light of the above challenges, the ZCC needs to step up the efforts to promote good and effective leaders in government (Chitando 2011: 46), the creation of a conducive social and political and environment (Zakeyo 2012: 14), the cessation of violence before and after elections and economic well-being of the citizens among others. The ZCC, and the church at large, needs to promote genuine reconciliation among Zimbabweans. The psychological scars of the war of liberation, the Matabeleland debacle and the periodic pre- and post-election violence are all episodes in the country's history in which healing and restoration are urgently needed. One wonders whether the church in general and the ZCC in particular has the capacity to bring this about. This reminds me of "*Mupandawana*"[12] (which literally means 'one gives from what one gets, if one gets'). *Mupandawana* reminisces the idea that if the church in Zimbabwe, and the ZCC in particular, is in disarray and is itself in perpetual tension, there is no way it can bring about reconciliation and national healing (Chimuka

[11] Who Will Guard the Guardians is a Latin phrase traditionally attributed to the Roman poet Juvenal, and arguably associated with the philosophy of Plato, who suggested that those entrusted to be guardians of the state can be relied upon to guard themselves. One wonders whether the government of Zimbabwe or politicians in general can be morally responsible enough to create the best conditions for all citizens!

[12] The Gutu District Growth point was so named after one of the sons of the Gumbo/ Madyirapazhe clan.

2008: 82). Yet, this is what Zimbabwe desperately needs at the moment. In addition, assuming that Zimbabwe has developed a common vision of the good life, the ZCC and the church at large will have to creatively design educational programmes for citizen education on matters to do with that selected social framework. If, as I suspect, the liberal democratic model is adopted for the running of state affairs, then the citizens need to imbibe and practise liberal democratic values. Ethical leadership will ensure that citizens have a clear course of action laid out for them.

Although the good life is envisioned differently, a moral framework based on the said governance model must be present, allowing people to develop towards their self-actualization and indeed the free worship of God. This responsibility is what the ZCC and the church at large must embrace as it trudges into the future. With a sound ethical foundation, Zimbabwe can develop without limit!

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Church-Related Hospitals and Health-Care Provision in Zimbabwe

Sophia Chirongoma

BACKGROUND

As noted by Chitando and Klagba ([2013](#)), human beings all over the world seek health and well-being. This chapter seeks to foreground the fundamental role played by church-related hospitals in facilitating health care in Zimbabwe. The focus of the chapter is to explore how church-related hospitals under the umbrella body Zimbabwe Association of Church-Related Hospitals (ZACH) have contributed towards sustaining the health-care system in Zimbabwe. ZACH is a medical arm of church hospitals and clinics in the country. It falls under the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC). The chapter reiterates that it is impossible to discuss the state of Zimbabwe's health system without linking it to the socio-political and economic situation; these three are inseparable and they have a strong bearing on the country's health system (Kim et al. [2000](#)). It argues that access to health care is critical to the health dimension, particularly under the HIV and AIDS epidemic environment. Hence, the

S. Chirongoma (✉)

Religious Studies Department, Midlands State University, Gweru, Zimbabwe

Research Institute for Theology and Religion (RITR), College of Human Sciences, University of South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria, South Africa

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discussion is anchored upon how ZACH, guided by its mission statement, envisages a healthy society in which all people in Zimbabwe have access to sustainable, high-quality and holistic health-care delivery.

The vantage point of this chapter is that whereas the contribution of Christian missionaries to African education in Zimbabwe has received considerable scholarly attention, not enough attention has been paid to the role played by Christian missionaries and Christian institutions in the field of African health care in Zimbabwe. As noted by Zvobgo (1986) and Magezi (2012), this is all the more surprising, especially when considered in light of the fact that medical missionaries relieved a great deal of suffering among Africans in colonial Zimbabwe, particularly in the rural areas where initially government hospitals and clinics were either very few or non-existent. This same trend has persisted in the post-colonial era, particularly during the peak of the humanitarian crisis in 2008 when public health-care facilities were closed or offered very limited services; virtually, mission hospitals, church-owned clinics and some private health-care facilities were the only options for health care that "moved ahead in faith" to alleviate pain, suffering and death.

Introduction and Background

The word "church" comes from the Greek noun, *to kuriakon*, used first for "the house of the Lord," and then of his people (Clowney 1988). It is always used in the Bible to translate the Greek word *ekklesia*, referring to an assembly of people (Hill 1988). *Ekklesia* (noun) is a word derived from the verb *ekkaleo* meaning to summon or to call out. The closest English equivalent of the word is convocation, meaning a calling together or an assembly. As noted by Magezi (2012), whilst technically the meaning of the term church refers to a group of God's people considered at any level from local to universal, in its daily use, the word is used interchangeably in three ways, namely, local assembly or congregation, denomination and universal church. In this chapter, the term church will be used interchangeably; in some instances, it refers to the contributions of particular denominations in Zimbabwe to the health-care system and in other cases the term church will be used to refer to the universal church in view of how biblical scriptures advocating for Christian involvement in holistic healing do not focus on one particular congregation, but on all who confess to be Christians.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the word "health" refers to "a complete state of physical, mental, spiritual and social

wellbeing and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity" (Pilch 2000: 24). This definition has not been amended since its inception in 1946 and it is the same definition that will be adopted in this chapter. Many scholars in the church-related health and development sector submit that churches are playing a critical role in health care (Fossett 2004; Foster 2010; Green et al. 2002; Magezi 2012; Zvobgo 1986). This chapter endeavours to add to these scholarly voices by highlighting the role of ZACH in facilitating health care in Zimbabwe. It foregrounds the health challenges encountered by the majority of Zimbabweans due to the near collapse of the public health-care system, particularly during the past decade (2000–2010), and how ZACH has sought to provide comprehensive health care amidst the trying times in Zimbabwe. However, before embarking on exploring the role of ZACH in the current era, it is important to give some background information on early missionary health care in the African continent, paying particular attention to their work in Zimbabwe.

Missionary Health Care in Africa with a Special Focus on Zimbabwe

According to Jean Marc Ela (1989), Africans are more and more preoccupied by social problems; the challenges of daily life crowd in on believers. Research has established that health is their priority (75%), even before family (48%) or job security (33%). Like other Africans, Zimbabweans place an integral value on their health and well-being. Wills (1985) argues that the opening up of missionary expeditions to the Zambezi was a direct result of Doctor David Livingstone's first journey to Africa and the appeals which he made to Britain on his return. Following in the footsteps of Dr. Livingstone, early missionaries were very enthusiastic to provide medical services. As Wills (1985: 97) succinctly explains, "the whole character of Doctor Livingstone's work, with his insistence on medicine, practical pursuits and healthy trade, left its stamp on later missionary enterprises." Missions have always been the primary providers of health care for Africans. Care for the bodily welfare of the people has always been an integral part of the Christian mission. Missionaries always sought and still seek to cure people from their ailments. Hugo Soderstrom (1984: 15) also adds that "when a missionary left to settle and build a mission in the bush, he was usually equipped with a box containing medicines. And even if he possessed a marginal medical knowledge he had to use his knowledge and medicines to the last drop."

Historically, church-based medical care developed as part of the Christian mission "to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to heal" (Luke 9:2). The traditional mission station included a church, a school and a hospital (Green et al. 2002). According to Zvobgo (1996), the success of Christianity in Africa, particularly in Zimbabwe, had a lot to do with its provision of education and health care. Gelfand (1973: 109–124) argues that the medical arm of the Christian mission services in Africa constitutes a significant part of the total contribution. Ela (1989) reiterates that the history of Christian missions in Africa is inseparable from medical and health programmes. Ela notes that about two-thirds of the Roman Catholic congregations operating in Africa were dedicated to medical work. "In time, each mission acquired a clinic as regularly as it built a school and the arrival of religious sisters to staff the clinic was usually the determining factor" (Ela 1989: 75). G. H. Wilson (1994: 302) puts it this way, "One feels that the medical work is the solid asset of the missionary work here … the care of the sick and afflicted without thought of reward or return bears witness to Christ as it did in Galilee long ago."

According to Feierman and Janzen (1992), the nineteenth-century missionaries believed that their medical work carried on the healing work of Christ and medical doctors were seen as the true successors of Christ the healer, the one who proclaimed the gospel message, "Heal the sick and say to them, the good news of God is at hand" (Luke 10:9). In Acts 10:38, the scripture relates how Jesus "went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devils." Albert Schweitzer popularised the concept of the missionary doctor, noting that many missionaries felt themselves able to disinfect a wound or hand out aspirin or doses of quinine (Ela 1989).

In Zimbabwe, the first mission station was set up at Inyathi in September 1859, when Robert Moffat led the first group of missionaries into the country (Bhebe 1979). According to Soderstrom (1984), these mission stations gradually and eventually transformed the African landscape in terms of introducing educational and medical facilities. In Masvingo province, the major referral hospitals were erected mainly by missionaries, for instance, Berejena Mission hospital was built by the Roman Catholic missionaries and the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) missionaries built Morgenster Mission hospital. The DRC missionaries from South Africa led by Revd A. A. Louw founded their first mission station at Morgenster Mission on 9 September 1891 and it became their centre for missionary activities, leading to the erection of a school, hospital, teachers' training college and a school for the deaf (Zvobgo 1991). At the time of writing,

Morgenster Hospital was the major church-owned referral centre in Masvingo province; it is located just about 20 kilometres out of the provincial city Masvingo, which houses the only other major referral centre, Masvingo General Hospital, a public hospital.

Missionaries pioneered bio-medical health-care provision in all rural communities in Zimbabwe; for instance, the first permanent medical mission with a doctor was established at Mount Selinda, Chipinge, in 1893 by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission (Zvobgo 1986). Doctor W. L. Thompson arrived at Mt. Selinda Mission Hospital in 1893 to work amongst the Ndau population (Gelfand 1973). In Masvingo province, one of the most prominent doctors was Doctor J. T. Helm who came to Morgenster Mission in 1894 under the DRC missionaries. He became a leading figure in facilitating medical care to the Shona people and was well known throughout the country. In addition to his medical work at Morgenster Hospital, Dr. Helm started a leper settlement at Chikarudzo on Morgenster Mission Farm in 1899. For twenty years, Dr. Helm treated the sick until his departure in 1914 due to failing health (Zvobgo 1991). Both of these mission hospitals (Mount Selinda and Morgenster) in time became the major referral centres in their districts and continue to provide essential medical services to the community up to the time of writing.

In 1928, the government decided to provide grants for the first time to missionary societies engaged in medical work among Africans. At Morgenster Mission, the John Helm Memorial Hospital was completed in 1930 with beds for thirty in-patients, and a three-year training course for African student nurses was also introduced (Van der Merwe 1953). In 1957, a hospital with fifty-two beds for tuberculosis patients was added to the main hospital at Morgenster (Van der Merwe 1981). Patients came from all over Southern Rhodesia, as well as from Mozambique, Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Bechuanaland and the Transvaal, for treatment (Van der Merwe 1953). There were two main reasons why patients came to Morgenster from different areas and countries; "Firstly, they were attracted by the medical service rendered in love and secondly, this service was offered by men and women who were professionally capable" (Van der Merwe 1981: 87). This was the interpretation by the missionaries, but it appears to be a fair evaluation of the popularity of health services that they offered.

The Wesleyan Methodists began medical work among Africans in colonial Zimbabwe when they opened their first hospital at Kwenda Mission in 1913. In spite of the closure of Kwenda Hospital, the Wesleyans did not

abandon the ministry of healing. They began medical work at Waddilove Training Institution when Sister Madge Dry arrived in May 1927 to train African nurses (Zvobgo 1986). By 1930, five mission hospitals (Mount Selinda, Morgenster, Mnene, Nyadiri and Waddilove) had been established in Zimbabwe (Soderstrom 1984). Gutu Mission Hospital was subsequently established and clinics were also established at smaller mission stations (Zvobgo 1986).

The foregoing discussion clearly shows that churches form one category of faith-based organisations (FBOs) or community-based organisations (CBOs) that have been providing health care in Africa. Most Zimbabweans are Christian, and strong connections with religion facilitate the significant role that mission hospitals and clinics play in providing health services (Magezi 2012). The next section explores some historical developments impacting on the Zimbabwean people's health and well-being.

LAND APPROPRIATION AND MISSIONARY HEALTH CARE IN ZIMBABWE

Great social stability characterised Zimbabwe prior to the settler-colonial epoch that began in 1890. Various Shona tributary societies and states had prospered for centuries and by the nineteenth century, the strong Ndebele state had established a distinctive tradition of barter trade, partly through the influence of Portuguese, Chinese and Arab merchants (Bond and Manyanya 2003). The basis of their production and the backbone of Zimbabwe's economy was the land. Unfortunately, this social stability was suddenly disrupted in 1890 by the Pioneer Column's invasion led by Cecil John Rhodes, the leader and owner of the British South Africa Company (BSAC). Land appropriation by the BSAC (1889–1923), which continued during the period of the "Responsible Government" ushering in the "White settlers' self-governing colony" (1923–1952), impacted heavily on the majority of the Zimbabwean people's health and well-being, particularly because they were pushed from their fertile and habitable land to areas that were not very good for human habitation, farming and livestock rearing (Kriger 1992). The passage of the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 divided the country into two roughly equal parts, putting most of the fertile land in the hands of the settlers. One half was for the tiny white minority, where no black was allowed to own property or even reside

without permission, and the rest containing the poorer soils, and receiving the lowest rainfall, for the black original inhabitants of Zimbabwe (McLaughlin 1996).

Inadequate and inferior government provision of health and education for Africans compared with Europeans aroused African indignation towards the settler regime. Government provision and financing of health services was biased in favour of urban health services for Europeans throughout the pre-independence period. The Rhodesian government did not build any hospitals in African areas. It was mainly concerned about the welfare of the white population. The government found it cheapest and easiest to let the various missions care for the health of the African people (Soderstrom 1984). For instance, in 1976 the government provided one hospital bed for every 1261 Africans compared with a corresponding 1:255 ratio for whites. Government grants to mission schools and hospitals remained small when compared with state expenditure on the Europeans' needs, and missions continued to rely chiefly on overseas funds (Kriger 1992). There was an enormous discrepancy in the distribution of the health budget; although Salisbury contained 9% of the population, it absorbed almost 30% of the annual expenditure. Medical personnel also responded to market pressures, which in this case meant racial lines. During this period, the country had 855 doctors, or roughly one doctor per 8000 head of population. However, 280 of these were chiefly engaged in caring for the registered members of white medical societies, implying that there was one doctor per 830 white people. For the rural population, the ratio was one doctor per 100,000 African patients (Hitchens and Stephen 1991). Missions provided two-thirds of all rural beds, which is still the case in the present era. The Rhodesian government encouraged African councils to provide health care in the rural areas.

Since most rural populations were cramped in Tribal Trust Lands and some had sought refuge in urban areas, there were population explosions, leading to very high infant mortality rates. Infant mortality during this period was estimated at 122 per thousand for blacks and 17 per thousand for whites. The malnutrition rates were very alarming, mainly because Africans were packed into Tribal Trust Lands with poor soil and little capacity for producing more than subsistence food or in the urban areas where they lacked any form of sustainable livelihood. During the colonial period in most rural settings in Africa, Western medical care was usually available only in missionary facilities and mission vehicles often served as ambulances (Ela 1989). The unfolding of events is captured by Soderstrom

(1984: 182) as follows, "As the first major infiltration of liberation forces was beginning to bring all the issues into the burning focus of a guerrilla war at the end of 1972, the church found itself involved in the course of the liberation struggle, especially the mission stations in the rural communities." Consequently, it was inevitable that most mission hospitals provided the liberation fighters with medical supplies and cared for some of the wounded fighters. This made them very unpopular with the colonial authorities, forcing most of the missions to close down during this period.

A number of missionaries belonging to various denominations in Zimbabwe were killed during the war. The first three in December 1976 were Roman Catholic priests. About forty missionaries, their relatives included, lost their lives between 1976 and 1980. Most people subscribe to the notion that the murders were committed by government soldiers. Soderstrom (1984: 182) explains, "Many missionaries supplied guerrillas with food, medicine and medical care, and were generally sympathetic and were a more obvious target for the Rhodesians than the guerrillas, many of whom had been educated at mission schools."

St Albert's is one good example of a mission that worked hand in glove with the guerrillas, providing them with supplies from the mission, organising meetings with local communities and assisting in recruiting youth to join them. As a result, it was the first victim of "Protected Villages," which were commonly referred to as "Keep(s)" by the local people since they were enclosures intended to isolate the nationalist guerrillas from the rural population.[1] The Rhodesian forces moved into the mission unannounced, surrounded the school with barbed wire and installed powerful searchlights, and the school was used as a holding and interrogation centre for approximately 4000 inhabitants of the surrounding community (McLaughlin 1991).

After the trial at St Albert's, these villages became widespread; by mid-1974, approximately 47,000 people in Chiweshe, north of Salisbury, had been moved into twenty-one villages and another 13,500 in Madziwa had been relocated in ten villages. There were approximately a total of 70,000 people in such villages; most of them were along the Zambezi Valley. Intended to isolate the guerrillas, this counter-insurgency measure resulted in thousands of peasant families being moved into guarded

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[1] For more information on protected villages, see N. J. Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

settlements where they lived in poor and crowded conditions, allowing little meaningful activity. Due to stringent curfew regulations, it was difficult to cultivate enough food. Starvation was a great plague, because the curfew hindered people from ploughing their fields. The security forces often destroyed the food stores when they suspected that the guerrillas would get the supplies (Soderstrom 1984). There were inadequate sanitary conditions and people were starved most of the time. They suffered brutality at the hands of the camp guards; women and children were raped and abused (McLaughlin 1996). Poor hygiene and sanitary facilities led to outbreaks of trachoma and typhoid. The death toll during the fighting rose due to all those who were maimed and injured and those who died from lack of medical care or proper food. Medical personnel were killed for giving medical assistance to the guerrilla soldiers. Some fled for their lives. Most rural clinics and hospitals were forced to close because they were suspected of having treated wounded guerrillas or were suspected of being able to do so. The few that remained open were maintained by the African staff, sometimes at the risk of their lives. Most missionaries who worked in the rural clinics and hospitals were forced to flee and this meant a considerable decrease in the health care offered to the population. As a result, large numbers of people died from untreated injuries, or illnesses for which no preventive or immediate remedial treatment was available (Hansson 1992).

The escalation of the war in 1978 led to an increase in the suffering of the rural population to such an extent that thousands of rural people tried desperately to escape by fleeing to the towns, where they could live free from harassment, torture and possible death. Plastic shelters and appalling deprivation in terms of food, water and sanitation were preferable to life in the rural areas at that time (Auret 1992). Worse still, the Rhodesian Ministry of Health with all its fine hospitals and dedicated staff continued to emphasise curative care to the detriment of preventive care. The 1978/1979 estimates reveal an allocation of 86.7% spending on curative care and only 9% on preventive care (Hitchens and Stephen 1991). Due to such a state of affairs on the eve of independence, when Zimbabwe attained its independence on 18 April 1980 with Robert Gabriel Mugabe as the Prime Minister, one of the government's major priorities was to address the provision of health care and an attempt to smoothen the discrepancies. Mission hospitals were to play a major role in providing health-care services to the majority of the population.

Church-Related Health Institutions Collaborating with the Government During the First Decade of Independence, 1980–1990

As has been highlighted in the preceding sections, health services were highly unequal before independence, with better care and more money spent for the high-income white community who suffered less disease than for the lowest-income rural peasant and commercial farm worker communities who had the highest levels of ill health. Government expenditure per white patient was twice that per black patient and 389 doctors served in towns and cities compared to 11 doctors in rural areas where 80% of the population lived (Loewenson 1989). Because health has always been one of the most important social concerns of Zimbabwean people, the government that came to power in 1980 was quick to address these disparities. Attacking these unfair inequalities and addressing the link between the main health problems and poverty was the priority concern of the government's first health policy, *Planning for Equity in Health* (Ministry of Health [MOH] 1984). The newly formed MOH had great plans for the country. It wanted to implement primary health care all over the country, ensuring that no inhabitant would travel more than 8 kilometres to a health facility. A health-care system was to be built where patients could be referred from one level to the next, beginning from the patient's local clinic near their home (Dahlin 2000). Primary health care was the main vehicle for improving health-care provision and this entailed:

- Health education
- Nutrition education and food production
- The expanded programme on immunisation
- Control of communicable diseases such as diarrhoea, malaria and TB
- Building safe and accessible water supplies and sanitation
- Ensuring adequate generic drug supplies and sanitation
- Providing basic and essential preventive and curative care
- Participation of communities (Loewenson 1998).

Health was linked to development, and communities working with the health sector also mobilised and used increased support for education, particularly female education, safe water and sanitation, better ventilated and maintained housing and improved family food production (Hansson 1996). The general health standards improved significantly. Life

expectancy at birth rose from forty-five years in 1960 to sixty in 1985 (Zimbabwe Human Development Report 2003). Infant mortality dropped from 96 per 1000 live births prior in 1980 to 47 per 1000 in 1990. Maternal mortality was halved to about 168% per 100,000; and diseases like malaria, TB and skin diseases also fell (Loewenson 1998). More health infrastructure was constructed and there was greater access to health care. More qualified personnel entered the system and in the 1980s employment in the health sector grew by an average of 5% per year, to reach 25,000 by 1990. In 1980, there was one health worker for every 467 people and by 1990 there was one for every 391. Much emphasis was placed on preventive and simple curative care such as immunisation campaigns, environmental health and treatment of communicable diseases (TB, STIs), and primary health care services were subsidised. A big shift was achieved between 1980 and 1985 and around 7% to 14% of the MOH budget was allocated to preventive services (Chibanda 1996).

According to Loewenson (1998), these vast improvements were achieved through the corporate effort of several service providers in the country including inter alia:

- The Ministry of Health, the largest provider
- Local government services
- Missions, with thirty mission hospitals and fifty clinics in rural areas
- Industrial services on mines and agro-estates
- The private sector, mainly general practitioners, private clinics and private beds in government hospitals
- Army medical services and
- Voluntary organisations that offered special health inputs (such as rehabilitation).

Investment in health in the early 1980s was most profound at the primary levels. Since the major emphasis lay on primary health care (PHC), the strategy aimed at broadening social participation in health activities. This was heavily drawn from the liberation ideology as indicated by the Ministry of Health's stance, "The guerrilla medical cadres developed an ideology of service to the people and mobilization of masses to promote their own health and this fine tradition will be carried out over (*sic*) in Zimbabwe's health service to improve the people's health in the shortest possible time" (Ministry of Health 1985). The primary mechanism to give effect to a policy of participation in which communities mobilised around

their own health needs was the Village Health Worker (VHW) initiated during the liberation struggle. They were to be trained and spread countrywide, each of them covering about 500–1000 people. The VHW was primarily an agent of positive change through communities mobilising to promote their own health (Dahlin 2000). The VHW would constitute a link between the patients in the villages and the medical staff at the health institutions. A case in point is Bondolfi Mission in Masvingo. The Mission was approached by the local Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front [ZANU (PF)] party leaders to train VHWs elected at public meetings within each village. About 293 VHWs were trained for six months in:

- Nutrition
- Child care
- Hygiene, sanitation and basic home treatment (Loewenson 1998).

They brought about significant achievements in the building of wells and toilets, helped at clinics, organised the feeding of undernourished children and promoted food production. The VHW was backed by a range of other community-based cadres, including community-based distributors in family planning services, health education and STIs. Traditional midwives were trained to perform safe deliveries, recognise complications, promote breast feeding and refer patients to the nearest health centre with the objective of reducing maternal mortality. Together, these community cadres managed to produce considerable achievements in community health. All health services in each district, whether administered by the Ministry of Health, the district council or mission, were integrated (Loewenson 1996).

ESAP,[2] HIV AND AIDS AND DISINTEGRATING HEALTH SERVICES, 1991–1999

The period between 1991 and 1999 ushered in a new era on the Zimbabwean socio- economic and political landscape. The first major and transformative move was the introduction of ESAP, a move that has left its imprints indelibly marked. Throughout the first decade of independence, Zimbabwe's economy was highly regarded by various commentators. The economy grew at an average of 4% per year and substantial gains were made in education and health. Zimbabwe was handling its finances well

[2] The acronym ESAP stands for Economic Structural Adjustment Programme.

and between 1985 and 1989, it had cut its debt service ratio in half. However, because the economy relied heavily on Western financial institutions for funding, the government eventually succumbed to the international pressure to liberalise its economy in order to comply with their international funder's expectations. Consequently, in January 1991, Zimbabwe adopted its ESAP designed primarily by the World Bank. The programme called for the usual prescription of actions advocated by Western financial institutions including:

- Privatisation
- Deregulation
- A reduction of government expenditures on social services and
- Deficit cutting (Zimbabwe Human Development Report 2003).

A country's economy has a strong bearing on the health system. As such, when the HI virus first struck Zimbabwe in 1985, it found in place a "fertile socio-economic ground" in the form of widespread socio-economic vulnerability,[3] which presented an ideal environment for its rapid spread (Zimbabwe Human Development Report 2003). Zimbabwe has experienced one of the world's most severe HIV and AIDS epidemics. Like her Southern African neighbours Botswana and South Africa, Zimbabwe faced a devastating HIV and AIDS epidemic which saw the economically active age group being decimated, and funerals became commonplace in the 1990s (Chitando 2002). As the HIV and AIDS epidemic hit Zimbabwe hard, from 1990 to 1995, per capita spending on health care fell by 20% in real terms (Zimbabwe Human Development Report 1999). Consequently, the country ended up under-spending on health and infrastructure while over-spending on interest, defence and general administration. This was highlighted through a series of workshops organised by the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) on the national budgeting process in Zimbabwe. Through these workshops, it was established that social services had been severely affected by the foreign and domestic debt-servicing burden, with 36% of the budget going

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[3] Socio-economic vulnerability in this context is defined as "a process in which people are subjected to economic and social re-engineering in such a manner that they are left with little or no options of pursuing sustainable socio-economic survival strategies." For more information on this, please see Zimbabwe Human Development Report 2003, *Redirecting our responses to HIV and AIDS: Towards reducing vulnerability-the ultimate war for survival* (University of Zimbabwe Publications: Harare, 2003).

into debt servicing. "Noting large allocations to defence and government ministers' 150% salary increases, the ZCC cynically observed that the politicians who formulate the budgets seek treatment abroad hence; they do not prioritise the national health budget" (Loewenson 1998: 18).

The ESAP failed dismally to produce the positive results it intended to achieve. The main areas targeted for action by ESAP were employment and training, monitoring and evaluation, cost recovery, removing food subsidies and social services. All these had far-reaching repercussions for the economy and the people's health. Most Zimbabweans presented a graphic depiction of the harshness of ESAP, describing it as "a predatory animal such as the lion or hyena that targets unfit animals which they first isolate from the fit ones … ESAP killed the happiness that came with independence" (Thompson 2003: 190). In 1997, a meeting of 300 women from the United Methodist Church in Mutare noted the deterioration of the health services and reiterated that ESAP had brought serious suffering, increased poverty and starvation (Loewenson 1998).

Although Zimbabwe's ESAP was inaugurated in 1991 and expired in 1995, its after effects continue to be felt at the time of writing. It is apparent that the majority of Zimbabweans regarded ESAP as an evil that robbed them of all that had been gained before its inception (Carmody and Taylor 2002). The economic and political crisis engulfing Zimbabwe from the mid-1990s onwards was the result of a combination of factors, chief among them being the deindustrialising effects of ESAP, the intransigent manner in which the Mugabe government sought to respond to this crisis, as well as the outbreak and spread of the HIV and AIDS epidemic. Amidst this crisis, ZACH has continued to play a formidable role in salvaging the crumbling health-care system as will be explicated below. The discussion will give a brief background of ZACH and proceed to highlight its major contributions in the health-care system during this formative period of Zimbabwe's history.

Zimbabwe's Health System in Shambles: Significant Interventions by the Zimbabwe Association of Church-Related Hospitals, 2000–2010

As has been noted in the foregoing discussion; Zimbabwe developed one of the strongest economies and health systems in southern Africa between independence and the mid-1990s. However, economic collapse has led to

a rapid decline in key economic indicators since 1996, impacting heavily on the public health-care system. Life expectancy at birth declined from sixty-one years in 1990 to forty-three years[4] for the period 2000–2005. The impact of HIV and AIDS on life expectancy cannot be over-emphasised; the estimate of forty-three years for Zimbabwe in 2000–2005 was twenty-six years lower than it would have been without HIV and AIDS (Zimbabwe Human Development Report 2003). From 2000 to 2005, gross national income per person fell by 54%. Bryan Callahan (2001: 83–88) catalogues the hardships and tragedies that have shaken the country for years on end:

> Since independence in 1980, Zimbabwe's citizens have staggered under the weight of multiple burdens, including economic recession, IMF sponsored structural adjustments, government corruption, political violence, ethnic tensions, land scarcity, drought, and an HIV/AIDS epidemic that has killed many of the country's brightest and most productive people.

By the end of 2000, the bankrupt government allocated even less of a declining overall budget to rural clinics, only 20%. The government also reduced grants to church-related and local authority hospitals. Spending on preventive health care fell from its peak of 15% of the total health budget in the mid-1980s to 9.9% in 2001 (Loewenson 2000). This had far-reaching repercussions, especially in light of the HIV and AIDS epidemic.

The land invasions also added problems to the pre-existing economic crisis by destroying a substantial portion of commercial agriculture, which provided 45% of the country's foreign exchange revenue and livelihood for more than 70% of the population. This caused a sharp decline in foreign earnings as well as severe food shortages. Since the Zimbabwean government decided to redistribute land without compensating the white commercial farmers who had the land, the international community retaliated by withdrawing aid. All these fuelled the raging fires within the health sector which was already heaving under the sigh of increased burden of diseases, particularly the increasing numbers of HIV- and AIDS-related illnesses and deaths. By 2001, about 3500 Zimbabweans were dying

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[4] This figure was slashed to thirty-three years for women and thirty-seven years for men during the period 2005–2009—the world's lowest. See Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights (ZADHR), ZADHR statement on World Health Day, April 2008. http://www.kubatana.net/html/sectors/zim065.asp?orgcode=ZIM065&year=0&range_start=1 (20 March 2009).

through a combination of poverty, malnutrition and HIV and AIDS per week in an estimated population of 11 million (Loewenson 2000). About 200,000 people (adults and children) are estimated to have died in 2001 (Zimbabwe Human Development Report 2003). These many deaths have important implications for the economy as a whole, by reducing population growth and life expectancy, lowering worker productivity and raising dependency ratios in rural areas since most patients retire to recuperate and sometimes die in the privacy of their rural homes, receiving home-based care from their families.

Primary clinics and district hospitals did not provide medicine for HIV- and AIDS-related illnesses and patients had to travel to larger towns to access such treatment. By 2005, Zimbabwe was reported to have the world's fourth-highest rate of HIV prevalence (IRIN News 2004). The period between 2006 and 2008 was the worst in terms of the humanitarian crisis. Faced with empty coffers, a fast crumbling health delivery system, isolation from the international community and shortages in medical aid scheme benefits, some patients were left to suffer with no relief in sight. The average life expectancy in the country plunged to thirty-seven years for men and thirty-four years for women—these figures being even lower than for Sierra Leone, one of the poorest countries on the face of the planet which is still recovering from a period of bloody civil war (Sokwanele 2008). It is against the backdrop of Zimbabwe's socio-economic and political situation that the fundamental role played by ZACH in the health-care system can be appreciated.

ZACH is a medical arm of Christian churches in Zimbabwe with a board of trustees constituted by the heads of Christian denominations and their representatives. Founded in 1974, its mandate is to assist and support member institutions in the provision of quality health care and service delivery, especially to the most vulnerable groups residing in the rural areas. ZACH represents mission hospitals run by various religious denominations at the national level in Zimbabwe. It is thus an NGO, not-for-profit member-based organisation supporting 126 hospitals and clinics countrywide. ZACH also manages programmes funded by bilateral and multilateral organisations. With government and donor support, mission hospitals and clinics are now the major care providers in rural communities. Six mission hospitals act as district hospitals, providing the only secondary care in a given catchment area. ZACH-affiliated hospitals also operate eighty-six rural health clinics. Mission hospitals play an important role in the Zimbabwean health system, by complementing government

efforts. The mission hospitals, the second most prevalent provider of health-care services in Zimbabwe, are currently operating with significant assistance from the public sector. For purposes of planning service provision, the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare (MOHCW) considers mission hospitals an important component of the delivery of health services in the country since several mission hospitals are also designated district hospitals (ZACH 2010).

ZACH holds meetings with the MOHCW to discuss the role of mission health facilities in rebuilding Zimbabwe's health-care system, and has also contributed to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Health, through lobbying for improved services and resources for mission hospitals. As an association, ZACH supports the planning and coordination of training programmes in medical services of its members. These mission institutions comprise about 25% of the 1080 national health facilities. The ZACH member institutions contribute nearly 38% of the 18,200 national hospital beds which constitutes 68% of the rural hospital bed capacity. Since 70% of Zimbabwe's population lives in rural areas, these mission health facilities play a key role in rural health service provision. Rural areas are generally not very attractive to professional staff unless special packages are involved; the overall vacancy rate at mission hospitals as in July 2010 was 35.3%. ZACH has, in the past, worked with the MOHCW and the European Commission to increase the number of staff (primary care nurses, lab technicians, pharmaceutical technicians and health information officers) and to attract staff (especially district medical officers) through additional incentive packages (ZACH 2010).

The economic collapse in Zimbabwe over the past decade has contributed to significant outmigration. In 2004, the MOHCW reported that nearly 3000 permits were processed for health professionals to enter the United Kingdom. This figure is about 25% of the professional health workforce in the public sector. This migration is fuelled by a number of factors. The most pervasive include:

- The economic crisis in Zimbabwe
- Low wages, especially in comparison to neighbouring countries
- Degradation of general working conditions
- Zimbabwe's strong medical and health service education system which makes graduates highly valued in other countries (Mudyarabikwa and Mbengwa 2006).

The outmigration, abroad or in neighbouring African countries, has included skilled health workers in senior positions that have left their posts for better wages and conditions. Human resources shortages are a main reason why Zimbabwe's public health-care system is currently working at limited capacity (ZACH 2009). By 2008, hyperinflation was causing major disruptions to health financing. ZACH stated in a report for 2008: "Budgets have lost their meaning as prices increase daily, reducing the buying powers of institutions" (ZACH 2009). At that point, basic goods and services such as food, linen, electricity and water were difficult to obtain. Shortages of resources, affordable commodities and transportation had a huge impact on the health system. Food shortages became a major problem, and hospitals had their budgets dramatically reduced (ZACH 2009).

The politically motivated violence following the March 2008 parliamentary and presidential elections also impacted heavily on the already overburdened health-care system.[5] Doctors and nursing staff at rural hospitals were working under conditions of severe stress and many health workers were intimidated; some were specifically instructed by state agents not to treat opposition supporters. Health workers were emotionally traumatised and depressed and some were treating up to sixty victims of torture and violence a day. This reign of terror also forced many people to migrate either out of the country or to other parts of the country.[6] These mass migrations further fuelled HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths. Home-based care (HBC) for HIV-related illnesses was disrupted and interrupted due to the displacement of trained volunteers and clients who facilitated and utilised such services.[7] Zimbabwe's hyperinflation eroded

[5] Most aid organisations had to bring their services to a halt in 2008 after having been given stern warnings by the ruling party militias that threatened to punish any aid workers that would be seen distributing aid in the rural communities; they were all accused of politicking rural folk.

[6] For more information on this subject, see Chirongoma S (2012) "In Search of a Sanctuary: Zimbabwean Migrants in South Africa" in Joel Carpenter (ed) *Walking Together: Christian Thinking and Public Life in South Africa* (ACU Press: Texas).

[7] These disruptions worsened during the infamous Murambatsvina clean-up operation which was initiated in 2005. For more information on this subject, see Chirongoma S (2009) "Operation Murambatsvina (Operation Restore Order): Its Impact and implications in the era of HIV and AIDS in contemporary Zimbabwe" in Ezra Chitando and Hadebe Nontando (eds) *Compassionate Circles: African Women, Theologians Facing HIV:* (Geneva World Council of Churches Publications, 2009).

the salaries of health-care professionals to such an extent that their monthly income was barely enough to cover a day's transport costs.

For the larger part of 2008, the main referral hospitals in the country—Harare Central Hospital and Parirenyatwa Hospital in Harare and Mpilo Hospital and United Bulawayo Hospitals in Bulawayo—were virtually closed (Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights [ZADHR] 2008). Most district hospitals and municipal clinics were barely functioning or closed. Sick people in need of medical attention were being turned away from Zimbabwe's public hospitals and clinics; they were advised to consult private doctors in private facilities. This option was not open to the majority of Zimbabweans already struggling to make ends meet. Private doctors were charging exorbitant fees in foreign currency equivalents of between about US$35 and US$50, far beyond the reach of most people, unemployment rose above 80% and the salaries of those with jobs often did not even cover monthly transport costs (IRIN News 2008). During this time period, health service was provided by the mission hospitals and private clinics, which are numerous and provide a diverse number of health services; however, the number of mission hospitals and private facilities was not, and is not, adequate to provide for the health-care needs of all Zimbabweans (Chitando 2008).

Hyperinflation and dollarisation have impacted patients as well. Some sick people were unable to pay the user fees that hospitals were allowed to charge. However, as enforcement of user fees was not standardised across provinces and across different types of health facilities, it was unclear what impact these fees had on poor and vulnerable populations. Another issue that patients and health workers dealt with was the lack of resources to access transportation to the hospitals and clinics. At the same time, the delivery of health commodities to health facilities was compromised by the lack of funds for vehicles and petrol. Mission hospitals appeared to have been more successful in narrowing their budget gaps and providing more substantive services to their catchment areas, with access to consistent funding from nongovernment sources (ZACH 2009). However, this caused substantial strain on staff, funds and health commodity availability. Furthermore, most mission hospitals were also relatively underfunded, and could not be seen as a reliable alternative for providing health services in case of a future economic crisis (ZACH 2009).

Conclusion

Zimbabwe's health-care system does not exist in isolation from other factors and organisations outside of the health sector. Zimbabwe's socio-economic and political crisis has greatly hampered the government's ability to provide funding to the health sector. Fiscal difficulties have forced the government to cut back on important health priorities such as preventive health care and capital investment. The resilience of church-related facilities in providing care amidst all these challenges over the past few years should be commended. The healing ministry of the church throughout the ages is therefore an evident sign of "moving ahead in faith" even into the future. This chapter resonates with Mbonyinkebe Sebahire (1987) who highlights the emerging theological emphasis of Jesus as healer and doctor in the African context and concludes that healing is part of the ongoing process of liberation to which the Church should be committed. It is befitting to close this chapter by quoting Sebahire (1987: 14), who argues that healing involves the whole community: "Indeed, it is the support of the believing community which makes health and salvation available. The faith which founds and which structures the new community is the very source of healing."

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Church Women's Organisations: Responding to HIV and AIDS in Contemporary Zimbabwe

Tabona Shoko and Tapiwa P. Mapuranga

INTRODUCTION

One of the areas where the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) has contributed to development is the area of health (see the chapter by Chirongoma in this volume). In particular, the ZCC has played a major role in mobilising churches to address one of the most threatening health issues of our time, namely, HIV and AIDS. Although the church women's organisations are autonomous, the ZCC has played a role in encouraging them to respond to the epidemic. Therefore, it is important to undertake a historical review of how church women's organisations have responded to HIV and AIDS. This is a strategic point that enables us to appreciate the role of the ZCC beyond its own specific programmes. The chapter highlights the extent to which the ZCC has contributed towards addressing this serious health and social challenge. Through their research into women's religious experiences and participation in faith-based workshops

T. Shoko (✉) • T. P. Mapuranga
Department of Religious Studies, Classics and Philosophy,
University of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe

on HIV and AIDS, the researchers gathered data on church women's organisations' (Ruwadzano, fellowship) response to HIV in Zimbabwe.

HIV and AIDS is generally perceived as a gendered epidemic needing a response by women. This is because women are at a greater risk of being infected and affected. Church women's groups have been the unsung heroes in responding to HIV and AIDS. Some have formed child care homes and/or old people's homes as a way of addressing the epidemic. Some of these go a long way in accommodating the infected and affected. As observed by Chitando, the church is "strategically placed to make a difference in the context of HIV and AIDS" (Chitando 2007: 5). Thus, the task of this chapter is to discuss what selected women's groups in particular churches have been doing in response to HIV and AIDS. The material gathered for this chapter was accumulated over many years and captures both the earlier and current approaches to HIV and AIDS by selected denominations in Zimbabwe. They confirm the churches' important role in addressing HIV and AIDS and promoting holistic development.

THE CHURCH AND HIV AND AIDS IN ZIMBABWE: A CRITICAL OVERVIEW

A critical stepping stone to understand the position which women are taking in response to HIV and AIDS is to first of all understand the changing patterns of the church's response to the epidemic. The church's response to HIV and AIDS can be divided into phases. The first period (from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s) can be identified as that of fear and panic due to misinformation and lack of information, which therefore resulted in the "culture of silence" that proved to be extremely deadly, probably more than the epidemic itself. This was overcome in the second phase of more direct engagement (from 2000 to the present). It is in the latest phase that the fear of the epidemic has been eroded because of the massive availability of information on the epidemic, and, thus, great work is being done in the church, which includes women's organisations in the church.

There are many given reasons why the church was known for its silence with issues regarding HIV and AIDS. One major reason is that HIV and AIDS is an epidemic that is mainly related to sexuality (Maluleke 2003). The church has often struggled to address issues of sex and sexuality in a realistic and effective manner. The tendency has been to pontificate against fornication and adultery, without adopting realistic strategies to assist

individuals, families and communities to approach sex and sexuality in a positive way. In brief, Christianity is one among other religious traditions that clearly spells out quite a number of sexual prohibitions, especially for women and the unmarried. In the public imagination, Christianity can figure as nothing more than a sexual code of conduct, a code that likes to elaborate prohibitions, especially for women.

The early association of HIV and AIDS with sexuality led to stigma and discrimination and inaction by the church. In the early phase of the epidemic, many Christians saw HIV as a curse. Igo (2009) identifies some of the most common metaphors used to describe the epidemic, words which reinforced fear and stigma in the community. These include the idea that HIV implies death, moral responsibility, punishment from God or unacceptable sexual behaviour or drug use. Kamau (2009: 194) observed that the "fear of being identified with a stigmatized disease leads to silence about AIDS" and that this frustrated intervention efforts. Until recently, the Church had been accused of being silent about the HIV and AIDS pandemic. According to Igo (2009: 147), "If the Christian Church can break its own nervousness and silence on the issue of human sexuality and proclaim clearly the good news of sex and sexual expression, then there may indeed be hope."

The second phase regarding the church's response can be classified as the contemporary response. The church is gradually being seen as a source of hope for those living with HIV and the affected. The church's position is very strategic for an effective response to HIV and AIDS. Chitando discusses a number of factors that give the church a point of strength in the fight against the epidemic. For Chitando, the legacy of compassion, a large pool of volunteers, highly motivated workers, an abiding presence in the community, credibility, membership from diverse professional backgrounds, prayer and spirituality (Chitando 2007: 6–18) have given the church a good working platform in addressing the effects of HIV. It is with these strengths that women have risen and are making great strides in accompanying people living with HIV.

The Position of Women in the Church

The church falls within the categories of religions that are deemed to be patriarchal, that is, dominated by men. There are many ways in which Christians often use the Bible to promote male interests and to marginalise women. As the Circle of Concerned African Theologians has insisted,

African women are "groaning in faith" (Kanyoro and Njoroge 1996). Most positions of power and authority in the church are dominated by men. In some denominations, only men can be ordained.

However, the church has accorded women space through women's organisations where they have been able to offer help to the wider community of people living with HIV. These women's unions have provided space for women in the church in not only Zimbabwe, but in South Africa as well. As indicated by Brigalia Bam:

> Without space on the pulpit and in the lecture halls, many women use the prayer time and prayer space for the *Manyano* meetings to express themselves and their dreams for the church … In these times of the HIV and AIDS pandemic, the pastoral and prayer-like focus of the *Manyano* has become even more important. (Bam 2005: 13)

Despite the patriarchy that dominates the church, these women's organisations, or mother's unions, greatly help women find their feet in Christianity. Chitando says these organisations help women with "alternative spaces where they have greater latitude to express themselves" (Chitando 2007: 27). It is within this context that many women in the Ruwadzano division of the church have contributed to the overall response to HIV and AIDS.

The Ecumenical Church Women's Response to HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe: A Summary

In Zimbabwe, the Christian churches' response to HIV and AIDS can be captured in Christian communities of different kinds commonly referred to as the church. The churches are classified by structural and denominational differences that comprise mainline churches that derive from work by missionaries in the earlier period of church history in the country. This category includes the Roman Catholic Church and mainstream Protestants such as Anglican, Methodist, Evangelical Lutheran and the Seventh Day Adventist Churches (Zvobgo 1996). The second group comprises African Independent Churches (AICs). These are churches that originated in Africa and have retained an African ethos. They identify and attend to African spiritual and physical needs. They manifest in different types categorised as Zionist and Apostolic and other mushrooming groups. AICs are characterised by rapid multiplication (Chitando et al. 2014). The third

group embraces the Pentecostal Churches, who believe in the Day of Pentecost. They highlight manifestation of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. Some of the Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe include the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA), the Family of God (FOG) and Celebration Ministries, Church on the Rock, End Times Ministries, Glad Tidings and others (Shoko 2007: 204–205). Since it is not feasible to discuss all these Christian churches exhaustively, it is vital that we select representative churches in our study of women's activities on HIV and AIDS in the churches.

Although not a member of the ZCC, the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe (see the chapter by Mwandayi and Mugwidi in this volume) is one of the largest churches that have established programmes on HIV and AIDS. In particular, women's programmes have been introduced that support people living with HIV and those affected by AIDS. The church has introduced community-based programmes in the country to address the pandemic. To this extent numerous HIV and AIDS Care Centres have been set up in different dioceses in Zimbabwe. One such centre is Mashambanzou, located 10 km outside Harare in the Waterfalls suburb. The centre is manned by devout women of the Catholic faith. Silveira House, founded by the Jesuits of the Capricorn Society led by Sir David Sterling, has been focusing its energy and resources on poverty alleviation through Civics Education and Practical Skills Training from 1998 (Shoko 2007: 206). Whilst men hold most official positions at the centre, the women are also involved by serving as support staff. Here is one such place that is devoted to providing effective means of addressing the HIV and AIDS epidemic.

In the Catholic Church, Mrs. Pat Brailley, a founding figure, was instrumental in setting up Mavambo Learning Centre, an interdenominational non-profit-making organisation providing for children affected by HIV and AIDS. This is a literacy programme within a healing environment. Brailley had observed from Mashambanzou that many orphans were "falling through the cracks" (Brailley, interview 6/08/09), particularly in the field of education. With the plight of children at heart, she undertook to set up a location in Mabvuku 25 km outside of Harare under St Fidelis Church that would cater for children's learning needs. *Chitarisiro*, the Shona word for hope, is what she wished to make possible and bring to the future of Zimbabwe. *Mavambo*, the name of the Learning Centre, is the Shona word for Genesis. Mavambo prepares children for successful placement and integration into the formal school system in Harare and

provides continuing HIV and AIDS education as well as academic, emotional and even financial support (Shoko 2007: 206). Additionally, Faith and Light is an international organisation that caters for special children. Its profile is ecumenical but it is mostly run by Catholics. Their motto is "Keep that candle burning and Faith and Light will live to love."

The Catholic Church in Zimbabwe's position on HIV and AIDS is expressed by the Heads of Christian Denominations (HOCD) curriculum review committee's document to the government's national HIV and AIDS policy in which the churches placed emphasis on HIV prevention in the form of abstinence before marriage and faithfulness in marriage. Sister Hyacinth Gerbecks submitted factors that pointed out that the HIV and AIDS pandemic in Zimbabwe is related to attitudes that promote or accept promiscuity through a number of clearly identifiable beliefs. The first of such beliefs is unprotected penetrative sexual intercourse, especially for men; the necessity of begetting and bearing children at all costs to become a full human being; the appropriateness of submissiveness in women which promotes exploitation by men and the false belief about the causation of disease, which promotes fatalism (The Herald, 19 June 1997). But the most controversial issue in the Catholic Church has been the church's stance on condoms. However, some Dominican Sisters have been actively encouraging the use of multiple prevention strategies. Thus, it is important to distinguish between formal declarations by Church leaders and the reality on the ground.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (ELCZ) has also introduced policies on HIV and AIDS. The ELCZ is a Protestant church that took roots in South West Zimbabwe subdivided as East and Western Deaneries where it provided medical services to the people in the areas in which it is established. From its inception in 1915, the ELCZ established mission stations and hospitals such as Mnene in the East and Manama in the West now operating as the district hospital. At mission stations like Musume, Masase and Chegato, the Church has established Chaplains to address spiritual and medical needs. In 2004 the church celebrated its century anniversary at Mnene in Mberengwa (Shoko 2007: 207) In light of its expansionist programme, the ELCZ has established three dioceses in the East, West and Central parts of Zimbabwe that continue to provide medical facilities to the people. The Eastern Diocese launch was conducted at Masvingo Urban Parish on 16–18 September 2005. In this endeavour the ELCZ works along with Island Hospice, Lutheran World

Federation (LWF) and the Ministry of Health. The church's women's wing called *Vashandiri* is more effective than its male counterpart, *Zvapupu* (Witnesses). The women's group are strong advocates on HIV and AIDS, and they have built a centre called Vashandiri Centre in Mkoba suburb of Gweru. An office for the national HIV and AIDS coordinator has been created. The church's efforts are in conformity with missionary initiatives in Zimbabwe at the beginning of the Twentieth Century, namely, to take upon themselves the responsibility of introducing contemporary ways of living to the indigenous people through evangelisation and the provision of education and medicine.

At Musume and Manama, the ELCZ has established home-based care centres called Batsiranai at Musume and Tusanani at Manama. The institutions are run by the church's Medical Board under a medical administrator and a qualified instructor. The first instructor at Musume was a woman called Beatrice Gumbo. The institution has an orphanage and provides medical facilities such as drugs, blankets and clothes. The centre is also equipped with motorbikes and bicycles to reach out to people outside in need of medical assistance. Trained health workers are deployed across the district with medical kits to supply medicines and assist relatives to take care of the sick under the home-based programme. Some government satellite clinics are used as referral points for afflicted patients. The centre has established support groups that include both men and women. The support group has established an advocacy choir that performs on numerous outreaches in Mberengwa district and beyond. One such thrilling performance was at the Vienna international AIDS Conference in Austria on 18–23 July 2010. They have also travelled to other countries in Europe such as Germany and Sweden.

In an attempt to grapple with the disease, the ELCZ has introduced health development programmes. Gurli Hannson, Swedish missionary who once worked at Mnene, introduced HIV and AIDS prevention programmes such as the PMTCT (Hansson, interview 14/08/09). The church has also held numerous workshops on HIV and AIDS prevention, care and treatment. In November 1989 the church organised a workshop on Spiritual Aspects of Health at Masvingo Bible School. In his opening address, the Bishop invited the church to share ideas about God's love for humankind by invoking Genesis 1:27 that says, "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female, he created them" (Shoko 2007: 207). No other creature is created in the image

of God except human beings. This showed the importance of human beings before God. The Bishop's thrust is pertinent, "We are created in the image of God therefore we are different from other creatures. It is therefore important for those who are given responsibility in dealing with human beings to think that they are dealing with the image of God" (Shiri, interview 14/08/09). Participants at the workshop accepted the people's interpretation of the causes of disease and misfortune in the traditional setting. They noted that these belief systems are very deep rooted and are related to the spiritual world. Above all, they endorsed the connection between healing and wholeness in an African context.

In the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church, most of the respondents revealed that HIV and AIDS programmes do not exist in their church. The reasons given were that the Church programme implementers such as Interest Coordinators did not prioritise HIV and AIDS programmes. Some churches, especially in Masvingo Province, tended to focus mainly on evangelisation that does not necessarily include issues of HIV and AIDS. If the subject was mentioned at all, it was moralising HIV and AIDS, treating it as a disease that infects sinners. The blame for infection was associated with women, who are apparently the most vulnerable targets of HIV and AIDS. As a result in Masvingo SDA, women HIV and AIDS programmes are rare. Our study established that the last time that the Masvingo SDA churches had some programme on HIV and AIDS was in 2004. This was when the churches, through the Conference, invited health specialists such as doctors, dieticians and educationists to facilitate at HIV and AIDS seminars. According to Gracious Shumba, "the seminar was poorly attended because the people were not conscientised about HIV" (Shumba interview, 12/4/2010). Thus, while some SDA churches were forthcoming in the fight against HIV and AIDS, others are lagging far behind. After the initial challenges, however, the SDA became more actively involved in addressing HIV and AIDS. They adopted a more progressive theology, as confirmed below.

The SDA women's groups have attempted to make some interventions. As a social responsibility, some SDA Churches through the Women's Ministries administered community care and treatment programmes for both the infected and affected members of the church and society in general. They provided food, clothes and other necessities, including spiritual counsel. They supported with prayers for the sick. They also donated school text books and toys to orphans who had lost parents and guardians

due to HIV and AIDS. In some cases, they rendered services in the homes and fields of these disadvantaged groups of people. Such programmes have seen the church extend its helping hand to those in prisons, orphanages, schools, old people's homes and children on the streets (Maggie interview, 5/6/09).

The Methodist church women in Zimbabwe is another body that has taken the effects of the HIV and AIDS epidemic seriously. In this church, women clubs have included HIV and AIDS programmes in their structure and hierarchy. As one adherent confirmed, "This is a good model for other churches in Zimbabwe" (Mahachi interview, 25/02/10). An office for the national HIV and AIDS coordinator was created. This coordinator works full time and reports to the administrator who in turn reports to the Presiding Bishop. The national coordinator works with the connectional HIV and AIDS Committee. Their responsibilities are providing strategic guidance, facilitation and technical support, planning, implementing, coordinating and monitoring HIV and AIDS programmes on Ruwadzano and Methodist membership (Chikuni interview, 10/02/10).

In the African Independent Churches (AICS) in Zimbabwe, there has not been much effort to deal with HIV and AIDS, particularly on the part of women. Rather, the churches are renowned for resistance of scientific medicine and for maintaining certain beliefs and cultural practices that keep women subjugated and have left many of their members exposed to HIV and AIDS. However, the battle against AIDS in Zimbabwe, which has so far claimed more than 2 million lives, received a major boost when the Union of the Development of Apostolic Churches in Zimbabwe Africa (UDACIZA), an umbrella body of Apostolic and Zionist Churches representing more than 70 Apostolic and Zionist churches, made a landmark resolution to abolish polygamy at the launch of an anti-HIV and AIDS blueprint in the capital, Harare, on Friday, 16 September 2005. The AICs made a surprise shift of policy by denunciation of long-standing and deep-rooted cultural practices in the church such as polygamy, wife inheritance, child adoption and treatment seeking behaviour. Polygamy has been found to fuel the spread of HIV and AIDS and has been a deep-rooted practice in the church. The landmark development was supported by biblical scripture such as 1 Tim 3:1–2. The abolition of polygamy would start with the leaders of the Apostolic and Zionist Churches (The Sunday Mail, 18th September 2005).

In an intensified effort to fight the HIV and AIDS pandemic, the AICs also broke history by the formulation of an HIV policy to curb the disease. UDACIZA now deals with issues that pertain to stigma and discrimination of those living with the virus. The highlights of their ideology is "No to HIV." This stance is consolidated by a song "AIDS *Hokoyo!*" (Beware) (The Sunday Mail, 18th September 2005). In support of women's rights, polygamy is denounced and monogamy applauded, "No small houses" since they promote HIV and AIDS (ZTV: 17/09/05). As one interviewee confirmed, "This is a plus for women" (Makamba interview, 4/12/09). As such the church is now convinced that faith healing alone is insufficient to combat the pandemic. Often denigrated as the "wretched of the earth" on their health stance, the association seemed to have realised that their original stance of anti-medicine has made the church contradictory and thus sidelined them from development (Shoko 2007: 210). Also, in an attempt to embrace a participatory approach, UDACIZA seeks to enhance the Apostolic Church members' knowledge of HIV and AIDS and encourage its membership to participate in programmes that help people affected by the virus.

General Church Activities on HIV and AIDS

In most mainline churches, women address matters that pertain to HIV and AIDS and other social problems by holding counselling sessions. Counselling provides an excellent opportunity for the minister to give hope and courage to people living with HIV and AIDS who have lost hope. Most of those who seek counselling are women affected and infected with HIV and AIDS. In counselling the people living with HIV and AIDS, the attitude of the counsellor can make a significant difference. The counsellor must have a disposition to love, heal and save. The counsellor must not be judgemental. They are called to listen to people living with HIV and AIDS as they share what is in their hearts, fear, agony, anger, anxiety and remorse. HIV and AIDS needs compassion along with spiritual and emotional reassurance. When counselors open, patients will be able to unburden their guilt and pain and find peace. In terms of approach, group counselling is encouraged. This has resulted in the formation of support groups in church and the initiation of income generating projects such as soap making and candle making.

Seminars on how to counsel people living with HIV and AIDS have become a regular feature in the Zimbabwean churches. Hundreds, if not

thousands, of pastors and ministers from mainline, independent and Pentecostal churches have received such training. Most interdenominational seminars were held at Kentucky Hotel in Harare, the place of operation of the ZCC at the time of writing. In the Lutheran Church seminars for women were conducted at the Vashandiri Centre in Gweru. However, others were also conducted at their regional Bible Schools at Masvingo Mission in Mberengwa and Manama Mission in Gwanda.

Support services constituted another area in which women church programmes served those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. Because hospital services were costly, more and more people were increasingly cared for at home prior to the availability of antiretroviral medication. Home-based care became quite a common task for women. Home-based care allows the family to be involved and provides the opportunity to educate the extended family and the immediate neighbourhood on the destructiveness of the disease and what can be done about it.

Zimbabwe has formed an Interdenominational AIDS Network to enable churches to identify areas of need and mobilise community resources in order to provide people living with HIV and AIDS with necessary support and care. The network gives home-based care givers training in prevention and counselling. Such teams are usually composed of a church worker, a nurse aide and a driver all under the supervision of qualified medical personnel. This team, along with a pastor, is responsible for services such as:

(1) Emotional and spiritual support to the people living with HIV and AIDS and the family
(2) Nursing services in the home
(3) Financial support when possible
(4) Health education for family member, schools, parent teacher associations and the community
(5) Training of care counsellors

Since prevention of transmission of HIV is imperative, education plays an important role in responding to the spread of HIV and AIDS. It is important to recognise the shift of the disease to economically disadvantaged people. Poverty, oppression, alienation and marginalisation provide conducive breeding ground for the spread of HIV and AIDS. As a result, the most vulnerable group, women and children, are put at greater risk. Against this background the church is educating their fellow followers on

the effects of the disease, how it is acquired and how to prevent it. Women's groups in the church are taught on Tuesdays in the Baptist church, Wednesdays in the Lutheran Church, Thursdays in the Anglican Church. But these days may vary depending on the areas and professions of the people involved. For instance, the Lutheran church women in Harare meet on Saturdays. The rationale is that most of them are workers and weekends offer the best time to meet when they are not at work.

Challenges

The church and women organisations face the major challenge of stigma and discrimination. Concerning discrimination, some Christians have tended to classify the cause of HIV and AIDS as sin perpetrated by prostitutes. As such, people affected with HIV and AIDS are regarded "sinners" and "lepers" to be isolated. AIDS sufferers have been treated as "outcasts" destined for hell. In some cases people living with HIV have been denied entry to health care facilities (Private interview, 12 June 2008).

We also found out that confidentiality is a challenge in church institutions on the matter of HIV and AIDS. Because the church has moralised the HIV and AIDS epidemic, few people disclose their status. And if those few people disclose, some ministers break the confidentiality norm and share what they would have been told in private with other congregants. This in turn exacerbates stigma and discrimination. In our study we established that limited resources, brain drain, cultural practices, depleted health personnel, poor physical infrastructure, socio-economic challenges and time constraints pose a tremendous challenge to the Church women's activities to combat HIV and AIDS.

Zimbabwe has been experiencing serious macro-economic and political turbulence in the country. This has had tremendous effects on addressing the impact of HIV and AIDS. One area that is critical has been loss of professional staff in Zimbabwe. This problem has affected most institutions and churches. Many professionals, including pastors and health experts, migrated to other countries in search of better economic opportunities. The loss of skills, experience and motivation reached desperate levels, consequently affecting activities that could contribute to the response to HIV and AIDS.

Despite the achievements, we agree with Chitando when he suggests that there is still more to be done for these women's groups to be more effective in the face of HIV. He suggests the following for women's guilds or Mothers Unions to be more helpful:

- To make sure that church women's groups become more aware of HIV issues.
- To educate the women to read the Bible in a liberating way.
- Women's groups in church must be centres of constant and rigorous critiques of patriarchy.
- There must be sisterly solidarity among churchwomen in Africa for greater competence in the face of HIV (Chitando 2007: 28–29).

Conclusion

The ultimate test of the church is the spiritual maturity of its people. Nowhere is this maturity more tried than in the way the church responds to the cry of suffering human beings in and around it. In today's context, AIDS represents the ultimate cry of suffering. In the churches today, 70–80% of the congregations are women. Some of the women are affected and others infected with the HIV epidemic. Most church members, especially ministers and leaders, have chosen to turn their backs against the plight of women as did the priest on the Levite on the road to Jericho. Some regard HIV and AIDS as God's punishment to fornicators and adulterous people. Those infected with the virus are discriminated against in churches. Women are among those discriminated against and are often blamed for the epidemic. However, through church women's groups, they have provided effective and sustainable responses. They have contributed to development in very significant ways. As this chapter has demonstrated, church women's groups have addressed a major health challenge, namely, HIV and AIDS, in many creative ways. Inspired by the leadership of the ZCC and getting support from the ZCC, they have demonstrated remarkable energy and commitment towards ensuring the health and dignity of all citizens.

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The Significance of Church-Related Universities in the Reconstruction of Zimbabwe

Solmon Zwana

Background

The emergence of church-related universities in Zimbabwe is a new phenomenon. By establishing universities as extensions of their mission, churches have demonstrated their aspirations to transform Zimbabwean society in more innovative ways. Through the universities, churches have positioned themselves not merely to make converts but also to be producers of human capital and to influence society. A triangular relationship is evident, where on one angle there is the church which established the university and forms the basis of its ethos. On the second angle is the government with its agenda expectations about the role of both the university and the church in national development. The third angle is occupied by the university and the various categories of people who populate it. The

S. Zwana (✉)
Methodist Church, Harare, Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe Council of Churches, Harare, Zimbabwe

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significance of the church university in reconstruction is informed by the interplay of the parties in the triangular relationship and the dynamics of the Zimbabwean context.

INTRODUCTION

On 15 September 2008 after protracted negotiations three Zimbabwean political parties signed a pact, popularised as the Global Political Agreement. Church leaders from the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) and other ecumenical bodies played an important role in facilitating this agreement. The agreement paved the way for the formation of a government of national unity, described as an inclusive government to the extent that it was made up of political parties which won seats in the 2008 parliamentary elections, namely, Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front) (ZANU (PF)), Movement for Democratic Change (Tsvangirai) (MDC (T)) and Movement for Democratic Change (Mutambara) (MDC (M)). The main tasks of the hybrid government included curbing economic decline, spearheading constitutional reform and bringing about social and political stability through a process of national healing and reconciliation. Although the political agreement led to relative political stability within the nation it remained fragile and continued to be trailed by uncertainty. Masunungure (2010) has identified possible scenarios relating to the current political dispensation. The first scenario was recovery which would be characterised by a successful transition leading to the election of a new government through free and fair elections. The second scenario, according to Masunungure, was that of relapse which would mean the collapse of the transitional arrangement and a situation where undemocratic forces assumed power leading to the loss of any gains made towards democratisation. The third scenario was the maintenance of *status quo* where the current transition becomes indefinite. History records that that there was a relapse as the ZANU (PF) ensured that it retained power and pushed out the opposition.

   This chapter explores the significance of church-related universities in the reconstruction of Zimbabwe and acknowledges that by establishing universities churches sought to refine their mission strategies to transform society. The study recognises that the added dimension of church relatedness in universities offers a more holistic approach towards social transformation. Reconstruction in this discussion is multidimensional and embraces physical, moral and spiritual aspects. These factors are examined taking into account the interest of state and political structures in influencing universities for their own ends. It is argued that as centres of higher

learning universities do not just exist to impart theoretical knowledge but also equip members of their communities through experience as well as through participation in national issues. The ZCC has played a strategic role in encouraging the different denominations to invest in education. Therefore, analysing the role of church-related universities in national reconstruction is an important step towards understanding the role of churches in development.

The dynamics of student activism and their implications in a church university are also interrogated alongside issues of academic freedom and autonomy as well as the role of a university in influencing and shaping national processes and debates. As pointed out by Raftopoulos (2009), the crisis had been shaped by and was part of a series of multiple crises that date back to the early 1990s. The significance of church-related universities can be derived from a number of factors which include the self-understanding of the church as being the salt of the earth and therefore with an obligation to serve the society, popular perceptions among diverse social circles and the perceptions of both ruling and non-ruling political elites. A case in point are comments made by then President Mugabe when he addressed centenary celebrations of churches in the 1990s where he "acknowledged the contribution of churches in education among other areas and appealed for the same trend to continue so as to revitalise the moral fibre of the nation" (Zwana 2008: 280).

Hegemony

Different scholars have observed that sometimes when the government invites churches to participate in national development they do it out of love for the church more for the body of the church than out of a search for a genuine and enduring partnership. Commenting on Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony, Jeff Haynes (1996) points out that it involves conceptualising a context of aspirations and the means to achieve them within a particular framework. Groups and institutions are manoeuvred or manipulated such that their cooperative interaction with the power holders is viewed as a fulfilment of the ideals of the frame of reference. Haynes writes: "In order to perpetuate hegemony successfully it is necessary for the dominant strata to maintain a more or less consensual moral order which has the status of common sense" (1996: 8). When common sense is given an ideological flavour, it becomes not just common knowledge but normative as dictated by those who have power. In the African

context ruling elites generally lack the patience and the commitment to attain hegemony through consensus. The quest by authorities to achieve or maintain hegemony often involves coercion more than "social and popular consent alone." Religious organisations and institutions often find themselves targets of a system characterised by the two extremes of rewards for compliance on the one hand and threats of punishment or sanctions on the other.

Government and political leaders strive to maintain power and influence over the populace. This involves influencing policy directions of institutions and organisations and, as Haynes (1996) further points out, forges solidarity between individuals and groups within the network of power structures that would include leaders of mainline religions. Mitchell Dean (2001) argues along the same lines but more forcefully by pointing out that governance involves pastoral power or biopolitics on the one hand and sovereign power on the other. He refers to biopolitics as the government's preoccupation with the "administration of life" operating at the level of the people. At this level, measurable activities, which may include health and sanitation, family planning, mortality, environmental issues, unemployment issues, land redistribution (in the case of Zimbabwe), education and standards of living, are targeted. Echoing the same point, Tania M. Li argues that preoccupation with such measurable phenomena is about legitimacy. "In the postcolonial era, concern with welfare and improvement falls under the rubric of 'development' and provides many governing regimes with a significant part of their claim to legitimacy" (1999: 296).

EMERGENCE OF CHURCH UNIVERSITIES IN ZIMBABWE

The African continent has experienced phenomenal Christian growth in spite of numerous challenges and disasters (Ross 1976: 94; Zwana 2007: 76). By virtue of their salvific mission, churches have been rated as sources of hope in the midst of difficulties. The creation of institutions such as universities as service arms of the churches have further enhanced their role in nation building and reconstruction. Beyond their *kerygmatic* and *koinonic* functions the *diakonic* aspect has been innovatively embraced through the establishment of institutions of higher learning in addition to existing lower-level centres of learning at mission centres.

Church universities in Zimbabwe emerged as part of the agenda of churches to maintain and step up visibility, enhance their mission strategies as well as remain relevant. According to Zwana (2006, 2007), the

establishment of church-related universities in Zimbabwe, following liberalisation by the government in the early 1990s, is a manifestation of new frontiers in mission and a response to contemporary challenges that are both spiritual and social. Africa University (AU) of the United Methodist Church was the first church-related university to be established in 1992, followed by the Seventh Day Adventist's Solusi University (SU) in 1994. The Catholic University of Zimbabwe (CUZ) was granted its Charter in 1998 and the short-lived Great Zimbabwe University was approved in 2001. These four institutions emerged from a plethora of failed attempts by many churches to establish their own denominational universities (Zwana 2007: 74).

There is a congruence of thought between state, churches and other actors on the importance of the role of universities as producers of human capital for national development. George Subotzky and Gabriel Cele argue:

> It is widely acknowledged that in the context of changing global relations and the rise of the new information technologies, producing relevant knowledge is central to the role of higher education in contemporary society. Within all spheres of society—the economy, polity and culture—knowledge has increasing salience as the central form of productive capital. (2004: 343)

Nevertheless, the immediate question is on the ways in which the church universities have contributed through new models of intellectual discourse that would address fundamental issues. The challenge of a curriculum that addresses African epistemologies and is responsive to the needs of the nation is one which many universities, not only in Zimbabwe, are still grappling with. One, however, has to acknowledge attempts that have been made in some of these institutions particularly the AU where the curriculum attempts to address pragmatic issues. The establishment of the Institute of Peace, Leadership and Good Governance at the AU is eloquent testimony to the university's consciousness of its role in national reconstruction.

In his analysis of factors influencing the development of educational policy in independent Zimbabwe, Kapfunde (1997: 168) postulates that although churches were not often consulted by the government in policy formulation they usually cooperated in the implementation of the latter's programmes but could also block or slow down those policies they did not subscribe to. What is essential to note here is that the government valued the role of churches in development processes. This point is further

supported by the findings of a Presidential Commission of Inquiry appointed in 1989 to explore the possibility of the establishment of a second university (Williams 1989). The Commission acknowledged that a new social order was possible only through socio-economic development strategies that recognised private universities as significant players (Zwana 2008: 291). Five key points stood out and are instructive in so far as perceptions about the role of churches in university education is concerned:

(a) Church organisations have continued to play a complementary role in educational provision at the sub-university level. They should be allowed to play a similar role at the university level.
(b) The establishment of such institutions will help to relieve the pressure of demand for higher education by qualified applicants.
(c) The infrastructure for private universities will remain permanently in situ. This is an investment which will benefit the country even if the private organisation should opt out at a later stage.
(d) The international connections of the institutions will enrich the educational experience of the students and contribute to the generation of foreign exchange.
(e) Non-governmental universities provide an opportunity for the mainstream churches to train their clergy at a degree level in the context and environment of the Zimbabwean culture and ideology instead of abroad (Report of the Commission of Inquiry 1989: 58).

Perceptions about the role of the churches in national development were, however, trapped in the old stereotypes of regarding them as mere partners in reconstruction and development through service delivery.

The strategy by churches of serving the nation through universities in addition to their other forms of service is consistent with James Cox's theory of mission by diffusion likened to leavening in bread (Cox 1991: 63–69), which Eric Sharpe (1965: 82–88) describes as "the spreading of Christian ideas […] in concentric circles, from the focus of the college." The church university, through its combination of knowledge production, religious influences and Christian activities, aims to radiate its influence to outlying communities or other nations.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND AUTONOMY

The role of universities in nation building has been generally linked by states to human power development. This linkage is by and large a matter of political strategy by dominant ruling classes who strive to marshal the

vision of a glittering path but to nowhere, in reality, signposted by the illusion of prosperity. It attempts to deliberately ignore the critical role of the university as a prophetic and watchdog institution in national processes. This prophetic role relates to two essential aspects in any university worth its salt, namely, academic freedom and autonomy.

Scholars generally agree that academic freedom and autonomy are essential elements in any university system. It is virtually impossible to conceptualise or define a university without these two notions. A significant aspect in the term's evolution is its association, according to Ashby (1966: 291) and Murray G. Ross (1976: 27), with two German concepts, *Lehrfreiheit* and *Leinfreiheit*, which were formulated in state universities in an attempt to redefine the relationship between the government and its universities. *Lehrfreiheit* denoted that an academic should be free to conduct research and share or teach his findings without being constrained by, especially, the state. As such, it "is a privilege which entails the obligation to teach truth, in defiance of anyone outside or inside the university who wishes to curtail it" (Jaspers, 1960: 19). *Leinfreiheit* meant that a student was free to choose where and what to study. Ashby includes the research worker in the category of *Leinfreiheit*. These concepts are reminiscent of the organisation of medieval cathedral and monastic schools as they gradually evolved into universities. The teachers in these institutions created guilds or *universitas* which were virtual unions whose aims included the need "to protect the teachers against the chancellor, the bishop, the king or anyone else who tried to bring them under control" (Butt 1947: 175).

The question often asked is how far the freedom can be taken into the public arena without being considered to have gone beyond limits. In Jaspers' view academic freedom is not fundamentally the same as constitutional freedom of speech. He argues that when it comes to constitutional freedom which includes personal opinions expressed through various media, political remarks and utterances outside their intellectual authority, university academics have no more privileges beyond other citizens (143). As an example, when Howard S. Gilmore, a former volunteer lecturer at Africa University, was arrested by the police and later deported for filming the notorious clean-up operation *murambatsvina* no deliberate connection was made with his academic background (Green 2005). However, as Jaspers argues: "it is quite conceivable that academic freedom may continue even after the constitutional freedom of expression has been abolished" (19 and 142). Even where an academic expresses an opinion in line with his or her research results there would still be an impact on the

relationship between the university and the government as well as the sponsoring church. Conversely, an academic using his or her constitutional right to freedom of expression would lead to the same result. Freedom of expression therefore remains closely related to academic freedom.

Defining academic freedom is one thing; practising it is another. As a result a discourse on academic freedom is context specific (Zeleza 2004: 43). It has to take into account perceptions from both those in the academic world and those outside, as well as contextual issues such as the laws, culture and politics of the country. In many cases the concept has assumed ideological tenor.

Viable State Apparatus

The university is regarded as a viable state apparatus and at the same time as a potential threat to political hegemony. The result is that relations between government and universities, whether private or public, are often coloured by the politics of the time in response to social and economic trends. This determines whether the university is considered a threat or a tool to further the ideological agenda of the state. Tengende (1994: 192), citing Louis Althusser (1971: 123–173) and Michael Burawoy (1976: 85–86), argues that "the university was a crucial ideological state apparatus" whose "solidarity function" was required to enhance the domination of the ruling party and the government in nation building and at the same time desisting from contradicting it.

Tengende (1994) argues that as the spate of strikes in the public university during the late 1980s spread to some sections of society and the civil service over wages and conditions of service, the University Amendment Act of 1990 was a government strategy to emasculate any possible "popular alliance between the disgruntled professionals, students and workers" (397). Furthermore, the use of "the institution as a centre for opposition politics" or any "opposition party related activism on campus" had to be curbed (398). The students' concerns included insufficient loans and grants, accommodation and the general deterioration of standards at the university as well as national issues of corruption (Cheater 1991: 195). The developments at the university had wide implications that could influence the direction of national discourses on nation building (Tengende: 409).

The government has been consistent in its interest in what goes on in the university. To suggest that the interest came about as a result of the new challenges to its hegemony would be erroneous. A year into independence, in 1981 the then Prime Minister Mugabe stated that due to the importance of university education, it was imperative that they could not be left in the hands of academics and their institutional structures but should be closely monitored (Schlette 1990: 77). This statement was popularised in both government and ruling party circles up to 2005 (cf Chombo 2000; Mbizvo 2005).

Social Concern

Perpetual areas of conflict have been when universities try to regard themselves as the conscience of the nation or the voices of the voiceless, criticising government policies and forming solidarity networks with civil society. Akilagpa Sawyerr has rightly observed that one of the functions of a university is to generate and transmit ideology as well as provide intellectual leadership. In this regard students are socialised into a university culture which accommodates and encourages social and political activity in which even lecturers may be involved in various ways ranging from publications to forums and linking the country and the world of knowledge lying outside the country and the past. An aspect of this function that is not often appreciated is the significance of the university as an institution of civil society, providing a countervailing influence against trends towards overconcentration of power in the state and its institutions (Sawyerr 1998: 21).

This statement begs the question whether academic pursuits could be viewed as neutral. In spite of the diversity that may be witnessed in an academic institution the knowledge and institutional culture acquired have to be tested as members interact with wider society. Zeleza writes:

> The reason why the question of academic freedom and social responsibility dominates African discourses lies in the acute politicisation of African social formations, a product of long histories of struggle against the barbarities of the slave trade, colonialism and post-colonial misrule. The powerful pull of such memories and the strong organic links of academics to the cultures and communities of civil society and their class affinities to the ruling elite is what makes them see themselves either in the 'magisterial' role of a revolutionary vanguard or a 'ministerial' of facilitating progressive change. (Zeleza 2004: 46)

In the Zimbabwean context, the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) had set a trend which remains relevant to private church-related universities: "The struggles for institutional autonomy and academic freedom became intertwined with struggles for democracy in the wider society. Besides the bread and butter issues of subsistence, both faculty and students fought for their rights to free expression" (Zeleza: 50). As a result this has seen the university forming alliances with sections of civil society and opposition political groups on certain issues.

As pointed out by Tengende, "from 1980 and 1990 civil society emerged towards engaging political society on issues concerning institutionalisation of a domain free from state tutelage and control." This was inspired by "the disarray and disruption of hegemonic discourses of the ruling political class caused by the events surrounding the Willowgate Scandal and heightened by state-students confrontations [which] engendered a crisis of political leadership" (357–358).

Church Relatedness and Ethos

Alceu Amoroso Lima (1960: 148–149) identifies three types of university in this regard: the totalitarian type which "is subordinated to the political ends of the state"; the organic or religious type, where though the university is free from the state it is "subject to a church or social institution" and the eclectic type which is not subject to influence from the state and private groups. The third type of university is rare indeed. As the Zimbabwean scenario testifies, universities as social institutions created for a purpose thrive with organic links to organisations or groups which have particular philosophies. The university is a product of the philosophical thrust of the organisation. As a result, questions of autonomy and academic freedom have to be tackled bearing in mind the nature of the sponsoring body's philosophy or ethos. The perceptions of government that higher education is too important a business to be given complete autonomy does not spare church-related universities. Lima's characterisations therefore do not apply to the Zimbabwean context as they are. There is a fusion of the three models in which each loses some of its traits.

Lima further argues that three aspects of autonomy are fundamental to a university set-up (150). Cultural autonomy in Lima's view has to do with academic freedom which embodies the right of the institution to organise its programmes without interference from external bodies. Economic autonomy relates to funding sources and arrangements and the

extent to which they are levers for external control or interests in the institution. By administrative autonomy Lima refers to issues of governance of the institution. Relating cultural autonomy to academic freedom is in this case a misnomer. Cultural autonomy should be treated separately as the fourth type in the discourse of church-related universities. It is the discourse of ethos and the extent to which it is infused or becomes the foundation of the institution. This may result in a triangular relationship of tensions and mutuality: how the university perceives its own identity, the state's interest in ensuring that the university conforms to expectations and the sponsoring church's interests and how it perceives the university as part of its organs for mission fulfilment.

By virtue of their association with the sponsoring denominations, church-related universities are an extension of the church's aspirations in promoting their ideals which include evangelising, humanitarian and development work. Proselytising strategies in this case are not necessarily preoccupied with increasing church membership but they are also employed to raise the profile of the church to popularity levels. This aspiration is boldly and vividly stated by Newman:

> Just as a commander wishes to have tall and well-formed and vigorous soldiers, not from any abstract devotion to the military standard of height or age, but for the purposes of war, and no one thinks it anything but natural and praiseworthy in him to be contemplating, not abstract qualities, but his own living and breathing men; so, in like manner, when the Church founds a University, she is not cherishing talent, genius, or knowledge, for their own sake, but for the sake of her children, with a view to their spiritual welfare and their religious influence and usefulness, with the object of training them to fill their respective posts in life better, and of making them more intelligent, capable, active members of society. (1873: xi–xii)

Common perceptions both within and outside church circles suggest that church universities exist to "instil 'faith based' values" (Zwana 2007: 82). This implies that the involvement of church-related universities in reconstruction is guided by the religious ethos of the sponsoring church. Inculcation of faith-based values on its own would be a failed project as its narrowness might preclude the university and its products from creative engagement with secular structures. The challenge here is that what is often passed off as spreading of faith-based values may be confined to proselytising proclamation with heavy dogmatic trappings sometimes too rigid to be infused in epistemological quests.

Mission statements of church universities in Zimbabwe clearly state their role as that of providing high-quality education and promoting lofty moral standards. For example, the mission statement of Solusi University states that the institution's focus is to provide **quality holistic Christian education** (sic) at undergraduate and graduate levels primarily for the Seventh -Day Adventist constituency and others in Eastern and Southern Africa who meet the educational and character standards established by the Solusi University Council. The university has a primary concern for the nurture and education of students for service in the church and community (Solusi University Bulletin, 2004–2006: 4).

On the other hand, the CUZ declares that it is committed to nurturing people of conscience who are competent and committed to serve the nation. The role of a Catholic university is poignantly captured in the Catholic Church document called *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* as follows:

> By its very nature, each Catholic University makes an important contribution to the Church's work of evangelisation. It is a living *institutional* witness to Christ and his message […]. Moreover, all the basic academic activities of a Catholic University are connected with and in harmony with the evangelising mission of the church: research carried out in the light of the Christian message which puts new human discoveries at the service of individuals and society; education offered in a faith-context that forms men and women capable of rational and critical judgement and conscious of the transcendent dignity of the human person; professional training that incorporates ethical values and a sense of service to individuals and to society; the dialogue with culture that makes the faith better understood, and the theological research that translates the faith into contemporary language. (49)

Consistent with Newmanian doctrine (Dulles 2002: 144ff) advocating for the centrality of the church tradition in its university (Barr 2003: 88), the document further calls for the inculcation of Christian values through daily programmes marked by such practices as prayer, mediation and the sacraments (*Ex Corde Ecclesiae*: 39).

There is direct link between the inculcation of Christian values and the attitudes as well as calibre of people who are admitted into the institution. Church universities often ensure that within the university population there is a kernel of committed adherents and sympathisers who serve as the bedrock of the institution and gatekeepers of the mission of the church in and through the university. These custodians of denominational traditions and teachings are a link between the university's common role as a

knowledge factory and the denomination's unique identity (Zwana 2007: 84). Their special role which may be discharged deliberately or unconsciously sustains and helps to spread both the content and the media of the denomination's values ultimately targeted for society beyond the university.

Student Activism

The core group within the university operates within a diverse context. A particular category which is significant in the life of the university are the students. In many parts of the world student activism has changed the course of the history of nations, for better or for worse. Any discourse on student activism in Zimbabwe cannot ignore the significance and implications of student activism in church-affiliated compared to state universities.

It is significant that although they are part of the Zimbabwe National Students' Union (ZINASU), which includes the more militant state universities, student unions of church-related universities have not taken to frequent overt militant activism on national, public or topical issues. The general assumption has been that church universities discourage demonstrations as being against Christian principles and so are better placed to transform society. This notion relates to former President Mugabe's belief that the churches are best qualified to promote high moral standards of the nation through their various initiatives. Even parents and students generally had similar attitudes. For example, one student argued that she came to Africa University because she wanted do her studies without interruptions: "It is better than going to national universities where there are a lot of strikes and demonstrations" (Stevens 2004). Such a perception, which is also shared by the general populace, puts pressure on church institutions to perform according to the expectations of their environment.

This notion, however, tends to ignore the fact that religious institutions do not necessarily prevent student militancy or wayward behaviour. It represents more of the nostalgia for the missionary era and its attendant forms of Western accoutrements than the post-independence era. The numerous student strikes witnessed over time, some of which led to the destruction of property in church boarding schools, testify to this (Maunde 2000: 77–78). It is these same students together with those from government and other private schools who feed into the universities.

Evidence of this assumption and efforts to live up to the reputation of being a place of tranquillity can be seen in the complaint made by students

from Solusi University to a Parliamentary Committee that their university constitution did not allow them to demonstrate, "yet the supreme law of the country enshrined in the Zimbabwean constitution allows them the right to express their views through a demonstration" (Departmental Committee on Service Ministries 1999, Section 8.10.3).

Yet at state universities student concerns have been wider, covering social, political and economic issues in the country. Student protests over high fees at Great Zimbabwe University (GZU) have involved a peaceful march on the streets in Masvingo town. On 24 April 1998, students at Africa University staged a class boycott over high fees as the Board of Directors was having a meeting. They tried to prevent members of the Board from leaving by sitting in the campus street. The boycott ended only when "police were called and the students immediately dispersed themselves" (Stevens UMNS, 6 May 1998). The previous year, 250 students had been suspended after staging a eleven-day boycott in protest over a hike in fees. About fifty armed police officers came to the campus to monitor the students as they left (*Pan African News Agency*, 17 April 1997). The students were reinstated after they obtained a court order challenging their suspension. The involvement of the police in an incident which university officials downplayed as a small boycott is significant given debates on issues surrounding the involvement of police during the often highly charged UZ demonstrations. The main difference is that the authorities at AU invited the police on campus while at UZ the Vice Chancellor did not always have such an option (Tengende: 345f).

After yet another class boycott over fees in 1999 which lasted a week, the Vice Chancellor of AU blamed the boycott to infiltration by members of the Zimbabwe National Students' Union. The *UMNS* reported, "The leaders in the tension were not Africa University students but representatives of the ZINASU, which has members from students' unions across the country" (UMNS 4 May 1999), and, according to the Vice Chancellor, quoted in the same article, "They came to incite students to demand stoppage of university functions." The university suspended five students' union officials, "not because of the boycott but for interrupting the smooth running of the university."

The complaint of the Vice Chancellor over the national students' union was echoed in the Parliamentary Committee presented in the same period:

> Students' unrest were linked in all colleges with students' national body ZINASU—Zimbabwe National Association of Students Union. Administrators across the board complained that ZINASU representatives

came to their institutions to address students without authorisation from administration. It was after such visits by ZINASU that students took to the streets. The committee was made to understand that students in colleges were given directives by ZINASU to demonstrate for national issues (they claim to be citizens of Zimbabwe though they are students as well). ZINASU seemed to be fuelling most student unrest. (Departmental Committee: 7.7)

Apart from ZINASU, other civic bodies and activists were also interested in interacting with students at church institutions. On 3 August 2004, Raymond Majongwe, secretary general of the Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe and former UZ student activist, was arrested while he was addressing students at AU (*Agence France Presse*, 3 August 2004). The perception that external forces were keen on infiltrating and influencing students led AU, for example, to employ strong arm tactics similar to those used at UZ in dealing with students' dissent, as a way of pre-empting violent tendencies.

Students in church universities have not been completely uninterested in national issues. Emmanuel Samundombe who, as Secretary General of Zimbabwe National Students' Union, was involved in mobilising students was arrested by the police and suspended from GZU, where he was a student, on allegations of "instigating the students to engage in opposition party politics as well as political violence in the run up to the Urban Council elections" in 2003 (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 23 October 2003). The fact that church universities were relatively quiet when it came to student unrest does not mean that the students were completely passive. Under the auspices of ZINASU and other groups of civil society the students participated in demonstrations. With the passage of time ZINASU increasingly became a significant player in national processes and consolidated its networks with civil society organisations in a variety of areas that included human rights, good governance and national development in general. The extent to which students from church universities have had an influence in the organisation's policy direction is a matter for further research.

The neutralising impact of church-related universities is not solely a result of the influence of the Christian ethos. Tengende writes about the influence of institutional and student cultures cultivated over the years at UZ. He demonstrates that student activism on national issues at the UZ evolved over time and in some cases it was shaped by reactions of students to such external factors as the type of treatment they received from the

state and its agencies. In confronting the university administration on issues to do with their welfare "a shift to national level politics became inevitable […] the problems at the university could not be viewed in isolation which led to the linkage of these issues with national level politics and policies" (303). Tengende further argues:

> The 'conspiracy of silence' by the government controlled media forced students to resort to violent demonstrations […] as a way of gaining publicity for their grievances and airing their criticism of the system. Students demonstrations on various issues became linked to demands for changes at the national level originally because: (a) the government was the funding agency for the university: (b) but later because the centralising tendency of the one party project […] meant domination […]. Thus students in trying to break through the blanket of silence over their grievances were forced to demand liberalisation of the media and the respect of individual freedoms such as freedom of expression. (312)

This form of reaction was supported by "the sheer size of the university, and large numbers of students concentrated in a limited area [which created] a numerically significant group of dedicated and committed politicised students" (Tengende: 212; Lipset 1993: 36). The large numbers also created "a sense of anonymity which is conducive to various kinds of deviant behaviours and the emergence of subcultures" (Tengende: 212). The small enrolments in church universities according to this theory mean less overt activism, which does not have a national impact. It is relatively easier for the university authorities to handle the smaller numbers of students than would be the case if the institution had many students. Furthermore, stereotyping religious institutions as paragons for modelling normative behaviour, which has its antecedence in missionary ideology, promotes authoritarian tendencies as the university structures may be inclined to apply codes of conduct which are deemed to be consistent with the parent religion. AU employed strong arm tactics similar to those used at the state universities, in dealing with student boycotts, thereby making them even more severe, as they deal with smaller numbers of students.

Geographic location has some effect on the nature of interactions within and between the university and the society at large, particularly the centres of power (Tengende: 212). AU is over 200 km from the capital and 16 kilometres from Mutare town. SU is about fifty kilometres from Bulawayo city. Tengende argues:

Universities located away from the centres of power and major cities are unlikely to exert a presence in national politics as compared to those which are located otherwise […] (because they are) located near the city centre and the seat of government the University of Zimbabwe students are able to get instant feedback on their political actions and commentaries and criticisms of governmental actions. (212)

It is necessary to note that distance also creates a monastic institutional atmosphere in some cases reminiscent of a boarding school. The codes of conduct at the church universities cover prohibition of alcohol on campus, smoking and hostel visits by those of the opposite sex. For example, admission at Solusi is declared a privilege and not a right. The privilege may be withdrawn on students who indulge in acts which are not "Christ- like" (Solusi University Bulletin, 2004–2006: 12–13).

Yet, "excessive consumption of alcohol" was mentioned as one of the causes of the violent variety of student demonstrations at UZ (Report of the Advisory Committee 1989: 58; *Herald* 4 April 1991). A small group of a self-styled "military wing," calling itself the University Bachelors Association commonly known by the acronym UBA, was notorious for leading the violent confrontations with the police. The UBA was active in the mobilisation of students for class boycotts and demonstrations and "to give them courage to confront the police and guarantee that the demonstrations would be violent, or to ensure that there would be 'revolutionary confrontation' […] the SRC ensured that the so-called military wing members got beer" (Tengende: 400–401).

The effects of the UZ Amendment Act and later the introduction of more stringent Acts such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Public Order and Security Act saw a degeneration of the more overt confrontational approach of the students. In addition was the emergence of new and more aggressive civic and opposition political groupings which brought to the fore demonstrations as a method of expressing themselves. When ZINASU entered into alliances with such civic groups as the National Constitutional Assembly they shed some of their prominence as the lone voice. Tengende links the disengagement of UZ students from activism with the rise of religious groups on campus, which advocated for Christian leadership in the Students' Representative Council and spawned violent methods of activism (528–529). This development disarmed and neutralised the UBA.

The Zimbabwe National Students' Union, often accused by the government of being involved in opposition politics, has also been challenged by the creation of a pro- government alternative students' union called the Zimbabwe Congress of Students' Unions (Raftopoulos 2003: 233). Similar strategies have been used in other sectors and two examples are cited here. Firstly, the Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions with strong ZANU (PF) links was formed to counter the activities of the militant Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions. Secondly, the Africa Destiny Network led by Obadiah Musindo is meant to pose as an ecumenical grouping alongside, if not competing with, long established groupings such as the Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe. Musindo's organisation is openly pro-ZANU (PF). During the 2005 parliamentary elections Musindo and his organisation openly campaigned for ZANU (PF), and he castigated the opposition MDC (*Daily Mirror* 8 August 2005). Civil society groups were suspect in the eyes of the government. The creation or sponsorship of alternative organisations was a strategy to pre-empt the effects of the third wave of democratisation which had gained currency as the 1980s closed (Young 1999: 23).

CONCLUSION

Universities are key players in influencing national processes. Through a combination of faith-based values, academic research and diffusion of contextually responsive epistemologies for capacity building and advocacy to and with the general church constituency, the wider networks of churches and civil society would make church-related universities an extremely viable fulcrum of reconstruction. For their reconstruction role to be effective the principles of academic freedom and autonomy have to be upheld, in relation to the state as well as the church. While church universities may be a means by which the church carries out its mission mandate, they can do so only as active and not passive agents that can also critically interrogate their role as church-affiliated institutions with an active interest in what is happening around it. Church universities are significant players for reconstruction by virtue of their theological source, but they would be more viable if they adopt a culture of critical engagement and curriculum that is responsive to societal needs and challenges. Ideas generated within the university would become more useful in shaping society. Given the ZCC's role in encouraging various denominations to invest in higher and tertiary

education, it is vital for the ZCC to continue to mobilise churches to make university education available to as many citizens as possible. Church universities are vital cogs in the development process. They must be well equipped in order for them to make more effective contributions towards Zimbabwe's development.

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CHAPTER 12

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches and Women's Empowerment

Tapiwa P. Mapuranga

INTRODUCTION

Since the development of African theology, the church has been called to answer and respond to the problems of Africa. Male theologians who dominated African theology until the 1980s indeed brought many critical issues to the fore. However, it appears that these African male theologians had largely not been taking women's issues seriously. It was only with the rise of African women theologians since the early 1990s (following the formation of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians in 1989) that women's issues were critically brought to the fore. This has enlightened the church on how it can handle women's concerns in Africa. However, despite the calls and cries by women theologians in Africa, it has been noted that more work remains to be done by the church in Africa in order to transform Christianity into a truly African religion (Chitando 2002: 16). With particular reference to Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) is one of the church organisations that have made it part of their agenda to transform Christianity into a relevant religion in the

T. P. Mapuranga (✉)
Department of Religious Studies, Classics and Philosophy, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe

lives of women. The organisation has, thus, among other tasks, brought women's issues to the limelight. It is thus the thrust of this chapter to examine how the ZCC has dealt with the issues of women's empowerment as part of the church.

Women's Empowerment: A Brief Introduction

This chapter looks at women's empowerment from the perspective of religious studies. Though there are quite a number of definitions of empowerment, this chapter considers it as a process by which those who have been denied the ability to make life choices acquire such ability (Kabeer 1999). With particular reference to women, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) prefers to call it 'female empowerment' so that it caters for young girls and adolescents as well. As such, female empowerment is achieved when women and girls acquire the power to act freely, exercise their rights and fulfil their potential as full and equal members of society. While empowerment often comes from within, and individuals empower themselves, cultures, societies and institutions create conditions that facilitate or undermine the possibilities for empowerment (USAID Policy 2012: 3).

The need to specifically examine women's empowerment stems from the notion that 'to this day, women perform 66% of the world's work, produce 50% of the food, but earn 10% of the income and own 1% of the property' (www.unwomen.org). From a religious studies perspective, this scenario emerges from the fact that

> Christianity and other world religions developed amid patriarchal societies in which women are treated as objects rather than persons. To this day, women have neither been accorded equal rights within the society not equal rights within religious communities. The male, in most instances, has been granted authority and power over women, especially wives, and this has led to devastating consequences for women and their health and wellbeing. (Messer 2004: 78)

It is out of this influence of religion that many women remain disempowered in areas such as education and training, economy, violence, power and decision-making and health amongst other issues. Such areas have been the concerns of African women theologians as they seek the empowerment of ordinary women by the church and other religious

traditions. The next section discusses some of the concerns of women brought up by African women theologians.

WOMEN AND THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES: AN OVERVIEW

African theology has been predominantly a male preserve since it came to the fore (Mapuranga 2013: 19). Unfortunately, this male dominance in African theology has been disproportionate to the challenges of women in the church. This has had some ripple effects on the misrepresentation of the needs of the women, who are the majority in the African church. As argued by Chitando (2007a: 6):

> The church in Africa, paradoxically, has the face of a woman … However, churches in Africa have not actively supported women in their quest for abundant life. To begin with, the church has continued to reinforce the subordination of women to men. Indigenous patriarchal ideologies are used to buttress the oppression of women. 'It is our culture' is the tired refrain. Selective reading of biblical passages lubricates the process. Unfortunately, many women have internalised patriarchal readings of passages.

Despite women being the majority in the church, a number of church traditions, including wrong interpretation of some biblical passages, continue to make women subordinate to their male counterparts. Such biblical passages that promote the minority status of women include *Ephesians* 5: 22–24, *I Corinthians* 14: 34–35 and *I Timothy* 2: 11–15 (see Mapuranga 2012). Such biblical passages have defined men as heads of families. According to Messer (2004: 78), such theologies relegate women to secondary roles within the church and culture. It is out of such theological perspectives that the church has been called to reinterpret these texts in a gender empowering manner, where the church needs to 'transform the concept of headship so as to encourage mutuality and companionship of partners who complement each other' (Moyo 2005: 131).

Consequently, there have been quite a number of accusations from women against the silence of the church regarding women's concerns. It is out of such situations that many African women have been left by the church to 'groan in faith' (Kanyoro and Njoroge 1996). African women theologians generally felt the need to awaken the church in Africa on matters that directly concern them. According to Kanyoro and Oduyoye (2006: 5),

Women can awaken the church in Africa to the fact that biblical history continues in the lives of God's people. By telling the stories of the struggles and experiences of faith of the People of God today, women will be able to show that the same power of God that enabled Hebrew people to observe their stories of faith lives with us for whom the promise of the Spirit was given and fulfilled at Pentecost. As women relate their own experiences, the church in Africa will be forced to listen to a people who have until now been denied a voice. The church will not only listen, but will be enriched by talents and gifts that have remained untapped until today.

The same sentiment is echoed by Dube who sees the centrality of the church in addressing problems confronted by society. Though her argument is directed at HIV, it could be suggested that the role of the church on HIV issues is similar to such issues as gender empowerment. She argues that (2004: v)

Yet the church and its leaders, by virtue of their community centeredness, their close relationship with individuals and families, their value of holding each person as God's person, and their role a servants of God, bearers of salvation and hope, have much expected from them. Much is laid at the feet of the church in the HIV and AIDS struggle. The challenge is in confronting the African church.

Despite these efforts, on the one hand, as noted by Chitando (2007a: 8), 'for a long time, African women have challenged the churches to hear their cries but to little avail: the leadership of the churches has hardly budged.' Such are the attitudes of the churches which choose to remain highly patriarchal and allow men to be in positions that are disempowering to women. However, on the other hand, some churches have heard the theologies of women who have expressed their needs in a way that has made them to be described by Chitando as operating with 'aggrieved hearts and militant pens' (2009: 59), as 'visible and audible daughters of Ethiopia' (2009: 56) who are singing down the walls of patriarchy (2009: 65). It is perhaps out of the continued contributions by African women theologians that the church is now working towards the issues of women's empowerment. Some churches and church organisations are increasingly accommodating women's empowerment issues in their programmes. But, does the Bible allow the church to empower women? The next section discusses the role of religion, with particular reference to the Bible, in dealing with women's empowerment issues.

Women's Empowerment: The Role of Religion

Throughout history, women have always struggled to emancipate themselves from the inequalities brought about by patriarchy. According to Ruether (1974: 191), 'religion is the most important shaper and enforcer of the image and role of women in culture and society.' For example, the Bible paradoxically presents a lot of images that influence the status of women in life. This section examines selected cases that are empowering for the women in the church. As such, through these examples, one would realise that by seeking to empower women, some churches and church-related organisations are not doing the extraordinary, but in ways that conform to the Bible.

On a positive and more empowering note, it is possible to discuss courageous women who countered the patriarchal culture of their time. Good examples include Shipra and Pauh who were the first to oppose the Pharaoh by refusing to kill their new-born sons (Exodus 1:15–21). Though their story is often ignored by theologians, it remains a critical feminist act which challenges oppressive structures. Through this example, women are empowered to make critical decisions in areas that affect their well-being. Miriam can also be regarded as challenging patriarchy when she asked, 'has the Lord indeed only spoken through Moses?' (Numbers 2:2b). This story also questions the male dominant roles in the church in contemporary society. Does the Lord only choose male leaders in the church, or God empowers women too?

Apart from the Old Testament, Vorster (1984: 38) argues that in the New Testament, Jesus brings a new dispensation in the biblical exhortations against women. Women were among the disciples who accompanied Jesus everywhere he went (Luke 8:1–3). Likewise, if there were women who were also disciples, then women in contemporary society can become so hopeful in taking active and empowering roles in the church and beyond. According to Beecher (1990: 11), Jesus also challenged the traditional role of women when he visited Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38–42). In this story, Mary broke the boundaries expected of women in her culture, by sitting at the feet of a rabbi, listening to his teaching (a role traditionally reserved for men). So, if Jesus could allow women such empowering roles, the church in contemporary society is indeed mandated to empower women, by breaking disempowering boundaries for women.

Having illustrated (using selected cases) how the Bible can be used to promote the empowerment of women so much , both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, the next section illustrates how the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) has sought to do the same.

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches: A Brief Background

The ZCC is a fellowship of 26 Christian denominations and 10 para-church organisations that confess to the Lord Jesus Christ according to the scriptures (zcc.org.zw). It was founded in 1964. It was inaugurated on the 29th of July 1964 at St Cuthbert hall in Gweru. According to Hallencreutz (1988: 52), the organisation emerged as the result of a largely inspired African movement to create a forum where Christian leaders from different denominations tackle matters of mutual concern in an increasingly tense political atmosphere. Generally, the ZCC plays the role of creating an enabling environments for debating about issues that affect their member church organisations. It is not an implementing body, but rather consolidates member's voices to speak out on national issues.

Since its inception in 1964, the ZCC adopted a number of programmes to respond to various political and socio-economic problems in a number of churches and Christian organisations that it brings together. Some of these programmes include the gender justice programme, church administration and management, economic justice, health justice and the justice and peace programme. It is interesting to note that the organisation has a fully fledged department dedicated to gender, and thus pays primary attention to the needs of women. In all its other programmes, one could argue that the theme of women runs through. It becomes plausible therefore to argue that the ZCC takes into consideration the need for empowerment, including specifically the empowerment of women.

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches and Women's Empowerment

The ZCC has made some commendable effort to address the needs of women. Some of its strengths in pushing for the agenda of women lie in the fact that 'the church is regarded as a credible institution, with a unique capacity to mobilise volunteers. Its workers are consistently well motivated, while its members have diverse professional backgrounds' (Chitando 2007b: 86). These attributes enable the church to tackle many challenges faced by society such as HIV and AIDS, gender-based violence, poverty and, in this case, the promotion of women's empowerment in society.

As alluded to earlier in this chapter, there are various desks or departments within the ZCC. Amongst these is the women's desk that was

specifically established to deal with issues that affect women in member churches and the society at large. This section of the women's desk was inspired by Galatians 3:26–28 which says, 'so there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.' The vision of the women's desk is to promote equality, prosperity and total emancipation of all women. Its mission is to pay attention to women's agenda and to problems of vital importance to Christian women. The women's desk, as stated in their vision (www.zcc.co.zw/women's-desk.html), is to promote equality, prosperity and total emancipation of all women. This arm of the organisation (the women's desk) is there to make sure that women also have the same opportunity as men, taking positions of influence in order to participate in the highest decision-making bodies within their church structures. There are many activities that the ZCC has done for women's empowerment through the women's desk.

The ZCC therefore deals with quite a number of areas where women need empowerment. One of these areas is in HIV and AIDS education. In so many calls in African theology (see, for example, Byamugisha et al. 2012), the church has been described as the body of Christ which is HIV positive. As such, the Christian church certainly cannot remain silent in the face of HIV and AIDS. According to Igo (2009: 11),

> While pastoral and medical care of those infected remain ever crucial in the response to this crisis, we Christians, with our deep faith in the incarnation and resurrection must go further and seek to eradicate this virus totally from our world. We have a very distinctive contribution to make to the whole area of prevention, because of the faith we proclaim.

This chapter appreciates the efforts by some leading theologians who have put a lot of effort to equip the church with ways of empowering women in the era of HIV and AIDS (see, for example, Dube 2003 and Chitando 2008, among others). This is because women have been affected most by the pandemic (see, for example, Mapuranga 2011). It is out of such calls for the church to act that the ZCC has been quite significant in its approach to HIV. For a long time, stigma and ignorance prevented the church from seriously getting involved with HIV and AIDS issues. The organisation started talking seriously about HIV in 1996. By 1998, the training department of the ZCC had begun to fully grasp the problems associated with HIV and AIDS (www.zcc.co.zw/er-and-training-centr.

html). They also conduct HIV and AIDS workshops for support groups and caregivers. From 2003 to 2005, HIV and AIDS became a priority for the ZCC. Emphasis was put on prevention, information, education, communication, counselling and home-based care.

Apart from empowering women with HIV and AIDS education, the ZCC has done a sterling job on empowering women in its member churches economically. Through its other desk on entrepreneurship and development, the ZCC targets training of member churches to acquire business skills, knowledge and other positive business attitudes. In this respect, the ZCC empowers women through projects such as making soap, baking, sewing and knitting. This is in agreement with Chirongoma (2006: 184), who argues that

> The churches can also address issues of poverty by initiating income-generating projects that will economically empower the poor. Even though most rural women are uneducated and lack access to resources, they can still benefit from projects initiated by churches, such as manufacture of peanut butter, poultry production, craft work and gardening. Such projects can empower poor people financially and protect them from the vulnerability of adopting risky survival strategies that further expose them to HIV.

As such, the ZCC is quite instrumental in mobilising its member churches and organisation in promoting women's empowerment economically. The ZCC has not waited for a 'Messianic era before engaging in economic activities that make a difference at the local level' (Chitando 2007a: 19).

Apart from strengthening women's pockets, the ZCC has, over the years, facilitated workshops that empower women with life skills on issues that affect them especially as wives, widows and single mothers. As such, the organisation also coordinates and conducts workshops, seminars, consultations and conferences on themes that empower women on issues such as wills and inheritance, leadership and project management, as well as microcredit. The organisation facilitates workshops and seminars regularly to enlighten women on issues regarding violence, wills and inheritance and other contemporary challenges. This was confirmed in an interview with Mrs. Ruwona (2014), who explained that she attended the 2005 Diocese of Manicaland Mother's Union conference which was held at St Augustine's Mission in Penhalonga, Mutare. During this conference, the ZCC women's desk members came to present on topics about wills and inheritance. She highlighted that she found the presentation quite insightful, educating as well as empowering.

The ZCC has also done a remarkable job with its member organisations by facilitating women's fellowships, such as *Mubatanidzwa* or *Ruwadzano* (see the chapter by Shoko and Mapuranga in this volume). These are women's groups in the churches that promote solidarity and empowerment amongst women in the churches. These create space for different groups of women such as clergy women, heads of denominations, pastor's wives, widows and single mothers. These women may come together in forums such as church conventions and conferences. According to Chitando (2007b: 11),

> Church women's organizations are especially significant in the provision of voluntary work. In Southern Africa they are known as *Manyano*. They are found in different denominations, each with its own uniform. These organizations provide women with a sense of belonging. In turn, the women live out their faith in dramatic fashion. While men have claimed to be too busy, it is the women from church who have answered the call to serve the poorest of the poor. They cook for and bathe the sick in their villages. They lead at funerals by consoling the bereaved and feeding the mourners. (Men only appear when they want to prove their authority, especially in designing the funeral programmes.)

Though such activities done through these women's guilds are rarely recognised as 'work,' it is vital to note that many women are empowered through these. Women's guilds, through facilitation from the ZCC, become organisations with 'friendly feet' and 'anointed hands' (Chitando 2007b) as they respond to the needs of other fellow women, thus empowering them in a variety of areas, spiritually, psychologically and financially. As such, the ZCC contributes immensely to the well-being of women in their member churches and organisations through its role of facilitation of empowerment programmes through these women guilds.

Despite all these efforts, the ZCC has faced a variety of challenges in their facilitation of programmes. The next section briefly examines one of the major setbacks in the organisation's attempt to empower women.

THE MAJOR CHALLENGES FACED BY THE ZIMBABWE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN EMPOWERING WOMEN

In general, the ZCC has managed to empower women in its member churches and organisations in a variety of areas that include HIV and AIDS education, entrepreneurship, training in areas such as baking,

sewing and knitting. The very fact that the organisation has been able to set a desk that specifically deals with women's issues tells a lot in terms of the desired achievements of the organisation. However, though the ZCC has managed to come up with various programmes that address the challenges that women face in the church and society, the organisation suffers from the fact that it is not a decision-making body; neither is it an implementing body. What it only does to member churches is to make recommendations and it is entirely up to the leadership of member churches and organisations to implement the recommendations or not. As such, some of the efforts may end up in vain as some churches may not implement their suggestions.

In addition, the ZCC has highlighted that it has faced major challenges in addressing the need to empower women. This is because its projects have only been implemented from the micro-scale operations of their 'women's desk.' They have thus not been able to reach out to many women at a macro level. In addition, in an interview (April 2014), one member of the women's desk indicated that their department has not done enough in addressing the concerns of women. As such, efforts are being made to establish the gender desk which will deal with the needs of both male and female with more rigour.

Conclusion

In as much as the tradition of the church is highly patriarchal, the ZCC stands up tall as one of those church organisations that have made significant efforts in the last 50 years towards women's empowerment. The ZCC has empowered women socially through its facilitation of women's guilds where women are taught a variety of life skills. In workshops facilitated by ZCC, women are also taught to eke out a living through training in areas of small entrepreneurship such as sewing, knitting and baking, amongst others. However, one major hurdle that the organisation has faced is that it is only a facilitating body, and thus cannot implement all its ideas in the member churches and organisations. This makes it quite difficult to ensure that all its recommendations to enhance women's empowerment for its members are implemented. Despite such setbacks, the agenda of ZCC for women's empowerment does not end at 50 years; rather, the journey to give abundance to women's life continues to unfold. By addressing women's issues, the ZCC is making a major contribution to the overall development of Zimbabwe.

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CHAPTER 13

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the Prophetic Mission of the Church

Jimmy Dube

INTRODUCTION

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) was formed basically to give the churches in the then Rhodesia a united and prophetic voice over what were considered to be injustices committed by the colonial regime against the citizens of the Southern African nation (Hallencreutz 1988a, b, see also the chapter by Ruzivo in this volume). Before the Council there was the Southern Rhodesia Missionary Conference of Christian Natives and also the Southern Rhodesia Christian Council which was predominantly for white missionaries. When the two organizations amalgamated in 1954 they formed the Southern Rhodesia Christian Conference (SRCC) (Ranger 1995: 124). The SRCC became the precursor to the modern-day Zimbabwe Council of Churches.

The eminent scholar and theologian Carl F. Hallencreutz has traced for us the chequered role the Zimbabwe (Christian) Council of Churches played from its inception in 1964, during the pre-and post-independent

J. Dube (✉)
Methodist Church, Harare, Zimbabwe

United Theological College, Harare, Zimbabwe

period up until 1985 (Hallencreutz 1988a, b). Indeed, the whole volume, *Church and State in Zimbabwe* (Hallencreutz and Moyo 1988), is highly informative. What emerges from the thorough scholarship in this volume regarding the socio-political and economic development role of the Church in Zimbabwe is very engaged and sometimes troubled. It becomes very evident from my reading of Hallencreutz that the Council had its prophetic role cut out during the pre-independence era and then suffered from an identity crisis the in the post-independence era, which is what most postcolonial organizations around the globe had to face post-independence. The former chairperson of the South African Council of Churches (SACC), Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town, Rev. Dr. Desmond Tutu, was apt to say, "During the apartheid days we knew as a church what we were against and post-apartheid we no longer know what we are for" (class lecture, 1998, Atlanta, GA). It is also evident judging from the crises that have riddled Zimbabwe within the last decade that the Council is yet to recover its identity. As the Malawian scholar Isaac Phiri rightly observes, "The Church in Africa has not spearheaded nor initiated socio-political engagement but has been unwillingly sucked into the socio-political drama and/or at times has been overtaken by events prompting reactionary responses" (Phiri 2001).

A detailed analysis of the role played by the Council during the colonial days demonstrates a Council that was fully engaged with the government and with the issues that affected the oppressed and poor. It was a Council on the side of the weak, speaking loud and clear about its own preferences when it came to the life and faith of its constituency of both black and white members and to the white colonial governments. Things would take a dramatic turn for the Council as far as its prophetic stance is concerned at the attainment of majority from 1980 on.

Dynamics of Church-State Relations in the Early Years of Independence

The major complication arose when the then State President, Rev. Canaan Banana, became directly involved in pressurizing the Council to relieve its General Secretary, Mr. C. D. Watyoka, of his duties. This left the Council paralysed and impotent to deal with issues that could directly anger the ZANU PF government. After the General Secretary was removed from his position, the succeeding General Secretaries were cautious about having any direct confrontations with the government, even when it had

trampled on the rights of the poor. This event, that saw Mr. C. D. Watyoka being literally driven out of office, must have left a scar on the organization and shaken the movement to the core. It would be years before the organization regained its status and become relevant again to the socio-political and economic affairs of Zimbabwe and the world in general.

The Council had been in the crossfire before, but never was the crossfire so intense and so fierce that it consumed the General Secretary.

The statement by Hallencreutz is telling about how bad the situation was between the ZCC and the State:

> The ZCC was, thus, forced by circumstances outside of its own immediate control to fire its General Secretary in order to restore trustworthy relations with the State. This was evidently a difficult decision to make and the final parting of ways was an emotional affair where both the ZCC President and Bishop Katsande of the Christian Marching Church eloquently expressed the Council's gratitude to Mr Watyoka for his nearly ten years of diligent service as ZCC chief executive. (Hallencreutz 1988b: 275)

What will remain a mystery is, what could have been the immediate consequence and for the future of the Council in Zimbabwe had the Council stuck to its guns and refused to fire its Secretary General? It can be inferred, judging from the behaviour of the State within the last thirty-four years of independence, that the government would have punished the Council had it continued with Watyoka as Secretary General. Not only could the Council have been punished, but there are high chances that the government could have formed a parallel Council. The following readings are telling of the situation obtaining on the ground, "The State President tried to explore possibilities to develop an alternative ecumenical structure which would take over the functions of ZCC if the Council did not 'make its own house clean'" (Hallencreutz 1988b: 273). To show how bad things had turned and how serious the government was in exploring possibilities of a parallel Council, the ZCC was called to meet the State President. Hallencreutz reports what obtained:

> At this meeting the Executive Committee received reports from a minor committee with Bishop Shiri and Revds Nemapare and Danisa and from a special group of six who had been entrusted by the President to explore possibilities for a new Christian Council if need be … Representing the group of six Dr. Mukwakwami was able to give a more substantial report. (Hallencreutz 1988b: 273–274)

Tensions Between the Church and the State

Another real possibility was that had the Council stuck to its guns and refused to comply with the State request to fire its General Secretary, those members of the Council who were sympathetic to ZANU PF could have pushed for a breakaway group. In short, as Bishop Shiri rightly observed, the "developments [within the Council] might lead to a division of the Council" (Hallencreutz 1988b: 274).

It must, therefore, be put on record that rather than countenance the division of the Council or the event of the government forming an alternative Council, the ZCC decided to join hands with the state and sold its morals and prophetic voice at the altar of expedience.

My reading of the situation, and judging from the available documents, is that the Council failed to protect the General Secretary, not because he was a thorn in the flesh for standing up and speaking prophetically against government, but because of his personal style of heavy handedness in running the affairs of the Council. In other words, he was too aligned to the Bishop Muzorewa type of politics, had been overcentralizing the Council business around himself, what Hallencreutz termed "Senator Todd Grievances" (Hallencreutz 1988b: 272). What had become a thorn in the flesh and had caused not only the State President, but also the key ministries in the government and in this particular case the Minister of Home Affairs Dr. H. Ushewokunze, and Minister of Information, Dr. N. Shamuyarira, to intervene was that the ZCC was blocking reconstruction funds to the State from overseas donors (Hallencreutz 1988b: 270). For four solid years (1980–1983) into the country's political independence, the Council was now enmeshed in conflict with the African rulers who had in the past enjoyed the Council's support.

After the unfortunate termination of Watyoka's services as the General Secretary, Rev. Murombedzi Kuchera was appointed and came on board during the time of genocide in Matabeleland. It has been highlighted elsewhere (Dube 2006. 97ff) that the performance of the ZCC compared to that of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace leaves a lot to be desired. During this time of conflict and State abuses of power, the Council's focus was more on mending its relationship with the government, on training programmes and on the development and reconstruction of communities that had been affected by the liberation struggle. There was, however, a prophetic moment when the ZCC, through Heads of Christian Denominations, met the Prime Minister Robert Mugabe

about the security situation in Matabeleland on April 5, 1983. It was at this meeting that "Robert Mugabe took issue with the views of the Catholic Bishops on Government's security measures in front of other Heads of Denominations" (Hallencreutz 1988b: 254). Even at this forum the Heads of Denominations and the ZCC failed to speak with one voice regarding the Gukurahundi genocide. In other words, the Protestant leaders failed to stand in solidarity with their Catholic brothers (the leadership was predominantly male) when they were being condemned and vilified for speaking the truth to power.

To his credit though, as General Secretary Rev. Kuchera managed to put the sensitive issue of the Gukurahundi genocide on the ZCC agenda twice. From *Gukurahundi* to the *Murambatsvina* up to the violent Elections of 2008, the Council had now retreated to the boardroom and closed executive and general meetings. It resorted to the issuing of theological statements in the newspapers. Few face-to-face engagements and confrontations with the state apparatus are recorded. The Council was not stirred into action by the violence and vilification of those who dared step out like Revds. Motsi, Kadenge, Shaw, Bishop Magaya and many others who faced criticism from the state (see the chapter by Tarusarira in this volume). It is this kind of stand-on-the-fence attitude of the Council that led to the formation of more militant and prophetic organizations such as the Zimbabwe Christian Alliance which spearheaded the Save Zimbabwe campaign.

THE PROPHETIC MISSION OF THE CHURCH

To be fair and just to the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, we may need to stop and ask if our evaluation and understanding of the Council's role in exercising of prophetic ministry is a shared phenomenon. What is it that constitutes exercising prophetic ministry? The relevance of this question comes to the fore when one realizes that, more and more, our understanding of a prophetic ministry is being overtaken by simplistic and highly spiritualized concepts of ministry which put more emphasis on faith as a private aspect of life. A simple online search of the phrase "prophetic ministry" testifies to the fact that the phrase "prophetic ministry" brings up more issues that have to do with a private faith than a faith that is engaged with the outside world. Not a single definition that encompasses a ministry directed to speaking theological truth into society and politics comes up when one types the phrase.

In short, the definition of "prophetic ministry" is no longer influenced by the examples of the prophet Amos, Elijah, Micah and others who stood up against the powerful and spoke God's word into the public square. The modern definition of prophetic ministry has been turned inward to miracle workings and foretelling by the so-called prophets and "men of God" (Chitando et al. 2014). In other words, faith has been privatized. So when we evaluate the Council on whether it did exercise or failed to exercise the prophetic ministry, we are asking if it did speak truth to power at a time when God expected the Council to.

The New Testament has many examples of those who went outside the church walls and august church assemblies and witnessed to the power and kingdom of God outside the church wall and some paid the ultimate price with their lives for speaking out. Stephen is one great example! During the critical times of this country has the church been able to raise enough of such men and women who stand and speak God's truth to power and even risk their lives for the sake of the kingdom of God? The post-New Testament age records many who exercised a prophetic ministry similar to that of biblical times. There were many martyrs who died because of testifying to the public square! The modern church in many parts of the world has produced many of such standing, who did bear witness to God's truth in the public square and were ready to be imprisoned, deported, slain and shot point-blank because the fire for justice in them could not be drowned by strategies of the political elites. There are many who have not only participated but also engaged their communities on socio-political issues in ways that speak of and demonstrate God's power and presence in the world.

Writing to twenty-first-century Christians, Peter Thirkell has helped us understand better what a prophetic ministry may entail for a modern person. He avers,

> In reflecting on what *action (*emphasis mine*)* in the public square might mean for each of us, there are three aspects to consider. The first is to stay alert for opportunities to bring biblically-informed point of view on contemporary issues of interest in the wider society … Secondly, there will be instances where matters of public interest bear directly on our areas of personal expertise or life experience—what Abraham Kuyper calls our "sphere of influence" … Thirdly, we should be mindful that our daily activities almost invariably bring us into the public square in terms of interactions with other people, allowing opportunities to show grace, compassion, mercy, and creativity at a personal level. (Thirkell 2012: 12)

MODELS OF PROPHETIC ENGAGEMENT

Did the church through the influence of the Council produce any of such? The answer is a positive! Starting from the Missionary Conference right up to the native Southern Rhodesia Missionary Conference way up to the Christian Council, names of missionaries and indigenous ministers who stood up and bore witness into the public square are there as a public testimony that God has not left God's church without any witnesses. The list begins with those who opposed colonial rule from the early days to the last day when colonialism was replaced by African independence. The list includes those who opposed sections of the Legislations that were deemed oppressive to the indigenous people, such as the Land Tenure Act, up to those who stood up and fought gallantly against the Unilateral Declaration of Independence. It also includes those who publicly supported the liberation movements that fought a guerrilla war against the regime.

We also need to analyse the effectiveness of the strategies employed by these men and women in exercising a prophetic ministry Did these leaders of the church task their expert theologians to pen theologically verbose pastoral letters/theological statements that are addressed to none but the nation? Were these statements penned in the comforts of well-ventilated offices and delivered to no one in particular, save newspapers that are sympathetic to opposition politics, thereby minimizing any chances of antagonizing the news editors, the ruling party and the government at large?

Were there times in its history that the Council went out of its general meetings and had a public engagement with the authorities? The answer is that during the colonial days the Council did more than hold general meetings, and was involved in mass mobilization of the people, black and white, and indeed influenced public opinion over critical issues that affected the people's lives. The records are clear that the Council does have on its list those who mobilized, spoke out, railed against injustice until they became persona non grata! The Council does have a list of martyrs among its effective leaders, ministers of the Gospel who because of their involvement in the Council shook the system and were assassinated or disappeared such as Rev. Kanodereka and Rev. Chombo, respectively!

The Council also boasts of a list of its key leaders who, because of their theological imagination, ended up engaging in politics on a full-time basis. These had become politicians, not by training, but because of their serious engagements in the prophetic ministry. Some of these would become Members of Parliament, for example, Mrs. Eveline Shava and Bishop

Dhube of the Baptist Church, or head different organs in government and in non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as World Vision, Rev. Max Chigwida and Ecumenical Chaplaincy at the University of Zimbabwe, Rev. Sebastian Bakare.

Nonetheless, to crown it all, the Council did not just produce ordinary politicians in its fifty-year history, but produced a federal Prime Minister, Sir. Garfield Todd, who would later become a Senator in the new Zimbabwe, an interim Prime Minister of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, Bishop Abel T. Muzorewa, and a State President, Professor Canaan Banana! These are people who were deeply involved in the Council and were deeply influenced and informed by it.

The strategies employed by the Council throughout its fifty-year history will tell us when the Council was really bold enough to stand up and speak truth to power. They also tell us the times when it abdicated its role and as a result the individual church leaders and some denominations felt let down and had no choice but to start alternative movements such the Christian Alliance to spearhead the prophetic ministry (see the chapter by Tarusarira in this volume). It can be further argued that the emergence of a plethora of ecumenical groups, all claiming to be representing the interests of the denominations in Zimbabwe, is a sign of failed or weak strategies of the Council. It can even be further concluded that the multiplicity of such organizations is a testament to infiltration of the Council by some elements of the State. This might be the case if one recalls the earlier discussion of the strategy threatened by the State had the Council failed to replace its General Secretary with one who would be sympathetic to government policies.

Conclusion

By upholding the prophetic ministry of the Church, the Council can make a significant contribution to development in Zimbabwe. The prophetic ministry of the Church insists on siding with the poor and investing in their development. Such development is holistic and involves emancipation in the economic, social, political and spiritual dimensions. The Council needs to recover its prophetic voice in order to be in dialogue with the government and to challenge every sign that the government has lost its vision. A prophetic church does not hesitate to speak truth to power. It recognizes that God is on the side of the oppressed and it invests in the health and well-being of the poorest of the poor. The Council is challenged to recover its prophetic voice and contribute towards holistic and sustainable development in Zimbabwe.

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The Theology of Enough: An Agenda for the Twenty-First Century Church in Zimbabwe

Bednicho Nyoni

Introduction

Informed by the Bible and its tenets, it is the task of this chapter to remind the twenty-first century church in Zimbabwe and beyond that for the Church to transform society, it must uphold and promote high ethical values. In particular, it must challenge greed and corruption in society. The Church should seriously proclaim and teach the theology of enough. It has been from wanting more and more that humanity has caused more harm than good to humans and the environment. The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) must engage theological institutions and the faith community to promote the theology of enough. This theology is critical for sustainable development to occur. The theology of enough is biblically based (although, admittedly, passages that promote excessive consumption are present). It means sufficiency, not less than required quantity, not

B. Nyoni (✉)
Zimbabwe Open University, Harare, Zimbabwe
e-mail: abednyoni@gmail.com

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what is more than needed, excessive, and profligate. This is exactly what is said by the following biblical texts among many others. "The Lord said to Moses, I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. This is what the Lord has commanded: 'each one is to gather as much as he needs. Take an omer (about half a gallon) for each person you have in your tent'" (Exodus 16:4, 16). Also, "Give me neither poverty nor riches, for in my poverty I might be forced to steal and in my riches l might forget my God" (Proverbs 30:8). The concept is against greed and selfishness. Enoughism is a theory propounded by John Naish (2008). The main thrust is to unveil the theology of enough as a way to balance the equation and to develop a sustainable society—for this planet earth to be once more habitable mother-earth. To this effect, Mahatma Gandhi once said that "there is enough for everyone's needs, but there is not enough for anyone's greed" (Gandhi 2008).

In the popular view, in what Paul Freire called "naïve consciousness", the role of the Church in society is relegated to 'spiritual matters'. Usually, these spiritual matters are understood to be the search for the "pie in the sky" (Freire 1970). In other words, the Church is supposed to pursue matters which will have nothing to do with the day-to-day lives of real people and ecology in this world. Many colonial and post-colonial authorities have been happy with this idea of the Church's role. Yet, the same authorities have been keen to invite the Church to build hospitals, schools, training institutions and other non-governmental institutions addressing issues of development and poverty eradication. The colonial settlers, for example, invited the Jesuits and Dominicans to accompany them, yet the government they established did not want the missionaries to genuinely bring the good news to the African/s. Describing this contradiction, Don Helder Camara, the Brazilian liberation theologian, observed in the 1970s, that when "l give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When l ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist" (Broucker 1970). It is against this backdrop that the twenty-first century church in Zimbabwe must have a paradigm shift within systematic theology, by introducing seriously the theology of enough, to both Christians and non-Christians for this mother-earth to be inhabitable. In turn, this will inspire sustainable development.

This chapter seeks to explore some of the perspectives on what is 'enough' among the Zimbabweans. For instance, in Zimbabwe there are people who are 'filthy rich', while others are 'filthy poor'. Consequently, the objectives of this chapter are to investigate the theology of enough in Zimbabwe and

to identify and examine biblical interpretations and theological position regarding the theology of enough with reference to key texts.

Is There a Theology of Enough in Zimbabwe?

Since Zimbabwe attained political independence in 1980, an oligarchy or plutocracy of the black population has become 'filthy rich' whilst the masses are getting drowned in rivers of poverty. In another way, the masses became 'filthy poor'. The first Chimurenga was from 1896 to 1897 and the second Chimurenga was from the 1960s to the late 1970s. It led to the end of white minority rule in Rhodesia and to the *de jure* independence of Zimbabwe in 1980. The Land Reform Programme, undertaken by the government of Zimbabwe since 2000, is referred to as third Chimurenga. In a modern context, the word Chimurenga denotes a struggle for social justice, human rights, and political dignity. Furthermore, it can be argued that taking over leadership from the colonialists has been used to justify the current patrimonialism and oligarchic control of wealth in a natural resources-rich country. Undisputedly, Zimbabwe's main challenge is a plutocracy, which has turned a blind eye to the 'filthy poor' masses.

The living standards deteriorated astronomically in Zimbabwe from the early 1990s. The economic crisis in Zimbabwe is a product of a nation's historical poor governance experience. Canaan Banana once gave a seminar on socialism and religion. In his speech (Banana 1987), he described the people of Zimbabwe as a people with a fresh bleeding wound inflicted in the past and disturbed in the present, a people grappling with a not-so-easy, and a still nebulous present. People are anxious about the trajectory of their bleeding present, a present suffering the pangs of hostile and dehumanizing forces. The overwhelming majority of citizens face a gloomy future with no signs of an immediate end to their plight. It would be true to say that our present situation is that of a severely colonized nation which has not overcome the psychological and behavioural effects of colonization (Banana 1987: 10).

In 1988–1989, the Willovale scandal was unearthed by the Bulawayo *Chronicle* newspaper. It was a Zimbabwean political scandal in which *The Chronicle* Newspaper revealed that there was an illegal resale of automobile purchases by various government officials. This scandal was later substantiated by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). Many government officials were found to have engaged actively in corruption by the Sandura Commission. However, the government exonerated those who were

involved in corrupt activities. They protected the high-profile personalities even when in some cases these individuals were proven to be corrupt. However, they went on to elevate them to higher positions and even declared them heroes (Moto Magazine 1997: 9).

Corruption is one of the factors which ruined the country's economy. In the same vein, Kurebwa (2002) explained that the level of corruption in Zimbabwe in both public and private sectors has risen to crisis levels since independence. Zimbabwe is known for her richness in natural resources, including diamonds, gold, asbestos, platinum, and so on. However, the extraction of diamonds in Chiadzwa, since 2006, has taken centre stage because of the disappearing of the diamonds, without benefiting the Zimbabweans. However, the then Finance Minister Tendai Biti submitted that the country was not benefiting from the diamonds and hinted that proceeds were being diverted from the treasury (The Zimbabwe Situation 2012: 1–20). In March 2016, former President Mugabe came out on national television, reporting that diamonds worth $15 billion had disappeared after being looted by unknown thieves (The Standard, 2016). According to Kizito M. Yves, undoubtedly human beings depend on the available resources on earth, in order to meet their various needs. Currently, it is evident that most of these resources (earth capital), such as all minerals, water, plants, and animals, are neither inexhaustible nor renewable (Yves 2011: 333–352). Therefore, it is critical to curb the appetite to loot and plunder natural resources.

Lack of accountability and corruption as well as greed have gradually become endemic in Zimbabwean society. They mostly involve the self-benefiting conduct by people or entities in positions of responsibility, both in the private and in the public sector. The elite has sought to gain and keep economic enrichment at the expense of the common good of the populace (Tsvangirai and Bango 2011). Resources meant for the poor or for the common good have often been converted to personal use by individuals in positions of trust. These scandals have helped to derail the country's economic progress and produce social misery, accompanied by the progressive disintegration of the national morale (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006: 9). Members of the ruling elite began to earnestly enrich themselves and started losing touch with the traditional basis of support. Mugabe and the ruling elite came to increasingly identify their lot with those of the economic elite, most of whom were whites (Dashwood 2000). Further, cronyism has affected the national approach. Thus, "l am rich because I belong to ZANU-PF and if you want to be rich too, you must

join ZANU-PF", boasted one of Robert Mugabe's contact persons, Philip Chiyangwa, a multimillionaire businessman (Meredith 2002). Therefore, for the poor masses, it seemed the elite, the oligarchy, are not rich as a result of hard work or God's blessings, but by being connected to the patronage network of corruption.

The elite built exquisite mansions. A typical house had six to ten bedrooms, two or more living rooms, two or more bathrooms, servants' quarters, spacious yards, high walls, and electric gates, and swimming pools and tennis courts. The homes they took over from the colonialists and white farmers also had ornamental gardens that many of the elite have grown to like. All of them hired gardeners to tend their gardens (Belk 2000: 1–15). The few rich members of Zimbabwe's oligarchy owned different types of opulent mansions which had more than 25 bedrooms, whilst the people who elected them were starving and living in one-roomed houses, some without electricity and water. Jodie Foster said that attacking the rich is not envy, it is self-defence. The hoarding of wealth is the cause of poverty. The rich are not just indifferent to poverty; they create and maintain it (Foster 2016). This is an unethical practice, considering the mission and aim of all the Chimurengas fought by those who are 'filthy poor'.

It is important to recognize that the traditional African family structure is an extended, rather than just a nuclear, one. For the elite in Zimbabwe, this is a potential problem. Even when family members live in different places, more successful kin are expected to help less successful kin. This includes monetary support as well as often housing and caring for nephews, cousins, and others for sometimes extended periods of time (Belk 2000: 1–15). The philosophy of *Ubuntu* is a source of the theology of enough, in African tradition. In the same vein, Tutu pointed out that:

> *Ubuntu* is a concept that we have in our Bantu languages at home. *Ubuntu* is the essence of being a person. It means that we are people through other. We cannot be fully human alone. We are made for interdependence; we are made for the family. When you have *Ubuntu*, you embrace others. You are generous, compassionate. If the world had more *Ubuntu*, we would not have war and extreme poverty. We would not have this huge gap between the rich and the poor. You are rich so that you can make up what is lacking for others. You are powerful so that you can help the weak, just as a mother or father helps their children. (Tutu 2000)

Ubuntu is against greed, corruption, self-centredness, and the looting of wealth, as has been depicted in this section. Therefore, it is explained that servant leadership is no longer embedded within the oligarchy in Zimbabwe because leadership in Africa as a whole should follow the pattern of 'Chiefs' who were the highest form of leadership in an ethnic group. Chiefs were meant to guarantee the well-being of all their citizens. Furthermore, the serving role of leadership has been generally lost in the attitude of selfishness and lack of empathy and care for the next person. African leaders usually work less and do not see themselves as 'servants,' but as big bosses (Moyo et al. 2012: 117–133). The elite in Zimbabwe have embraced a Western culture of individualism, thereby abandoning *Ubuntu*.

THE BIBLICAL POSITION ON THE THEOLOGY OF ENOUGH

Christianity and other religions, as well as atheists, have never agreed on the position of their religious faiths on the theology of enough. This section intends to explore the position of Christianity and other religions on the subject matter, through selected biblical texts and other sources from different scholars. The following passage, cited in the introduction, provides valuable insights into the theology of enough. Thus:

> The Lord said to Moses, l will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. This is what the Lord has commanded: Each one is to gather as much as he needs. Take an omer (about half a gallon) for each person you have in your tent. However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell. So Moses was angry with them. Each morning everyone gathered as much as he needed. (Exodus 16:4, 16, 20–21)

What can humankind learn from this biblical narrative? In fact, the whole of Exodus, Chapter 16, is committed to manna and quail and for the Israelites to follow instructions of God through Moses. What can the twenty-first century church draw from this important passage? The aforesaid biblical quotation's key phrases in this chapter must catch humankind's attention. In the midst of greed, corruption, egocentrism, and wanton accumulation of wealth, shortages of money, and other challenges in Zimbabwe, enoughism has no meaning to the filthy rich.

The biblical passage cited above is pregnant with the theology of enough. It is concerned with humankind sharing equally the food and the riches of their countries. This is, however, a moral obligation for all humankind. The passage calls for a 'high standard' of honesty and compassion, as well as love for one another. Greedy people who tried to hoard food were reprimanded for causing the stored food to be filled with maggots and become smelly. The decaying of the extra food stored (hoarded) should be a great lesson for humankind. Humanity must desist from wanting more. This is what John Naish explained as follows, "human beings should be called '*Homo Expetens*'—wanting man; instead of '*Homo Sapiens*'—wise man or thinking man" (Naish 2008). To this end, he is emphasizing that humankind is prone to wanting more and more and more, especially the filthy rich. Enough of everything makes this mother-earth inhabitable. Accumulation tendencies are against God's governance, the owner of everything on this earth including the enslaved poor masses. Therefore, the poor masses are in that state, not by the will of God, but by the social creation of the few filthy rich.

Humanity must gather as much as they need, not too much or extra. This seems too difficult in the age of 'progressive development' because humankind is stereotyped as 'wanting more'. This wanting more stereotype cycle can be broken from moral, fairness, democracy, economic efficiency, and social stability concepts. By not getting enough of everything found on this mother-earth, the world is experiencing more unsolved socio-economic and religiopolitical challenges, for example, climate change, unending civil wars in Africa, Asia, and so on, HIV and AIDS, corruption, poor governance, and social stratification. In other countries there are no middle classes, the filthy rich are at the apex whilst the filthy poor are at the bottom, a big sign of the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor. Gathering as much as a person needs is thus the instruction. The instruction did not say humanity must live like monks and hermits, no, but people must "gather as much as [you] need" (Killinger 1988: 42–51). There is a need for 'filthy rich' individuals to recognize that what they have comes or belongs to God; hence, they must give back to God by giving to the 'filthy poor'. Thus, they must use their riches in a moral and fair way, through service to the poor.

A liturgy of enough is based on Psalms 23.

The Lord is our shepherd; we have all that we need, God created the green fields of this earth, life-giving waters and pure, clean air. The Lord is our

shepherd; we follow where God leads. But earth itself needs reviving, and we are called as stewards to its care. The earth is God's table; everyone is called to the feast. We see, there are enough resources for all when the distribution is equitable and fair. The goodness and mercy of God fill all of the creation. For God created this planet as humanity's home; it is for humankind to enjoy, but also to share. (Slettlon 2011)

Sletton's ideas are crystal clear to foster the fact that although the theology of enough does not exist for economists, and capitalists, and so on, the Bible is clear that all the resources on earth are meant for equitable distribution or are enough for everyone, but not enough for the greedy.

The ideas from John B. Cobb depict the complexity of the theology of enough between Christians' tenets and economist professionals. In addition, Cobbian philosophy is espoused as follows: a theology of enough calls directly for personal decisions. He believes there are millions of them, perhaps tens of millions, who are quite sure they have enough of the things that money buys (Anielski 2000). Unfortunately, the theology of enough is not taken seriously by the twenty-first century church. Humankind by nature will continue to crave for more and more and more. They cannot control their intrinsic wants—thereby they lack sufficiency skills. The need for ecological rehabilitation is evidenced by several books and papers which have been published and continue to be published on environmental issues (see, for example, Gitau 2000).

The theology of enough is not confined to socio-economic and religiopolitical issues only, but it embraces ecology and there is a biblical mandate for environmental stewardship by humankind. To this end, it is noted, thus, in the African perspective: the destruction of creation means the destruction of humanity and vice versa. The African worldview recognizes an uninterrupted interaction between human persons and the cosmos, and this goes on to such an extent that they cannot exist without this interpenetration and interdependence (Yves 2011) Therefore, lacking the theology of enough causes a chain reaction with negative ripples such as the plundering of national resources. However, the effects of wanting more and more without a sense of satisfaction and engaging in the aforesaid enterprises led to climate change. This is a crisis the world is currently experiencing, which calls for humankind to exercise checks and balances on their unrestricted appetite in wealth accumulation.

Christianity and Other Religions on the Theology of Enough or Equitable Distribution of Wealth

Most religions are seriously concerned with socio-economic and religio-political challenges, in favour of the preservation of human life and development as well as the conservation of the environment. Therefore, religious bodies or institutions combat wanton accumulation of wealth in relation to their respective convictions for the poor masses, bitten by extreme poverty, are in these institutions. In Zimbabwe, Christian bodies such as the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC), and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) have expressed their convictions pertaining to the theology of enough or equitable distribution of wealth in Zimbabwe (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006: 12).

It is, however, refreshing that the Christian institutions in Zimbabwe have engaged the government on critical issues that resonate with the biblical protests for the poor to be part of the historical narrative by raising and advocating for their concerns. This was long overdue considering that the above voice (Church) of the voiceless (poor masses) engaged the government in 2006, 26 years after the country attained political independence in 1980. The unbearable state to be pointed out is that during these 26 years the Christian bodies in Zimbabwe were divided.

They could not work together to combat corruption and wastefulness for the filthy poor masses in the country. To this end, they admitted that they were truly a sleeping giant and a disjointed body of Christ by admitting that the socio-economic and religiopolitical situation in Zimbabwe degenerated to this alarming level, despite the fact that more than 80% of the population is Christian, including many of those in political leadership positions. Such are the results when the Church ceases to be prophetic and combative.

Many years after expressing their views in the ZCC-inspired document, "The Zimbabwe We Want," the poor masses who are voiceless are still wallowing in extreme poverty. What happened to the document? Did the government take heed of the contents of the document? It seems that the oligarchy or the plutocracy has intensified means and ways of wealth accumulation, instead of adopting an equitable distribution of wealth to the poor masses. This is evidenced by the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor in Zimbabwe. For this reason, it is argued by the Africa Wealth Report that "the rich get richer even as poverty and inequality deepen" (The Guardian 2015). In Zimbabwe, the worst-performing country, wealth per capita dropped seriously. Most people live for less than

a dollar per day, especially in rural areas where over 60% Zimbabweans people live (The Guardian 2015: 1ff). In such a situation, the Church must be found to be the voice for the voiceless, heralding the theology of enough or equitable distribution of wealth and not to conform to the deeds and ways of the plutocracy. The Church should stay truthful to the biblical protest against the concentration of wealth among the few. In the same vein, Feiman (2005/2006: 1 f) argues for a new approach to economic justice.

Furthermore, African traditional religions have reverence for the environment and sustainable consumption. Therefore, it is observed that African traditional religions know what it means to revere nature as sacred. This concern is evident in their attitudes towards earth and all its contents. They believe that human beings live in a religious universe so that natural phenomena and objects are intimately associated with God (Okonkwo 2011). This is a fundamental conviction that must propel the contemporary Church to seriously talk and act against environmental degradation, teaming up with traditional institutions in Zimbabwe and other bodies, for example, the Environmental Management Agency (EMA).

In the same vein, liberation theology seems to advocate for the theology of enough when it demands that the twenty-first century church be politically involved with the poor and with their struggles to liberate themselves from extreme poverty and oppression (McGovern 1989: 197). In such a situation, the twenty-first century church cannot choose to be silent or neutral, for if it chooses to be silent or neutral whilst the poor masses are wallowing in absolute poverty, the Church would have chosen the side of the plutocracy and their coterie of friends in Zimbabwe. To this effect, Desmond Tutu observed: "If you are in a situation of injustice and you decide to be silent, it means you have chosen the side of the oppressor, and if an elephant has his foot on the tail of the mouse, and you say, you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality" (McAfee Brown 1984: 19). However, the poor masses belong to a social group, class, culture, and sex. They are a product or by-product of an economic and social system fashioned by the few for their own benefit. The unity of the Church and the poor would achieve social transformation (Torres and Eagleson 1981: 108), whereby the plutocracy and their coterie of friends embrace the theology of enough as a means for a democratic society. Therefore, extreme poverty is solvable.

Although the theme is beyond the scope of this chapter, the Church in Zimbabwe will need to reflect on the prosperity gospel (Marongwe and

Maposa 2015; Zindoga 2016) as it tends to promote an insatiable appetite among Christians and other members of society. Further, the Church must critique problematic ideologies (Vengeyi 2013) that can be deployed to prevent individuals from having had enough of 'staying in' power. There is a need to read the Bible in ways that enable people to recognize that God provided for everyone and continues to do so for humanity today (Fynn 2007: 37–39). However, the theology of enough or equitable distribution of wealth coupled with fairness, economic efficiency, social stability, and democracy argued for in this chapter contends that the poor masses that are in absolute poverty can enjoy abundant life here and now, in Zimbabwe and beyond.

Conclusion

The chapter has argued that the theology of enough or equitable distribution of wealth can serve as a corrective paradigm against corruption and wastefulness by the elite in Zimbabwe. Although the Bible has been appealed to in order to justify looting and plundering national resources, in this chapter I have argued that it can inform the theology of enough. In Zimbabwe, belief in religions has grown stronger than confidence in government. Religion has become the safe haven for many troubled minds, largely on the assumption that prayers and miracles will deliver people from their earthly troubles and usher them into the next life. On account of that narrative, religious institutions are thriving more than, and in some cases usurping, the power and role of the governments. While African governments have a lot to do to clear their images on why their countries have lagged behind in development, it cannot be disputed that the fraction of money that goes into the pockets of religious leaders would help address some of the problems the masses are facing today if that money had gone into government's coffers. If only that money could be used to buy medicines, build schools, and clinics, roads, and energy, the masses would be in a better place (Gomo 2015). To this end, and in view of the above factors, it is strategic for the ZCC to promote the theology of enough in order to create social stability with an economic efficiency that is centred on masses rather than on the oligarchy. Therefore, enoughism contends that "the earth provides enough resources for every man, woman, and child to live comfortably. However, there are people in power that choose to hoard it all. When people have more than what they need, they must build longer tables, rather than a higher fence" (Chaplin 2016).

Ultimately, greedy people who plunder natural resources and reserve wealth for themselves and their coterie of friends for self-satiation should be prosecuted. They are not working for a just society and equitable distribution of wealth. The theology of enough is a concept to reckon with in this time of unprecedented inequality between the 'filthy rich' and the 'filthy poor' masses in Zimbabwe and beyond. Churches must be promoting the theology of enough for sustainable development to be achieved.

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