

The relevance of Moltmann's concept of  
hope for the discourse on hope in  
Zimbabwe

By

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## Declaration

I, **Tichaona Nigel Chikanya**, declare that: **The relevance of Moltmann's concept of hope for the discourse on hope in Zimbabwe**, is my own work, and that it has not been submitted for any other degree, before, or examination in any other university and that all the sources I have used and quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of a complete reference system.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Abbreviations and acronyms**

CCJP	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
CBD	Central Business District
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Program
GMB	Grain Marketing Board
GNU	Government of National Unity
GPA	Global Political Agreement
LRF	Legal Resource Foundation
LRP	Land Redistribution Program/Land Reform Program
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OM	Operation Murambatsvina
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Education Fund
WFP	World Food Program
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African Peoples Union
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZEPI	Zimbabwean Expanded Program on Immunization

## Key words

Eschatology

Government of National Unity

History of Zimbabwean independence

Hope

Hopelessness

*Murambatsvina*

Promise

*Rambai Makashinga*

Reconciliation

Resurrection

Zimbabwe

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# **CHAPTER 1**

## Introduction and Methodology

## 1. 1 Background and Introduction

During 2008 whilst completing my second year of studies in Theology I was deployed back to Zimbabwe to work with my home congregation in the village of Chinhoyi. At the time Zimbabwe was engulfed by a political battle between the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party led by President Robert Mugabe and the main opposition, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) championed by Morgan Tsvangirai. This contestation, which had been raging for several years, had resulted in massive socio-cultural and economic difficulties for the mostly rural and semi-urban citizenry of Zimbabwe. This being the case I had to minister the message of hope to the congregation I was assigned to during a very tough period.<sup>1</sup> This turned out to be a more difficult task than I had comprehended, which was made trickier by my relative inexperience in preaching at the time. There was little I could say without touching on the socio-political aspects which made me question whether believers in my village still looked up to God for guidance. Surprisingly, with the emergence of the MDC most people throughout the country had directed their hope to Morgan Tsvangirai but unfortunately nothing much changed, ironically more violence was witnessed throughout the country.

As a maturing theologian, my main concern was with regards to the idea and functioning of hope. The central question I pondered on was: where does hope come from and how can this power source be tapped in order to construct or reconstruct hope within the populous of Zimbabwe? My search for answers was partly triggered by the words of Stanley Hauerwas (1981:1) where he expressed that Christians need to discover that their most important social task is nothing less than to become a community capable of faithfully living the story of Christ found in the holy scriptures. Through this reading I realised the urgent need to act as an agent and catalyst of hope for Zimbabweans at large. This strong

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<sup>1</sup> This paradigm shift experience prompted me to initiate a comprehensive study on hope and its mechanics with specific reference to the situation in Zimbabwe.

conviction was fueled further by the writings of Jürgen Moltmann, which provided the theoretical framework for this study. Moltmann (1967:3) defined hope as the expectation of those things believed to have been truly promised by God. In theological terms, hope is inextricably linked to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This study is rooted in the researcher's subjective desire to restore and reignite hope for the disenfranchised Zimbabwean people through hope in God. Zimbabwe was once nicknamed the 'breadbasket of Africa' owing to its thriving economy, but has sadly become one of the worst countries economically, socially and politically in Africa. It is amazing that in a so called democratic country there still exist many traits of an undemocratic state. Philip Barclay (2010: x) recollects an incident where a young Zimbabwean activist, already beaten for his protest against Mugabe, was brutally killed by a group of pro-Mugabe men on his way to the hospital:

These new attackers dragged the activist out of his makeshift stretcher and loaded him like a sack of mealie on to their new Chinese-made pick-up truck. His body, beaten again and now crushed and gaping, was found by the side of the road the next day.

Another similar brutal assault was carried out on nine members of the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe who were arrested for distributing fliers in the Harare city centre in February 2008. Geoff Feltoe (2008) reported the following regarding the incident:

They were allegedly taken to an underground room at the nearby ZANU-PF offices where they were severely beaten with sticks and metal poles and were forced to recite party slogans and proclaim that President Mugabe rule in perpetuity. The organization's president sustained a fractured arm and deep cuts. It is alleged that this torture took place in the presence of an armed police officer who did not

attempt to stop the beating.

Such incidents have become synonymous with Zimbabwe, especially during election time.<sup>2</sup> Since 1980 many people have been left jobless after the closure of countless businesses, many more lost their lives during the dark days of Gukurahundi, many forfeited their land and houses due to operation Murambatsvina and hundreds of thousands were forced to migrate to neighbouring countries in search of a better life.<sup>3</sup> As a Zimbabwean I encountered and witnessed this political, social and economic turmoil, which motivated me to conduct this study. The hopelessness of the country is openly known and has attracted the international community but to no avail. The situation has left prominent scars in the lives of many Zimbabweans. This research aims to investigate whether Moltmann's theology of hope can suggest ways of re-establishing hope amongst Zimbabweans. Generally speaking there are conflicting signs of hope and hopelessness in Zimbabwe and this research argues how Moltmann's ideas could provide recommendations on how to strengthen the hope.

Jürgen Moltmann is a Protestant theologian who theorised his theology in the German context but his work has become increasingly open to other theological traditions (Bauckham 1989:294).<sup>4</sup> Ford (1989:292) believes that Moltmann's initial source of theology came when he first experienced the reality of God as a prisoner of war between 1945 and 1948, after the end of world war two. It was during these tribulations that Moltmann experienced God's power of hope and His presence in suffering. Moltmann's theology of hope seeks a transformation of the present by fixing our hope in Christ. The context in which Moltmann conceptualised his philosophy of hope is reminiscent of the Zimbabwean context of immense suffering and hopelessness. Moltmann (1967:16) not only views

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<sup>2</sup> For detailed accounts of the politically related abuses in Zimbabwe see Meldrum (2004), Meredith (2007), Smith (2008), Barclay (2010) and Godwin (2011).

<sup>3</sup> Operations Murambatsvina and Gukurahundi are explained in chapter two.

<sup>4</sup> Some of these traditions include Roman Catholic, Orthodox Church and Liberal Theology.

salvation as Christ's "preferential option for the poor", but also as offering the hope of reconciliation between the oppressors and the oppressed. The existence of unhealed wounds, physically and spiritually, still prevails throughout Zimbabwe.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

This study uses Moltmann's theology of hope to address the realities in Zimbabwe that have resulted in hopelessness. Although the subjects of hope and hopelessness have been extensively explored, there is little literature relating to Zimbabwe, especially from a Christian perspective. The central research question this study aims to answer is: Can Moltmann's theology of hope contribute to the discourse of hope and hopelessness in Zimbabwe?

In the two decades between 1990 and 2010 people in Zimbabwe have been tortured and treated inhumanely by the very leaders they had placed their hope in, which questions whether their hope can ever be restored.<sup>5</sup> Today Zimbabwe is rife with poverty, which has accelerated its moral decay, violence is reported on a daily basis and few signs of an actual democracy remain. The state and its agencies have clearly failed the citizens. All of the above mentioned beasts have instilled fear in the people and hope is desperately required to alter the ills. The church, as portrayed by Hauerwas (1981:1) must take the lead in redefining the nation's hope.

By 2005 unemployment had quadrupled since independence in 1980, standards of living were among the worst on the continent, the Zimbabwean dollar (Z\$) was devastatingly devaluated because of decreased trade and the widespread corruption in government had become a regular feature in the media (Sanders &

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<sup>5</sup> The doubt of whether Zimbabwean are still hoping is developed due to many unpleasant experiences which have a potential to destroy the expectation of good things which is hopelessness.

Davies 2005:1-3). The socio-economic conditions continue to deteriorate. This research hopes to articulate a unique perspective on hope for the Zimbabwean situation with the vision of inspiring people into activism despite the unbearable circumstances that surround them.

### **1.3 Justification of research study**

As a result of the fore mentioned troubles in Zimbabwe reconciliation is desperately needed. According to Moltmann (1969:155) despair is one of the forms of hopelessness and since it is a reality in Zimbabwe this investigation is justified. As a researcher, I describe my experience of the realities in Zimbabwe as a moment of pain, struggle, challenge and sheer discomfort. However, my strong conviction is that in our own woundedness we could become a source of strength to others. According to Hellum (2004:1786) what began as minor land invasions led to the resettlement of virtually all Zimbabwe's former white farmers and their workers who had worked with them for a long time, what followed was a sharp decline in food and crop production for export purposes, dramatic inflation, loss of jobs, food shortages and a collapsing health and education system. Hellum further expresses that all these incidents eroded the people's hope. In order to address the problems of hope one needs to answer the question, "where does genuine hope come from?" In Colossians (1:27) Paul reminds us that Christ is our hope and through Him there is liberation for the oppressed. Moltmann (1967:18) on the other hand, as alluded to before, describes hope as built-in to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup> This hope is borne from the understanding that by resurrecting Jesus God enacted his promise. This research is limited to the Zimbabwean realities that clearly show hope and hopelessness. All these events are interpreted so as to redefine the hope for the Zimbabwean communities.

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<sup>6</sup> Through His death, Christ identifies with all sorts of suffering and in his resurrection he promises new life.

#### **1.4 Limitations and delimitations of study**

This study is theoretical in nature as it has not engaged in any fieldwork. References are extracted from a literature review on Moltmann's seminal work on hope, namely *Theology of hope*, as is reflected in the chapter on Moltmann, and on the Zimbabwean situation, as is reflected in the relevant chapter. It should be noted that the prescribed length of this piece disallows separate chapters for literature reviews, as it also disallows sections dealing extensively with all Moltmann's writings and related secondary literature.

Even though this study was supported by the sponsorship of the University of Pretoria all of the work is based on facts from literature and testimonies from ordinary Zimbabweans. Though many friends have been of great help, the limitations reduce the credence to claims of adequacy and accuracy in this study. However, as a cultural insider to Zimbabwean life, the researcher was able to provide a unique perspective of the events, which added a deep of legitimacy. Furthermore, this study includes reflections from observations made by a number of bodies like the Solidarity Peace Reports from the United Nations and other studies from South African agencies. However, this study has used a variety of literary sources to reduce negative attitudes towards specific political organisations; however certain facts presented in this study do portray particular political organisations and movements negatively. It should be emphasised that the researcher does not harbour any bias or favouritism to the political organisations and/or individuals mentioned in this study.

#### **1.5 Methodology**

In this study, participant observation and personal experience were used as data collection tools. According to Taft (1988:60), "a participant observer, by definition, plays an obtrusive role and this fact may influence the behaviour of the group".

This outcome can be potentially harmful if the researcher is not ethical during the research process. Since the main aim of this study is to strengthen the fading hope of the Zimbabweans, this research method compliments the outcomes. An important focus is on the harsh realities of Zimbabwean life so as to make informed conclusions on aspects that need to be addressed. However, factors that can breed hope were also highlighted. Secondly the study also reinterpreted Moltmann's theology of hope, outlining how it can be understood in the Zimbabwe context. Finally this study recommended a framework for designing a theology of hope in Zimbabwe.

## **1.6 Dissertation Outline**

This thesis consists of five chapters and addresses the significant historical, economic and political issues that led to hopelessness. The theology of hope according to Moltmann is used to curtail the situation in Zimbabwe by recommending a theology of hope for the country. Moltmann's theology was used to analyse the historical realities and how these realities can be subverted to the reconstruction of the people's hope.

### *Chapter 1*

The first chapter of this study outlined the research problems and aims. Background information was provided on hope and hopelessness in Zimbabwe. The appropriate research methods employed in the study were also explicated. All the basic concepts used in the study are also outlined in chapter one.

### *Chapter 2*

The second chapter investigates the social, economic and political aspects of Zimbabwe between 1980 and 2011. The concept of hope is used to systematise these aspects as a situation between hope and hopelessness. Furthermore the chapter delineates the watershed moments and events leading up to the current



state of affairs. Most of the information highlighted in this chapter is factual as the aim is to dispense a better understanding of the realities on the ground.

### *Chapter 3*

Chapter three provides an interpretation of Moltmann's theology of hope with the discussion limited by his *Theology of hope*. The chapter divulges some key concepts of hope as given by Moltmann and as understood by the researcher. These concepts are simplified and reinterpreted. This chapter paves a way towards a possible theology of hope in Zimbabwe.

### *Chapter 4*

The fourth chapter initiates a dialogue between Moltmann's theology of hope and the realities in Zimbabwe. In this chapter some of Moltmann's key terms are made relevant by applying them to the Zimbabwean situation.

### *Chapter 5*

The fifth chapter concludes the study. This chapter highlights issues raised in the previous chapters and provides actionable recommendations regarding the reconstruction of hope in Zimbabwe.

## **1.7 Conclusion**

It must be mentioned that the researcher is cognisant of numerous other studies done on Zimbabwe and matters relevant to the hope debate. Although Zimbabwe has been through a wave of hopelessness, it is possible to reignite the hope if certain processes are followed. The events in Zimbabwe have had a profound impact on the researcher, especially as a person whose primary vocation is to offer care to the hopeless in society. Hope is a vital subject that needs to be explored further in the Zimbabwean context and this research aspires to contribute positively to this discourse.

## **CHAPTER 2**

# Zimbabwe: A Nation between Hope and Hopelessness

## **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter the concept hope will be used as an instrument to systematise the recent Zimbabwean socio-political history. The advent of the political independence in 1980 came with the hope that Zimbabweans would have a more peaceful dispensation in the aftermath of the liberation struggle. However, events have since showed the extreme opposite. According to the Commonwealth's Civil Society Report (2010) the poverty in Zimbabwe was so extreme that students in institutions of higher learning occasionally resort to prostitution in order to survive. This chapter will interrogate of the events that have marred Zimbabwe over the past three decades.

## **2.2 The hope of independence**

Zimbabwe attained independence on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1980. The first decade of independence promised a better future for the Zimbabweans. The Union Jack (British colonial flag) was replaced by a new vibrant flag; Rhodesia, the colonial name, was changed to Zimbabwe; and new coats of arms were adopted. In 1984 when Zimbabwe reflected on its first four years of independence the country had experienced several positives. According to Roger (1985:2) the Zimbabwean economy had performed far better than its neighbours, but this was largely due to unique circumstances that no longer exist today. There was remarkable growth in the economy and a significant reduction in poverty.

Chung (2006:6) expresses that the liberation struggle, which was premised on the will to serve the general interests of the masses, was the main ingredient during the initial years of success and prosperity. There is enough evidence to support this fact as the early years of independence were characterized by joy and optimism. After independence significant gains were made in health, education and the economy. The Zimbabwean government proved to be honest

and faithful to the masses (Commonwealth Foundation 2000). According to the World Bank (2000) during the mid 1980s Zimbabwe had a reasonably qualified labour force, with a diversified productive base, well developed infrastructure and a relatively sophisticated financial sector, which made it one of the most industrialised economies in the Southern African region.

Statistics reveal that the country's economy grew rapidly directly after independence, mainly stimulated by the removal of the sanctions, increased consumer demand as a result of better wages and extremely good agricultural seasons during the early 1980s (Sanders & Davies 1988:724).<sup>7</sup> It was the change of government from colonial rule to the democratically elected government that led to most of these changes. These positive events rightly raised the hopes of everyone that Zimbabwe would nirvana for her inhabitants.

The health sector amongst others had big changes immediately after independence. Colonial Zimbabwe, like most colonised countries in Africa, had a high infant mortality rate. This was as a result of the racially divided class system that prevailed in the old Rhodesia (Sanders & Davies 1988:727). Furthermore poor sanitation and inadequate water supplies contributed to the poor health sectors prior 1980. Independence ushered in vigorous health care reforms that were based on the primary health care approach (Sanders & Davies 1988:725). The government invested in more health facilities and made health care free to the poor. According to Chung (2006:327) in 1987 274 rural health centres had been built whilst a further 49 were under construction. This is a clear indication of the zeal the state had with regards to health care reforms. According to the Ministry of Health (1984:6) report by 1981 the Zimbabwean Expanded Programme on Immunization (ZEPI) had penetrated the most remote areas of the country and had drastically improved the health of children. Robert Mugabe and the ZANU-PF were duly credited as the architects of this socio-economic

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<sup>7</sup> The government of Zimbabwe had also adopted policies of controlling wages, particularly for the lowly paid.

revolution.

## **2.3 The growing hopelessness**

Although the country experienced laudable successes during the initial years of independence, a number of events have since transpired that have left most Zimbabweans hopeless. The April 1980 independence of Zimbabwe promised a better life for all with increased availability of food, peace, stable political governance and a general higher standard of living. Since Zimbabwe had been torn apart by colonial rule and a fourteen year armed conflict, the announcement of independence was received positively. Sadly these visions of greener pastures were quickly replaced by the dark reality of dictatorship. Events like *Gukurahundi* left many Zimbabweans without parents, whilst in some instances entire families were wiped out. Who could have foreseen such misgivings, especially after the inaugural speech of the Prime Minister Robert Mugabe who called for reconciliation of all warring factions and promised Zimbabweans a brighter future (Eppel 2004:44). The sections that follow will scrutinize some of the events that led to the current dispensation of hopelessness in the country.

### **2.3.1 *Gukurahundi***

*Gukurahundi* is a Shona word that refers to the first rain of summer that washes away the chaff left from the previous season (Eppel 2004:59). *Gukurahundi* was an elite group of 5 Brigade army forces that were trained by the North Koreans in 1982 under Prime Minister Mugabe (McGregor & Ranger 2000:6). This group was deployed by Mugabe in Matabeleland to massacre Ndebele civilians who were alleged to have supported the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) political party.

Surveys and historical accounts blame the government for the massacre and

killings of innocent civilian women and children during *Gukurahundi*. According to the Catholic commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and the Legal Resources Foundations (LRF), *Gukurahundi* stretched from 1982 to 1987 with over 20 000 people killed (CCJP and LRF 1997:61). During the process of killing people, the 5 Brigade told victims that they were being punished because they were Ndebele and for allegedly supporting ZAPU, as there was a myth that all Ndebele speaking people supported this party (Eppel 2004:45). Even during the 1985 election year, the killings and violence increased. These attacks showed how ZANU-PF had ruthlessly used the youth and the military to maintain its political dominance (McGregor & Kanger 2000:8).

Eppel (2004:43) contests that Zimbabwe has proven to be a country with many unresolved conflicts, which have been primarily fuelled by a leadership committed to never leaving power. When critically analysing the process of democracy in Africa, it is clear that a number of national liberation movements evolved into parties that legally monopolize power under the guise of preserving independence. Unfortunately, this was the case with the Zimbabwean government. The massacre of innocent civilians by armed forces is something not synonymous with an independent country that has a democracy. The researcher finds it ironic that *Gukurahundi* was announced by Prime Minister Robert Mugabe during his Heroes' Day speech of 1980.

In the aftermath of *Gukurahundi* the government of Zimbabwe investigated the reported killings and beatings of innocent people despite the public knowing that ZANU-PF was responsible for these crimes in the first place. Eppel (2004:59) argues that ZANU-PF has had a history of abusing political and economic power for selfish ends and because of this most Zimbabweans have lost hope in political leaders and the state. Even after the brutal massacre of innocent people and the political manipulation of food resources, ZAPU managed to win the majority seats in the Matabeleland region after the 1985 elections. It was clear to

the ZANU-PF leaders that *Gukurahundi* had failed to destroy ZAPU, which required a change in strategy. The new oppression tactics sought to maintain the *Gukurahundi* by banning ZAPU. There was no change until 1987 when both ZANU-PF and ZAPU signed of the unity accord (Eppel 2004:46).

Most villagers in rural Matabeleland consistently refer to *Gukurahundi* as far worse than the tribulations prior to liberation. People expressed fear and hopelessness by uttering statements like:

We can still be eliminated at any time as these people are serious about what they are doing...these wounds caused by *Gukurahundi* are huge and deep...The liberation war was painful, but it had a purpose, it was planned face to face but this is just cruelty to innocent people (Eppel 2004:46).<sup>8</sup>

In light of this Moltmann asserts that “when there is no-longer any prospects of meaningful life, people turn to meaningless violence” (Moltmann 2006:95). Considering the failure of the anti ZANU-PF campaigns during the 2000, 2002 and 2008 elections which could not change anything, many Zimbabweans have lost hope in the power of their vote and there is little faith in Mugabe being supplanted democratically (Eppel 2004:51). The hopelessness amongst Zimbabweans has been stimulated by events such as *Gukurahundi*; hence, a study on hope is relevant and timely.

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<sup>8</sup> For other accounts of *Gukurahundi* also see CCJP and LRF (1997:60), Moeletsi Mbeki (2009:177-186) and <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/gukurahundintro.html>.

### 2.3.2 Operation *Murambatsvina*

In this section the researcher will not detail the entire chronicle of *Murambatsvina* but will rather highlight a few incidents in order to systematically plot how these events left most Zimbabweans homeless and ultimately hopeless. *Operation Murambatsvina* (OM) was a program initiated by the government of Zimbabwe in May 2005. This program involved the demolition of informal infrastructure such as houses, trading sites and any form of settlement not approved by the government (Musoni 2010:302). *Murambatsvina* is a Shona word denoting “one who does not like filth”. OM was touted as an urban cleanup exercise which targeted illegal structures and activities within Zimbabwe’s major urban areas (Potts 2006:274). Another translation of *Murambatsvina* in Shona is “drive out the rubbish”, but the government of Zimbabwe referred to it as an operation geared at restoring order.

The victims of *Operation Murambatsvina* referred to the program as a ‘tsunami’ because of the speed at which the process adversely affected many lives. Earlier, when discussing the hope brought by the 1980 independence, I noted how the new government had adopted new policies with a degree of success. However even with this policy change by September 2003 the urban dwelling situation in Zimbabwe could hardly have been different from the colonial era as 72% of urban households were defined as poor with 51% deemed to be very poor and barely able to afford enough food (Potts 2006:274). Before the rubbish could be removed in 2005 through OM the trend of poverty in urban areas could be traced from the lower wages and the trajectories of urban poverty which were associated with the increasing informal settlement and illegal low income housing as a solution to the majority of the Zimbabweans who were suffering (Potts 2006:270 -275).

OM was a blatant case of people being punished for the failure and



incompetence of the government. The justification for OM from the government was as follows:

Enforce by-laws to stop all forms of illegal activities. These violations of the by-laws in areas of vending, traffic control, illegal structures, touting/abuse of commuters by rank marshals, street life/prostitution, and vandalism of property infrastructure, stock theft, and illegal cultivation amongst others have led to deterioration of standards thus negatively affecting the image of the city. The attitude of the members of the public as well as some city officials has led to a point whereby Harare and other cities lost its glow. We are determined to bring the glow back...it is not a once off exercise but a sustained one that will see to the cleanup of all cities. OM is going to be massive in the CBD and the suburbs which will see to the demolition of all illegal structures and removal of all activities at undesignated areas (Potts 2006:275).<sup>9</sup>

It is clear that the government officials responsible for the OM had not done enough work to check the practicality of the program before embarking on it. It is evident that there were a number of things that needed to be in place before OM, like building houses for people and providing decent employment. As a result the exercise was rendered futile. Forced migration is a direct contravention of a person's basic human right as defined by the United Nations (1953) amongst, so the program again questioned the so-called democracy in Zimbabwe.

The international community led by the United States of America and Great Britain tried to bring Mugabe into submission by imposing 'targeted sanctions' on the state and key officials, but this has brought little change, rather it has in some instances worsened the lives of ordinary Zimbabweans (Moyo 2009:2). The church and the public sector in particular have been heavily affected by the

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<sup>9</sup> You can also refer to the Solidarity Peace Trust (2009:36) appendix 2 for further analysis of the reasons behind OM.

sanctions. Potts (2006:291) explicates that the government embarked on *Operation Murambatsvina* in order to punish urban areas for their tendency since 2000 to vote for the opposition MDC and secondly to decrease the presence of the poorest people in urban centres by driving them out of towns to rural areas.

Some reports suggest that many informal businesses and homes were looted during the operation, whilst identification documents were burnt in order to impede none ZANU-PF supporters from participating in the elections. It is unfortunate that there is an entire generation of Zimbabweans which has grown up under the severe threat of an intolerant state which uses its apparatus to silence and crush innocent people. The only way to change the status quo is by democratizing all government institutions and insuring that they play their intended role (Chemhuru 2010:180). OM was followed by other severe economic blows like the hyperinflation of 2007 and 2008, which ultimately drove many Zimbabweans out of their formal jobs as salaries failed to keep pace with the cost of living.

### **2.3.3 Operation Makavhota sei**

*Makavhota sei?* Is a question literally translated to English as “How did you vote?” Following the elections of 2008 the Mugabe regime embarked on this operation that further confused people and left them disillusioned about the election process. The operation involved messengers of the ZANU-PF who went on a rampage demanding to know whom the individuals had voted for immediately after the outcome of the March 2008 elections, which were not favourable for Mugabe. In simple terms, people had to pay, and in some cases with their lives, for voting for the MDC (Solidarity Peace Trust 2010:16). A lot of people were maimed, displaced from their homes, kidnapped and others burnt alive in their homes. This was a time of reckoning as a lot of nasty situations occurred during the March 2008 period right up to the election run up in June the

same year (Moyo 2009:15). Mbeki (2009:187-188) provides an apt summation of the events:

Senior ZANU-PF officials and some government officials were reported to have encouraged, funded and, in some cases, been directly involved in perpetrating the violence, even allegedly setting up bases designed to torture suspected opposition members in Mashonaland East and the Midlands. Police turned a blind eye to many of these acts of political violence and, in some situations, actually arrested the victims. In their own operations police also raided the offices of several non-governmental organizations, including the Zimbabwe Election Support Network and the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations, arresting senior officials. The extent of the violence resulted in Morgan Tsvangirai withdrawing from the presidential run-off, unwilling to subject his supporters to further attacks.

Elections are generally viewed to be the best solution for determining who leads a country. The elections of 2008 were branded as the answer to Zimbabwe's problems because people genuinely believed that by voting Mugabe out things would turn around, which was sadly not the case. Even after losing the elections at local government, senatorial, parliamentary and presidential level Mugabe did not relinquish power. If elections could not provide the answers to country's dilemmas, perhaps this points to God as the only one who can provide a better life. Therefore this research shall follow the Christian perspective as provided by Moltmann. Moyo (2009:58) motivates that political change should be sort by non violent means and hopefully this research can be a further catalyst for such action.

### 2.3.4 Land Reform Program

The Land Reform Program (LRP) was aimed at the redistribution and settlement of land. The exercise was a way of redressing the colonial imbalances where “white Rhodesians seized control of the vast majority of good agricultural land, leaving black peasants to scrape a living from marginal ‘tribal reserves’” (Manby 2002:5). Negotiations on land reform started in 1979 with the Lancaster House Agreement which sought to redistribute land through the “willing buyer, willing seller” system, however this legislation effectively favoured white farm owners and agitated the masses, especially the liberation veterans who were the major ‘losers’ after independence. The Lancaster legislation was amended into the Land Acquisition Act of 1992, which gave the government greater control to acquire land for redistribution and agribusiness. However, this change did not yield the necessary results, in fact the amount of land reacquire between 1990 and 2000 was less than the land purchased during the initial ten years of independence (Manby 2002:6).<sup>10</sup>

With mounting pressure from veterans of the liberation movement and millions of Zimbabwe peasants the government again adopted new policy to ‘fast track’ the land redistribution process. The landmark moment came in 2005 when a constitutional amendment was passed that allowed the government full control of land that had been expropriated. Landowners could not challenge the government in any court. There was international outrage at this law, especially from Britain, which felt the land seizure was illegal.

For the ruling party the LRP was also aimed at economically restructuring the Zimbabwean economy, although there is no evidence of such achievements as yet. Sadly, the few poor people who benefited from the LRP struggled to make

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<sup>10</sup> In a further bid to accelerate the land reform issue the government published the Land Reform and Resettlement Program Phase II in 1998, but this also failed because of poor funding for the program, which was exacerbated by dwindling support from international donors and an ailing local economy.

the farms productive as the government gave little support to them. According to the Rukuni Commission (1994:223) the LRP was severely underfunded and beset with planning and administrative difficulties. In as much as reports warned that the LRP, if not handled well, would result in a crisis, the government did not take any corrective actions (Moyo 2009:29 -30). Civil society was also concerned that the renewed approach to LRP would threaten food security at household and national level. The government was supposed to make provision for farmer training and since these prerogatives were not met the program lost its objective, which was of poverty alleviation (Hellum & Derman 2004:179). Beside the continuous encouragement from the government, nothing much was produced by the LRP other than leading Zimbabwe into more debt and triggering appalling food shortages, which led to a further decline in the economy. But more importantly, especially with the context of this study, the failure of the LRP dealt another blow to the aspirations of millions of Zimbabwe peasants who had hope that ownership of land would bring immediate prosperity.

### **2.3.5 Food distribution as a political weapon**

The manipulation of food security has long been utilised as a weapon in Zimbabwean politics dating back to Rhodesian days. The starvation of rural Zimbabweans appears to be a strategy not to intentionally starve people to death, but rather designed to trade food-for-votes, and as a means of punishing political opponents. In spite of critical food shortages, government officials have consistently denied there is a crisis looming. For example former Minister of State Affairs responsible for land and resettlement programs, Paul Mangwana, openly declared that there was no food crisis in Zimbabwe, stating: "We won't need any donors for that because we have harvested enough food and we have actually recorded a surplus" (Moyo 2009:16). As such the World Food Program was not invited to continue donor feeding on a large scale and the cessation of most international food aid left millions of Zimbabweans at the mercy of GMB, a

government-parastatal that has a near-monopoly in the trade and distribution of maize. As the election approached, threats by rural ZANU-PF officials that support for MDC would mean starvation became widespread. This strategy became clearer as more and more incidents were reported of a definitive ZANU-PF food-for-votes policy being implemented. The major reason behind the shunning of all donor support is attributed to the ZANU-PF notion that any organization (donor or not), linked to Western countries and the United States of America is out to fund the opposition political parties and ultimately foster regime change in Zimbabwe.

### **2.3.6 Economic Structural Adjustment Program**

The Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) was inaugurated in 1991 and stretched until 1995. Following the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1980, the economy boomed and there was substantial diversification even though sanctions were imposed on Zimbabwe in 1982 by the United Nations (Ndlela 1986:14). According to Dhliwayo (2001:1) the goals of ESAP as regards to fiscal operations were to reduce government expenditure through the removal of subsidies, to initiate cost recovery, civil service rationalization and parastatal reform. Primarily, ESAP was aimed at transforming the Zimbabwean economic system into a market driven economy, hoping this would decrease poverty and create decent employment.

It is important to note that ESAP effectively shifted the burden of a weak governance system to the poor who had to pay the cost of the economic reforms through sizeable cutbacks in the health and education sectors (Chinake 1997:41). The unfortunate part was that the poor had to devise survival strategies in light of the hardships experienced during the implementation of ESAP. Some of the survival tactics included prostitution, gold panning, selling firewood, which meant cutting down good forests and trading agricultural produce in the informal

sector. It is also believed that as a result of the effects of ESAP, children were forced onto the streets to fend for their families and many more were left orphaned (Kaseke 1993:5).

According to the World Bank (1995:2) the majority of Zimbabweans who are poor owe their poverty to “deprivation of welfare, social power and, very profoundly, a lack of capabilities”. In other words, being poor often means being voiceless, powerless and generally having less likelihood of breaking through the ‘cycle of poverty’, unless if empowered through education and any other intervention strategy.<sup>11</sup> With the implementation of ESAP prices of food and other basic commodities spiralled upwards, the Zimbabwean dollar depreciated by 97% during 1991, the inflation increased by at least 25% adding to the hopelessness in the country. Even though so many people have argued that the ESAP implementation came during the drought of 1991-1992, which resulted in its failure, the researcher is convinced that ESAP did not bring any improvements to the lives of ordinary Zimbabweans.

According to Marquette (1997:114) about 41% of the population of resettlement areas created by the post independence redistribution of land was negatively affected by the ESAP, leading to many deaths due to poor health facilities and starvation. Rippenburg (1997:47) further articulates that the basic error and inconsistency of the ESAP, which is the fundamental cause of its failure throughout Africa-is the priority given to economic growth, money and market mechanisms over people and their basic needs. ESAP was launched with a number of promising economic reforms but there was little benefit to the general public.

## **2.4 Signs of hope**

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<sup>11</sup> For a seminal analysis on the nature of poverty read John Kenneth Galbraith (2001).

This section reflects on some of the signs of hope in Zimbabwe currently discernible. It needs to be acknowledged that even through the tough moments a number of events have transpired that have inspired hope in the people of Zimbabwe. Interestingly, during Zimbabwe's social and economic collapse the government, together with churches and key NGOs, came up with programs to counter the hopelessness within its citizens.

### **2.4.1 *Rambai Makashinga***

*Rambai Makashinga* is a Shona phrase or slogan that was used to 'instill' perseverance among citizens as the entire country was undergoing economic despair, sanctions and deteriorating services across all sectors (Moyo 2009:18) . This slogan was initiated by ZANU-PF through their then Minister of Information Jonathan Moyo to encourage the masses to soldier on during the difficult times. This move was both ingenious and ironic in the sense that the ZANU-PF was, directly and indirectly, to blame for creating the difficult times in the first place. Slogans like *Rambai Makashinga* (remain resolute) were broadcasted in radios and national television to encourage and instill hope in the people.<sup>12</sup> Amongst other things the *Rambai Makashinga* mantra also evolved into a song.

The slogan and song were used to entertain, console, communicate religious truths and to express love. Above all the credo was used to serve a political function. To those who were deeply impacted by social disasters like *Gukurahundi*, the slogan symbolized forgiveness and encouraged them to focus on building a better future (Phimister 2005:113). These phrases were used to address various mistakes done by the government and suggested a new beginning. Some of the words in the song recite as follows: "Our land is our prosperity". This verse can be correlated with the Land Reform Program, which sought to bring prosperity to the people through the land.

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<sup>12</sup> The twist in this tale is that these positive messages came hand-in-glove with intense efforts from ZANU-PF to control the print and broadcast media.



The government used music to suggest to the citizens that problems were like the proverbial morning cloud dew that fizzles away as swiftly as it came (see Hosea 6:4) (Mapuranga & Chitando 2005:3). It is my strong conviction that this model of communication was a way of preaching healing, hope and regeneration. The government wanted to encourage and reassure the masses that ZANU-PF was still the only political option that could 'save' Zimbabwe. Thus it can be concluded that the *Rambai Makashinga* drive was another attempt by Robert Mugabe at maintaining power. Paradoxically, people, both educated and uneducated, were motivated to vote for the MDC as a result of *Rambai Makashinga*.

#### **2.4.2 Reconciliation in Zimbabwe**

According to Moyo (2009:13) reconciliation is a way of making it possible for ideas, beliefs and institutions that cannot co-exist. The common understanding of reconciliation alludes to it as new and friendly relationship with someone you argued or fought with. In other words reconciliation is about bringing two diverging forces together for a common cause, which is the betterment of those who exist in a particular community. The reconciliation referred to in this part of the study began with the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980 followed by the Unity accord in 1987 and recently witnessed with the 2008 formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU). Following the announcement of independence in 1980 was the campaign for 'unity' designed to savour relations between the three major language groups at the time, which were Ndebele, Shona and British (Moyo 2009:15-19). According to the National Reconciliation Committee, reconciliation was proclaimed by Mugabe as follows:

Henceforth you and I must strive to adapt ourselves, intellectually and spiritually to the reality of our political change and relate to each other as brothers bound one to the other by a bond of comradeship. If

yesterday I fought you as an enemy, today you have become a friend and ally with the same national interests, loyalty, rights and duties as myself. If yesterday you hated me, today you cannot avoid the love that binds you to me and me to you. Is it not folly, therefore, that in these circumstances anybody should seek to revive the wounds and grievances of the past? The wrongs of the past must now stand forgiven and forgotten (Meredith 2002, De Waal 1999:49).

Understood as a political strategy, reconciliation is a beginning, involving a decision to take the first steps towards the higher goal of sustainable peace. It is a process that is rarely linear. Following the events of independence the language of reconciliation according to the leadership of Zimbabwe set precedence for working together towards a better Zimbabwe. However Raftopoulos (2004:13) contends that given the historical dynamics of Zimbabwe, the policy of reconciliation remained merely a formal political hope, especially given the continuing legacy of structural inequality in the sphere of the economy.

On the other hand the Church and Civil Society Forum envisaged national healing and reconciliation as a home grown inclusive process that would lay the foundations for a peaceful and cohesive Zimbabwean society where the security of individuals and communities is guaranteed; where the dignity of the individual is respected; where broken relationships are restored; and where diversity is celebrated (Moyo 2009:69). Reconciliation carried with it hope for a better Zimbabwe as it was believed that truth and justice were to be accorded to this poor nation after a long journey riddled with needless and costly political clashes and socio-economic ills (Chemvumi 2010:64). Or, stated differently:

...unity reinforced by reconciliation and Comradeship is surely the solid mortar that can bind our nation and strengthen it against any divisive forces or machination, internal and external. We must not lose sight of the fact that not everybody wishes us well (Chronicle 25

July, 2009).

Commenting on the The Unity Accord of 1987 Raftopoulos (1992:71) purports that the agreement between the political parties (ZANU-PF and ZAPO) was born out of recognition that neither party would proceed on a national level on their own. This statement indicates how parties needed each other for change in Zimbabwe. Reconciliation can rebuild trust, strengthen relationships, enhance equality and foster social cohesion so as to ensure a healthy and prosperous society. Reconciliation is still a work in progress in Zimbabwe, a nation beset with challenges. From the Christian perspective, Christ also died to reconcile those who persecuted and murdered Him. These points show how reconciliation and hope dovetail.

#### **2.4.3 Government of National Unity**

The GNU was formed in February 2009, ten months after the violent and disputed 29 March 2008 elections and is comprised of ZANU-PF and the two factions within the MDC. According to the updates from the Solidarity Trust (2006:15, 16) the inclusive government was born under a cloud of scepticism, with most observers predicting that Morgan Tsvangirai (the leader of MDC) would fall prey to Mugabe's "divide, rule and destroy" strategy. By the time of the formation of the GNU it was hoped the new government would address the following issues: Pre-independence war period; *Gukurahundi*; land redistribution; Operation *Murambatsvina*; and Operation *Mavhotasei*.

Some people expected the GNU to financially compensate every citizen who was affected by the disastrous *Murambatsvina* exercise. Other wanted the GNU to allocate decent accommodation to all the victims of the operation, whilst others simply desired the perpetrators to publicly apologize to the citizens for the sake of reconciliation. Other naively thought the GNU would completely eradicate

corruption from all state institutions. All these expectations were representative of the renewed sense of hope that was rekindled in the people by the GNU.

It is encouraging to note that the unity government is making slow but discernible progress in a number of areas. Several schools and hospitals have reopened; civil servants are being paid; goods have returned to store shelves; and the cholera epidemic has been brought under control. Human rights activists have also reported a significant drop in abuses, as arbitrary and political detentions, though not completely gone, have declined (Chemvumi 2010:77) . The ravaged economy has also improved, with Zimbabwe recording a 4.7% Growth Domestic Product rise in 2009, the first positive numbers in a decade. In as much as it is encouraging to see such change there are still some significant threats that could derail the reform process.

#### **2.4.4 Elections**

An election is defined as a formal procedure whereby a person is elected into an office, in this case the political office of Presidency and Parliament. It is important to note that elections in Zimbabwe have been held regularly since independence and ZANU-PF has always won them by lopsided margins. Every time elections were held the people of Zimbabwe were excited to choose their leaders and with the rise of new leaders there were always new signs of hope for a better government. In 2000 parliamentary elections, people in the rural areas voted for the MDC because they had grown tired of their aspirations not being met by ZANU-PF (Bracking 2006:347).

President Mugabe's call for early elections in 2009 increased fears of a return to the violence of 2008. As a result on 15 September 2008 the Global Political

Agreement (GPA) was signed by the leaders of the three major political parties.<sup>13</sup>

Some of the phrases in the GPA are as follows:

[The GNU is] CONCERNED about the recent challenges that we have faced as a country and the multiple threats to the wellbeing of our people and, therefore, determined to resolve these permanently. COMMITTING ourselves to putting our people and our country first by arresting the fall in living standards and reversing the decline of our economy. (GNU 2008)

The GPA offers a coherent framework for staging credible elections. However, progress remains stymied because ZANU-PF has not demonstrated commitment to democratic reforms and the MDC-T, the breakaway faction of MDC, is not strong enough to force them to.

According to the Executive summary of 2008 elections in Zimbabwe it was clear that despite the extremely harsh and repressive political environment in which elections were conducted in Zimbabwe, the people of Zimbabwe found 'resources of hope' required to say no to authoritarian rule. This was shown by the outcome when MDC won the elections. One woman expressed the following in an interview: "I am no longer hopeful and I think it is going to be worse than it was if any elections are done now, since elections or no elections the ZANU-PF will win" (Solidarity Peace Trust 2010:12).

This is a political and social system, which has suppressed the growth of democracy, and there has been no preservation of the rule of law.

## 2.5 Conclusion

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<sup>13</sup> The document was signed by Robert Mugabe president of ZANU-PF, Morgan Tsvangirai president of MDC Arthur Mutambara president of MDC-T breakaway faction and was facilitated Thabo Mbeki, president of South Africa at the time.

When Zimbabwe attained independence in April 1980 there were high hopes expressed for Zimbabwe's political and economic future. Evidence has shown that Zimbabwe was amongst the most industrially developed countries in Africa and had a capable human resource. For the first decade the country lived up to most of the expectations of the citizens even though there were some signs of hopelessness. By the late 1990s all the early hopes had been dashed and of the economy had begun to contract.

The voice of change is however weak in Zimbabwe and it is the strong conviction of the researcher that the signs of hopelessness need to be addressed in Zimbabwe. There is a widespread sense of hopelessness in Zimbabwe with the health sector, education system and the economy facing collapse (Thorpe 1997:488). Over the years poor Zimbabweans have been manipulated, fear and patronage have reduced opportunities for ordinary citizens in Zimbabwe to engage for change. Essential concepts that need to be understood and educated are the democratic rights individuals possess in Zimbabwe.

## **CHAPTER 3**

# An Interpretation of Hope in Moltmann's Theology

### 3.1 Introduction

The 1960s seemed to offer unlimited possibilities in every area of life and there was an enthusiastic confidence that freedom and total fulfillment could be attained, Moltmann's theology of hope spoke to this mood (Moltmann 1967:xi). Theology of hope was influenced by eschatological orientation of the Marxist philosophy, Ernest Bloch's principle of hope and several other writings. Moltmann took the resurrection of Jesus Christ as his departure point, where he argued that the resurrection and eschatological future of Christ symbolized things to come (Moltmann 1967:12). In his theology of hope Moltmann proposed that Christian hope should be the central motivating factor in the life and thought of Christians and the corporate body of the church, this is shown throughout his writings on hope with special emphasis on the role of the church.

As mentioned previously, Ford (1989:290) attributes Moltmann's initial source of theology to his initial experience of God's grace as a prisoner of war from 1945 to 1948. This encounter marked the beginning of his understanding of God's saving hope as God was made visible in his life through this experience. Out of this experience Moltmann experienced God as the power and source of hope during suffering. In order to bring Christian hope and Zimbabwe's situations into dialogue within the limitations set by this piece, the researcher decided to limit the reflection mainly to Jürgen Moltmann's seminal *Theology of hope*.

### 3.2 Moltmann's view on Christian hope

According to Moltmann, hope is built from the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and Apostle Paul alludes to this idea in Colossians (1:27) when he trumpets that "Christ is our hope". Moltmann (1967:18) further explains that the resurrection of Christ is the first indication that all things were made possible through Him and His is the only one who can transform the thoughts of man.



Moltmann (1967:12) concedes that the death and resurrection of Christ was the major concept in his message of hope.

Paraphrasing Aristotle, Moltmann (1967:3) defines hope as a waking dream, where hope is nothing else than the expectation of those things that have been promised by God. It follows from this statement by Moltmann that hope comes from faith in God and the promises God gives to the people who believe in him. Macquarrie (1978:6) describes hope as a positive mood in which a person trusts and expects God to intervene in all situations without losing touch with his/her own environment and community. God through His sovereignty can speak authority into all situations like misery, suffering, injustice and poverty, which can develop trust in people. For Moltmann if people hope in God, that hope can transform their thoughts as they contemplate the sacrifices Christ made and that He is the beginning of all things (Moltmann 1967:18-19).

Moltmann claims that the “resurrection of the dead was a way toward expressing belief in the righteousness of God which cannot be limited even by death” (Macquarrie 1978:22). This is true because a person’s hope, longing and desires, once awakened by specific promises, stretch further than any kind of physical fulfillment that can be experienced. At the time of writing the theology of hope book in the mid-1960s Moltmann (1967:3) contended that hope had departed the church and was moved and inspired to conceptualize a theory that would reignite hope within the church. Whilst on the cross Jesus Christ was identified with the marginalized, the poor, the suffering and all negative forces in the world and with His resurrection the new promise for a new beginning. It is clear that God therefore identifies with the hopeless. Hope is an essential component of life that binds all living beings.<sup>14</sup> However hope can also be defined and explained

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<sup>14</sup> “[There is no exemption] but he who is joined to all the living has hope – for a living dog is better than a dead lion” (Ecclesiastes 9:4 AMP). This scripture can be interpreted as announcing that living peasants are better than dead kings because the living can hope for a better tomorrow by default of being alive. Simply put, being alive means having an inbuilt capacity to hope.

through other concepts like eschatology and promise as will be shown in the next two sections.

### **3.3 Moltmann's view on history, promise and eschatology**

There is a deep connection that exists between history, the promises of God and eschatology when looking at Moltmann's theology of hope. The promises of God disclose the horizons of history, whereas the key theological concepts which define the future are the notion of divine promise, the understanding of the resurrection of Jesus as promised and the understanding of history as a mission (Moltmann 1967:xiii).

The sections that follow will expand on how history, promise and eschatology relate directly to hope in Moltmann's work.

#### **3.3.1 Hope and history**

In Moltmann's theology history plays an extremely important role, but he also radically reframes and deconstructs history. Through the influence of Old Testament scholar Gerhard Von Rad (1901-1971), Moltmann concludes that God and history must be conceived in dialectical relations (Otto 1992:375). In other words Moltmann reframes hope through key historical events. Historically, the experience of reality for Israel was revealed in God's promises and that Israel saw God again and again in the fulfillment of his promises (Moltmann 1967:107). Although history deals with texts, witnesses, fragments and, it keeps the hoping person focused on the possibilities latent in the future. In this regard Moltmann suggests that since biblical history contains the promises of God, it is through these promises that people hope in God (Moltmann 1967:110).

The history that is suggested by Moltmann is symbolic and mythical in that the stories are more important than facts and in this case the stories will then force us to consider new possibilities, which can be interpreted as hope (Moltmann 1967:119). The stories referred to in this case are the stories of the Old and New Testament of Yahweh and Jesus Christ fulfilling these promises. For Moltmann knowing God entails recognizing him in his historic faithfulness towards the promises he made to all people (Moltmann 1967:103-105).

It is, however, in both the Old and New Testament that God is recognized as the God who promises and whose faithfulness guarantees the fulfillment of what has been promised in history (Moltmann 1967:167). The resurrection of Christ is then not to be viewed as a historical event, but as a history-making event in which all other historical events are called in question, and through the resurrection people hope for the future. Within all experiences of history the important events for Christian eschatology and/or the future are the experiences of persecution, false accusation, suffering and martyrdom; which help to strengthen our hope in Christ since Christ has already experienced all these ills (Moltmann 1967:181). To Moltmann's credit, his *Theology of hope* took the realistic view of hope as core to history (Scaer 1970:71).<sup>15</sup> It is important to note that Moltmann views the resurrection of Jesus as the anchor of hope in history and there is a bridge between universal expectations and personal hope.

In criticizing Moltmann, Woodbridge (2009:111) argued that the *Theology of hope* is a series of superficial philosophical insights and affirmations that showcase Moltmann's power of thinking.<sup>16</sup> However, besides the criticism Moltmann makes a very valid point in that people must acknowledge the suffering and injustice that mark our present experience in the world and more especially how we witness

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<sup>15</sup> In this regard Moltmann works in similar vein to protestant reformer Martin Luther, who read the bible from the principles of justification.

<sup>16</sup> For a more detailed account on the criticism of Moltmann's book 'theology of hope', read Woodbridge 2009.

God in our midst during these kinds of sufferings. Furthermore, people need to understand the promises of God in their present and past experiences in order to predict a possible future. Perhaps from this point of view the same principles and ideas of Moltmann on history and hope could be applied to the Zimbabwean dispensation highlighted in chapter two, hence allowing a possible dialogue that shall be explored in chapter four. It appears that Christian hope does not allow humans to resign themselves to despair in the face of unchangeable situations and brute facts, instead hope points people ahead to the horizons of new possibilities (Moltmann 1967:209).

Moltmann suggests hope to be embraced with the happiness of the present, as hope pronounces the poor blessed and relieves the weary and heavy-laden (Moltmann 1967:17). Following these ideas it can be said that expectation makes life bearable and good, for in expectation a person can accept his/her whole present and can find joy in the pain, because in the promises of God hope can see future (Moltmann 1967:18).

### **3.3.2 Hope and promise**

A promise according to Moltmann (1967:89) is a declaration that announces the coming of a reality that does not yet exist and in this case God is the one who gives these promises. Promises and partial fulfillment appear throughout scripture and provide the basis for hope, but the tensions created by unfulfilled promises call for patience and may challenge the believers' ability to trust (Dulling 1973:56). Moltmann believes that God's promise to act in the future is more important than the fact that he has acted in the past (Woodbridge 2009:108). What is implied by this focus on the future does not mean Christians must withdraw from the world in the hope that a better world will somehow evolve, but rather it is a call to active participation in the world in order to assist in creating that better world. It is my strong conviction that most theologians would not agree

to this concept of active participation, since some reformed theologians would go with Karl Barth's (1886-1968) understanding of God as Sovereign and hence possessing power over everything. Christ's resurrection creates a history and future where death no longer has the final claim on human life (Harvie 2009:18). In 1 Cor 15:19 Paul views Christ's resurrection as the source of true hope which is different to life as it is presently experienced.<sup>17</sup>

The resurrection of Christ, when viewed as a promise directs the believer towards an eschatological future in which God is believed to be creating a better life for those in Christ (Harvie 2009:19). Christopher Morse (1979:14) has contended that the structure Moltmann gives to promise does not conform to the logic of more rigorous analysis of language engaged in analytical philosophy. In response to Morse Moltmann (1975:98-99) maintained that his view of promise is not speech-act by expressing that:

If we look first at the history of promise in the Old Testament traditions, we can say in history the divine promises are communicated to particular people such as Abraham, and are therefore made present through remembrance and narratives ... God's promises must be understood historically not merely because there were uttered in history, and must ever again be interpreted afresh in history, but also because they throw open a particular history.<sup>18</sup>

Since a promise binds a person to the future and gives a sense of direction, hope and promise are deeply connected. Moltmann's God is a God with the future as his essential nature and his name is a name of promise that discloses a new future and through the promises of God, hope drives one from the present into the future (Yesilhark 2008:30). Therefore within this kind of understanding, it is

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<sup>17</sup> 1 Cor 15:19 says, 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable' most pitiable because of the sacrifices made in this life in light of the hope of life to come.

<sup>18</sup> Also see Harvie (2009:19).

promise which leads hope further through the resurrection of Christ. Because faith contains promises, belief in God entails that the truth shall manifest and that total fulfillment is depended on the faithfulness of God.

According to Moltmann (1967:106) the person who gives a promise has a large bearing on the hope to attain the promises since the reality of the fulfillment of the promises lie in the credibility of the one giving the promise. In Moltmann's theology of hope it is God who gives promises and develops hope through Jesus Christ as shown in history. However, the Old Testament shows a different picture since many of the prophet's words about the future, especially political predictions, did not come to pass in the way they were originally meant (Moltmann 1967:97). God's raising of the crucified Christ remains a central Christian symbol of hope in the midst of suffering and oppression throughout history, Christian communities have found sustenance and strength in the memory of God's act (Singh 2008:251). The reason why hope is so important and should be in the very centre of Christianity is because Christian faith is based on the raising of the crucified Christ and basically lives from it. This, on the other hand, points to the promises of the universal future of Christ. Together with the understanding of hope, Moltmann shifts eschatology back to the heart of Christianity where the future is part of the promises of God and should be left open for Christ to fulfil everything (Moltmann 1967:16).

Christ in this case fulfils the promises of God and the section that follows will explore one of the major principles governing hope where Christ is at the centre of life and is the hope of the world.

### **3.3.3 Moltmann's eschatology**

One of the key frames of reference used by Moltmann in his work to describe hope is eschatology, in which Moltmann calls for the realization of the

eschatological hope of justice, the humanizing of mankind, the socializing of humanity in which the church would exercise its healing responsibly in the modern society (Moltmann 1967:329). According to Moltmann (1967:12) eschatology starts with the resurrection of Christ where God opened the future for everyone through the crucifixion. In Moltmann's rationalization (1967:210), Christian eschatology speaks of Christ and understands history as the reality instituted by the promises of God. In light of this, the as yet unrealized future God has promised stands in contradiction with the present reality. All these ideas point to the fact that what happened in the past plays a role in the present and the future, further emphasizing the importance of history.

From the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Moltmann views God to be present in suffering and this becomes his departure point in anticipating the future. Eschatology therefore is not to be understood as "vertical" infringement of eternity into time, but it has to do rather with "horizontal" horizon of God's future, the world's present and the way that future impact the present (Moltmann 1967:192). In this case eschatology defines the promises of God to all creation, a promise that is the measure of all that would claim the name Christianity. Moltmann (1967:16) further writes:

Eschatology is not one element of Christianity, but it is the medium, of Christian faith as such, the key in which everything in it is set, the glow that suffuses everything here in the dawn of an expected new day. For Christian faith lives from the raising of the crucified Christ, and strains after the promises of the universal future of Christ. Eschatology is the passionate suffering and passionate longing kindled by the Messiah. Hence eschatology cannot really be only a part of Christian doctrine. Rather the eschatological outlook is characteristic of all Christian proclamation of every Christian existence and of the whole church.

Moltmann proceeds to demonstrate how eschatology serves to define all Christian life and thought by offering an eschatological interpretation of Revelations with history as core to the present and future. History is essential in eschatology as it shows how God's embracing promises have been fulfilled through time.

According to Moltmann (1967:234) new hope is formulated through historical experiences and the promises of the expected future, which he referred to as creation out of nothing, whereby Christ's resurrection opened the future to new promises of Christ's presence in His people's lives. In this case the creation out of nothing means creation of new life from the death of Christ. The future and what to expect in the future will be based on the new creation through the resurrection of Christ (Moltmann 1967:18). Hope in the true Sovereign God and the history of humanity constitute the central subject of the bible, with the reality of pain, amazement, death and life.

Eschatology, as an orientation of theological perspective, can only hold together Christ's victory as the promissory ground of both the Christian faith and its future consummation and as Moltmann puts it:<sup>19</sup>

Christ's future is not one single point in an absolute remoteness for which we are to wait, a mere coming event. This is hardly thinkable, for we would probably all go to sleep over it. Christ's future is now, or it is not at all... The Saviour is coming. He is not sitting on some celestial throne, resting somewhere in eternity, waiting for some particular time before he acts or a certain moment when he will suddenly plunge in. The coming of the Saviour runs like a thread throughout history, through God's working in the world (Matt. 28:20).

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<sup>19</sup> 2 Cor 1:20, Eph (1:13-14).



If this thread is not to break, then Jesus must always become (Blumhardt 1998:38).<sup>20</sup>

Therefore the notion of Christ being continually presented as the coming one is a complex eschatological truth in which Christ's life, death and resurrection among other aspects lead to the restoration of all things (Winn 2008:35). As stated before, Christian communities have historically found sustenance and strength in the memory of God's act of love during Calvary. With all these facts, God's raising of the crucified Christ remains a central Christian symbol of hope in the midst of suffering and oppression, which has been expressed as hopelessness in the case of Zimbabwe.

In order to understand Moltmann's eschatology it makes sense to begin with personal hope, move to historical hope and finally to the hope of the world (Moltmann 1967:189). Moltmann places Christian eschatology at the centre of his theology of hope and in so doing makes explicit connections between politics and Christian theology. For Moltmann the object of theology is God, people exist because of God and we cannot speak of ourselves without (Moltmann 1967:79). Moltmann's theology of hope seeks a transformation of the present as Moltmann sees this transformation of the present as social and holistic in nature because it is framed in terms of the kingdom of God (Gorringe 1999:88).

### **3.4. Moltmann's doctrine of God and Christology**

According to Otto (1991:2-3) Moltmann's conception of God sublates both theism and atheism by way of Trinitarian conception of God founded in an eschatological theology of the cross. Moltmann has himself personally experienced the devastation of war, the loss of hope and the quest of God and this is the position at which he formulated his doctrine of God. The core of his doctrine of God is the

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<sup>20</sup> Also see Winn (1998:34).

crucified God in which he interpreted the cross as the event of God's suffering and solidarity with the World (Bauckham 1989:294). Moltmann (1967:47) elaborates that incomprehensible suffering questions God's existence. Whilst Moltmann's doctrine of God is centred on suffering, it is important to note that Moltmann is careful to make clear that not every kind of suffering can be attributed, even analogically, to God (Ford 2005:155). Therefore there is a sense in which people have to take responsibility for their lives even though God is involved.

Moltmann denies Barth's emphasis on God as Sovereign, and he advocates that "In God there is no one-sided relationship of superiority and subordination, command and obedience, master and servant" making this his starting point for all kinds of relationships that should exist between God and his creation (Otto 1991:36). "In the kingdom," Moltmann says, "dwelling on Jesus' proclamation, God is not Lord, he is the merciful father" and we are not servants, but children, we love in freedom and do not submit to rule (Moltmann 1980:70). It is therefore in Moltmann's conception of God that He offered to the poor, called the weary and heavy laden to Him and refreshed them through the joyful message of the kingdom of God (Moltmann 1980:71-72).

Moltmann's theology of hope is centred on the historical Jesus where the resurrection of Jesus constitutes God's promises of new creation for the whole of reality. This point makes it clear that the person of Jesus Christ plays a significant role in the formation of hope in Christ since as people experience God in suffering; they also experience the power of hope. In other words the moment one views God as present in suffering, then life is enjoyed in Christ. This view of God impacts the way in which the doctrine of hope and how personal experiences are interpreted.

### 3.4.1 Moltmann's description of hope in Christ

For Moltmann Christian hope is thoroughly Christological since it arises from the resurrection of Jesus and as already mentioned, the hope suggested by Moltmann is hope that is born out of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Moltmann 1967:16). Christ becomes the hope of the world not because he guarantees the preservation of this world but because he liberates people from all the binding ties of the world (Schlink 1955:130). From hope emanates obedience to the redeeming message of Jesus Christ (Moltmann 1967:112).

A close analysis of the person of Christ through what is known in history changes the effect of the present experiences since there would be solidarity between the suffering people and the crucified Christ. Because of Moltmann's encounter with the crucified God in which he interpreted the cross as the event of God's suffering, those who wait upon the coming of Christ know how patient and long suffering God is (Moltmann 2003:93-94). Moltmann's (2008:20) experience of the war had a powerful impact on his theology and he reflected on the war in the following way:

In July 1943, Operation Gomorrah was launched...Helplessly we looked on as St. George's began to burn, and then the city hall and finally Hamburg's churches, which flared up like torches...an explosive bomb hit the platform where we were standing...the mass of splinters...tore apart my friend Gerhard Schopper, who was standing next to me. ...During this night I cried out to God for the first time in my life and put my life in His hands. ...My question was not 'why does God allow this to happen?' but 'My God, where are you?' and 'Why am I alive and not dead, too, like the friend at my side?

Even though Moltmann did not know God, Christ searched for him, found him and saved him, it was through this experience of Christ that Moltmann described

Christ at the hope of the world (Moltmann 2008:30). Hope is not mere a expectation of things wished for, but the powerful, deep impulse with which we face joyfully and confidently toward the living boundary, the true end of our lives and of our world, at once here – now and yet-to-be (Calhoun 1955:142). This is to say Christ is our hope since he enables us to live in all situations through the love and strength he showed during his sufferings on the cross. Christ gave us the promise of strength to endure the stress of earthly battles and of life with him beyond all earthly bounds.

### **3.4.2 Christ's death and resurrection**

In Moltmann's understanding, the cross does not solve the problems of suffering, but Christ meets those suffering in his voluntary fellow-suffering (Ford 2005:153). As people suffer there is solidarity in their suffering as Christ would be identified with them. Therefore Christ's death overcomes what Moltmann calls, "the suffering in suffering" the lack of love and the abandonment in suffering (Moltmann 1974:58). Christ's death and resurrection represents the bigger picture of hopelessness and new hope as Christ was identified with the world in all its suffering, godlessness, godforsakenness, brokenness whilst on the other hand his resurrection constitutes God's promises of new creation (Ford 2005:149).<sup>21</sup>

The future of Jesus Christ through the resurrection, which is to be expected, can be stated only from history and from the promises of God. Since some of the promises have been accomplished it follows that promises stands between knowing and not knowing and the knowledge of the future which is kindled by promise is therefore a knowledge in hope (Moltmann 1967:188). Understanding the meaning of the death and resurrection of Christ helps the church to relook at

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<sup>21</sup> Also see Moltmann (1967:184).

its mission to transform the world it she anticipates the fulfilment of the promises of God (Ford 2005:296).

If a person is to hope for personal fulfillment in some sense the person must hope for life beyond death, since such fulfillment cannot occur within the finite limits of his earthly existence. Moltmann (1967:84) calls for the realization of the eschatological hope of justice in which people are to change the way they expect God's transformational power. In other words God is saying, "Behold I make all things new" through faith and trust in Christ as the power where new horizons of hope (Braaten 1967:223-24).

According to Scaer (1970:70) there is a significant theological distinction between the concepts of hope and the traditional values of Christianity. In traditional Christianity God and Jesus stand outside of time, but in the theology of hope they are subject to time. There is a problem with the latter understanding of God as God seizes to be Sovereign over everything, because he is subject to time. Moltmann (1967:12) in his own analysis argued that the exploration of the resurrection reclaimed the centrality of hope and opened the paths of inquiry for Eschatological theology. This idea of the biblical insight in Moltmann's work was rejected by Woodbridge who argued that the hope suggested by Moltmann for a bright earthly future is a false hope since it rejects biblical eschatology (Woodbridge 2009:110). Scaer (1970:71) on the other end views 'theology of hope' as centred on fundamental philosophy dressed up in biblical imagery.<sup>22</sup>

The meaning of Christ to the world is not only limited to him being the hope of the world, however Moltmann describes Christ using his titles derived from the New Testament and the following section explores some of the statements of hope.

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<sup>22</sup> For a detailed account on the criticism of Moltmann see Scaer 1970.

### 3.4.3 Statements of hope

According to Moltmann (2003:88) when we use the titles of Jesus Christ such as Saviour, Son of man, Lord and Redeemer we are not merely expressing what Jesus means to us but we are also expressing what we expect from Christ. For Moltmann the various titles we accord to Jesus Christ are actually statements of hope which, if understood well, can offer motivation for people to follow Christ and help reformulate hope where it has been lost (Moltmann 1967:183-189). Moltmann does not overtly come to this conclusion in his 1967 *Theology of hope* book, but explores this idea in-depth in later works.

Jesus as Saviour is one of the titles that Moltmann used to describe Christ as a means of hope. In this case, Jesus Christ becomes Saviour because he saves men and women through present power and future hope (Moltmann 1980:75, also see Aldwinckle 1982:50). Although God's saving activity was once and for all, it is also an on-going reality mediated through the sacraments (which in the reformed tradition are Holy Communion and water Baptism), the act of faith in obedience to loving Christ and participation in caring for those in need (Koskela 2008:31). According to Moltmann (1967:109) the death and resurrection of Christ are key elements in the universal message of hope forged through the bond of suffering endured by Christ and all humanity. Since the names of Christ are not empty titles, it follows that the description of Christ is embraced within his titles.

According to Moltmann (1969:152) the New Testament never simply says that Christ is risen and so a glorious future for people begins, rather the New Testament always speak of the resurrection in connection with the cross of Jesus which means hope is spoken of in connection with suffering and the patience of love. According to the Bible, suffering has been part of human life after the earliest days since the fall of Adam and Eve because of their disobedience (Moltmann 1969:152). In Genesis God declared that Adam and Eve would suffer

physically: women would experience “pain” in childhood bearing and men would have to “toil” and “sweat” for food (Gen 3:16-18). However this point does not imply that hope for a better life vanished in the Garden of Eden, instead people can still hope in the promises of God despite this history. In other words the resurrection in this case set in motion the art of waiting upon God’s promises being fulfilled through his providence.

Moltmann states that hope keeps people unsettled until the great fulfillment of all prophecies by God and that hope produces perseverance (Moltmann 1969:153-54). There are however two forms of hopelessness, overconfidence and despair. In the hopelessness described in chapter two, most of the Zimbabwean communities have adopted the second form of hopelessness, despair, which has become the dominating phenomenon in Zimbabwean.

Christ redeems all of us, and to redeem means to ransom, rescue or liberate. Christ as the hope of the world rescues the world from all kind of bad experiences. Jesus Christ as the redeemer of all people from death guided his chosen ones into a new life through his sacrificed atonement. In other words Christ brought to the world redemption in which he became hopeless with the hopeless and in all this Christ brought new hope. Hence through the resurrection people wait upon God and renew their hope in Christ.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

Moltmann’s theology of hope has had a significant impact on the field of eschatology and there is no doubt that it will continue to impact people’s thinking. Since suffering is a common phenomenon amongst human beings questions around God’s existence in such situations always abound and from this point it is necessary to consult Moltmann as a departure point on issues of hope. Even though some scholars argue that the *Theology of hope* is just a number of

shallow theoretical idealistic thoughts, Moltmann's contains truths that point human beings back towards Christ as the only valid source of hope. Furthermore, people need to understand the promises of God during suffering and perhaps from this point could be useful in creating a dialogue between Moltmann's theories on hope and the Zimbabwean context.

Since Moltmann's doctrine of God was derived through the suffering Jesus Christ on the cross, there are many situations in the world today where Moltmann's concepts of hope could be applied to useful effect.<sup>23</sup> It is from this point that a possible dialogue will be explored in chapter 4 between the hopelessness in Zimbabwe and Moltmann's theology of hope. Whilst Moltmann (1985:89-90) seems to intimate that God's love finds fulfillment through suffering, it is as if he views suffering as a value in itself. However, Moltmann argues that suffering is a means for hoping towards a good ending. In other words, hope can emerge from suffering and for Moltmann it was through his encounter with God's love at a point in his life when the Second World War devastated him

*Theology of hope* enlightens Christians on the subject hope by proposing that Christian hope should be the central motivating factor in the life and thought of the church. According to Woodbridge (2009:108), Moltmann believed that God's promise to act in the future is more important than the fact that he has acted in the past. In other words when Christians anticipate a better world, they begin to participate in the creation of a utopian world through active engagement in current affairs.

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<sup>23</sup> This is because Moltmann's theology allows for a discussion in which Christ can be questioned, especially on how he is involved in humanity's suffering.



## **CHAPTER 4**

# Initiating a Dialogue Between the Discourse on Hope in Zimbabwe and Hope in Moltmann's Theology

## 4.1 Introduction

Prime Minister Robert Mugabe borrowed from the liberation theology to justify his radical approach to the land issue by expressing the following:

And for you specifically as church leaders, you face one fundamental question: what are Christians supposed to do, maybe expected to do, when they live under an unjust system which claims to be Christian, to be Godly? What do we tell God's oppressed children, what do we tell a purchased people" what do we tell the widow, the needy, the fatherless, and the landless? What form does Christian witness take in such circumstances? (Mugabe 2001:34).

This chapter is an attempt to answer some of the questions asked by Mugabe using Moltmann's theology of hope, by initiating a conversation between Moltmann's theology of hope and the discourse on hope and hopelessness in Zimbabwe. In the previous chapter it was noted that Moltmann believes God's promise to act in the future is more important than the fact that he has already acted in history. Therefore a focus on the eschatological future does not mean withdrawal from the world. As pointed out in chapter Zimbabwe was a beacon of hope at the time of independence in 1980 and people were actively involved in the construction of their country at the time. The political leaders who were governing after independence promised many things like free education and reconciliation, just to mention a few.

The promises however were undergirded by political reform, which is different from Moltmann who suggests that Christ is the centre of everything. The two phenomena under discussion have two different approaches; the one is Moltmann's theology of hope and other is the political situation in Zimbabwe. Towards the end of the chapter the researcher will revisit the discourses on hope in Zimbabwe and where possible suggest ways to reconstruct the hope of the

Zimbabwean communities. It cannot be denied that with the aid of Moltmann's propositions, some possible contributions to the discourse on hope could be initiated. It shall be shown also in this chapter how Moltmann's work shall help us to make some contributions to the discourse of hope in Zimbabwe. In the hopelessness described in chapter two, most of the Zimbabwean communities have given into despair, which Moltmann sees as a form of hopelessness.

#### **4.2 Connecting Moltmann's theology of hope to the Zimbabwean discourse on hope**

From its genesis Moltmann's theology of hope had the bold ambitions of restoring hope to the church (Moltmann 1967: xii). Possessing similar aims, the researcher believes Moltmann can contribute to the hope discourse in Zimbabwe by providing coordinates for a roadmap of how it can be reinstituted.

Suffering is a known reality in Zimbabwe and one of the key issues addressed by Moltmann in his book related to "how people can understand God through suffering". In his theology of hope Moltmann argues that hope can emerge from suffering, since he personally experienced God's love at the point when nothing else mattered (Moltmann 1967: xii). Difficult as it is, people also experience love in devastating times as Christ is always at work. The idea that Christ is ever-present in our suffering only becomes true by faith. The following section explores how history has been central to the hope discourse in Zimbabwe.

Hope in the Zimbabwe context can be defined as an inner striving towards a distant, seemingly unattainable future. Currently, Zimbabweans hope for a stable economy, equitable distribution of resources, political peace and actual democracy. This hope is attached to goals set by the government and civic leaders, whereas in Moltmann's theory Christ is the giver of authentic hope. For Moltmann, Christian hope is the foundation of purposeful existence that allows

current and coming generations to approach life with courage and complete trust in God's promises. In Zimbabwe, obtaining independence and having a democratically elected government were the core values in building a better future, whereas Moltmann has Christ as the centre of all life. Therefore Christian hope is an attitude or confident expression for God's future salvific activity that arises from faith in what he has already accomplished on our behalf (Heil 1987:6).

The historical element of hope in Zimbabwe shows a similar trend with how Christ shows hope to the hopeless.<sup>24</sup> When Zimbabweans were going through *Gukurahundi*, *Murambatsvina* and other unpleasant experiences, as per Moltmann's experiences of oppression, Christ was present in loving solidarity with the people. Even though there are many agents of hope, for Moltmann it is more appealing to rely and trust in God. Since God's word of promise creates hope, Christians should recognize the spirit of Christ buried deep within them which mediates between present situations and God (Moltmann 2003:34) In the case of Zimbabwe people were easily attracted and fooled by the promises of the governments because in the midst of suffering, the temptation is believe earthy agents instead of turning to God, who is unseen and perceived to be detached from the suffering of the people. By relying on earthly agents of hope, people participate in a history which ends in despair because the process itself delivers no lasting victories (Brueggemann 1987:89)

The hopelessness described in chapter two could be equated to the absence of God in the different situations that were taking place. For instance, the massacre of civilians in Matabeleland through *Gukurahundi* could be equated to the death of Christ and this could be described as the absence of Christ. I would like to describe the hopelessness of the Zimbabweans as the "dark" moments in which

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<sup>24</sup> Colonial rule suppressed the hope of the black Zimbabweans, but independence rekindled the hope of the masses.

Christ could be described as absent amongst the suffering people. On the other hand, new signs of hope can be described as the “light”.

There is no doubt that we cannot talk of hope without hopelessness and hence the Zimbabwean context correlates with the model of hope as described by Moltmann, where historical themes are pivotal in modelling the concept of hope. Moltmann contends that the cross does not solve the problems of suffering, but rather Christ meets those in suffering in his voluntary love. It is important to note that the dark moments help define hope since hopelessness points to Christ and only in hopelessness can hope be built.<sup>25</sup> The dark could be described as the death of Christ whereas the light can symbolizes the resurrection of Christ. In summary, hope is activated among those who are experiencing grief and suffering.

In the dark moments, God is identified personally with people suffering from injustice or people dying without ever having had hope of a better life in this world. What this means is that during that time described as “Deus absconditus” Christ will be in the middle of all circumstances. Realizing (Deus absconditus) the absence of God means knowing that during this moments Christ is busy transforming the thoughts of man. People need to understand that their suffering is an opportunity to see the faithfulness of God, but they first need to transfix their hope toward his direction. God’s authentic hope reminds people that their suffering is not absolute but a temporal dispensation.

#### **4.3 Towards a theology of hope in Zimbabwe**

In terms of the understanding of God’s presence in the hope discourse, I would like to emphasize that everything should be centred on Christ. In other words the

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<sup>25</sup> We cannot talk about light without referencing the dark, as light cannot exist without darkness.

eschatological future starts with the crucified Christ and the resurrection of Christ fulfils the promise of Christ being present in people's lives.

In Moltmann's view Christian theology proves itself not in correspondence to reality as it is, but in opening up future prospects for reality (Bauckham 1987:27). This means that Christian theology helps in painting a picture of what one can expect in the future. In my view Moltmann contributes to the discourse on hope in Zimbabwe through his Christocentric way of thinking. When Christ becomes the centre of everything, the promises of Christ leads people into a phase of anticipating the perfect peace from Christ. Reconciliation is one of the agents of hope in Zimbabwe, where people want to co-operatively work together in creating a better future. This concept is almost similar to Moltmann's idea of people getting involved in the world in order to cultivate their hope in Christ. Christ, as the hope of the world, liberates his people from all hopelessness.<sup>26</sup>

A close analysis of the signs of hope as described in chapter two show how the government, the church and non-governmental organisations worked towards helping the Zimbabweans to soldier on regardless of the hopeless situations. To most of the Zimbabweans, encouragement emanated from political leaders, and this was the basis and reason for a purposeful existence. Whilst Moltmann, in his theology of hope, does not directly address a political phenomenon, it is important to note that he is addressing aspects of suffering directly related to political, social and economic factors. For Zimbabweans, Moltmann's concepts of hope could provide a powerful impulse with which the people of Zimbabwe joyfully and confidently anticipate a future with Christ at the centre of all experiences. This would imply a change of focus as people would no longer base their trust in political leaders but in Christ to bring hope, reconciliation and unity amongst his people. For example, rather than reconciliation becoming an agent

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<sup>26</sup> When this happens people become obedient to God's word and Christ rebuilds the broken hearted (Moltmann 1967:112).

of political hope in Zimbabwe, it could become an agent of true hope which works at uniting political leaders, church leaders and other bodies for the benefit of Zimbabweans.

The concepts death and resurrection are at the heart of Moltmann's theory and this could help the Zimbabweans to realize that Christ identifies with their suffering (Moltmann 1967:109). When this takes shape then hope will not merely mean an expectation of things wished for, but will be a deep inclination where Zimbabweans can face adversity with the assurance that Christ is by their side. As such the gospel of Christ would cease been merely theoretical.

The signs of hope in Zimbabwe are characterized by slogans that instil perseverance amongst the citizens, the promise of reconciliation, the GNU's ambitious Global Partnership Agreement that promises and the elections held every four years. Politicians in Zimbabwe have used hope to take advantage of desperate people who tend to easily fall for any promises. Rahner (1997:286) interestingly argues that, hope is not merely a matter of deciding to turn ourselves over to any promises through some hubristic spiritual act to the infinite context of our lives, but rather we gain a deeper sense of hope as we deal with historical realities. In this case hope becomes a reality, which is directly proportional to our acceptance of the ultimate incomprehensibility of our existence on earth.

In Zimbabwe, whereas between the giving of the promises and its fulfillment is an interval in which people live in hope and obedience, for Moltmann, God, who gives the promises, can be trusted to fulfil any promise. Bauckham (1987:47) argues that Moltmann could be right to articulate that only God's word of promises creates true hope. As mentioned earlier, hope in Zimbabwe is measured by the economic growth, reduction in poverty, the effectiveness of the democratically elected government, quality health facilities, and availability of job

opportunities and equitable distribution of land. Moltmann articulates how Christian hope can contribute towards the discourse of hope in difficult situations by also broadening the narrow political and economic definitions of hope.

It is important to note that even though Moltmann is not writing in the context of Zimbabwe, there are potential areas of correspondence between Moltmann's context and the Zimbabwean context. Some of the critical concepts which are closely linked are hope and promise. When Zimbabwe attained its independence in 1980, promise was amongst the key concepts that fuelled the hope of many Zimbabweans. Other than the promises given by human beings, Moltmann encourages people to look forward to the promises of God. Since a promise binds a person to the future, it is more appealing to be deeply connected to the promises of God in scripture. Faith in people is limited but the total fulfillment of the promises of God is realistic. The worldly standards promise unattainable goals but on the contrary, Christ promises peace and joy from God our father.

A society like Zimbabwe saturated with violence, rape, killings of innocent civilians and unprecedented forced removals is a society in crisis. Such situations if allowed to continue lead to more hopelessness and despair. Politicians who skilfully use such phenomena to get Zimbabweans to hope in them as the only agents capable of changing the situations. Reductionist and often misleading usages of the concept of hope is evident in Zimbabwe through programs like food distribution, which was manipulated as a weapon for political ends. Unfortunately, Zimbabweans have lost hope in the power of their vote and there is little faith in new ideas.

Moltmann's work on hope may well fuel a type of hope that re-energise attempts to motivate and teach citizens to exercise their vote effectively so that they can vote for the political party that provides the best prospects. It is the researcher's strong conviction that Moltmann's ideas on hope would agree with Brueggemann



(1987:86) that hope is not likely to come amongst those suffering in silence but rather those who enter their grief, suffering and oppression and bring it out positively. It is the same concept being suggested by Mugabe in his speech. It is therefore my strong conviction that through Moltmann's work we are able to differentiate between false hope and true hope.

Christian hope not only claims to be grounded in an objective historical reality but also directs people to the invisible future where Christians await the second coming of Christ (Bauckham 1999:57).

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

There is no doubt that Moltmann's theology of hope can be set in dialogue with the discourse on hope in Zimbabwe. During his encounter with Christ Moltmann's expressed the following: "...during this night I cried out to God for the first time in my life and put my life in his hands...". The people in Zimbabwe could take a similar decision in these hardships, where nothing else would matter except Christ redeeming his people through love. When this happens Christ would be our hope as he would enable us to live in all situations through his love since Christ suffered on the cross.

The theology of hope as described in this chapter points to the importance of history, promises of God and Christ as the centre of hope. In this case, to be Christ like means to be name issues as they are, to have a vision and a strategy to deal with such socioeconomic and political evils and finally to be courageous players in political issues as people who advocate for a better Zimbabwe. If the church manages to do this, it will become what Moltmann suggested when he expressed that, "the book theology of hope should restore to the church and the community its hope in Christ" (Moltmann 1967: xxi).

# **CHAPTER 5**

## Conclusion and the Way Forward

## **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter presented the initiation of a dialogue between Moltmann's theology of hope and the discourse of hope in Zimbabwe. It was concluded that Moltmann's theology of hope contribute to the discourse on hope in Zimbabwe. Moltmann himself wrote the book after going through hopelessness, from which he claimed to be found by Christ and this is a good departure point for the hope discourses in Zimbabwe. Moltmann (1999:2) claimed to have lost all hope and confidence in German culture because of Auschwitz and Buchenwald (concentration camps where Jews had been imprisoned and killed by Nazis). This chapter concludes the study by suggesting new avenues for instilling God's hope in Zimbabwe.

## **5.2 Hope in Zimbabwe**

Chapter two focused on the background of Zimbabwe's decline to hopelessness since 1980. Extremely disturbing experiences have been synonymous with Zimbabwe since independence. For Moltmann, historical developments are central to the establishment of hope. Even though Zimbabwe's recent history is unpleasant, one needs to acknowledge that God has been sustaining his people regardless of these circumstances. By examining history, people can recognize God's faithfulness to his people (Moltmann 1967:104). Despite the fact that one cannot easily identify Christ in suffering, his providence could be recognised through what agencies like the United States Agency for International Development and NGOs have done for the country since independence.

The researcher believes historical experiences of hopelessness for the Zimbabwean population may be a stepping-stone to the new eschatological future. However this does not mean the negation of present realities, healing, reconciliation and justice still need to take place. False hope can be identified

throughout the discourse, as there were many unfulfilled expectations from government, political leaders and even from the church. This study hopes to resuscitate the peoples' confidence in dealing with the future.

There is no way people can reverse the effects of *Gukurahundi*, *Murambatsvina*, Operation *Makavhota sei*, land redistribution, food redistribution as a political weapon and the ESAP, but the effects can be dealt with in order to move into new avenues of hope. In essence the political players cannot facilitate a true, acceptable, credible and objective national healing process (Moyo 2010:83). It would make a difference if people accept and be responsible for their past deficiencies and for pardon in order to facilitate the healing process. A conclusion can therefore be drawn on the discourses of hope that they have encouraged people to face the future without fear.

### 5.3 Hoping in Christ

This section, in particular, reflects on Christ as the hope of Zimbabwe, since Moltmann suggests that hope can emerge from suffering. Hoping in Christ does not mean neglecting the promises from political leaders and any other encouragement, rather what Moltmann suggest about hope lead in everything.<sup>27</sup> Christ should be seen as the hope in all circumstances and people should aspire for this standard and not mere human standards. One area of potential disagreement with Moltmann is with regard to his view on the sovereignty of God. The researcher tends to side with a more absolute view on God's sovereignty, as articulated to a certain sense by Karl Barth.

In continuation of Moltmann's thought it is possible to state that hope in Christ makes the following horizons and paradigms possible (Moltmann 1967:24):

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<sup>27</sup> The hope born out of the death and resurrection of Christ.

- It is hope in Christ for God's glory. For other than focusing on any sort of human glory and or the glory of political leaders, Moltmann suggests that the hope in Christ is for God's glory.
- It is hope in Christ for the new creation of the world. Christ opens new avenues for all who trust in him to be active agents in the creation of a new world.
- It is hope in Christ for the history of human beings journeying with God. This shows how Christ is always involved in the lives of his creation.
- It is hope in Christ for the resurrection and eternal life of human beings. The Eschatological future is governed by Christ and the resurrection makes all things possible.

In his later work Moltmann (2003:5) describes Christian hope as the power of resurrection from life's failures and defeats in starting a new life.<sup>28</sup>

#### **5.4 Towards moral regeneration and reconstruction of hope in society**

Through this theology of hope it is possible for Zimbabweans to reconstruct moral values within the government, political sphere and amongst individual citizens. This is not to suggest that there is currently no moral values and dignity in Zimbabwe, but it would do best for Zimbabweans to regenerate the morals values which would help reconstruct the country. It is also important to note that we cannot reconstruct a community's hope without looking back into their historical traits and how certain practices or systems affected the people. In the context of this research people were affected by *Gukurahundi* and *Murambatsvina*, just to mention a few, but these incidents need not destroy the people's progress. God manifests in history and perhaps the Zimbabwean community should review how Christ has been present amongst his people and thankfully accept his hand of providence. Another way of addressing the

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<sup>28</sup> Moltmann describes this as "In my end is my beginning".

regeneration of moral values and hope is to revisit the wounds of the past and deal with the effects of the wounds in order for justice to take place. However this must be done in manner that leaves people united and not at war with each other.

Moltmann describes this concept (1967:321) as creative hope where love drives all action. The hope of the resurrection in this case must bring a new understanding of the world.

### **5.5 Way forward and concluding remarks**

This study has explored how Moltmann's concept of hope can contribute to the discourses on hope in Zimbabwe. The research examined some of the concepts used by Moltmann and how they can be applied to the Zimbabwe context. Contemporary believers need to reactivate their Christian hope by pointing to the kingdom of God. The following points were derived from the study by the researcher, some directly linked to Moltmann and some developed as the research progressed:

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1. The crucified Christ is the hope of the world not because he guarantees the preservation of this world, but because he liberates us from all the troubles of this world.
2. The first act of hope is the faithful preaching of the gospel and accepting responsibility for the just ordering of the society.
3. Those who hope in Christ are under the orders of God as the Sustainer and God demands that all man regardless of their nationality, race, or social status be united in attaining the eschatological future.

4. If hope were really alive within us, then we would not stand looking back into history but rather rush forward towards Jesus Christ's arms.
5. Zimbabweans' impatience came from the false hope raised in regard to economy, political instabilities, health facilities and the recession. Unfortunately there is an entire generation of Zimbabweans who grew up under the threat of an intolerant state which used its apparatus to silence and crush dissent.
6. Operation *Murambatsvina* came at a time when Zimbabwe could hardly provide its people with basic commodities, formal employment, housing and social amenities, but this should not mark the end of life but rather the beginning of new opportunities

## Abstract

Many Zimbabweans experienced its 18 April 1980 independence of Zimbabwe as ushering in an era of hope. However, it is shown that events like Operations *Murambatsvina* and *Makavhotasei*, the Land Reform Program, and the Economic Structural Adjustment Program significantly and negatively impacted on the initial hope of independence. The study traces and explores the potential of Moltmann's work on hope for the Zimbabwean context. It is concluded that Moltmann's work can make a constructive contribution the meta-discourse on hope in Zimbabwe. This is specifically the case with reference to the way in which Moltmann's theology of hope integrates the role of history, God's promise in a comprehensive eschatological framework, grounded in his Christology.



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