

**The Church, national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe: A
womanist perspective on Churches in Manicaland (CiM)**

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my late father, Boniface Juru Mhuru. I am convinced that you would have been proud to see me acquire this qualification because education was always your passion.

To all the women victims and survivors of political violence in Zimbabwe, this study is also dedicated to you so that you know that you are not forgotten. This study has broken the silence on your experiences and for once, it has given you a voice; a voice which should never be muted again.

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Declaration

I declare that the dissertation on, The Church, National Healing and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe: A Womanist Perspective on Churches in Manicaland (CiM) is my own work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signed

Date

MOLLY MANYONGANISE

Abstract

Given that women are the major victims of any conflict, their lived experiences should be the starting point of any post-reconstruction process. Proceeding from this premise, this study looked at the role of the church in national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe from a gendered perspective focusing specifically on Churches in Manicaland (CiM), a forum of churches operating in Manicaland province. While academic scholars have written about the activities of the church and church organisations in Zimbabwe (in the national healing and reconciliation process), there have been limited attempts at examining the intersections of gender and post-reconstruction processes such as national healing and reconciliation especially in as far as the church's participation in the process is concerned. This study comes in to fill this gap in the existing scholarly literature by proposing a new model for national healing and reconciliation on which the church can lean. The aim of this study is to provide a womanist perspective to CiM's activities in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe by finding out if the Forum prioritises women's experiences of political violence. The study is qualitative in nature and it utilised documents and interviews as tools for data collection from CiM officials. Input from women survivors of political violence as well as some men and women who witnessed political violence in the communities in Mutare Urban and Mutare Rural provided the raw data from which an analysis was drawn. The study found out that though CiM has been active in trying to bring healing and reconciliation to communities in Manicaland, it has not focused on women's experiences of political violence as requiring special attention. From the responses of study participants, the study probed the possible reasons behind this neglect. Drawing from the experiences of women in Manicaland of political violence, the study proposed the adoption of a womanist model for national healing and reconciliation. The study argued that from this model, the church in Zimbabwe can come up with an all-inclusive African Womanist Theology of

national healing and reconciliation, a theology which pays particular attention to how women experience conflict.

Key words: women, political violence, church, healing, reconciliation, transitional justice, forgiveness, social intergration, womanist model, African Womanist Theology

Acronyms

AEE	African Evangelistic Enterprise
AFM	Apostolic Faith Mission
AICs	African Initiated Churches
AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
ARLPI	Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative
ATRs	African Traditional Religions
BCU	Boys' Christian Union
BSAC	British South Africa Company
CCJP	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
CCM	Christian Council of Mozambique
CCSF	Church and Civil Society Forum
CiM	Churches in Manicaland
CMC	Christian Marching Church
CSM	Church of Sweden
CYL	City Youth League
DANet	Destiny for Africa Network
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EFZ	Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
Fr	Father
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme

GCU	Girls' Christian Union
GNU	Government of National Unity
GPA	Global Political Agreement
GtH	Grace to Heal
HIS	Heart in Service
HIV	Human Immuno Virus
HOCD	Heads of Christian Denominations
HOME	Hand of Mercy
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
IG	Inclusive Government
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
JOMIC	Joint Monitoring Command
LMS	London Missionary Society
LRF	Legal Resources Foundation
MCU	Men's Christian Union
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDC-N	Movement for Democratic Change-Ncube
MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change- Tsvangirai
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
NPCs	New Pentecostal Churches
NPRC	National Peace and Reconciliation Commission
NTJW	National Transitional Justice Working Group

NVDD	National Vision Discussion Document
ONHRI	Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration
PaCDEF	Peace-building and Capacity Development Foundation
PCR	Programme to Combat Racism
PHD	Prophetic Healing Deliverance
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
RAU	Research and Advocacy Unit
SADC	South African Development Community
SATRC	South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UANC	United African National Council
UCCZ	United Christian Church in Zimbabwe
UDACIZA	Union for the Development of African Churches in Zimbabwe
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UFIC	United Family International Church
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WCC	World Council of Churches
WLMAP	Women of Liberation Mass Action for Peace
ZADHR	Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights
ZAFM	Zion Apostolic Faith Mission
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African Union Patriotic Front
ZAOGA	Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African Patriotic Front

ZCA	Zimbabwe Christian Alliance
ZCBC	Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference
ZCC	Zimbabwe Council of Churches
ZCC	Zion Christian Church
ZEC	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
ZNPC	Zimbabwe National Pastors' Conference
ZPP	Zimbabwe Peace Project
ZUD	Zimbabwe Union for Democrats
ZUM	Zimbabwe Unity Movement

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Orientation

1.0 Introduction

The discourse on national healing and reconciliation has dominated public debates in Zimbabwe since 1980 when Robert Mugabe, the then Prime Minister of the newly founded republic announced the policy in his maiden independence speech. Other calls for national healing and reconciliation were made after the *Gukurahundi*¹ Massacres which saw over 20 000 Ndebeles killed by the army (Maseko 2011:93; Togarasei & Chitando 2011:211) as well as after the 2008 political violence in which over 200 opposition supporters were exterminated (Chitando & Togarasei 2010:155) while many others were maimed, tortured or raped. Initial calls for national healing in 1980 have been criticised for being narrow, individualistic, selfish and lacking the support of the majority of victims of the pre-independence war. Other critical institutions were left out. For example, the church (which is the focus of this study) in particular complained that it was not consulted prior to the announcement of this policy.

Academic scholarship focusing on national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe, while acknowledging the shortcomings of previous policies, has not taken deliberate steps to come up with more effective paradigms that are useful to various institutions who are taking part in the process of bringing national healing and reconciliation to communities in contemporary Zimbabwe especially paradigms that place women at the centre of the national healing and reconciliation process. As such, this study sought to look at the role of the church in national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. Using the Churches in Manicaland (CiM) as a case

¹ It is an operation launched by the Zimbabwean government in the Midlands and Matabeleland Provinces to flush out 'dissidents' which resulted in many civilians victimized in various ways.

study, it investigated whether CiM prioritises women's experiences of political violence in its bid to bring healing and reconciliation to communities in Manicaland Province. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce and to give the orientation of the study. It provides the area of investigation, the study objectives, the research methodology, clarification of terms as well as the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Area of investigation

This study is in the area of History of Religions, with a specific focus on Christianity in Zimbabwe. It sought to investigate the role of the church in Zimbabwe in the national healing and reconciliation process. While some analysts have emphasized that the church has a role to play in this process, there has not been that deliberate effort to actually look at what the church is doing on the ground as well as to highlight the challenges the church faces in its bid to fulfill this role. The thesis mainly looked at the Churches in Manicaland (CiM) and its intention was to bring out a womanist perspective on issues of national healing and reconciliation. The period under review in this study is from 2000 to the present.

1.2 Background to the Study

Zimbabwe got its independence in 1980 after a protracted struggle in which many lives were lost and a lot of scars were left on the hearts of people, some of which still exist to this day. The reconciliation policy that was adopted after independence did not afford the majority of Zimbabweans the chance to share their pain and concerns. This implies that the reconciliation policy was adopted without due consideration on issues of truth-telling, justice and healing/restoration. Machingura (2010:335) notes that "the people across political, racial, social, economical and religious divide were so excited to hear Mugabe talking about reconciliation considering the decades of civil strife in Zimbabwe." One of the questions that arises from this

whole scenario is how critical political actors in Zimbabwe (the church included) could have overlooked these prerequisites for genuine reconciliation to have taken place. From Machingura's point of view, truth and justice should come before any call for healing, reconciliation and integration (Machingura 2010:334). The post independence call should, thus, be viewed as a lid that covered the war crimes that were committed and the injustices done during the liberation war. It was somehow a way of silencing the wronged by commanding them to embrace reconciliation as a way of wishing away their pain. However, post-independence events such as *Gukurahundi* and the occurrence of political violence in the country are evidence of unresolved issues within the Zimbabwean society as a whole (Scarnecchia 2008 :74).

From 2000 the violence that characterised the political turf in Zimbabwe has left many people with more scars, scars that need healing. This violence, from Machingura's perspective, has affected the Zimbabwean society psychologically, politically, spiritually, socially, and economically (Machingura 2010:333). The call for national healing is, therefore, not out of context. If anything, it is somehow an acknowledgement of the injustices done at the behest of the crises in the respective period under investigation. The Organ for National Healing that was constituted after the 2008 political violence bears witness to this need. However, as the agenda for national healing is being tabled, the place of the church in the whole process has not been clearly explained. In a heated debate on National Healing on 28 May 2010, Sekai Holland (who was co-minister of national healing and reconciliation) highlighted an important point which needs to be considered in this thesis; that the church in Zimbabwe is not at peace itself and that, like any other institution it is part of society (Gonda 2010). Shana (a church leader), however, argues that politicians should stay in politics and leave the church and civic society to come up with a process of national healing that is effective (Gonda 2010). The question that arises from

this statement is whether the national healing process can be separated from the politics of the nation. In the same vein, Pamela Machakanja (2010:8) says that diverse viewpoints are emerging over the ownership of the reconciliation project especially between the church and the state. These contestations between the church and the state in Zimbabwe on issues of national healing and reconciliation are critical for this research. These contestations are viewed in this study as struggles for power between institutions that are well known for entrenching hegemonic masculinities whose result could be the exclusion of women who are among the major victims of any conflict in Zimbabwe. It, therefore, becomes paramount to locate the role that the church is playing in the national healing process in order to find out if that role is gender-sensitive. Such an endeavour is intended to strengthen the churches' capacity to contribute meaningfully to national healing and reconciliation.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

One of the major challenges that Zimbabwe has faced from the year 2000 to the present is that of political violence. This violence has threatened the unity and the very survival of Zimbabwe as a nation. It is out of this context that calls for national healing and reconciliation have been made by various stakeholders in Zimbabwe (the church included). While men have been victims of the violence, this study notes that women constitute the majority of the victims. As Churches in Manicaland (CiM) seek to play an active role in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe, the question that arises is: Does CiM consider women's experiences of political violence in the national healing and reconciliation process? This is critical if we aim to come up with a more relevant model for healing and reconciliation, one which is inclusive of women's experiences, and one which the women themselves are able to embrace. This consideration arises from the consideration of Sweetman's argument that gender equality affects the ways in which

people are caught up in armed conflict and what happens to them during and after it (2005:3) showing that gender considerations are crucial for any post-conflict reconstruction process such as national healing and reconciliation.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the study is to analyse the role of the church in Zimbabwe in the national healing and reconciliation process from a womanist perspective and the study's objectives are to:

1. Investigate the role of the Church in Zimbabwe in the national political processes.
2. Discuss the activities of Churches in Manicaland in the national healing and reconciliation process.
3. Assess whether the activities of Churches in Manicaland in national healing and reconciliation are gender-sensitive.
4. Propose the adoption of a womanist model for national healing and reconciliation.

1.5 Research Questions

For the above objectives to be met, the following questions need to be answered:

1. What is the role of the church in Zimbabwe in the national political processes?
2. Who are Churches in Manicaland (CiM)?
3. In what context was CiM founded?
4. What is the role of CiM in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe?
5. How have Zimbabwean women experienced political violence?
6. Have these experiences of political violence by women in Zimbabwe been captured well by CiM in the national healing and reconciliation process?
7. What challenges lie in the path of the church as it tries to fulfill its mandate of bringing healing and reconciliation to the Zimbabwean nation?

8. How pivotal is the womanist model for national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe?

1.6 Justification of the Study

Various factors influenced this study. First, there is limited scholarly work on how national healing and reconciliation can be achieved in Zimbabwe. Second, most studies on national healing and reconciliation in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular have tended to focus on the politics of the process thereby ignoring the contributions that religion can make. Third, while other studies have acknowledged that women are the majority of the victims in conflict zones, very few have placed women at the centre of the post-conflict restoration processes. Where this has been done, it has been in feminist studies. While by no means discrediting feminist discourses, the study wishes to put forward the womanist model as an option for national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. The research argues that lack of a clear enunciated model led to prior “reconciliation and national healing efforts in Zimbabwe [suffering] numerous setbacks” (Mbire 2011:3).

In this respect, the study endeavours to contribute to new knowledge by providing new valuable insights into the study of the subject of national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. The study does this by making a gendered analysis of the role of Churches in Manicaland (CiM). It employs an ‘outsider perspective’ to investigate if CiM is sensitive to women’s experiences of political violence as it tries to bring healing and reconciliation in the Zimbabwean context.

1.7 Methodology

The term methodology is used here to refer to approaches and various ways used to gather and analyse data. According to Henning (2004:36) methodology “is a coherent group of methods that complement one another and that have the ability to fit together to deliver data and findings that will reflect the research question and suit the researcher’s purpose.” On the other hand, Holloway

(2005:293) defines methodology as “a framework of theories and principles on which methods and procedures are based.” The discussion below looks at the various theoretical approaches that were adopted for this research as well as the methods employed for data collection.

1.7.1 Theoretical Approaches

The study used the history of religions, the phenomenology of religions as well as the womanist approaches.

1.7.1.1 The History of Religions Approach

As alluded to earlier, the study is situated within the area of history of religions. It, therefore, becomes paramount to adopt the history of religions approach as the main approach that informs the study. Generally, scholarship does not agree on the nature, task and goal of the history of religions (Mapuranga, Chitando & Gunda 2013:308). This is largely due to the fact that the terms ‘history’ and ‘religion’ do not each have a universal and all encompassing definition (Mapuranga, Chitando & Gunda 2013:308). The history of religions developed as an offshoot of philosophy of religion or as a number of philological-historical sub-disciplines within biblical studies and the study of early Christianity (Platvoet 1988:99). Max Muller’s Comparative Theology is what presently is called the history of religions, that is, the historical study of single religions as well as their comparisons (Platvoet 1988:99).

The history of religions explores the importance of religion in the historical processes that make up world history. It situates religion in its historical and socio-political contexts as part of the interplay of forces that constitute the story of humankind, and acknowledges the role of religion in shaping and being shaped by that story (History of Religions n.d). Streng (1985:220) explains that “this method is an examination of religious people, their ideas, beliefs and practices within concrete historical epochs.” In this case, its focus is on the study of religion and the study of

religious dimension of human experience and of common historical phenomena. According to Bianchi (1975:3), “the history of religions is not generally the study of religion, but the study of religion as a phenomenon and fact of history and as such, capable of investigation by a historian”. Like all historical sciences, the history of religions approaches its subject by studying facts and details: what really existed and was manifest (Bianchi 1975:1). The strength of the approach lies in that it “allows for the documenting of accounts of particular historical processes and of general historical typology” (Bianchi 1975:8). Furthermore, it does not prove the superiority of any religion over others. If anything the history of religions offers a sympathetic understanding of religions other than one’s own; prefers an attitude of self-criticism, or even skepticism about one’s own religious background and it does not monopolise the study of religions (Eliade and Kitagawa n.d). If anything, what the history of religions makes clear is that human existence comprises a search for meaning, peace of the soul with God and the need to overcome the anguish of the world and all pains of consciences (Cox 2006:77).

This approach was vital to this study in the sense that it allowed the researcher to give an overview of the history of the church in Zimbabwe paying particular attention to the way the church has historically participated in national political processes as well as women’s experiences of violence in Zimbabwe. It further enabled the researcher to assess the church’s role in issues of national healing and reconciliation. To add to this, the researcher was able to situate the national healing and reconciliation discourse within the relevant historical and socio-political epoch, which is the post-conflict Zimbabwe and also to acknowledge the role that Christianity (with a particular focus on Churches in Manicaland) can play in the national healing and reconciliation process. Furthermore, it enabled the researcher to unveil the origins of Churches in Manicaland (CiM). As Mapuranga, Chitando and Gunda (2013:209) argue, “the method answers

such questions as relating to the date, purpose and pattern” of CiM’s emergence. However, despite its usefulness, the approach is compromised by challenges emanating from loss of information through death of very important members as well as forgetfulness which the researcher overcame by making use of written documents pertaining to the Forum. Furthermore, the approach is not self-sufficient, but rather depends heavily on other disciplines. Thus, the phenomenological and womanist approaches discussed below filled in those gaps.

1.7.1.2 The Phenomenological approach

Phenomenology of religion is mainly concerned with religious experience and describes religious phenomena from the point of view of the believers. Chitando (1998:102) says that phenomenology may be regarded as a study of appearances. As an approach to the study of religion, it “owes its conceptualization and development to the Pierre Daniel Chantepie de la Saussaye, William Brede Kristensen and Gerardus van de Leew” (Cox 2006:105). Chantepie de la Saussaye cited in Cox (2006:105) defines phenomenology of religion as a method for classifying and comparing religious beliefs and practices, which would produce a new discipline, falling mid-way between the history of religions and philosophy. Key to the phenomenological approach is the performance of *epoche* which is the suspension of all prejudice against other people’s religions; fostering empathetic interpolation which is a “process of cultivating a feeling for the practices and beliefs of a religion other than one’s own or at least of a religion which does not originate in the scholar’s own culture or historical period” (Cox 2010:52). Description of the phenomena calls on the researcher to describe the “data observed as accurately as possible” (Cox 2010:57) and eidetic intuition which is a procedure in the phenomenological method that moves beyond the particular instances of phenomena to the universal essences. According to Taringa (2013:101), “phenomenologists...do not only focus on bringing out the meaning of particular

religious data, but also on how religious data fit together with other religious phenomena in a particular religion.”

As an approach to the study of religion, phenomenology has its own strengths and weaknesses. For example, one of its strengths lies in that it tries to “classify specific sets of phenomena including religious phenomenon in such a way that it does justice to their expressed meanings” (Waardenburg quoted in Ekeke and Ekeopara 2010:267). The phenomenological approach is descriptively oriented. As such, it avoids evaluative judgements. It also enables a comparative analysis of data. Sharma (1974:83) says

“the phenomenological approach to religion provides us with criteria for analyzing and understanding religious practices...enables us to do justice to all religions and cultures, recognizing their contribution to human civilisation without being prejudiced by one’s own traditional value standards. The phenomenological approach to religion, thus, attempts to define religion, to isolate its essential elements, to discern its general pattern and universal elements that provide the basis for religious belief and practice.”

Despite these strengths, the approach “lacks the ability to contextualise various religious phenomena being studied” (Ekeke & Ekeopara 2010). The method does not explain how to perform *epoche* neither does it explain how one can grasp the essence of religious phenomena (Mapuranga, Chitando & Gunda 2013:312). It is difficult [through performance of *epoche*] to maintain the non-evaluative position since the very process of selection and the production of typologies assumes an interpretive framework (Chitando 1998:107). Chitando (1998:107) posits that if *epoche* is taken to mean an almost permanent aversion to questions of truth and value, then it is problematic.

Having said this, it is important to note that this approach was useful as it aided the researcher to observe and describe how the Churches in Manicaland are approaching issues of national healing

and reconciliation. This entails concentrating on the points of view of the members of CiM as well as those of the people the Forum is dealing with.

1.7.1.3 Womanist Approaches

Womanist approaches are yet other approaches that are going to be employed in this study. In this case, both African womanism by Alice Walker (though Walker has only termed it ‘womanism, African scholars have tended to refer to it as African womanism because of its affinities with Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi’s womanism) and Africana womanism by Clenora Hudson-Weems are important to the study. As a theory, womanism was introduced by Alice Walker as a reaction to the shortcomings of feminism (Ebunoluwa 2009:229). African-American women felt that feminism was obsessed with sexism at the expense of other forms of oppression arising from race and class. According to Cosmas-Diaz (2008:14)

“mainstream feminism does not examine the role of racism, colonialism, and imperialism in gender relations. Its lack of attention to women of colour’s experience, in addition to multi-culturalism’s failure to address women’s multiple oppressions, gave birth to womanism.”

According to Walker quoted by Ellis-Williams, “a womanist is ‘one’ who is committed to the survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female” (2003:115). Thus, Williams quoted in Ellis-Williams (2003:115) argues that womanists not only concern themselves about the liberation of women, but they also struggle along with black men and children for the liberation, survival and positive quality of life for the entire community. As such, womanism presents an alternative for black women by framing their survival in the context of the survival of their community where the fate of women and that of men are inextricably linked. According to Cosmas-Diaz (2008:14) the main elements of womanism are the struggle against oppression, affirmation of women’s cultural strengths, and promotion of collective social justice. In this case, Chitando (2011:10) sees a womanist as a woman with a holistic approach to the struggles of the

community as a whole. What one can say in short is that womanism focuses on the transformative power of individual and communal resistance to the conditions of oppression. It makes women's experiences visible by giving a voice to women (Collins 1996:10).

Clenora Hudson-Weems developed the Africana womanist approach. She defines it as “an ideology created and designed for all women of African descent. It is grounded in African culture, and therefore, it necessarily focuses on the unique experiences, struggles, needs and desires of African women” (Hudson-Weems 2004:35). Emphasizing on the complementary roles of women and men, Hudson-Weems argues that:

“It is equally important to establish the true role of the Africana woman as a non-participant in a separate struggle from her male counterpart as does the feminist, but rather as co-partner with the African men in this...struggle...”
(Hudson-Weems 2004:39).

She further argues that:

“Africana women...both in their private and public lives, engage in supporting their male counterparts as a number one priority to ensure the safety and security of their families and communities” (Hudson-Weems 2004:50).

Thus, the Africana womanist is committed to the art of mothering and nurturing her own children in particular and human kind in general. As a result, NNaemeka (2005:37) views Hudson-Weems' African womanism as an antidote to the limitations of African feminism and Black feminism as conceptual tools for examining the lives of black women.

Furthermore, Kolawole (2004:262) argues

“womanism has been a conciliatory gender concept as it emphasizes cultural relevance, the family, motherhood, and the intersection between various forms of oppression, social stratification and marginalisation based on race, ethnicity, class and gender...African women exalt femininity and recognise the need to separate gender space when necessary.”

Such attributes are critical to this study as it focuses on national healing and reconciliation from a womanist perspective because “womanists value everyday activism that involves violence and

oppression wherever and whenever they appear...” (Phillips 2006:xxxix). In this case, the inclusive nature of the womanist approach is more appealing to African reality (Kolawole 2004:262). As a result, many men and women consider womanism a more mollifying gender theory than feminism (Kolawole 2004:261). Moreover, the womanist approach emphasises on female models of authority.

Womanism has since been adopted by African women theologians as a useful theory in understanding human relationships in religion as it brings out insights about moral life based on ethics supporting justice for women, survival and a productive quality of life. In this case, Womanist theology challenges all structures that foster any form of oppressive power as well as the complex discourses that help to maintain that power (Douglas 2006:148). According to Burrow (1999:45) womanists focus first and foremost on their experience and voice as they continue to clarify just what they mean to say and do as theologians whose reality is multidimensional. In this case, the recognition by womanism that women especially black women are oppressed at three levels namely race, gender and class was important for this study in the Zimbabwean context. In contemporary Zimbabwe, women are mostly marginalised due to their gender and class. Hence, as Churches in Manicaland engages in the national healing and reconciliation process, the womanist approach becomes useful in bringing out the struggles and experiences of women in the whole process. It was also vital in revealing how women and men are engaging each other in bringing about national healing and reconciliation. This is crucial because womanism makes women’s experiences in the communities, churches and society its point of departure. Despite these strengths, the approach has been criticised for failing to adequately take into account the heterogeneity of women of African descent with their different histories and realities (Collins 1996:16). This study acknowledges that the stories of women in

Manicaland of how they experienced violence are not homogeneous. As such, it created space for this diversity by according study participants to create their own meanings regarding political violence, national healing and reconciliation.

1.8 Data Collection Methods

The research made use of the narrative qualitative research method. Qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena. Phenomena may be events, situations, experiences or concepts (Hancock 1998:3). Creswell quoted in Muhammad et al (2011:2083) defines qualitative research as an

“inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants and conducts the study in a natural setting.”

On the other hand, Denzin and Lincoln (2000:3) says qualitative research

“is a multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials case study, personal experience, introspective, life story interview, observational, historical, interactional and visual texts- that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individual’s lives.”

For Hancock (1998:2) qualitative research is concerned with finding the answers to questions which begin with why, how, in what way while for Shank (2002:5) qualitative research is a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning. The aims of qualitative research are to help people understand the world in which they live as it makes a critical analysis of the opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals producing subjective data. Muhammad et al (2011:2082) say that:

“the reasoning process used in qualitative research involves perceptually putting pieces together to make wholes. From this process, meaning is produced.

However, because perception varies with the individual, many different meanings are possible.”

The qualitative research technique is important in analyzing the complexities that surround the national healing and reconciliation discourse and how the CiM is participating in this process in Zimbabwe. The use of the narrative method in this research is not focusing on life stories but experiences of women in Zimbabwe’s national healing process and how CiM is dealing with these. The study is cognizant of the multiple meanings of the term ‘narrative’ and it adopts Riesman and Quinney’s definition of narrative as “a discrete unit of discourse: an answer to a single question, topically-centred and temporally-organised” (2005:394). In this case, it enabled the researcher to explain the experiences of political violence by Zimbabwean women and how these are being dealt with by CiM in the national healing and reconciliation process.

1.8.1 Sampling

In any research, it is extremely difficult to cover the whole of any selected geographical area collecting data. In this case, sampling becomes crucial. The notion of sampling as applied in qualitative research entails that only a subset of the population known and referred to as a sample is selected for a given research enquiry (Oppong 2013:203). This study made use of purposive sampling which can also be referred to as ‘judgemental’ sampling (Marshall 1996:523).

Purposive sampling is a method in which the subjects are selected on the basis of their experience or knowledge of the issues being researched on (Oppong 2013:203). According to Patton (1990:169), the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich case for study in-depth. He goes on to explain that information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research. In this technique, the researcher makes a deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses (Tongco n.d:147). The researcher actively selects the most productive

sample to answer the research question (Marshall 1996:523). In this case, it is the researcher who decides what has to be known through the selection of people who can willfully provide the information by virtue of their knowledge and experience. The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of the church in Zimbabwe in the national healing and reconciliation process. This investigation is done through womanist lenses in order to ascertain whether women's experiences of political violence are prioritised in this process. This study purposefully selected Churches in Manicaland because very little has been written about this Forum despite its efforts in bringing national healing and reconciliation to communities in Zimbabwe's Manicaland Province. In other words, CiM has been active in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe. The researcher sampled thirty-five (35) participants in this study. These were made up of twenty-four (24) women and eleven (11) men. Among these were CiM Steering Committee officials, a traditional leader as well as rural and urban community members in Manicaland. The age range for these participants is 18 years and above. With this sample, the researcher intended to draw information from leaders of CiM as well as community individuals who (i) interact with the Forum in the national healing and reconciliation process and are witnesses of political violence against women and (ii) women survivors of political violence. Once in the field, the researcher used snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a "process in which contact is made with participants appropriate for [one's] research through whatever access route [one] can find, and through these first participants [one] is introduced to others of similar/relevant characteristics for [one's] research" (Edwards & Holland 2013:6). The researcher used the CiM Coordinator as the entry point into the Forum who then gave her other names of officials in the Steering Committee and other people who had participated in CiM's programmes. Among the people was a former social worker from the Zimbabwe Peace Project

(ZPP) who then helped the researcher identify women who had survived violence in Mutare Urban and Mutare Rural. The women survivors then identified others until the researcher was satisfied that the sample was sufficient. The researcher's interaction with CiM officials enabled her to identify women who had witnessed political violence and had also participated in some of the Forum's programmes. These were interviewed in a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and were drawn from Mutare Rural and Mutare Urban.

1.8.2 Data collection tools

1.8.2.1 Interviews

Data for this research was obtained through both structured and semi-structured interviews. Qualitative interviewing utilises open-ended questions that allow for individual variations. The interviewer is the integral part of the investigation. In this study, the researcher went into the field to gather data through structured and semi-structured interviews. These interviews were crucial in providing insights to the views, experiences, beliefs and/or motivations of CiM and community members in Manicaland on issues of national healing and reconciliation.

1.8.2.2 Structured Interviews

Structured interviews consist of the interviewer asking each respondent the same questions in the same way. Like a questionnaire, a tightly structured schedule of questions is used (Hancock 2002:9). Gill et al (2008:291) describes structured interviews as “essentially, verbally administered questionnaires, in which a list of predetermined questions are asked, with little or no variation and with no scope for follow up questions- to responses that warrant further elaboration.” In this study, structured interviews were used to gather data that has to do with the formation of CiM, its activities and how it is dealing with women's experiences of political violence in the national healing and reconciliation process.

Structured interviews are important in this study because they are quick and easy to administer despite the fact that they allow for limited participant responses. In this case, where depth is required the researcher is going to use semi-structured interviews.

1.8.2.3 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews involve a series of open-ended questions based on the topic areas the researcher wants to cover (Hancock 1998:9). Normally, the questions are “developed before data collection to obtain specific information and enable comparison across cases (Knox & Burkard 2009:567). According to Patton (2002:453) semi-structured interviews enable the gathering of what is called in the research literature ‘thick description’. This type of interview allows the researcher to ask all questions of each respondent, but may pursue in more depth particular areas that emerge for each interviewee (Hancock 1998:9; Didicco-Bloom & Crabtree 2006:315; Knox & Burkard 2009:567). It also gives the interviewer the freedom to vary the sequence of the questions. In this case the interview schedule prepared before hand serves as a guide or a foundation on which the interview is built but one that allows creativity and flexibility (Knox & Burkard 2009:568). In this study, semi-structured interviews were used especially in the communities where CiM has its programmes as the researcher needed not only find out women’s experiences of political violence from women survivors of violence and male participants who are witnesses of political violence against women but also whether CiM is cognisant of these in its programming for healing and reconciliation. It was important for the researcher to allow interviewees from these communities to explain in detail how they have experienced political violence and to what extent they feel CiM is sensitive to issues of women pertaining to this violence.

Despite the strengths of semi-structured interviews, they have their own disadvantages. For example, Woods (n.d) lists the following as some of the disadvantages:

- Can be time-intensive;
- Prone to possible bias;
- Spontaneous questions asked of some and of others can be seen as unfair or possibly misleading;
- The use of occasional spontaneous questions makes the answers difficult to quantify and analyse.

1.8.2.4 Focus Group Discussion

A focus group discussion is a unique method of qualitative research that involves discussing a set of issues with a pre-determined group of people (Hennink 2007:4). As a research tool, it uses group interaction on a topic to obtain data (Adler & Clark 2011:273). The primary focus of a focus group is to describe and understand meanings and interpretations of a select group of people to gain an understanding of a specific issue from the perspective of the participants of the group (Liamputtong 2011:3). From Adler and Clark's point of view, focus groups encourage participation by those who would be more likely to decline one-on-one interviews (2011:273). However, Liamputtong (2011:4) view focus group discussions as a method that allows researchers to pay attention to the needs of those who have little or no societal voice. The participants usually have shared social and cultural experiences. In this study, a focus group discussion was held with ten women (out of the thirty-five study participants) from Mutare Urban and Mutare Rural. These were women who had witnessed political violence against other women and had had an opportunity to interact with CiM in some of its programmes for healing and reconciliation. Kitzinger cited in Liamputtong (2011:3) says that a focus group is focused

because it involves some kind of collective activity. In this case, the women were reflecting on women's experiences of political violence in Manicaland and whether these were being taken on board by CiM in the process of national healing and reconciliation.

Focus groups as tools of data collection have got their own advantages. For example, focus groups “encourage a range of responses which provide a greater understanding of the attitudes, behavior, opinions or perceptions of participants on the research issue” (Hennink 2007:6). In addition, they permit the researcher to “uncover aspects of understanding that often remain hidden in the more conventional in-depth interviewing method” (Liamputtong 2011:4). Most importantly, focus groups help the researcher to capture shared lived experiences of those in the focus group. Political violence is a shared lived experience of women in Manicaland which the use of a focus group helped the researcher to capture.

Despite the strengths, focus groups have their own weaknesses. Some of the weaknesses relevant for this study are that it is difficult to maintain confidentiality of information shared in a group (Adler & Clark 2011:273). However, though difficult to monitor compliance to confidentiality, the researcher implored the participants not to divulge information that could endanger the lives of other women participants. The other weakness of focus groups is that some participants may not actively take part and also information peculiar to individuals may not be divulged owing to embarrassment of those present in the group (Liamputtong 2011:8). In order to deal with this problem, the researcher, at the beginning of the discussion, assured participants that every contribution was important so that each participant would feel confident in giving their views and stories. Participants were also encouraged to share those experiences that they were comfortable with.

While interviews provide insightful analysis, the research also made use of informal discussions and observations. Observing participants in situations enables the researcher to come up with data that is more reliable (Hancock 1998:12).

In analysing the data, this study used content analysis. Content analysis is a procedure for the categorisation of verbal or behavioural data, for purposes of classification, summarisation and tabulation (Hancock 1998:17). In this case, responses given on how Churches in Manicaland are participating in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe were subjected to this analysis. The research also made use of the Churches in Manicaland's pastoral letters and pamphlets. Archival material were used especially on the reconstruction of the history of the Churches in Manicaland. The researcher used relevant published material on national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe.

1.9 Clarification of terms

The meanings of key terms that are central to this study can not be taken for granted. There is need to clarify these terms so that the research can be understood within its context.

1.9.1 Church

The term 'church' is highly contested owing to various ambiguities (Manyonganise and Chirimuuta, 2011:288). Sengers (2012:55) posits that "the concept 'church' has various meanings according to the context in which it is used." This study seeks to adopt a sociological definition of 'church'. In sociology, the definition of the term 'church' is based on the work of Max Weber and Troeltsch. Pearson (n.d) is of the view that for Troeltsch, the church is an institution "endowed with grace and salvation," which it distributes to the masses." Sengers (2012:55) provides three definitions of the term 'church' namely the theological, sociological and the political/legal. He says

“In a theological sense, it means the whole group of the faithful who, at the Commandment of Jesus, regularly assemble to study the Scriptures, to celebrate the sacraments (especially the Last Supper) and to preserve the Apostolic tradition, according to Acts 2:42. In a sociological sense, it means the (Christian) religious organization that is more or less accommodated to society with a message and vision for the whole society. ‘Church’ also has a political/legal meaning, when it is used to describe the difference between religious organisations which are accepted or registered and those which are not.”

Sengers (2012:55) definitions are enlightening. For purposes of this study, the researcher adopted his sociological definition since it allows the study to view the church as an institution within a society. Moreover, it also allows for the use of the term in its different forms in the context of Zimbabwe. For example, Chitando and Manyonganise (2011:79) note that

“it is tempting to talk about ‘the church’ in Zimbabwe as theologically, this suggests a homogeneous body following the teachings of one leader, Jesus Christ. However, the reality on the ground is that it is more sociologically appropriate to refer to Christianities and churches.”

As this study looks at the role of the church in the national healing and reconciliation process, it is cognisant of the fact that Manicaland as a province does not have a homogeneous grouping which it calls ‘church’ but has a plethora of different churches some of which have come together to form a forum, that is, the CiM. What the study sought to do is to take CiM as a representation of the other churches that are not covered within its grouping.

1.9.2 National Healing

The meaning of the concept of ‘national healing’ is highly debatable. The term healing accompanied by the adjective ‘national’ is vague. What makes the healing endeavour problematic is the fact that it does not take into cognisance peculiarities of individual cases, but ‘nationalises’ the healing process in one stroke. Its effectiveness becomes questionable especially when one looks at how marginalised groups such as women are catered for in a ‘nationalised’ healing process. However, it is generally agreed that violent conflict inflicts traumatic injuries

on its victims which then require some kind of healing in the post-conflict period. If the wounds inflicted upon the victims through violence are not dealt with well, they may lead to perpetual violence. By emphasizing the effects of violence- ‘the wound’- the discourse of reconciliation transforms the victims’ injury and suffering into a question of healing (Humphrey 2005:216). Thus, there is a close relationship between reconciliation and healing. For example, Staub et al (2005:302) are of the opinion that “the beginning of healing would enhance the possibility of reconciliation, while the beginning of reconciliation would further the possibility of healing.” In this case, Amadiume and An-Naim cited in Mbire (2011:12) define healing as “an attempt to address sources of physical or emotional pain and restoration of human dignity.” Parent (2011) cited in Charbonneau (2012:8) argue that “healing can only be a long, complex and non-linear process.” He adds that the path towards healing differ from individual to individual, from group to group, from community to community. In this case, it is important to be aware of the context within which healing is supposed to take place and the challenges that can be encountered in the process. Parent (2012) highlights factors that may impede healing after violent conflict. These are:

- Lingering psychological consequences at individual and collective levels
- Distrust
- Fear

In such cases, there is, therefore, need to consider Herman’s model for healing. Herman (1997:290) identified three stages through which a victim passes through in order to get healing after a traumatic experience. The three stages are the guarantee of one’s safety, remembrance and mourning and finally reconnection with one’s environment. To this, Gutlove (2009:190) argues that “the need for safety underlies all other aspects of the healing process.” In the same vein,

Mbire (2011:12) posits that psycho-social programmes, counseling, self-help support groups and symbolic forms of healing form part of the healing process. Thus, it was critical for this study to assess ways in which CiM is promoting healing in Manicaland. This was done with the awareness of the fact that critics have questioned the very idea that individuals and nations can heal and ultimately recover from violence (Richters n.d:9).

1.9.3 Reconciliation

It is important to note from the onset that “a theoretical confusion obscures the term ‘reconciliation’” (Hogskola n.d:15). What this entails is that there is no consensus among scholars as to what ‘reconciliation’ really means (Dieng 2002:2; Mbire 2011:11; Bloomfield et al 2003:12). For Bloomfield et al (2003:12), this lack of consensus is because “reconciliation is both a goal- something to achieve- and a process- a means to achieve a goal.” They go on to explain that

“the goal of reconciliation is a future aspiration, something important to aim towards, perhaps even an ideal state to hope for. But the process is the means to work effectively and practically towards that final goal-and is invaluable in itself.”

The other thing that makes defining ‘reconciliation’ a complex process is the various contexts within which the process occurs, for example, reconciliation can happen at a personal, community as well as at national level. In this case, finding a common definition that fits in all levels may be a cumbersome task. This complexity presents problems especially for the Zimbabwean situation. The major problem that arises is in defining the level at which reconciliation needs to take place. Is it at individual, community or national level? In the context of post-conflict situations, does reconciliation have the same meaning when one refers to society and when one refers to individual victims? (n.d). When we begin to talk about reconciliation, we presuppose that there are two or more warring parties who for the sake of peace need to

reconcile. In this presupposition, there is bound to be an aggressor who has been acting upon a victim. As the call for reconciliation is made, what are the necessary conditions that need to be satisfied before reconciliation takes place?

This question brings us to Lederach's concept of reconciliation. Lederach introduces the concept of "reconciliation- as-encounter," that is the need to provide space and opportunity for encounters between conflicting parties at various levels to articulate past pain (acknowledgement) and envision an independent (shared) future (Pillay n.d). He explains the paradoxes of reconciliation as truth, mercy, peace and justice. For Lederach (1998:20)

"reconciliation can be seen as dealing with three specific paradoxes. First, in an overall sense, reconciliation promotes an encounter between the open expression of the painful past, on the one hand, and the search for the articulation of long-term, independent future, on the other hand. Second, reconciliation provides a place for truth and mercy to meet, where concerns for letting go in favour of renewed relationship are validated and embraced. Third, reconciliation recognizes the need to give time and place to both justice and peace, where redressing the wrong is held together with the envisioning of a common, connected future."

This analysis brings us to the question whether we can aptly define 'reconciliation' without factoring in issues of forgiveness and justice. Bloomfield et al (2003:12) acknowledges that "reconciliation is an overarching process which includes the search for truth, forgiveness, healing, and so on." Various scholars have sought to show that concepts of forgiveness, truth and justice may pose serious challenges to the process of reconciliation. For example, Daly and Sarkin (2007:6) argue that "truth can impede reconciliation because the truth can be so terrible that attitudes harden...." Saunders (2011:120) warns those working in transitional justice to be "wary of considering forgiveness as an *a priori* good or as commensurate with reconciliation or healing, and should carefully consider the potential effects, both societal and personal, of encouraging forgiveness." What this means is that in the reconciliation process, forgiveness cannot be a precondition. Saunders is advocating for the treatment of the two concepts

(reconciliation and forgiveness) as separate entities. No less complex is the relationship between reconciliation and justice (Daly & Sarkin 2007:6). From the point of view of Daly and Sarkin (2007:6)

the link between justice and reconciliation becomes critical in times of transition, particularly in societies where the past has been characterised by strife, violence, polarisation, and caste. Reconciliation often comes in the context of what to do with the perpetrators.

Hamber (2007:121-122) shares the above view when he says that “genuine reconciliation is about facing difficult questions about the past, and this includes considering how any process of reconciliation might relate to retributive justice.” Daly and Sarkin view retributive justice as problematic to the process of reconciliation and, therefore, advocate for restorative justice. However, they argue that though “the current dominant ideology is that reconciliation and justice are incompatible, ...justice is to be favoured at the expense of reconciliation.” Having said this, it was critical for this study to find out how CiM is dealing with issues of reconciliation vis a vis issues of justice, truth and forgiveness especially pertaining to women’s experiences of political violence in Manicaland province. Hence, there is need for the researcher to adopt a working definition of reconciliation for this study.

Bloomfield et al (2003:12) define reconciliation as a “process through which a society moves from a divided past to a shared future”, while for Staub (2006:867), “reconciliation may be defined as mutual acceptance by groups of each other.” On the other hand, SIDA (n.d) view reconciliation as a societal process that involves mutual agreement of past suffering and the changing of destructive attitudes and behavior into constructive relationships toward sustainable peace.” In this case, this study adopts the definitions by Bloomfield et al and SIDA which recognise that reconciliation is a process and not an event. Therefore, its pace cannot be dictated (Bloomfield et al, 2003:13). Second, these definitions imply that the process needs to be broad

and inclusive. In this case, women's experiences of violent conflict are expected to be carried along in the reconciliation process. According to Valji (2007) there are various ways in which gender, power and violence intersect during conflict. Bloomfield et al (2003:13) note that gender is an indispensable dimension of reconciliation at the official and institutional level. They further argue that

most experience demonstrates that women (and often also other politically marginalised groups) have limited access to peace and negotiation processes and little or no representation in government and other decision-making bodies. This lack of involvement in political processes seriously reduces their possibilities to voice their concerns and interests and ensure that these are recognised as political concerns at a crucial point. And this may again result in a certain alienation from the nation and state (2003:13).

This analysis is crucial for this study as it enabled the researcher to investigate how inclusive CiM is of women's experiences of political violence without necessarily belittling how men are also affected by the same violence. In this case, any reconciliation process, it is argued, needs to take these experiences on board if it is to be successful.

1.9.4 Social Integration

Social integration is a complex idea, which means different things to different people (de Alcantara, 1994:3). Integration as a general sociological concept and as a state refers to stable, cooperative relations within a social system which has distinct borders to the environment (Heckmann 2006:8). Ferguson (2008:5) defines social integration "as the process of promoting the values, relations and institutions that enable all people to participate in social, economic and political life on the basis of rights, equity and dignity" and for de Alcantara (1994:3), it is "simply a way of describing the established patterns of human relations in any given society." Beresneviciute (2003:97) says "the term 'integration' is used to define developments that determine connections of related diverse elements into the social whole, system, community or

other units. From Ferguson's perspective social integration is interlinked to other three different but interlinked process that shape the extent to which people are able to live and work together on an equal basis and these are recognition, representation and resource allocation.

It is important to note that the process of integration is not to be viewed as an event, but "a long lasting process" (Heckmann 2006:17) that may take generations to be realised. Issues of gender are important in any integration process. For example, how do players in the integration process ensure the non-exclusion of vulnerable groups in their communities during the integration process? The concept of social integration was crucial for this study as it analysed the activities of CiM in the national healing and reconciliation process to see how it attempted to integrate women survivors of political violence in Manicaland.

1.9.5 Forgiveness

Forgiveness in transitional justice is a contested term. Scholars are generally agreed that forgiveness refers to the identity transforming process within the victim (Doorn 2011:13; Saunders 2011:121). It is usually viewed as the overcoming of feelings of revenge, moral hatred, indignation or some other feelings that are related to anger (Doorn 2011:13). Anger and resentment as sentiments are not always to be viewed as threatening but may be crucial to the establishment of peace (Saunders 2011:120). However, Saunders questions what forgiveness really entails. She says "equally contested is whether forgiveness is a feeling, a rational decision or an act; whether forgiving is primarily a self-help strategy for victims or, conversely, a gesture of interpersonal reconciliation; whether one forgives a person or an act;..." This study critically examined CiM's understanding of the relationship between forgiveness and justice. Although some scholars are of the view that forgiveness "offers victims a way to transcend their victimhood and psychic preoccupation with a perpetrator" (Saunders 2011:125) there are others

who question the motive for encouraging victims to forgive. For example, Saunders (2011:120) argues that forgiveness may produce injustice, maintain inequality or weaken moral commitments. In addition, Derrida cited in Saunders (2011:127) argues that “forgiveness is unjust precisely because it falls outside the purview and is contrary to the logic of justice.” The above views are useful for this study as we endeavoured to bring out how CiM has dealt with issues of forgiveness and justice for those crimes that were perpetrated against women.

Furthermore, “while forgiveness may bring a sense of resolution to some individuals, it may cause unwarranted psychological burdens on victims, and that perceived pressure to forgive may cause significant trauma on its own” (Saunders 2011:120). Van Stokkom, Doorn and Van Tongeren (n.d) argue that “forgiveness may be too high a demand for reconciliation and the processing and recognition of wrong-doing must occur before forgiveness can be considered.” There is, therefore, need for mediators in post-conflict societies to be careful not to make premature calls for forgiveness. Philpott (2007:99) supports this view when he says “forgiveness...because it involves a highly personal decision and depends on a psychological readiness that may take years for a victim to develop, is a practice that political leaders can commend but ought never to pressure others to choose.” This study discussed CiM’s call on the Manicaland communities to forgive each other and ascertained the conditions under which these calls are being made.

1.9.6 Transitional Justice

Restoring justice after conflict is as much a political imperative as a social necessity (Mani 2005:25). As a peace-building mechanism, justice ensures that members within communities can have faith in their social institutions if injustices perpetrated against them during conflict are redressed. Most societies have adopted transitional justice as the most useful means of bringing

stability in a post-conflict period. Even then, like all the other terms explained above, it is not easy to define ‘transitional justice’.

For Dyfan (n.d), transitional justice “refers to a range of approaches that societies undertake to tackle legacies of widespread or systematic human rights abuses, as they move from a period of violent conflict or oppression towards democracy, the rule of law, and respect for individual and collective rights.” Teitel cited in Skaar (2013:59) defines it as “the conception of justice associated with periods of political change to confront the wrongdoings of repressive predecessor regimes.” Selim and Murithi (2011:59) view transitional justice as “the range of processes and mechanisms that are utilised to enable war-affected or post-authoritarian societies to make a transition to a more democratic and peaceful dispensation.” The above three definitions are critical for this study because they all conceptualise ‘justice’ as imperative in any society that is in transition. This is important because the primary objectives of transitional justice are according to Dyfan (n.d), to introduce processes of reconciliation among both parties to the conflict and the affected populations by establishing a process of accountability and acknowledgement; and to deter reoccurrence, thus ensuring sustainable peace. However, some scholars have criticised transitional justice as a narrow mechanism which focuses more on issues of political rights violations while turning a blind eye to issues of economic, social and cultural rights violations (Mani 2005; Selim & Murithi 2011).

Despite the various weaknesses of transitional justice that have been noted by some scholars like Mani (2005) and Selim and Murithi (2011), it has been commended as a “key pillar of peace-building [as] it seeks to address root causes of conflict towards achieving a just and sustainable society” (Selim & Murithi 2011:60). Thus, this study drew from the objectives of transitional justice in order to assess the contributions of CiM to the national healing and reconciliation

process in Zimbabwe. Critical to this study was the understanding of how CiM has dealt with gender biases underpinning discourses of national healing and reconciliation. This for Reilly (2007:158) entails asking critical questions such as: Whose experiences matter, in what ways, under what conditions and with what concrete effects, especially for women?

1.10 Thesis Structure

The study constitutes seven chapters. Chapter one introduces and lays down the orientation of the study. It states the area of investigation, research problem, background to the study, justification, objectives, research methodology and clarification of terms. In short, this chapter gives the theoretical foundation of the thesis.

Chapter two reviews relevant literature. This chapter is important because it shows what other scholars have written on national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. Seeing what has already been done helps in broadening the researcher's perspective. It also enables the researcher to identify gaps within already existing literature so that where possible these gaps can be filled. For example, this study has identified the need for the churches in Zimbabwe to prioritise women's experiences of political violence as they seek to play a role in national healing and reconciliation in the country.

The subject of national healing and the reconciliation in Zimbabwe needs to be understood within the context of the history of Christianity in Zimbabwe. Therefore, Chapter three provides an overview of the history of Christianity in Zimbabwe. What the chapter seeks to do is to argue that the way Christian historiography has been written in Zimbabwe has almost always excluded women's contributions to the development of Christianity in Zimbabwe and the church in its generic sense has been silent throughout history to women's experiences of political violence. The major question to be asked in this chapter is: Where are the women in the history of

Christianity in Zimbabwe? Apart from this, the chapter also gives a mapping of Christianity in Zimbabwe so that we understand the churches that formed CiM.

Chapter Four focuses on how political violence has had an impact on church-state relations in Zimbabwe. This chapter seeks to explain the context within which Churches in Manicaland (CiM) was formed. As the researcher looks at political violence, she seeks to bring out how women have experienced it as this forms the basis for national healing and reconciliation. It is in this chapter where the history of religions approach is useful as the researcher looks at the formation of the Forum called Churches in Manicaland within the context of political violence.

The focus of Chapter Five is on how CiM is participating in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe. This chapter presents findings from fieldwork. Questions to be answered in this chapter are whether CiM is sensitive to women's experiences of political violence as it participates in this process of national healing and reconciliation. For purposes of not distorting collected data, the phenomenological approach to the study of religion is useful in this chapter.

Chapter six discusses the role of the church in national healing and reconciliation from a womanist perspective. It is in this chapter that data presented in chapter five is interpreted and analysed. In this analysis of data, the researcher makes use of the womanist approaches. The researcher argues for the adoption of a womanist model for national healing and reconciliation. The importance of this model is that though it places women at the centre of the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe, it is mindful of those other members of society who, though not necessarily women, are also in need of the healing. As such, the model enables the church to be inclusive and holistic in the national healing and reconciliation process thereby ensuring the possibility of whole communities being healed and reconciled. As such, the

inclusion of this chapter is critical as it enables the researcher to provide the church in Zimbabwe with useful tools with which to map the contours of an African Womanist Theology of national healing and reconciliation.

Chapter seven provides the summary and conclusion to the study. Recommendations are also given in this chapter.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the study by providing a clear description of the area of investigation, background to the study, objectives and the justification. It also gave a description of the methodology which the study adopted. In this case, theoretical approaches as well as data collection methods and methods of analysis were explained. Key terms were also defined in this chapter. Overall, the chapter argued that this study is crucial since it seeks to fill the gap that exists in the already existing literature on national healing and reconciliation by making a gendered analysis of the process in Zimbabwe. The next chapter provides and analyses literature relevant for this study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the study and gave its orientation. This chapter reviews some of the relevant literature. However, throughout the study, new literature not discussed in this chapter is reviewed to support various arguments. Scholars around the world have of late, shown interest in analysing what the church can or is doing to meaningfully contribute to the various crises Zimbabwe has found itself in. Some works have focused on the history of the Christian missions in Zimbabwe, the church's political participation while some have, in part, looked at the national healing and reconciliation process under way in Zimbabwe. This chapter endeavours to provide a review of some of the literature available on the theme of national healing and reconciliation and some of the issues that are looked at in this thesis such as the history of Christianity in Zimbabwe, the church and political violence as well as women and political violence to mention only a few. As such, the chapter reviews literature that deals with among other things the history of Christianity in Zimbabwe, women and political violence as well as healing and reconciliation. This review is not by any means exhaustive, but it provides a window through which we can see the views of other scholars who have dealt with the subject under study and how this study seeks to feed into the discourse of national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. For works that are going to be used at greater length within the study, this study avoids reviewing them at greater length in order to avoid monotony.

2.1 History of Christianity and Politics in Zimbabwe

Various scholars have written on the history of Christianity in Zimbabwe. These works have revealed the relationship that existed between the church and the state from the point Christianity

was introduced to Zimbabwe. Some works have also given a glimpse of how the church has been historically associated with political violence in Zimbabwe. Instead of this study trying to reconstruct the history, it simply gives an overview since some of the scholars have already done the reconstruction of this important history. By giving the overview of the history of Christianity in Zimbabwe, what this study seeks to do is to highlight three important issues that are critical for this study. First, to provide a mapping of the churches as they appear on the Zimbabwean religious landscape, second, how the church has dealt with political violence throughout its existence in Zimbabwe and third, how the history of Christianity in Zimbabwe, despite the different experiences of political violence by women, has tended to overshadow, marginalise and/or trivialise women's issues especially their experiences of political violence.

The book *Christianity South of the Zambezi*, Volume 1 (1973) provides insights into the convergence between Christianity and the African in Zimbabwe. This volume details the African response to Christianity revealing the initial resistance to the new religion. Authors in the volume show areas of commonality and difference between Christianity and African Traditional Religions (ATRs). The differences usually brought tensions between the missionaries and the Africans. The missionaries' disregard for ATRs led to the Africans' disillusionment which is one of the reasons why African Initiated Churches emerged. Despite this, contributors to the book show that Christianity made in-roads in Zimbabwe with women actively participating in evangelism. In this regard, the Wesleyan Methodist's *Ruwadzano/Manyano*² Movement is a case in point. This greatly supports the fact that women were the majority of recipients of Christianity not only in Africa in general but Zimbabwe in particular.

The book *Christianity South of the Zambezi*, Volume 2 (1977) is a follow up on the one edited by Dachs above. It provides a picture of Christianity getting established in Zimbabwe and the

² It is in reference to the churches' women's groups.

quest by local people to make the new faith more meaningful in their context. Contributors to the volume endeavour to show the impact of Christianity in Zimbabwe though some chapters also examine Christianity in South Central Africa. In general, the book looks at the interaction of missionaries and African Christians. It exposes the superiority complex of the white missionaries which to a greater extent was not in tandem with the love for one's neighbour which they preached. Although the missionaries were beginning to appreciate the use of Africans in evangelism, racism continued to be a contentious issue in the church often bringing conflict into the church. This is critical for this study because historically the church has not functioned as a unified entity. In this case, even as the church seeks to be active in bringing healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe, this study is aware of both overt and covert conflicts within the church itself.

In this book, *Christian Education at the Mutapa Court* (1986) Mudenge gives a detailed account of the advent of Christianity in Zimbabwe tracing it back to the 16th century when Goncalo da Silveira, a catholic Jesuit arrived at the Mutapa court. The Dominican missionaries' endeavours are also recorded. Mudenge agrees with other Christian historians that though both endeavours by the Jesuits and the Dominicans ended in failure, the seed of Christianity in Zimbabwe had been planted and was to germinate in the 19th century. What Mudenge reveals which is critical for this study is the fact that from the onset, when Christianity was introduced in Zimbabwe, it was closely linked with the state. Firstly, the Jesuits who brought the religion to Zimbabwe were under the instruction of the king of Portugal; secondly, the introduction of Christianity in the Munhumutapa Kingdom targeted the royal house. What this points to is the close relationship between religion and politics and this study argues that Churches in Manicaland (CiM) needs to

pay attention to this relationship as they take part in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe.

In a book titled *The Wesleyan Methodist Missions in Zimbabwe 1891-1945* (1991) Zvobgo provides a history of the Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe. In the book, Zvobgo highlights the contributions of the Wesleyan Methodists to both the religious, social as well as the political life of Zimbabwe as a nation. It discusses the relations between the church and the state on critical issues such as the land question. Critical to this study is the book's revelation of how African women were sexually abused by both the white political administrators as well as black security personnel with impunity. Zvobgo also highlights how Wesleyan Methodist missionaries demanded justice on behalf of these women despite the fact that the political establishment actually promoted some of the abusers.

Zvobgo in his other book titled *A History of Christian Missions in Zimbabwe 1890-1939* (1996), made a comprehensive study of Christian missions in Zimbabwe in the 19th century. He highlights the pivotal role played by missionaries in the colonisation of Zimbabwe. He notes that in their bid to evangelise the country, the white missionaries failed to appreciate the various cultures they encountered. As a result, they downplayed the influence of African Traditional Religion(s) on the people they were trying to convert. This negatively affected their mission. Despite these shortcomings, Zvobgo shows that the various missionary societies which operated in Zimbabwe can boast of positive contributions they made in the different communities. Most notably, these contributions were in the areas of education and health. Missionaries worked hard in translating the Bible into the various dialects found in Zimbabwe. African evangelists were able to read and preach the Gospel message in their own languages. Basically, what Zvobgo clearly brings out is that with the coming of missionaries, a new era which was to change the

religious landscape of the country dawned on Zimbabwe. The above mentioned studies are important for this study as they provide valuable information not only on the history of Christianity in Zimbabwe, but also on the theme of church-state relations.

The history of Christianity in Zimbabwe would not be complete without the consideration of African Initiated Churches and Pentecostalism as these churches have significantly shaped even the Zimbabwean political landscape which is under study in this thesis. Daneel has written a lot on African Initiated Churches in Zimbabwe. The choice to use the term ‘initiated’ is done with the full knowledge that there are other various terms with different connotations that are used to describe these churches. Such discussion is beyond the scope of this study.

In his book *Quest for Belonging: Introduction to a Study of African Independent Churches* (1987), Daneel looks at indigenous churches in Southern Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) bringing out their typology and missiological significance. Of much interest to this thesis is the discussion of these churches’ political involvement in Zimbabwe. He brings out the fact that the churches participated in both tribal and national politics in overt and covert ways. As noted by most scholars of African history, these churches were formed almost at the same time with the rise of African nationalism. As a result, the Zimbabwean churches were sympathetic to the black struggle for independence which brought them into conflict with the colonial government. This brings us to the critical issue of church-state relations. Although Daneel is doubtful whether the indigenous churches became involved in the struggle fully, this thesis argues that at the height of the struggle the churches became part and parcel of the struggle for independence in Zimbabwe. In this case, as we see these churches actively participating in Zimbabwean politics today, we should be cognisant of the fact that their very origins are rooted in politics.

In an article entitled *Mapositori Churches and Politics in Zimbabwe: Political Dramas to Win Support of Mapositori Churches* (2011), Vengeyi alludes to the fact that African Indigenous churches have become critical players in Zimbabwean politics with major political parties battling to get their support. He correctly notes that

“After 2000 Mapositori became popular with ZANU PF. This church constituted a ready and dependable support base. As such, they were ferried to various state functions, where special seats were reserved for them at state funerary gatherings, at heroes Acre, national stadia during Independence Day celebrations and Heroes Day celebrations among other state functions.”

This clearly shows that there has been an attempt within the Zimbabwean political terrain to create an identity of AICs that is synonymous with nationalism whose narrative is a monopoly of ZANU PF.

Chitando agrees with Vengeyi and notes in his article entitled *‘Prayers, Politics and Peace: The Church’s role in Zimbabwe’s Crisis’* (2011) that from 2000, representatives of AIC(s) openly supported President Robert Mugabe. Thus, the stampeding for the AICs’ support needs to be understood within the broader context of their being in touch with the grassroots which is in the majority and significant for political support. In this article, Chitando notes very well that the church offered varied responses to the Zimbabwean crises since 2000 especially in the wake of political violence. He highlights how AICs deployed religious language to prop up Mugabe’s image and government. This study, therefore, needs to establish how Churches in Manicaland (CiM) are utilising the knowledge and experience of AICs in their area of influence in order to deal with critical issues such as women’s experiences of political violence in the national healing and reconciliation process. The study is aware that various scholars have categorised AICs as spaces that have marginalised women.

Pentecostalism is another brand of Christianity that has received scholarly attention in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular. This thesis is particularly interested in those that look at its role in the public arena especially the political one.

In a book titled *African Christianity: Its Public Role*, (1998), Gifford deals with the way Pentecostal churches in Africa have participated in politics. His study focuses on these churches in Uganda, Zambia and Cameroon. He argues that “the public role of African Pentecostalism and its socio-political effects are key concerns” (1998:34). His analysis of the Zambian case is enlightening as it deals with the complexity of direct political involvement of the Pentecostal churches. He posits that “when the new churches do enter the political arena, although they certainly insist that corruption should cease, they hardly have a conscious social agenda” (1998:341).

Focusing on ZAOGA, David Maxwell in an article entitled *Catch the Cockerel before Dawn’: Pentecostalism and Politics in Post-colonial Zimbabwe* (2002) brings out valuable insights into Pentecostalism and politics in Zimbabwe. In this article, he explores the relationship between Pentecostalism and politics in post-independence Zimbabwe. In this endeavour, he utilises insights from one of Zimbabwe’s big Pentecostal church, the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA). In his analysis, he brings out critical issues of how Pentecostalism as represented by ZAOGA tries to maintain the status quo as it seeks reciprocal legitimation from politicians. Maxwell posits that “...religious and political elites seek legitimation from each other [which eventually turn] religious and political fields [into] sites of shifting coalitions” (2002:250). Striking in Maxwell’s analysis is the comparative analysis of the vices of nepotism, authoritarianism and the creation of personality cults between ZAOGA and ZANU PF. Such

expositions are significant for this thesis as they provide a window through which we can view church-state relations in the period between 2000 to date.

In a book chapter entitled *'Pentecostal Churches and Politics in Zimbabwe's turbulent years (2000-2008)* (2013), Togarasei looks at how Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe have been navigating the political waters in the country. This study complements Gifford's analysis. In his analysis, Togarasei alludes to the fact that, since pre-colonial times, religion and politics have always had a close relationship. He discusses the various types of Pentecostal churches that are found in Zimbabwe and goes on to look at how this particular kind of Christianity dealt or responded to the political crisis that Zimbabwe faced between 2000 and 2008. He notes that Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe responded to the crisis either through their umbrella bodies or as individual churches. These churches issued political statements as well as engaged in humanitarian work during the crisis, yet there were others who opted to remain quiet while others chose to support the status quo. Togarasei, therefore, rejects the thesis that paints Pentecostal churches as apolitical. He urges Pentecostal churches to increase their involvement in social, economic and political issues. His argument is that "situations of suffering, poverty and injustice should lead [Pentecostals] as Christians to ask what it means to be a Christian in such contexts" (2013:106). In this case, it is interesting to note that Pentecostal churches in Manicaland are a part of Churches in Manicaland (CiM), and are actively participating in the process of national healing and reconciliation. This alone provides space for testing Gifford's theorisation of Pentecostal churches in Africa and their political participation and how this shapes their relations with the state in Zimbabwe.

2.2 Political Violence in Zimbabwe

From 2000, various scholars have reflected on the political violence that engulfed Zimbabwe. Their scholarly works have analysed the political violence that has occurred focusing on specific historical episodes.

In their article, *A Tale of Two Elections: Zimbabwe at the Polls in 2008* (2008) Alexander and Tendi analyse the 29 March Harmonised and the June 27 2008 elections. They analyse the period prior to these elections and establish that even then, violence was occurring. For example, the violence that marked the Save Zimbabwe Campaign Prayer meeting on 11 March 2007 led to a campaign of terror where abductions, torture and police intimidation became the order of the day. Alexander and Tendi also attest to the militarisation of the Zimbabwe state and notes that though the security force chiefs claim that they support the regime as a way of safeguarding Zimbabwe's sovereignty, they also seek to protect their power and business empires which many of them have amassed. This was despite the fact that the majority of Zimbabweans were wallowing in poverty due to a deteriorating economy. This was to prove costly for ZANU PF in the 29 March 2008 Harmonised elections. Underestimating the fall in support for its party, ZANU PF allowed the MDC to campaign in the rural areas which traditionally had been touted ZANU PF's support base. This led to ZANU PF losing most of its rural constituencies to the MDC and for Alexander and Tendi, this led to the violence which followed. They also indicate that in 2008, the targets of violence were MDC leaders and their constituencies and not ethnic 'others'. The study also shows how people were subjected to various forms of violence which eventually led Tsvangirai to withdraw from the June 27 Presidential run-off. There are issues raised in this study which need further interrogation in the present study. For example, Alexander and Tendi deny the deployment of ethnicity in the 2008 elections. This study argues that the two

authors may have ignored how ethnicity was deployed especially where women were sexually abused. This, therefore, calls for an analysis on the subtle ways in which ethnicity was part and parcel of the 2008 election. In this case, for a national healing and reconciliation process to be effective, it cannot afford to ignore the issue of ethnicity and how it continues to be a key identity marker in Zimbabwe.

Masunungure, in a book chapter entitled *A Militarised Election: The 27 June Presidential Election* (2009) discusses the political violence that engulfed Zimbabwe after the 29 March Harmonised elections. Masunungure highlights the active involvement of the security institutions in this election and argues that this was a continuation by ZANU PF to militarise the state, a project which it had started in 2000. This was evidenced by the appointment of retired security personnel to most of the strategic parastatals. In the 2008 run-off, Masunungure (2009:85) argues that “the military factor in the run-off election was so dominant and visible that to many critical observers, the military had covertly taken over and had become the arbiter of Zimbabwe’s fate.” The violence created no-go areas for the opposition while ZANU PF could access every corner of the country. Although Masunungure aptly describes the run-off campaign as being characterised by coercion, intimidation, beatings and displacement, he seems to ignore the sexual abuses of women. This omission is noticeable in some of the writings by male scholars writing on this period. Thus, this study argues that any post-conflict reconstruction process in Zimbabwe needs to acknowledge the gendered nature of the political violence that Zimbabwe has witnessed.

In a book titled *When a State turns on its Citizens: 60 Years of Institutionalised Violence and Political Culture* (2011), Sachikonye discusses Zimbabwe’s political violence culture from the colonial period. From his perspective, political violence in Zimbabwe does not occur in a

vacuum but has a history of being institutionalised. It has become part and parcel of Zimbabwe's political culture because throughout history it has been used for political gain by those in power. Sachikonye brings out how violence was used by the colonial regime in order to subdue the black population and also how the liberation movements used violence against the colonial regime, the public and within itself. This same violence spilled into the post-independence era with ZANU PF perpetuating the use of violence. He views political "violence as a tool of choice if and when opposition parties threaten to erode the ruling party's support base (2011:19). Furthermore, Sachikonye analyses the effects of the Midlands and Matabeleland Disturbances. Of importance is the highlight of women being raped and pregnant women being bayoneted during this period. From Sachikonye's point of view, the pattern of violence from the colonial period is similar with the one we find from 2000 onwards, the only difference being the scale, intensity and the militarisation of violence. Like Masunungure (discussed above), he posits that from 2000-2008, Zimbabwe witnessed the militarisation of the state which led to the nation witnessing intense political violence. For example, commenting on the 27 June 2008 Presidential run-off, Sachikonye argues that "state agencies played an active, if not a leading role in ensuring that the opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, would not win in the run-off election...."

The work by Sachikonye is important for this study because it locates us within the actual context which justifies the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe. By tracing violence to the colonial era, Sachikonye affords us an opportunity to understand the history of political violence in Zimbabwe. We are allowed to see that independence did not dismantle the structures of violence. If anything, ZANU PF after independence perfected these structures. Sachikonye's book title captures the actual scenario in which the Zimbabwean state is the one unleashing violence against its people. Though, he mentions the violence against women during

Gukurahundi, his silence on the sexual violence that women endured at the hands of both the Rhodesian Forces and the liberation war fighters is baffling. This study argues that the liberation struggle provides us a chance to understand the history of sexual violence against women by and within the liberation movement itself as well as by the Rhodesian forces. As it occurs in Zimbabwe today, we need to understand that it forms part of those structures which have been maintained for the subjugation not only of opposition supporters but of women in particular. In this case, centering the national healing and reconciliation process on women affords the church an opportunity of not only listening to the sexual violation of women during conflict but to act against its further occurrence.

Kaulem in his book titled *Ending Violence in Zimbabwe* (2011) claims that violence has become part of the political culture of the country (2011:78). He notes that political violence in Zimbabwe increases during elections. Kaulem tries to deal with the changing identities of victim/perpetrator and argues that perpetrators of violence were once victims of violence. The continued use of violence hinges on the fact that Zimbabwe has not dealt with past violations dating back to the colonial era. Like other Zimbabwean scholars, Kaulem agrees that political violence in Zimbabwe increased in 2008. What is critical in Kaulem's thesis is his call to replace the cultures of death with the cultures of life. He argues

Violence is destructive. But it is also attractive in its own, curious way. As Zimbabweans, we have been tempted by these curious attractions, but our history has clearly demonstrated that it is time we abandoned the violent ways of organising our politics. It is time to listen to our historical experiences and to our humanity in order that we work hard to re-emphasize our non-violent virtues (2011:135).

The weakness of the book is its failure to recognise that Zimbabweans do not experience political violence in the same manner because of the gendered nature of violence. Hence, blanketing these experiences as if they are similar is a mistake that any one seeking to bring

about the healing and reconciliation of Zimbabwean society cannot make. As such, this study, in this context, argues that special attention needs to be paid to the experiences of women as Churches in Manicaland participates in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe.

2.3 Women and Political Violence

The issue of women and political violence in Zimbabwe is a critical one and forms the basis for this thesis. It needs to be noted that in conflict zones, women are the majority of victims to experience sexual, physical, socio-economic, psychological as well as emotional violence. Literature is abound that reveals that women are vulnerable during conflict periods worldwide and that Zimbabwean women are no exception.

In a book chapter entitled *Justice for Women Victims of Violence: Rwanda after the Genocide (2000)* Nowrojee and Ralph discuss how sexual violence assume gender-specific forms, like sexual mutilation, forced pregnancy, rape or sexual slavery. They posit that in a conflict situation, being female is in itself a risk factor leading women and girls to be targeted for sexual abuse on the basis of their gender regardless of their age, ethnicity or political affiliation. They also argue that rape and sexual assault of women in situations of conflict are widely committed but seldom denounced because it is viewed as the spoils of war and not as illegitimate acts that violate humanitarian law. In such situations, the perpetrators of the sexual violence are not punished for their crimes. In their analysis of the effects of rape, Nowrojee and Ralph posit that the victim of rape is dehumanised, so is her family and community. In order to avoid the humiliation of the individual, family and community, in most cases, the rape is concealed. The authors, however, argue that the “silence and impunity about abuses against women hides the problems that devastate, and sometimes end, women’s lives” (2000:163). Women themselves do

not speak out about the sexual abuses for fear of being stigmatised. They also highlight lack of political will to document human rights violations against women by governments as a major stumbling block to prevent and remedy the sexual abuse. Nowrojee and Ralph categorise rape as a violation of International law, a war crime, a crime against humanity, a genocidal crime and a form of torture. Focusing on Rwanda, the authors expose how the security forces in that country as well as the heads of militia, directed or encouraged both the killings and sexual abuse of women. The effects of rape are listed as social stigmatisation, poor physical and psychological health, unwanted pregnancy and poverty. The authors also indicate how women encounter economic difficulties after conflict especially after losing relatives who acted as breadwinners. In addition, they explained how Rwandan survivors of sexual violence are particularly troubled by the lack of accountability for the abuse they suffered. Their desire is to see the perpetrators of the violence against them held responsible.

Nowrojee and Ralph's theorisation of violence, though focusing on the Rwandan experience is very relevant for the Zimbabwean context, hence, for this study. This study draws from the critical insights on the silence of women's experiences of sexual violence by both critical institutions as well as the victims themselves; and the impunity that is accorded the perpetrators of sexual violence especially by national legal systems. What is also significant about this work is the exposition of how political governments ignore what women go through during conflict primarily because they are complicit in the violence. This study also finds Nowrojee and Ralph's work vital because it delineates the causes that lead women to be sexually abused as ethnicity and political affiliation. This study argues that these causes were also deployed in Zimbabwe in general and Manicaland in particular both covertly and overtly.

In an article titled “*“We live in fear, we feel so Unsafe”*: *The Imagination and Fear of Rape in South Africa*’ (2007) Dosekun makes a discursive analysis of the views of women in South Africa on rape. Her analysis brings out the gendered politics of rape. She rightly notes that “dominant discourses of violence and vulnerability are deeply gendered.” She goes on to expose the existence of rape-dense cultures in South Africa where even without experiencing the actual rape, women live in the fear of rape itself. This basically affects the way they participate in the public spaces. The discursive analysis by Dosekun may point to the existence of the same ‘cultures’ in Zimbabwe especially as one looks at women’s political experiences of violence. It sheds light into the implications of living in a society that is full of uncertainty due to political upheavals like Zimbabwe where one does not know what his/her neighbour thinks about their political affiliation.

In a research carried out by AIDS-Free World titled *Electing to Rape: Sexual Terror in Mugabe’s Zimbabwe* (2009) it was revealed that in Zimbabwe since 2000, women have suffered sexual violence. Aids Free World interviewed seventy-two Zimbabwean women who are victims of rape/gang rape and other forms of sexual abuse during Zimbabwe’s election periods. An analysis of the testimonies given by the women indicates that some of the women ended up getting infected with the HI virus while others got children from the rapes.

These two organisations produced a report entitled ‘*No Hiding Place: Politically Motivated Rape of Women in Zimbabwe*’ (2010) in which they traced the occurrence of politically motivated sexual abuse of women in Zimbabwe from 2001 to 2008. They recorded that the sexual abuse includes “extreme violence, gang rape and insertion of objects- bottles and sticks into the women’s genitals.” This is supported by a report produced in the Human Rights Bulletin

entitled '*Gender-based Violence in Zimbabwe*' which alludes to the fact that women experience violence in the form of rape and concubinage during Zimbabwe's elections.

These two editors in a book titled *Sexual Violence in Africa's Conflict Zones* (2011) grapple with the issue of sexual violence against women and children in those parts of Africa that are riddled with conflict. The main focus is on countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan though a comparative analysis with the United States of America is done. Of note is the acknowledgement by the editors of this book that "civilians in Africa's conflict zones, particularly women and children are often vulnerable to sexual violence, including rape, mutilation and sexual slavery..." The narrations given in Chapter 5 of the book are telling of women's experiences in conflict situations. For example, the now famous story of the Congolese girl, Lumo who was raped by over 50 men in one day and has had to undergo nine operations of the fistula is horrendous. While Zimbabwe was not covered in the study, other researches done in the country have shown that since 2000, gang rapes have been used as tools to punish political opponents and women have been the majority of victims (see Appendix D).

In another report published in 2011 titled *Politically Motivated Violence against Women in Zimbabwe 2000-2010: A Review of the Public Domain Literature*, RAU traces the occurrence of politically motivated violence to the pre-colonial era. It notes that reports on political violence produced in Zimbabwe before 2000 lack a gendered perspective. This is really important as it brings into perspective society's lack of commitment to issues that directly affect women such as political violence. This research seeks to build on RAU's research findings by trying to establish whether Churches in Manicaland prioritise women's experiences of political violence as the Forum participates in the national healing and reconciliation project.

2.4 National Healing and Reconciliation

The theme of national healing and reconciliation is not new in Zimbabwe's political terrain as one can trace it back to the eve of independence when the then Prime Minister, Robert Mugabe made his maiden speech calling upon citizens of Zimbabwe to reconcile. The theme of national healing and reconciliation has been subjected to scholarly analysis where evaluations and critiques have been provided. The review below gives some of the scholarly analyses.

De Waal gives an analysis of the theme of reconciliation in Zimbabwe in his book *The Politics of Reconciliation: Zimbabwe's First Decade* (1990) specifically focusing on the first ten years after independence. He praises the first decade of independence for the willingness by both blacks and whites to embrace each other in the spirit of forgiveness which for him is central in an attempt to move towards national reconciliation. He also looks at the role of the churches in national reconciliation in Zimbabwe in the decade under study. De Waal argues that "national reconciliation was practical politics" (1990:48). He wants readers to believe that the policy of National Reconciliation was a result of "the compromises to which [Mugabe and company] had been forced to agree at the Lancaster House Conference" (1990:48). Such perceptions are blind to the selfish reasons that led the new government to adopt this policy. It is now a widely held view that the policy was also meant to shield the guerillas of the war of their war atrocities. The quick call to forgiveness and forgetfulness needs to be understood as a ploy to cover up war crimes. As Soyinka (2000:31) argues "a people who do not preserve their memory are a people who have forfeited their history." While De Waal focuses on the first decade of independence, this study seeks to go beyond this period by focusing on the period 2000 to date. What the study does with De Waal's thesis is to critique his romanticisation of Zimbabwe's first decade of independence, especially the reasons he gives as leading to the adoption of the policy of national

reconciliation. This is done in order to show how the policy projects to the failure or success of the current process of national healing and reconciliation.

Like De Waal, Russell Daye in this book *Political Forgiveness: Lessons from South Africa* (2004) looks at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa. He acknowledges the centrality of forgiveness to human existence. He problematises the concept of forgiveness and asks pertinent questions which pertain to how the process should go. He compares the process of forgiveness to a drama with a number of acts. Probably, key to his theorisations on the concept of forgiveness is his acknowledgement that “when we move from the interpersonal to the sociopolitical realm, forgiveness becomes more complicated” (2004:8). Russell Daye’s model of forgiveness is very informative to this thesis as he warns against any attempt to rush the granting of forgiveness without a careful exposition of the unjust actions through the generation of a broad narrative. He also highlights the centrality of healing in a post-conflict environment as he argues that “where there have been gross human rights violations, individuals will suffer from traumatic stress disorders and will have particular therapeutic needs that centre on issues of empowerment and security” (2004:11). While Daye’s theorisation of the concept of forgiveness in the South African context is important for this thesis, what this study seeks to do is to go beyond his problematisation of forgiveness to problematise the perceived end of this forgiveness which is ‘national healing’ and ‘reconciliation’. This problematisation questions whether the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe is paying particular attention to women’s experiences of political violence.

In a monograph titled *National Healing and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe: Challenges and Opportunities* (2010), Machakanja sees national healing and reconciliation as prerequisites for sustainable peace and nation-building. Machakanja castigates the Global Political Agreement

(GPA) for failing to provide a solid foundation for national healing and reconciliation. From her perspective, the GPA and in particular, Article VII fails to articulate more complex questions of transitional justice and human rights abuses in specific terms. She notes very well that while there are efforts being made to address the issues of national healing and reconciliation, there continue to emerge contested viewpoints over “the construction and ownership of the national healing, social cohesion and unity project” (2010:8). She says:

“...there are arguments as to whether the national healing and reconciliation project should be led by politicians, given the politics of partisan-ship that have characterized the political landscape of Zimbabwe since its independence. For example, informed by the South African and Rwandan experiences, arguments by some church alliances are that because issues of national healing and reconciliation are embedded in moral obligations, the church-based independent organizations can claim ‘moral authority’ and legitimacy to lead the National Healing and Reconciliation process as politicians are viewed as not having the moral integrity to remain neutral and/or separate national issues from party political agendas.”

In another article entitled ‘*Mapping Women’s Needs in Zimbabwe’s National Healing Process*’ (2012) Machakanja argues that many national healing processes fail to consider the needs of the victims of violent conflict especially women. She recommends (quoting Mutua, 2008) that in identifying and addressing women’s needs in the national healing agenda, Zimbabwe should aim to avoid the traps of transitional justice initiatives that have focused on the human-rights violations alone, and should focus also on the equally important arena of economic violations and psychological needs, as well as social and cultural rights that are intrinsically connected with sexual and gender-based violence.

The two studies by Machakanja are very interesting especially for this thesis as they are looking at the period under study in this research. Her first study informs this research of the conflict of ownership of the national healing and reconciliation project in Zimbabwe between the church and the state. It is interesting to see how CiM is navigating its way through this conflict and

whether they are not bound to neglect the concerns of women in the process. The second study is also critical for this thesis in that it informs the researcher's womanist model for national healing and reconciliation. For example, this thesis agrees with Machakanja's call for a woman-centred national healing process, and tries to establish how CiM is taking women's experiences of political violence into perspective as the Forum participates in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe.

Tsunga brings the reader to remembrance of how after the killing of at least 20 000 people in Matebeleland in the 1980s, the government was quick to call for national healing while no one was prosecuted for the crimes in an article entitled *Transitional Justice and national Healing: Perpetrators must pay the price*' (2011). From his perspective this has led to the increase in organised violence and torture. He then argues that "it is therefore critical that any process towards transitional justice and national healing is predicated on an unequivocal goal of breaking the cycle of impunity rather than letting bygones be bygones" (2011:96). This is a clear rejection of the call to forget about past violations, the erasure of one's memory with perpetrators not accounting for their acts of violence.

Mbofana looks at the challenges of community healing in Zimbabwe in a book chapter entitled *Incising an Unripe abscess: The Challenges of Community Healing in Zimbabwe* (2011). From his perspective, the environment is not yet conducive for the healing of communities. He highlights the causes of political violence in Zimbabwe and the complexities of issues of national healing. He suggests truth-telling as the basis for community healing since it empowers communities to actively participate in their own healing under the leadership of community leaders. The observations made by Mbofana are important as they provide us with an analysis of the context within which the process of national healing is expected to proceed. We would then

wonder if women are being given an audience by CiM to bring to the fore their experiences of political violence from which they need healing.

2.5 Gender in National Healing and Reconciliation

The subject on gender in national healing and reconciliation has received scholarly attention especially from feminists as well as scholars from development studies. Some of these are analysed below.

In a book titled *The Aftermath: Women in Post-conflict Transformation* (2001), contributors to this book explore the various facets of violence against women during conflict, and the problems of reconciliation after the conflict. What is of significance, coming out of the book, is the shift in gender relations when the state and society engages in post-conflict reconstruction and transformation. This is really critical for this thesis as it enables us to see how the issue of gender plays itself out in Zimbabwe's national healing and reconciliation process.

Women and Peace in Africa: Studies on Traditional Conflict Resolution Practices (2003) is a publication produced by UNESCO. This publication discusses the significance of women in peace building. The study also recognises how in most cases women are marginalised in post-conflict reconstruction processes yet they are the most to have been affected by the conflict. Though Zimbabwe is not covered in these studies, their insights are pivotal and provide a basis on which Churches in Manicaland could build on, for the success of the national healing and reconciliation process.

Using feminist lens to critique justice discourses in post-conflict societies, Niamh Reilly in an article entitled *Seeking Gender Justice in Post-conflict Transitions: Towards a Transformative Women's Human Rights Approach* (2007) notes that scholarship dealing with transitional justice issues has largely ignored "women's wider experiences of conflict, their extensive contributions

to peace initiatives, or the significance of pervasive gender inequalities and biases in limiting women's meaningful participation at every level and stage of post-conflict transition" (2007:156). Looking at the Chilean, Guatemalan and South African cases, she shows how the processes of transition were gender exclusive. Of the Chilean and Guatemalan Commissions, she argues that "both processes closed off consideration of the forms and locations of women's conflict-related harms" (2007:157), including domestic violence or conflict-induced impoverishment.

From her point of view, it is important for any transitional justice process to consider how women are specifically affected by war. This for her, calls for an understanding of how "patriarchy, militarism and nationalism interact to produce gendered identities and experiences that are inimical to women's human rights in both conflicts and transitions" (2007:158). In her analysis of post-conflict societies, Reilly further argues that women are prone to increased and new forms of domestic violence as a result of the general normalisation of violence during and after conflict situations. She also looks at how the international legal processes have dealt with women's experiences of conflict, for example, sexual violence and calls for the mainstreaming of gender in the International Criminal Court (ICC). Her argument is that the general attitudes of societies towards women as well as women's condition and position in the power hierarchy largely shapes the way women experience war and conflict. She, therefore, highlights the significance of women's organisations in transitional processes to ensure a continued redefinition of what constitutes harm to women in conflict situations.

In a research report titled *Women, Peace and Security in Afghanistan: Looking Back to Move Forward* (2014), Partis-Jennings and Huber, narrate how women in Afghanistan feel very insecure and have rejected the inclusion of the Taliban in the reconciliation process. The women

also felt that the mechanisms being put in place in the country were not cognisant of the need to uphold human rights and women's rights. From the perspective of Afghan women, the process of reconciliation was not a result of widespread consultation and lacks adequate representation of women and women's needs and rights. Their rejection for the inclusion of the Taliban was due to fear of threats, insecurity and violence. The authors also highlight that the women in Afghanistan expected the reconciliation process to focus on issues of healing, truth, justice and reparation. From their analysis of the process, Afghan women felt that the reconciliation process has failed to provide a forum for addressing past grievances and allowing women to envisage a future of a post-transition Afghanistan. The women wanted the Taliban to be punished for the crimes committed during the conflict.

In their research, Partis-Jennings and Huber found out that in Afghanistan, there were certain masculine identity models and traditional patriarchal structures such as tribal and religious leaders who constitute obstacles to women's engagement with peace. They identified the importance of the community and the family unit as opportunities for advancing the peace process and reconciliation. The other thing that they advocated for was women representation in the peace talks. Research participants advocated for the interpretation of Islam in a manner that ensured the recognition of women's rights and equal participation in society. In this case, they called for a rights-based approach to the process of reconciliation. What is relevant for this study from the work by Partis-Jennings and Huber are the voices of women in Afghanistan saying out their concerns and expectations in the reconciliation process. Such voices are important because they call for a bottom-up process of reconciliation, thereby bringing out grassroots women's needs in the process.

Manjoo discusses the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (SATRC) in an article entitled *The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission: A Model for Gender Justice* (2004). She notes that during conflict, there is an escalation of violence against women and argues that although women are violated physically, psychologically and economically during conflict, sexual violence is also rampant during such periods. For Manjoo, public acknowledgement is key to the healing of victims as is the allowing of victims to testify and break the silence surrounding violence (2004:3). From her perspective, Truth and Reconciliation Commissions can make visible and legitimise women's experiences, if the mandate is gender-sensitive and explicitly reflects the nature of violence and human rights violations against women (2004:4). Manjoo posits that women in South Africa were raped by the security forces, by opposition political groups and also in the camps of liberation movements. However, this did not fully emerge either prior to or during the Truth and Reconciliation hearings. In Manjoo's opinion, the need to place women and their experiences of violence at the core of the crime is a constant struggle. She also notes that the SATRC narrowly defined its mandate in the national healing and reconciliation process.

Her analysis of the SATRC is very revealing. From the onset, Manjoo notes that the reconciliation process was male-led. Further, she argues that women had a very minimal or no role at all in the TRC's conceptualisation and that gender was not raised as an important issue for consideration throughout the process (2004:11). Thus,

“the lack of participation of women, the lack of consultation of women, the discussions and drafting process which was led by men who were not necessarily gender-sensitive, all gave rise to concerns... The consequence of such a flawed process was the development of a gender and race neutral piece of legislation, which then resulted in the TRC not dealing with violations that really affected black women the most.”

She castigates the TRC for leaning so much towards Christian or religious ethos in the process. Basically, she is of the view that the TRC failed to recognise that men and women suffer different kinds of violations during conflict and that the impact of these violations are not the same for men and women. The lumping together of men and women just as victims of political violence negates, minimizes and devalues the experiences of women and this led to the marginalisation of women in the SATRC.

In an occasional paper entitled *Your justice is too Slow: Will the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda Fail Rwanda's Rape Victims?* (2005) written for the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Nowrojee examines international justice from the point of view of rape survivors in Rwanda. She indicates that Tutsi women in Rwanda were raped on the streets, at checkpoints, in cultivated plots, in or near government buildings, hospitals, churches and other places where they sought sanctuary. Women in Rwanda were also held individually or in groups as sexual slaves for the purpose of rape. Some were raped to death with the use of sharp sticks or other objects. Nowrojee notes that in Rwanda, there was a lack of political will at the senior management level to integrate sexual violence crimes into a consistently followed prosecution strategy. She captures the voices of the rape victims and witnesses who showed deep frustration with the international justice process. Though the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) ruled that rape was an act of genocide, it failed to include the voices of the victims for whom the tribunal was formed. This led to rape survivors developing deep sentiments of anger, frustration, dashed hopes, indignation and even resignation. For them, justice was too slow. Nowrojee gathered from these women that they wanted respect and care at all stages of the justice process as well as public acknowledgement of the wrongs done to them. There was fear among the victims that they were dying without telling their stories. Where they had been given

the opportunity to share their stories, some stories were ignored for ‘lack’ of evidence while in other cases the evidence was simply ignored. Those that testified were stigmatised and discriminated by their communities while some were threatened and harassed. Nowrojee’s work is very informative of what women go through in post-conflict societies and how their conflict experiences can even worsen after the conflict itself.

In a chapter entitled *Truth and Reconciliation Commissions and Gender Justice* (2008), Allesandra Secco examines three countries where TRCs were used in a post-conflict situation in order to bring healing and reconciliation. The countries looked at are Peru, Sierra Leone and East Timor. After examining these cases, Secco argues that gender-sensitive approaches to national healing and reconciliation need to be adopted at the point of constituting TRCs. From her perspective, this was the case in Sierra Leone and East Timor but was the reverse in Peru which sought to give credence to women’s issues at a later stage. She commends the three Commissions for engendering the truth-telling processes and transitional justice. In her general analysis, Secco (2008:70) argues that “a gender-sensitive analysis helps elucidate the ways women and men are differently harmed by conflict according to their gendered identities and roles, with the critical result of shedding light on the ‘peaceful’ society gender regimes and on the links between ordinary and unequal gender relations and extra-ordinary conflict related violence.”

Focusing specifically on Zimbabwe, the Church and Civil Society Forum (CCSF) in a monograph titled *Gender Dynamics of National Healing* (2012) critiqued the reconciliation policies that have been adopted in Zimbabwe since 1980 using gendered lens. From CCSF’s perspective, the 1980 reconciliation policy is the one that sowed the seeds of impunity because it forced people to forgive and forget without perpetrators of violence during the liberation struggle

accounting for their deeds. The 1987 Unity Accord failed to address the violent atrocities of *Gukurahundi* and how women were violated. Even the CCJP which documented the atrocities did not show how men and women experienced this violence differently. The Forum also looked at incidents of violence from 2000 to 2012 and noted that there was no healing or closure especially for the victims of Operation *Murambatsvina* (see section 4.8). The Global Political Agreement (GPA) that was signed in 2008 by the three major political parties in Zimbabwe is shown as one that was meant to work together towards consolidation of peace and reconstruction of the country both politically and economically. The Forum takes a closer look at Article 7c of the GPA which encouraged the political parties to set up a mechanism to properly advise on what measures might be necessary and practicable to achieve national healing, cohesion and unity in respect of victims of pre- and post-independence political conflicts. This then led to the formation of the Organ on National healing, Reconciliation and Integration. However, CCSF castigates the Article for avoiding the use of such words as justice and reconciliation and most of the provisions are expressed as willingness and not commitment. In the Forum's opinion, "the provisions on violence prevention are inseparable to healing and transitional justice" (CCSF, 2012:14). In this regard, CCSF established that impunity was rife and at grassroots levels, perpetrators of violence had not been prosecuted. This was an evident lack of commitment to the implementation of the GPA which blurred the whole idea of national healing.

CCSF's study is critical to this research as it also focused on how women's experiences of political violence are critical for Zimbabwe's national healing and reconciliation process. Using the victim-centred approach, the Forum examined political violence as well as the socio-economic impact of violence on women. The Forum presents women as the major victims of violence in Zimbabwe. It also noted that although a few women actively perpetrated violence the

majority were confined to socially ascribed roles of supporting the men. Women were abused physically and sexually and were also punished on behalf of the absent men. For example, in the 2008 political violence, women were the major victims. However, the Forum argues that “in the national healing agenda, women played limited to peripheral roles in defining the form and structure as well as the process of national healing” (2012:22). Thus, the absence of sensitivity or priority to women’s needs in national healing becomes a natural outcome.

2.6 The Church, National Healing and Reconciliation

Some scholars have dealt with the theme of national healing and reconciliation with a particular focus on what the role of the church is.

In his book, *Church and Peace in Africa* (2001) van Butselaar looks at the role of the churches in the peace process by focusing on Mozambique, South Africa and Rwanda. He notes that the African continent has witnessed many conflicts of a violent nature despite Christianity being the fastest growing religion on the continent with a message of justice and reconciliation. He then questions why the church in Africa has failed to deliver peace and reconciliation. Van Butselaar makes the observation that churches may have contributed to division and violence by siding with a specific (ruling) party, or by identifying with one ethnic group (2001:1). From his point of view, studying the role of the church in Africa in “furthering peace and reconciliation in the crisis situations in which they find themselves is critical as it may help stimulate discussion in the African Churches themselves, when they have to make decisions on how to best serve the lord and his people in Africa” (2001:2). In his analysis of the role of the church in peace and reconciliation in Mozambique, South Africa and Rwanda, van Butselaar highlights the historical ambivalent role the church has played in African politics since the colonial times through the wars of liberation to the post-independence period. His discussion of the Mozambican situation

highlights the volatile environment within which churches had to operate, from the time of colonialism. In post-independent Mozambique, the civil war between Frelimo and Renamo destabilised the country. However, the mainly protestant Mozambican Christian Council (CCM) set up a Peace and Reconciliation Commission in order to further dialogue between the different groups in 1984. The Catholic bishops of the country were also urging that dialogue take place between the Frelimo government and Renamo. The bottom line here is that despite the challenges encountered, the church managed to broker peace in Mozambique. Without taking anything away from van Butselaar, current events in Mozambique may point to the fact that the peace brokered by the church in Mozambique has not managed to hold.

In his analysis of South Africa, van Butselaar, looks at the relationship between the church and the apartheid government. He puts the church in South Africa into three categorisations namely the Boer churches, the English-speaking churches and the black churches (made up of the mission supported and the African initiated churches). He concludes that all these churches felt compelled to support the regime. While AICs were expected to go against the regime, it was generally not the case due to the fact that the government made frequent visits to these churches and rewarded the leaders with the leadership of homelands (once they were created). From van Butselaar's perspective, this muted the prophetic voice of the churches against apartheid and hampered them from working effectively for reconciliation. As such, he credits individual South African Church leaders for having the courage to stand up to the government to condemn apartheid as well for being instrumental in the formation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. He concludes that "church leaders certainly made a fundamental contribution to the miracle of peace in South Africa" (2001:28).

The Rwandan experience is the one that is very telling in van Butselaar's analysis. He presents the story of Rwanda as one that has always been characterised by conflict between the Hutus and Tutsis since the 16th century. This conflict culminated in the 1994 genocide in which more than 500 000 people were killed. Prior to the genocide, the church leaders in Rwanda especially the Catholics had produced a number of pastoral letters in which they condemned ethnic conflict and other evils in society. However, the pastoral letters failed to encourage the warring parties to desist from conflict and pursue the option of peace and reconciliation. In all this, the protestant churches were silent. Thus, at the verge of a break out of conflict in 1994, the government refused to listen to the church leaders when it was called not to allow the atrocities to continue. In this conflict, the church leaders were both victims and perpetrators of violence. After the war, van Butselaar notes that the government has become very repressive thereby limiting the space for the church to maneuver. On the whole, he makes important observations especially of the failure by the church in Rwanda to actively engage in the reconciliation of Rwandan society by insisting on justice and not reconciliation. Though the work by van Butselaar does not focus on Zimbabwe, it is critical for this study because it discussed the role played by churches in other countries some of which are very close to Zimbabwe. The proximity of Mozambique and Manicaland becomes crucial in this instance. It becomes important to find out if there are any lessons learnt from the Mozambican experience by the Churches in Manicaland. The work is also informative to this study on the church-state power dynamics when it comes to post-conflict healing and reconciliation which may impinge on the churches' effectiveness in this process. This study looks at the role of the church in national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe but specifically focusing on how the church is dealing with women's experiences of violence, an area which van Butselaar left out in his work.

Focusing on Zimbabwe, Muchena, in a book chapter entitled *The church and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe: A Mission Impossible* (2005) discusses the role that was being played by the ecumenical movement in Zimbabwe in reconciling the nation between 2000 and 2004. Of particular note is his mention of a series of pastoral visits that had been undertaken by the ecumenical groups under the coordination of Ecumenical Support Services and the Zimbabwe National Pastors Conference to politically troubled spots such as Chimanimani, Chipinge and Mashonaland Central. He says the purpose of the visits was to intensify the call for an end to violent politics and engage enforcement officers and political leaders in the issues facing the nation. From this, Muchena concludes that

“...it is possible for the church to take a lead role in building reconciliation between politically variant positions. The role of the church in the political process is essentially that of midwifery. The church can act as midwife to a process of reconciliation if it is equipped with sufficient negotiation skills, political will and leadership, a supportive environment and solidarity from neighbours in the Southern African region and from the international ecumenical family” (2004:267).

However, he notes that in Zimbabwe the church faces the challenges of harassment, political labeling, intimidation among others as it tries to fulfill this mandate. Muchena’s chapter is pivotal for this thesis as it contributes meaningfully to the national healing and reconciliation discourse in Zimbabwe. While he interrogates whether the church’s engagement in the whole process is a mission impossible, this thesis argues that the church is a critical institution in Zimbabwe which should actively engage in the national healing and reconciliation process and should not be deterred by the impediments that lie along the way. What this study seeks to do is to bring to the attention of the church in Zimbabwe through its study of Churches in Manicaland (CiM) of the gender dynamics of the national healing and reconciliation process. Moreover,

while Muchena's study covers the period 2000-2004, this current study seeks to cover the period 2000 to the present. In this case, some of the insights in his paper are very valuable for this study. Masengwe made a contribution to the discourse on social healing and reconciliation. In his Masters dissertation *The Church's Role in Social Healing and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe: An Analysis of Reconciliation in the National Vision Discussion Document of The Churches of Zimbabwe* (2008), he seeks to establish the theological understanding of reconciliation that informs the NVDD. He focuses on the theme of reconciliation and closely analyses it. While he applauds the church's involvement in the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe, he sharply criticises it for being irrelevant to the agenda of the new regime. He decries the church's return to private piety after independence when the state was building monuments that celebrated violence. Taking a leaf from the NVDD, Masengwe suggests what the church needs to do in Zimbabwe for reconciliation to take place. Masengwe's analysis is crucial for this research as it enables us to look at whether Churches in Manicaland (CiM) as a Forum takes into cognisance public views of national healing and reconciliation as it participates in the national healing and reconciliation process.

Giving an example of the Rwandan genocide in a book chapter entitled '*Evangelisation for Reconciliation and peace*' (2010) Ezeogu highlights what happens when churches turn a blind eye to issues of reconciliation, justice and peace. From his perspective, "what happened in Rwanda was a people evangelised, baptised and confirmed as Christians, who had no idea of reconciliation, justice and peace" (2010:345). He emphasises that the ministry of the church is that of reconciliation and further argues that reconciliation of people in situations of conflict and tension such as those in which many Africans live today is an essential role of the church's mission.

In his chapter, *'Christ Jesus: Our Peace and Reconciliation'* (2010), Nwaigbo condemns the church in Africa for spending too much time talking about peace while doing little about peacemaking. He views reconciliation as peacemaking process. However, from his perspective, the basis for reconciliation is truth and there can be no reconciliation based on deceptions and lies. In his own words, "Jesus Christ is our reconciliation and peace, for through Him, with Him and in Him, all conflicts arising from tribal, creedal, ethnic, political and social distinctions and disparities are resolved because Jesus Christ is our peace (2010:357).

In a book chapter entitled *The role of religion in Peacebuilding* (2010), Tarimo observes that peace building cannot be left to political initiative alone. Religion is an important institution that should collaborate in such initiatives. He also notes that most of the destructive conflicts have been fuelled by people who profess one faith or the other and often times, governments ignore religious contributions, failing to realize that if properly used these can be an incentive to the process of peace building, e.g. by discouraging the desire for revenge that has characterized most human conflicts.

This is yet another author who argues that the contribution of religious women is indispensable for the success of the mission of the church and the development of Africa. In her book chapter entitled *'The Religious Women's Contribution to Peace, Justice and Reconciliation* (2010), she then concludes that African religious women have a fundamental role to play in the fight for justice and in the process of reconciliation.

In an article entitled *The Reading and Interpretation of Matthew 18:21-22 in Relation to Multiple Reconciliations: The Zimbabwean Experience* (2010), Machingura notes very well that the election violence that has occurred throughout the history of post-independence Zimbabwe has caused division and hatred among the people. What Machingura seeks to do in this article is to

question how certain biblical texts may be used by the church to deal with issues of injustices (especially violence) in ways that would fail to bring the anticipated reconciliation. When dealing with issues of violence, Machingura persuades the church to speak out about justice. The observations made in this research are pivotal as the paper alleges that churches in Zimbabwe have not been vocal on issues of justice. As this thesis looks at the role of the church in Zimbabwe in the national healing and reconciliation process, one of the issues it concerns itself with is to establish ways in which Churches in Manicaland is dealing with the issue of justice as one of the aspects critical for national healing and reconciliation.

In a pastoral letter entitled *Let Us Work For the Common Good, Let Us Save Our Nation* (2011) produced by the ZCBC, the bishops share their concerns on how the state of affairs in the country could easily lead to loss of nationhood, the disintegration of society and to the forming of degenerate militias with opposing loyalties (2011:3). It encourages Zimbabweans to work together for the common good and hails the signing of the Global Political Agreement as a sign of hope and peace in the nation. However, the bishops noted that issues of national healing, reconciliation and integration are not given much serious media coverage. What is encouraging is that in this pastoral letter the bishops are aware that national healing, reconciliation and integration are crucial for national well-being. What is disheartening though is that they did not say what they were doing or going to do to ensure that the process of national healing goes forward. Therefore, this research comes in to fill this gap, as it seeks to bring out what the church especially the grouping of Churches in Manicaland (CiM) is doing in ensuring that the process is not abandoned.

In an article entitled “*Be therefore reconciled to one another*”: *The Church’s role in justice, healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe* (2011), Togarasei and Chitando look at the political

violence of 2008 as one that has left families and communities deeply divided. They explore the role of the church in the quest for justice, healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe and recognise that the church is critical in the search for justice, peace and development. They also trace Zimbabwe's post-colonial experiences of political violence from 1980 which gave birth to the current political crises the nation finds itself in. For Togarasei and Chitando, the current political crises justify the need for justice, healing and reconciliation. They make reference to the *Gukurahundi* atrocities and notes how these left tribal tensions between the Shona and the Ndebele. In this regard, they argue that

“there is need for reconciliation of the people of Zimbabwe on this subject. The truth of what happened needs to be known, and, where possible, victims compensated by the state and perpetrators punished.”

From 2000, Togarasei and Chitando highlight the land crisis, political violence during elections, Operation *Murambatsvina* as critical moments in Zimbabwe's history where the nation has witnessed violence. It is these moments among others which make the call for national healing and reconciliation imperative. For Togarasei and Chitando, the church becomes a critical player in this process due to the fact that “justice, healing and reconciliation are key themes in Christian scriptures. They also posit that in this process, the church should focus on healing before reconciliation. The authors go on to ask a critical question which is pertinent for this study. They ask “How can there be healing and reconciliation when women who were raped remain in hiding?” This points us to the environment within which the national healing and reconciliation is taking place. In this case, they condemn efforts towards healing and reconciliation but devoid of justice. From their analysis, “without justice, only a shaky foundation for healing and reconciliation can be built” (2011:217). The article reiterates the need for truth telling in the process of healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. They argue “we are convinced that the

church has a theological mandate to seek the truth, as the truth sets people free” (2011:218). In this process, the church is posited as a credible and well-structured institution to effectively bring about healing and reconciliation. Therefore, the church needs to confront “aggressive masculinities that celebrate violence as a mark of manhood” (2011:225) and encourage the youth to embrace cultures of peace by desisting from destroying human lives. However, Togarasei and Chitando note that in doing this, the church faces a number of challenges. For example, the church has limited investment in peace-building and reconciliation initiatives, has inadequately engaged with lay professionals and does not have long-term strategies for peace-building. This article is important for this study in that it provides a wish-list for the church in Zimbabwe as it participates in national healing and reconciliation. This study seeks to go beyond the wish-list and find out on the ground how CiM is practicing some of the suggested activities in the paper taking particular regard for women’s experiences of political violence.

In an article entitled *‘The Church in Zimbabwe’s Peace and Reconciliation Process under the Government of National Unity* (2014), Munemo and Nciizah discuss the Zimbabwean crisis since 2000. They identify some of the elements that constitute this violence which are political violence, torture, human rights abuses, inflation, unemployment among others. They note that the church has in the crisis era been pushed to the margins of the peace and reconciliation process. From their perspective, in the transitional period, the process has been dominated by institutions created by politicians like the Organ on National healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) and the Joint Monitoring Command (JOMIC). They also identify political hegemony as a major impediment to the process of national healing and reconciliation. In this case, they list the responsibilities of the church in national building some of which are the watch dog role and the strategic partner role. The two authors are of the opinion that the role of the

church in Zimbabwe in national healing and reconciliation has been compromised by its close association with Civil Society. There are challenges in the article by Munemo and Nciizah. First, they make a blanket statement that the church in Zimbabwe has been involved in the initiatives to find peace and reconciliation. This statement does not recognise that some churches and church leaders were complicit in the violence that Zimbabwe as a nation has witnessed. Moreover, the church itself has been at war perpetrating violence against members for purposes of power. This study takes cognisance of this fact and views members of churches as people who need healing within the church and society at large. Second, the authors claim that “during the transition, the church should have taken this opportunity and the largely violence free atmosphere that was prevailing to seek resolution to the major sources of conflict on the Zimbabwean political landscape” (2014:68). Such a statement seems to be divorced from the Zimbabwean context. It is a fact that violence did not stop with the transition. It is a culture that has characterised politics in Zimbabwe up to the current period. Despite these challenges, the article informs this study because it is located within the period under consideration in this study. While Munemo and Nciizah’s focus was on the church in general, this study focuses on Churches in Manicaland’s role in national healing and reconciliation from a gendered perspective. Generally, the study by Munemo and Nciizah is silent on women’s experiences of political violence and their needs in the process.

In a book chapter entitled ‘*Can Churches Contribute to post-Violence Reconciliation and Reconstruction? Insights and Applications from Northern Ireland*’ (2014), Ganiel notes correctly in her research in Ireland that Christians’ ability to act in the social and political world is constrained by social structures. As such, “transforming relationships and structures [becomes] difficult tasks, particularly in a context where Christian activists have limited political power and

diminished influence (2014:60). Ganiel further identifies religious special interest groups in Ireland as significant actors in the peace process because these operated outside the constraints of bureaucratised institutional churches. As such, they had more “freedom and flexibility to develop radical ideas, and could move more quickly to respond to immediate needs (2014:61). The strength of these groups lies in their ability to network with like-minded groups, congregations and individuals. Ganiel’s study in Ireland is crucial for the Zimbabwean context especially for CiM as one considers the reasons for its emergence. It also helps this study as it enables it to categorise CiM correctly.

Ganiel and Tarusarira in their book chapter entitled ‘*Reconciliation and reconstruction among Churches and Faith-Based Organisations in Zimbabwe*’ (2014) argue that *Gukurahundi* marked the beginning of post-independence politically motivated violence in Zimbabwe. For them “*Gukurahundi* was just the beginning of Mugabe’s betrayal of the vision for reconciliation he outlined in his independence speech” (2014:57). They identify political violence, troubled ethnic relationships, and economic collapse as the context within which Zimbabweans need to approach reconciliation. They further suggest that it is crucial that structures that support violence be transformed in the process of reconciliation. Like in Ganiel’s study in Ireland, Ganiel and Tarusarira observe that in Zimbabwe, there are also some religious groups which have been active in the process of reconciliation. Using Zimbabwe Christian Alliance (ZCA), Churches in Manicaland (CiM) and Grace to Heal (GtH) as case studies, they highlight the various activities that the religious groups are undertaking in this process. This work by Ganiel and Tarusarira is of great importance to this study because it has also acknowledged that among other religious groups, CiM is playing a significant role in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe. The research has also noted like other scholarly works that political violence among

other issues forms the basis for national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. However, Ganiel and Tarusarira have gone further to identify ethnicity as another area that needs attention in this process. The issue of ethnicity has been ignored by scholars studying political violence in Zimbabwe from 2000 to the present. The tendency has been to focus on party politics while ignoring how ethnicity may have been fuelling this violence. For this study, it would be crucial to provide a mapping of the Manicaland province looking at the various ethnicities that are in the area. The study also seeks to consolidate the work by Ganiel and Tarusarira by performing a gendered analysis of the activities of CiM in the national healing and reconciliation process, an area which the two neglected.

In his chapter *‘Religion in Times of Crisis in Zimbabwe: A Case Study of Churches in Manicaland and its Theodicy of Liberation* (2014), Tarusarira looks at the efforts of what he calls ‘religiously-inspired’ actors to transform ongoing crises in Zimbabwe. He traces the culture of violence in Zimbabwe from 1980. He also agrees with other scholars that the occurrence of political violence in Zimbabwe provides the contextual framework which makes the pursuit for political transformation imperative. In his analysis, Tarusarira argues that it is due to the weaknesses of the theodicies of mainline churches that groups such as CiM are emerging in Zimbabwe’s religio-political space. He, however, acknowledges that “as the political crisis deepened in Zimbabwe in the late 1990s, mainstream churches responded with seasonal pastoral statements that demonstrated the cognitive aspect of their theodicies” (2014:94), though, he castigates some of the pastoral letters for being “mediocre, general and predictable as a result of the church’s fear and cooption” (2014:94). It is, therefore, not surprising that such efforts left no impact on the politicians. Tarusarira further notes the emergence of politically oriented religious organisations at the dawn of the new millennium in response to socio-economic and political

instability. Using CiM as a case study, he outlines what these groups are doing in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe. Although, Tarusarira's work is insightful, it does not make a gendered analysis of CiM's activities which is the focus of this study.

In a book chapter entitled *Moral Anchors of National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration in Post-Conflict Zimbabwe* (2015), Mangena critiques the role of the church in the national healing, reconciliation and integration process in Zimbabwe from a philosophical perspective. He looks at the Organ for National healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) which was constituted after the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) in 2008 and argues that the Organ was put in place against a background of political violence that had come to define Zimbabwean politics. Although three ministers from the main political parties were mandated to lead the Organ, Mangena notices that the church in Zimbabwe was at the forefront in giving it the direction on the national healing and reconciliation process. However, he warns the church not to monopolise the process since Zimbabwe is a multi-religious society.

From Mangena's point of view, the church needs to broaden its definition of 'national framework' in order to include other stakeholders in the national healing and reconciliation process. He urges the church to embrace people from other religions such as African Traditional Religions (ATRs), Judaism and Islam in this process. Furthermore, Mangena provides the background to national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe and praises the 1980 reconciliation policy as having been the backbone of Zimbabwe's economic success because in his opinion it was anchored on the principles of *ubuntu*. He then lists the *Gukurahundi* Massacres as one of the issues that still needs attention in the national healing and reconciliation process. In order to drive his point home, Mangena then critiques the document '*Church and Civil Society Submissions: Towards Development of a National Framework for National Healing,*

Reconciliation and Integration in Zimbabwe’ which was a submission by the church to ONHRI. Taking from this document, Mangena indicates what the church says is its five-fold mandate namely: the Bible-based mandate, the Constituency-based mandate, the Community-based mandate, the Call of God-based mandate and the Constitution-based mandate. It is from some of these mandates (for example, the Article 7 of the GPA) that the church in the document argues for a leadership role in the national healing and reconciliation process though it notes that the church itself is also in need of healing. From the submissions by the church, Mangena rebuts the church’s claim to the leadership of the national healing and reconciliation process. He argues that if the church is in need of healing then it cannot be entrusted with the leadership of the process. For example, the conflict in the Anglican Church disqualifies the church from such a role. He also highlights the partisan politics by some of the church leaders of African Initiated Churches as a worrying factor which should dissuade people from allowing the church to lead the process. In this case, Mangena suggests that ONHRI should adopt the *hunhu/ubuntu* ethic as the guiding principle in the national healing and reconciliation process. He describes the ethic as having a three-pronged approach, that is, the metaphysical/spiritual approach, the dialogical approach and the consensus approach. These approaches call ONHRI to involve all key stakeholders in the process of national healing and reconciliation and these are: the church, the civil society, academics, the traditional leadership as well as the victims and perpetrators of violence. That is where the inclusive nature of *ubuntu* becomes a critical essential in the national healing and reconciliation process.

Mangena’s work is crucial for this study because it has noted various critical issues. From the onset, it has been noted that, first, in the context of violence, the national healing and reconciliation process is essential in Zimbabwe. Second, that the church is participating in the

process not as an untainted institution but acknowledges that it remains a critical stakeholder in the process. Third, it has suggested a possible tool that can be used to ensure the success of the process, which is *ubuntu*. Fourth, he makes a critical observation that after 1980, no reconciliation policy has been able to bring Zimbabweans together by effectively burying the past. Despite these strengths, the work exhibits some weaknesses. For example, Mangena's praise of the 1980 reconciliation policy does not pay attention to issues of how the policy was conceived and how it covered up and protected those that had perpetrated violence during the war. He also ignores the unique experiences of women during the war especially how the policy failed to provide women who had been sexually abused during the war with spaces for their healing. This study, therefore, critiques the 1980 reconciliation using gendered lens. It argues that the failure to recognise the weaknesses of the policy provided fertile ground for continued women's sexual abuse throughout Zimbabwe's post-colonial history and the study calls for a women-centred approach to the current national healing and reconciliation process.

2.7 The Gap

The above scholarly works provide insightful analysis of the real issues that surround the discourse on national healing and reconciliation. However, none of them have sought to provide new models in terms of their engagement with the national healing and reconciliation agenda especially in Zimbabwe. This thesis seeks to cover this gap by suggesting an alternative model (the womanist model) for the churches as they seek to play a meaningful role in the process of healing and reconciliation. Almost all the available works on this subject focusing on Zimbabwe have not brought out the womanist perspective through a gendered analysis of the activities of the church or church groups in the national healing and reconciliation process.

2.8 Conclusion

The literature reviewed in this chapter confirms that extensive research on the subjects of the history of Christianity in Zimbabwe, women and political violence as well as the role of the church in national healing and reconciliation has been carried out. This shows that the church is a critical player in the transition process after conflict. However, there is evidence that no work has been done showing how the church can utilise women's experiences of political violence in Zimbabwe in order to ensure a successful national healing and reconciliation process in the country. This is what this study seeks to do by looking at whether Churches in Manicaland (CiM) is cognisant of the above mentioned issues. The next chapter provides an overview of the history of Christianity in Zimbabwe. This is done in order to provide a mapping of churches in Zimbabwe. The chapter also shows how women's experiences are located within this history and how the church has/has not dealt with these issues. This should provide us with a basis for advocating for a women-centred approach to national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe.

Chapter 3

The History of Christianity in Zimbabwe: An Overview

3.0 Introduction

This chapter looks at the history of Christianity in Zimbabwe. As alluded to in the previous chapters, this chapter intends to provide an overview of this history as a way of providing a mapping of not only the churches as they appear in Zimbabwe, but in Manicaland Province which is the focus of the study. The purpose of such an endeavour is to bring out how Christianity came to Zimbabwe. Its intention is also to highlight the minimal visibility and/or the total invisibility of women's contributions and experiences in the history of Christianity in Zimbabwe thereby bringing out how the history of Christianity in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular is gendered. Furthermore, the chapter seeks to bring out the reality that women in Zimbabwe have always been victims of political violence and that at times the church has been complicit in this violence. As Mwaura (2007: 361) argues "gender has been a factor in missionary work" and hence it is "imperative that a gender analysis of missionary activities be done at all levels." This enables us to see how women's experiences are more often neglected in the religio-political spheres.

This chapter is important because it provides a framework within which to understand the role of the church in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe during the period under study which is 2000 to the present. However, it should be noted that doing this is a challenging task because the history of Christianity in Africa in general is complex. The reason being that Christianity did not arrive in Africa in general and in Zimbabwe in particular as a uniform entity, as it was clothed in different robes, namely, Catholicism and Protestantism. Over the years, it has taken on new forms and it continues to be regenerated. Due to this, Ukah

(2007:2) classifies Christianity in Africa into three broad categories which are: mission Christianity, African Initiated Christianity and African Pentecostalism. This chapter discusses these as they appear in the Zimbabwean context.

3.1 The Advent of Christianity in Zimbabwe

The advent of Christianity in Zimbabwe dates back to the 16th century when Goncalo da Silveira arrived at the Mutapa court. He was a Jesuit. Various reasons have been put forward to explain why Silveira was sent to the Mutapa State. For instance, the fact that Silveira's coming to the Mutapa State needs to be understood in the broader context of the history of Portuguese settlement in Southern Africa from 1505 to 1560. The main purpose for this settlement was for trade in gold and ivory. Their other intention was to expel the Arabs who were already in control of that trade. It is in this context that a mission was undertaken to the Mutapa State with the sole aim of converting the Emperor of the State. The conversion of the Emperor was very crucial to the Portuguese since they believed that once he was a Christian, he would influence his people to become Christians as well. Apart from the above, Silveira's mission was perceived as one that would benefit both Portugal and the Church of Rome. For example, Portugal would have a monopoly over trade in the Eastern Coast and its enemies (especially the Arabs) would have suffered (Mudenge 1986:5). On the other hand, the Roman Catholic Church would have widened its missionary horizons. From Ukah's perspective "the Portuguese missionaries resorted to a "church-state" model of planting Christianity by targeting local chiefs and hoping that once these chiefs have converted, their people will follow suit" (2007:3). What is evident from the above analysis is that from the onset, when Christianity came to Zimbabwe, it was closely linked with politics. However, Silveira's activities were short-lived as he was murdered at the command of

the King, after the Arab traders had influenced the King to turn against him. After Silveira's death a new Order of Catholics was sent to the Mutapa court.

Catholics of the Dominican Order arrived at the Mutapa Court in the seventeenth century. These came together with a Portuguese battalion which was dispatched by the Portuguese government to avenge Goncalo da Silveira's death. As the battalion tried to reach the Mutapa state, they perpetrated violence against those who were perceived as enemies. Hastings (1994:123) quotes Fr. Francisco Monclaro who explains that "enemies of the Christian faith, primarily Arab traders, were executed, impaled alive, torn asunder, their backs open, blasted to bits by mortars, all done in a gruesome manner, deliberately calculated 'to strike terror into the natives'". For Hastings (1994:79), the massacre of Muslims at Sena was done apparently under Jesuit encouragement." In this case, the church was complicit in this violence.

According to Verstraelen (1998:3) the Portuguese missionaries were withdrawn in 1667 because of political upheavals. The major successes of the Catholic missionaries in this period were that they were able to build some churches in Manyika (Manicaland) and Mazowe (Verstraelen 1998:3) at places such as Masapa, Dambarare, Ruhanje, Bukutu and others (Gundani 2007:153). However, most scholars are generally agreed that by the time they withdrew from the Mutapa state, the Portuguese missionaries had failed to make a visible mark on the local inhabitants in terms of spreading Christianity. Gundani (2007:156) argues that apart from the churches built "there is nothing to suggest the growth of what could possibly be called a church beyond small groups of Portuguese traders and settlers, their *mestizo* children, and the slaves that obeyed them." In the same vein, Matikiti (2012:119) argues that "although many Catholic churches were planted, they had all disappeared by the time Protestant missions arrived in the nineteenth century." The major reason for the failure has been given as the close identification of the

missionaries with the Portuguese government. Furthermore, converting emperors had one problem in that it produced a popular religion while at the grassroots level the people were not converted. The fact that the rulers embraced Christianity did not make their subjects become Christians, as was expected by the Portuguese missionaries. The emperors themselves were not genuine Christians. They got converted for political benefits, namely, to get help from Portuguese mercenaries. Furthermore, the Portuguese failed to realize how little real contact these Mutapa princes had with Christianity (Bhila 1977:31). At the end of the day, no genuine Christians could be seen in the whole empire. A second attempt to Christianise Zimbabwe was to be seen in the nineteenth century.

3.2 Nineteenth Century Mission Christianity in Zimbabwe

The 19th century marks the second phase of Christian missions in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular. This was a result of the evangelical revival in Europe which started in the 18th century. The revival spilled over into foreign lands, leading to the establishment of missionary societies. The zeal for missionary work was stimulated by the combination of evangelicalism (living according to the Gospel) with evangelism (preaching the Gospel). This kind of Christianity has been referred to as ‘Mission’ or ‘Missionary’ Christianity. Ukah (2007:3) has explained this kind of Christianity as the one that represents those churches that were established by Christian missionary agencies from Europe and America in Africa during the 18th and 19th centuries. In the first twenty years of colonialism, twenty different missionary groups established themselves in Zimbabwe. In order for these churches to avoid competing for converts, the Southern Rhodesia Missionary Conference was held in 1903 with the aim of defining spheres of influence for each church so that each denomination would be restricted to one area within the country for evangelism. These boundaries were blurred after Zimbabwe’s

independence such that mainline church missionaries were free to establish their churches across the country. While several Christian missions were established in Zimbabwe during this time, this study will restrict itself to looking at those it considers to be the major ones and which will form part of the discussion of the Churches in Manicaland, which is the focus of the study. As one analyses the distribution of the mission churches in Zimbabwe one would find that they were much concentrated in Manicaland. The possible explanation for this is that “the density of such missions in the eastern highlands of Manicaland suggests a company objective [BSAC] to create a buffer along the initially contested border with the Portuguese in Mozambique” (Wuthnow 1998:802).

3.2.1 Catholicism

The Jesuits arrived in Matabeleland led by Fr Prestage in 1879, well after the LMS were already there (Vestraelen 1998:3). It was actually the LMS missionaries (see 3.2.2) who introduced them to Lobengula who invited them to settle near his royal court. From his viewpoint, they were useful as technicians. Baur (1994:202) says Lobengula found the Jesuits excellent at repairing his ox-wagons and liked the Father-in-charge for his medical skills. He, however, objected to the establishment of any Jesuit mission. When Lobengula later moved with his people to a new site, the Jesuits left and went on “exploratory tours” (Baur 1994:202). Quite a number of them died from malaria. Those that survived withdrew from Matabeleland in 1885. Fr Prestage came back to Matabeleland in 1887 and was given permission by Lobengula to establish a mission station at Empandeni. Fr Prestage returned to South Africa only to come back to Zimbabwe as a chaplain of the Pioneer Column.

The Jesuits failed to convert the Ndebele to Christianity despite their earlier convictions that the Ndebele would make excellent Christians. Most of the reasons for this failure are similar to those

that are discussed under the LMS below. However, there are some that are peculiar to their Order. For example, the Jesuits involved themselves in hunting to such great levels that it almost became their co-business in Matabeleland. Depelchin, one of the Jesuits missionaries, warned his colleagues that if they were to be successful in saving souls, they had to abandon and avoid hunting because it was diverting their attention and consuming their energies (Bhila 1977:37).

These challenges encountered by the missionaries in their bid to evangelise Matabeleland led them to the conviction that the political system of the Ndebele had to be destroyed if they were to make any breakthrough. Missionaries like Fr Prestage even suggested the use of force against the Ndebele. In 1883 Fr Prestage said, “until the Matebeles are put down by brute force.....they will never improve.” (Zvobgo, 1996:6-7). The LMS missionaries shared the same sentiments. They later discovered that they needed the support of secular power if the evangelisation of Matabeleland was to succeed. Hence, they formed an informal alliance with the B.S.A. Company in which they were to prioritise each other’s interests in Matabeleland. When in 1893 the Anglo-Ndebele war broke out most missionaries celebrated the demise of the Ndebele state (Zvobgo 1996:7). The Anglo-Ndebele war serves to show that the colonisation of Zimbabwe was punctuated by violent scenes and that Christianity has always been part and parcel of the political violence that Zimbabwe has witnessed since the colonial times. Irrespective of the effects of the war on the Ndebele state especially on women and children, most missionaries saw an opportunity for the evangelisation of Matabeleland in that state of fear and intimidation. It is, however, striking that records on the war even those produced by Christian missionaries are silent on how the various social groups in Matabeleland were affected by the war in their different capacities. The assumption could have been that social groups in communities are

affected by conflict in the same manner; an assumption which could have led to the silence on how women were affected by war.

In Mashonaland, the Jesuits started a mission under the leadership of Fr Hartmann who arrived with the Pioneer Column. After accompanying the Pioneer Column in 1890, the Jesuits settled at Chishawasha where Rhodes gave them a 12,000 acre plot. In 1895, they witnessed their first converts. According to Zvobgo (1996:13), it was consoling to the Fathers and Brothers [of the Catholic Church] who had for nearly three years laboured without a single convert in Mashonaland to publicly make converts of the church. After the 1896-97 rebellion, the Jesuits increased their mission stations around Zimbabwe. Some major stations which they opened were Kutama mission in Mashonaland West, Muzondo mission which was later moved to Gokomere Mission in Masvingo Province. They opened schools at almost every mission station. Apart from the Jesuit missionaries, other Catholic Orders such as the Dominican Sister and Catholics of the Trappist order also evangelised other parts of Mashonaland and Manicaland, opening missions, hospitals and schools.

3.2.2 Protestantism

Protestant Christianity was introduced to Zimbabwe in the nineteenth century. The London Missionary Society was the first to engage in missionary work in Matabeleland (Matikiti 2012:119). In 1859, through the influence of Robert Moffat, Mzilikazi granted the society permission to build a mission station at Inyati. A second mission was established in 1870 at Hope Fountain.

Though many Ndebele people showed interest in hearing the preaching of the Gospel, no convert was made by 1887. Montagu Kerr quoted by Bhila (1977:32) said after 25 years of preaching, “there are no converts to the faith of our fathers.” This could be attributed to a number of

reasons: Firstly, the people were probably afraid of being taken to task by the king who expected them to strictly follow the customs of the Ndebele, failure of which one would be accused of witchcraft and eventually put to death. Secondly, the LMS missionaries attacked polygamy without necessarily considering its centrality to Ndebele culture. Bhebe quoted in Baur (1994:202) says Mzilikazi once said “We Matebele like many wives.” This clearly brings out the pride the Ndebele had in their polygamous culture. Thus, the failure by the missionaries to appreciate this meant that their missionary work was negatively affected. Thirdly, the Ndebele always suspected the missionaries. In this case, it is important to note that there has always existed a suspicious relationship between the church and those in political leadership. For example, the missionaries were blamed for all the calamities that befell the Ndebele (one of the causes of the 1893 Anglo-Ndebele war). The situation was compounded after the signing of the Rudd Concession. The LMS missionary, Charles D. Helm had encouraged King Lobengula to sign the treaty greatly assuring him that his authority was by no means being put under threat. However, Rhodes’ opponents clarified the contents of the treaty to the king after which it was discovered that Helm had lied. Such betrayal of trust infuriated Lobengula and fearing for their lives, the LMS missionaries temporarily withdrew from Matabeleland in 1889.

The LMS missionaries, like their predecessors (i.e. the Jesuits and Dominicans), involved themselves in trade and closely associated with white settlers. For example, during the signing of the Rudd concession, Moffat acted as an advisor to the settlers while Helm and Carnegie interpreted. This dual role of the missionaries as salesmen of the word of God and traders created confusion in the minds of Mzilikazi and his successors. Mzilikazi always thought of Robert Moffat as the leader of the traders and not as a missionary (Bhila 1977:34). This difficulty in making a distinction between ‘the preacher of the Gospel’ and the trader also created doubts in

the minds of the general Ndebele populace about the intentions of the missionaries. As a result, they encouraged Lobengula to expel the missionaries from their kingdom. However, having realised that he could benefit from the technical expertise of the white missionaries, (especially in the area of repairing guns) he refused to banish them from his kingdom.

Bhila (1977:38) is of the opinion that the LMS missionaries were not mentally equipped to deal with the Africans. They did not study the psychology of the Ndebele. As a result, unnecessary tensions arose. For example, Mzilikazi objected to the Christian teaching of the missionaries which called on his people to respect their fathers as well as their mothers. From his perspective, no woman was worth of any respect (this is representative of the general traditional attitudes of the time which at times find themselves replicated in some Zimbabwean communities today). He also objected to the missionaries' teaching about all men being equal before God. He did not want to be treated in the same way as his subjects. This kind of attitude resonates very well with the current scenario in Zimbabwe where the current leaders feel they are above not only the people, but even the law itself.

There were many other areas where Christian principles clashed with Ndebele traditional customs, but the missionaries failed to compromise. They were determined to uproot and destroy these customs and beliefs with the 'power of the Gospel.' They underestimated the influence which these beliefs and customs had on the Ndebele. This paternalism led many Ndebele people to resent the missionaries since they could not tolerate the condemnation of their traditional ways of life. Paradoxically, the missionaries had different views as to why their mission did not yield any fruit after so many years of labour. From their perspective, the Ndebele were "deaf and blind to persuasion" (Bhila 1977:38). This clearly shows that the missionaries thought that they were superior to Africans. Thus, their mission was doomed to fail.

3.2.2.1 Methodism

Methodism is important for this study because it is very prominent in Manicaland. In Zimbabwe, Methodism came in two forms, namely, the Wesleyan Methodists from Europe and the United Methodists from North America. While Wesleyan Methodism was dominant in Mashonaland, the United Methodists were dominant in Manicaland. The Wesleyan Methodist missions in Mashonaland were founded by Owen Watkins and Isaac Shimmin. The missions were sponsored by the B.S.A. Company. Rhodes gave them large tracts of land on which to build their mission stations. Churches were later built at Hartleyton and Harare (Salisbury). In 1892, Epworth, Nenguwo and Kwenda mission stations were established. African evangelists who had come from the Transvaal and Cape Colony were deployed at these mission stations. In 1893 and 1894 they founded the Gwai River and Bulawayo stations respectively, while Tegwani was established in 1897 (Zvobgo 1973:63). Hartleyton and Nenguwo (Waddilove) mission stations were destroyed during the 1896-97 Shona Uprisings. They were rebuilt after the uprisings were suppressed and new mission stations were established at Gweru, Shurugwi, Chemhanza, Kadoma, Sandringham, Chegutu and Pakame (Zvobgo 1973:63). In addition to these major stations, smaller stations were established from which the Wesleyans would evangelise to both Europeans and Africans.

In their efforts to evangelise the communities in Mashonaland, the Wesleyan Methodists encountered quite a number of difficulties. The first challenge was that of Lobengula resisting the establishment of Christian missions among the Shona whom he regarded as his subjects. The second challenge was the failure by missionaries to understand Shona society. They were very prejudicial and assumed that the Shona did not have a religion at all and that their conception of

god was vague. From their perspective this would make the Shona more readily accept the new faith. This is evidenced by Shimmin's words when he said:

“the more I see of the natives, the more do I rejoice at the possibilities before us. They are in most deplorable ignorance of all true religion, but judging from appearances, they are likely to make sound and intelligent Christian believers”
(Zvobgo1973:64).

This shows the extent to which the missionaries underestimated the strength of African Traditional Religion(s) among the Shona. Zvobgo (1991:30) argues that “Shimmin did not realise that the traditional religion appealed very strongly to ordinary Shona.” The result was that the local leaders opposed the new faith when they discovered that it undermined their religious beliefs. Furthermore, the white settlers were against the idea of Africans becoming Christians. They strongly believed that Africans were not fit for Christian salvation.

In order to deal with these difficulties, the Wesleyan Methodists decided to change their evangelisation strategy. They adopted a new strategy in which they would first convert chiefs to Christianity. One of the notable chiefs to be converted was Chief Chiremba of Epworth. Up to today (2015), Epworth remains one of the powerful centres of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe.

Furthermore, the *Ruwadzano/Manyano* Movement was formed as a way of ensuring the active participation of women in the process of evangelisation. The Movement started as the African Women's Prayer Union in South Africa and was later introduced in Zimbabwe. These women were pivotal in the growth of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. The success of this Women's movement later led to the formation of other unions such as the Girls' Christian Union (GCU), the Men's Christian Union (MCU) and the Boys Christian Union (BCU). This ensured that all members in their congregations took an active part in evangelisation. The influence of this movement is seen in that most, if not all, mainline churches embraced it. Through the ecumenical

initiative, different Protestant churches now come together to hold combined women's meetings which are commonly referred to as *Mubatanidzwa weMadzimai*. Such meetings are important in that they blur the differences that are brought out by denominationalism and are proof to the fact that women have the agency to work together irrespective of their religious affiliations. When correctly utilised, such spaces can become useful for the healing and reconciliation of those that are brutalised by political violence. The mere fact that these groups are successful shows that when given the opportunity, women are capable leaders and churches need to take cognisance of their presence and abilities.

Missionaries of the United Methodist Church came from America and arrived in Manicaland in 1897 led by Bishop J. Hartzell. Rhodes granted them 13,000 acres of land and they also took over some buildings of the B.S.A.C. Zvobgo (1996:72) says these land grants were granted on condition that the church would build a school for European children and an industrial mission for the local blacks. The following missionaries were instrumental for the United Methodists: "Morris. W Ehnes and his wife, M.H. Reid, Mrs. James L. Dewitt. Mrs Anna Arndt, Herman Heinkel, A.C. Hammett, and Alice J. Springer, Harriette. E. Johnson, Mrs Helen E. Rasmussen, George. M. Odium, Mr and Mrs. Robert Wodehouse and R. Emory Beetham" (Copplestone (1973:17). The establishment of mission stations in Manicaland by the United Methodists was applauded by officials of the BSA Company. After applying for some land from the Company, the Administrator, Earl Grey responded to Hartzell in 1898:

"My colleagues and I view with great satisfaction your desire to establish an important centre for your church in Rhodesian territory. We heartily welcome the cooperation of your countrymen; and are particularly glad to receive your assurances that it is the wish of the United States to take an active part with England in her endeavour to establish the rules and security of Anglo-saxon civilisation in territories which have hitherto been submerged by barbarism" (Copplestone 1973:16).

Following this response, land was allocated to the church. In the following years the United Methodists opened other mission stations; some of the major ones being Mutambara Mission (1905) in Manicaland, Murewa Mission (1909), Mutoko Mission (1911) and Nyadiri Mission (1923) in Mashonaland East province (Zvobgo 1996:74-75).

A school was started by the missionaries at Old Umtali (Mutare). For the United Methodist missionaries, education was very important because it would ensure the success of their mission. It was a vital tool of evangelisation and also a means of training Christian leaders. Later a Girls' school was started under the care of the Women's Foreign Ministry (Zvobgo 1996:73). The introduction of education to girls in Manicaland was initially unpopular. Most parents resisted because they feared that the educated girls would refuse to accept marriage to polygamists. However, girls' enrolment at the Girls' school increased as more and more girls ran away from arranged marriages. Copplestone (1973:51) reveals that

“At first, almost all the girls in the school were runaways from home who were trying to escape from the imposition of marriage agreements made for them by their families. The voluntary marriage law was no protection to them until they decisively resisted the severe pressures forcing them towards marriage. Outraged parents and disappointed holders of broken marriage contracts still kept storming into Old Umtali to persuade or coerce the girls, if they could, to come away. Some girls gave in, some did not. In some cases, the school thought it best to relinquish the girls, either because they actually had been married previously or because their being allowed to remain at Mt Hartzell would create such opposition to missionary work among the kraals.”

Despite these impediments, more and more girls came to the school. The acceptance of these girls at Old Umtali should be understood within the wider context of women empowerment. These girls took the first initiative to challenge the Shona custom of forced marriages. In this case, education became a liberating tool for these girls from the pangs of a culture that had for so long oppressed them. As Copplestone (1973:51) concludes, “this tension over the marriage question marked the Girls' school as the only wing of the Southern Rhodesian mission that was

in direct and specific conflict with a deeply rooted and important practice in African community life.” Most of the girls who were educated at the school were married to the young African evangelists and teachers who were manning the Mission’s multiplying stations. As for them, it was a great victory since they were able to get married to the men of their choice (Maxwell 1999:51).

3.2.2.2 Anglicanism

Like Methodism, the Anglican Church had great influence in Manicaland when Protestant Christianity was introduced and it remains one of the strongest churches in the province. The first Anglican bishop in Zimbabwe was George Knight-Bruce. He was given permission to tour Mashonaland by Lobengula in 1888. In 1890, he sent Canon Balfour to Mashonaland with the task of building churches for future converts. Knight-Bruce came to Manicaland in 1891 and settled in Mutare. The expenses of the Anglican missions among the Shona were funded by Cecil John Rhodes to the tune of 600 pounds. Bishop Knight-Bruce founded St Augustine mission near Penhalonga.

By the end of 1891, five evangelists among them Bernard Mizeki and Frank Ziqubu were already working at Mangwende and Makoni respectively (Atkinson 1973:88). Another Anglican missionary, Douglas Pelly arrived in Zimbabwe in 1892. As time went on the number of white settlers grew and it became imperative for the missionaries to minister to Africans as well as Europeans. This called for more human and financial resources.

In the field of education the Anglican missionaries sought to establish schools which would teach Anglican beliefs. This plan did not succeed because the Anglicans encountered various challenges among them shortage of teachers, non-availability of finances to pay their workers and poor living conditions. Like the problems faced by the Wesleyan Methodists in

Mashonaland, they encountered hostile attitudes from the white settlers who believed that investing in education for Africans was a sheer waste of resources. Despite these challenges Bishop Gaul, the second bishop of Mashonaland was determined to see the project succeeding. He called for more teachers. It is in this context that one should understand the establishment of St Augustine and St Faith Boys schools in Manicaland. In 1904 a girls' school was established at St Monica (Zvobgo 1996:76).

3.2.2.3 Reformed Church in Zimbabwe

The Dutch Reformed Church missionaries arrived in Southern Zimbabwe in 1891 being led by A.A. Louw. According to Baur (1994), they were the large majority of settlers who came with Rhodes. They stationed themselves at Mugabe's mountains and founded Morgenster Mission. Dr. Jameson gave them land on which to build their mission.

After the 1896-97 Ndebele-Shona Uprisings the Dutch Reformed Church expanded their work in Mashonaland where they opened several mission stations. After establishing these missions, the Dutch Reformed Church moved on to the area of education. Their aim was to teach the converts to read the Bible. The local language was very crucial to the Dutch Reformed Church, thus, they encouraged the production of materials in the vernacular. For example, their monthly magazine, *Munyai Washe* was used in their classes. They started a training school for training evangelist-teachers at Morgenster in 1911 (Zvobgo 1996:4). This was critical as it empowered the black African to take the responsibility of spreading the gospel.

3.2.2.4 Salvation Army

The Salvation Army arrived in Zimbabwe from South Africa in November 1891. The Salvation Army team comprised Major John Pascoe, his wife and two daughters, and Captains David Crook, Edward Cass, Bob Scott, Edgar Mahon and Theodore Searle (Mudorch 2015:9). They

were given 3,000 acres farm in the Mazoe area by Jameson. They later moved to Nyachuru where they established Howard Institute (Zvobgo 1996:5). The purpose for the Salvation Army to come to Zimbabwe was not to convert Africans but to concentrate their energies on preaching to white South Africans who had come to Mashonaland as gold miners (Mudorch, 2015:9). According to Mudorch (2015:15), “throughout the colonial era the Salvation Army, like other Christian missions, lobbied for land grants and cash subsidies to run its schools and hospitals.” Thus, apart from receiving land in Mashonaland from the government, the church also received land in other parts of the country including Manicaland. This has led Mudorch (2015:15) to conclude that

“The Salvation Army and other missions became part of the colony’s governing apparatus that ensured domestic tranquility, the acquiring of BSAC profits, and the cultural enterprise that Rhodesians termed the cultivation of “Western civilisation” among the Africans. All of this would be done at the expense of such unfair treatment of Africans as forced labour in mines and on farms, and the denial of land ownership and of political and legal rights. Neither the Salvation Army nor Rhodesian government down to 1980 sought the advice of Africans in matters of state and church polity.”

3.2.2.5 United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe

The United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe (UCCZ) was founded in 1893 by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) which was instituted in the United States of America in 1810. Like other missionary societies, the ABCFM was given large areas of land by the BSAC on which to build their mission (Matikiti, 2012:125) and its major area of operation was in Manicaland. The church remains strong in the Chipinge area. Most of the land that was allocated to the ABCFM was far away from the capital city and in Matikiti’s point of view, the major reason for this was that government was suspicious that churches from America were too political and were bound to be revolutionary. Their major mission stations were established in

Mutare at Mt Selinda and Chikore Mission. The ABCFM was renamed the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe (UCCZ) after the independence of Zimbabwe.

3.2.2.6 The Seventh Day Adventists

Missionaries for this church arrived in Bulawayo from the United States of America in 1894 and Rhodes granted them a 12,000 acre farm at Solusi. Missionaries who were instrumental in the Zimbabwean mission were Elder and Mrs G.B. Tripp, Mr and Mrs W.H. Anderson and Dr. A.S. Carmichael (Zvobgo 1996:11). The church later opened a station at Nyazura in the Manicaland Province. Their educational activities were concentrated at Solusi where they started a boarding school. The school curriculum offered both academic as well as practical subjects. Girls at the school were trained in sewing and basket-weaving while the boys were taught ploughing, planting, reaping and cattle rearing.

3.2.2.7 Church of Sweden

Before coming to Zimbabwe the Church of Sweden (CSM) already had mission stations in South Africa. Their coming to Zimbabwe was driven by the desire to open new missions in other areas. Pastors of the CSM had received information from the Jesuits in Matabeleland that no other missionary church was operating in the Mberengwa district. It was then decided that Reverend A.R. Kempe would stay in Zimbabwe and start the CSM mission. This was however, postponed due to the Boer war as well as the emergence of other commitments in South Africa. In 1902, Axel Liljestrand and Adolf Hellden were commissioned to Zimbabwe. They were accompanied by an African Zulu evangelist, Jeremias Makubu. Makubu died of malaria in Shurugwi. Other missionaries who later came to Zimbabwe faced the same challenges. Mrs Hellden died of malaria in 1903 and later in 1908 Liljestrand died from the same disease. The CSM was greatly affected by various illnesses amongst its staff (Soderstrom 1974:32). Apart from the problem of

malaria, the missionaries also encountered language problems. They spoke Zulu and had to learn *chikaranga*. One of the missionaries, Joseph Othenius who had arrived in Mberengwa in 1913 translated parts of the Swedish Handbook to *Karanga* dialect, the Lutheran small catechism as well as Biblical History. This work was continued when another missionary, Mrs Elisabet Bernander came to Mberengwa in 1923. The Swedes also sent their staff for language studies at Morgenster Mission which was run by the Dutch Reformed Church. They could also use material that had already been translated to Shona by the DRC. The use of African evangelists helped in dealing with the language barriers. The African evangelists also continued to evangelise when the Swedish missionaries fell sick and on a number of occasions, had to seek medical attention either in South Africa or in Sweden. Missionaries of the Church of Sweden made contributions in the area of health and education.

3.3 Christian Missions and the Ndebele-Shona Uprising (1896-1897)

The Ndebele-Shona uprising enables us to reflect on the historical involvement of the church in political violence in Zimbabwe as well as the gendered nature of the violence that followed the uprising. However, most historical accounts have been silent on how women experienced the uprising. To this end, Schmidt (1996:36) is worried about the silence of gender in the historical accounts that have been given on the causes, organisation, and consequences of the Ndebele-Shona uprising. While some may see the worry as misplaced especially considering that the society we are dealing with at this point in time was not gender-sensitive, the researcher agrees with Schmidt because women have always been part of the history from which they have been excluded. It is the masculinisation of history that we should interrogate as we seek to understand the uprisings in general.

The Ndebele and the Shona rose up against the white colonisers in 1896. The Ndebele were the first to revolt in March 1896 while the Shona followed suit in June 1896. A detailed discussion of the causes of these uprisings is beyond the scope of this study, but it suffices only to mention that among other things the Ndebele and the Shona interpreted the problems they were facing as punishment from their ancestors for allowing the Europeans to settle in Matabeleland and Mashonaland. Hence, they thought it was their religious duty to drive these white settlers away. However, there is one cause which is critical for this thesis which led particularly the Shona to revolt. This cause relates to the sexual abuse that was experienced by women at the hands of both the white coloniser and the colonised black men. Probably one of the most graphic incidents which deserve mention is the one that occurred in 1895 in Lomagundi district. Zvobgo (1991:42) says a Native Commissioner went to a nearby kraal and threatened to burn it down if his demands were not met. He then took the Chief's daughter and sexually abused her. He was reported to the Acting Administrator at the insistence of John White, the white Methodist missionary (we see here some missionaries standing up to condemn some of the injustices that were committed by their white colleagues). He was tried by a judge and found guilty and was deported to Europe. However, what is surprising is that when the Shona rose up against the whites, Zvobgo (1991:42) reports that the former Native Commissioner who had abused the chief's daughter had returned and was made the captain of a force that was sent to punish the local people. He was only relieved of his duties after White protested, but not without him being threatened with death. This incident provides a mirror through which one can view and understand Zimbabwean society today. It enables us to see where the culture of impunity came from, as well as where the practice of rewarding those that perpetrate violence against women was born. It is also refreshing to note that some 'men of the cloth' did not turn a blind eye to

these abuses but stood up to condemn them and also to seek justice on their behalf. Such courage can act as a reference point for the clergy in Zimbabwe today as they seek to stand by the most vulnerable groups in society like women and children in the national healing and reconciliation process.

Furthermore, Zvobgo reports that the black policemen who were recruited by the colonial government also took part in the sexual abuse of black women. He says

“The Mashonaland Native Police not only actively oppressed the people but also raped women. The reputation of these representatives of official justice had become so evil that their arrival at a kraal was the occasion of the worst alarms” (1991:43).

In Matabeleland, Ndebele headman quoted in Schmidt (1996:37) argued that “it was the African police who ravished their daughters” through rape and other forms of sexual abuse. The recording of such violations of women’s bodies is significant since we find its recurrence throughout Zimbabwe’s history to the present epoch.

It is the rebellion of the Shona that took the white settlers by surprise, probably because for the Ndebele they had fought in the Anglo-Ndebele War of 1893. They had for a long time regarded the Shona as cowards whom they had defended from further Ndebele raids during the 1893 Anglo-Ndebele war. Thus, they had underestimated what the Shona were capable of. This contemptuous attitude towards the Shona was widely shared by many missionaries and white settlers in Mashonaland. For example, the missionaries at Chishawasha did not believe the school boys who warned them of the impending rebellion. John White sums up their attitude when he said, “that the Mashona have risen at all is a big wonder, but that they should fight with such determination after the reverses they have had is even a bigger surprise.” (Zvobgo 1996:39). This clearly shows that the missionaries were greatly shocked with the resilience that was exhibited by the Shona during this war. Schmidt (1996:36) argues that

“Colonial stereotyping had characterised the Ndebele as fierce and war-like, the brave if loathsome descendants of Shaka’s Zulus. The Shona, on the other hand were considered a cowardly and abject people, who for several decades previously had been terrorised and subjugated by their Ndebele neighbours.”

The Shona proved in no uncertain terms that they were not just the trembling cowards as the Ndebele had made them appear but called by their God, they had even dared to attack the powerful foreigners (Baur 1994). Samkange and Samkange (1980:57) revealed that “the uprising was organised and brilliantly masterminded by the spirit mediums” chief among them, Mbuya Nehanda.

During the war, missionaries were active participants especially fighting against the African forces who were viewed as ‘rebels’. They saw the necessity of secular power if they were to succeed in the evangelisation of Zimbabwe. According to Zvobgo (1980:21) “all the [missionaries] were anxious to see the country colonised and white power established because this would provide them with the political protection they needed in an area in which many of them had failed to operate in the past due to the hostile attitude of African chiefs towards missionaries.” Hence, during the war, they were prepared to defend their mission stations. For example, after getting news of the Shona Uprising, the missionaries at Chishawasha refused to move to Harare (Salisbury), but sought government permission to remain at the station and were prepared to defend themselves. After they successfully defended Chishawasha, the missionaries went and joined the army in Harare (Salisbury). In order to be able to defend themselves, quite a number of missionaries allowed their mission stations to be used as centres of intelligence by the government. This is an indication that the missionaries cooperated with the state and played an active part in thwarting the ‘rebellion’. A Wesleyan Methodist missionary was quoted by Zvobgo (1980:23) saying “that the missionaries cooperated with the company in crushing African

resistance because this would eliminate the “heathen and tyrannous native rule” and enable the churches to operate under “a civilised and Christian government.”

Some missionaries acted as chaplains of the army during the Uprising. For example, Fr Biehler and Fr Pelly accompanied the regiments that were in their charge wherever they went and ministered to them (in other words, they were condoning the violence that was taking place). Apart from ministering to the troops, the missionaries took part in the capturing of cattle which belonged to the blacks and they also participated in burning their huts. This made the local people fail to distinguish between the white colonisers and the ‘men of the cloth.’ This practice of destroying property of a perceived enemy has become part of Zimbabwean politics to this day. From the African’s perspective the missionaries were working hand in glove with the colonial regime. Zvobgo (1980:23) summarises the scenario aptly in the following words:

“The role of the missionaries in the colonisation process made them initially unwelcome amongst most Africans and seriously undermined the acceptability of their missionary work. They were regarded as part of the colonial machinery and, consequently, during the revolt, mission stations, missionaries themselves and those loyal to them were attacked by African forces. The attack against the churches was so violent that missionary work almost came to a halt.”

Christian missions were, however, adversely affected by the rebellion. Some missionaries lost their lives. For example, a Salvation Army missionary was killed in Mazoe (Zvobgo 1991:55). The Anglican Church lost the most famous martyr, Bernard Mizeki (up to now Anglicans have a day to remember the death of this man). The Wesleyan Methodist mission stations at Hartleyton and Nenguwo were destroyed and the African evangelists who were manning these stations were killed. These were Molimile Molele at Nenguwo and James Anta at Hartleyton. Molimile Molele’s wife’s experience during this catastrophe is worth mentioning because it reveals the kinds of political violence that women experience. According to Zvobgo (1991:55), her husband, Molimile Molele, was killed while trying to serve his friend, James White who had been

wounded by the Shona fighters. Not only was her husband killed, but also one of her three children. This woman, together with her remaining two children, hid from the fighters for a week surviving on pumpkins. She had to travel to Harare on foot, a distance which covers several kilometers. This woman suffered the trauma of losing her husband and child, of witnessing the killings that were occurring on either side of the fighting as well as of trying to find ways of escaping from the violence. Several questions can be asked here: Why was her husband killed? Was it a crime to help a wounded perceived 'enemy'? Was it really necessary to also kill the innocent children? Would it not have been fair to simply warn Molele and allow him to go? It is such questions that the study continues to ask as it analyses the violence that have so much become endemic in Zimbabwean society today especially violence that has failed to recognise the importance of the safety of women.

Lyons (2004:70) cites the *Zambezi Mission Records* which reveal that women in Chishawasha played an active role during the uprising and a large number of them were seen after the war had broken out, driving away mission cattle, which had been grazing at the foot of a hill close by. Missionaries had to fire some shots for them to leave the cattle but still they went away with about forty herd of cattle. When the colonial soldiers came to retaliate, they captured livestock and some girls. At times women were also captured so that they could give out information about their men who were fighting in the war. Schmidt (1996:39) cites the Rhodesian Herald which revealed that the soldiers killed the headman and three of his male colleagues, while capturing four women from whom they intended to get information on the uprising but they failed. Lyons (2004:71) argues that “women were being used as hostages and pawns by the missionaries and colonial officials, despite their “civilising” objections to the Shona and Ndebele practice of hostage taking.” We, therefore, find that the practice of capturing women as a way of forcing

political opponents to surrender which has become prevalent in Zimbabwean politics has a long history which can be traced back to the colonial era.

Missionaries played a pivotal role in bringing the Shona uprising to an end. In 1897, Rev John White successfully persuaded the people of Nenguwo to surrender to the Government (Zvobgo 1996:42). Missionaries at Chishawasha also mediated between the Government and the rebels. When it was time for the religious leaders who had led the rebellions to be executed, Fr Richartz prepared Kaguvi, Mashonganyika and Muzambi for their death. He baptised them before their executions.

After the uprisings, many Shonas were converted to Christianity. For example, there was an increase in the number of those who came for instruction at Chishawasha Mission. This was enhanced by the drought that followed soon after the uprisings. Many Africans were forced to seek food at mission stations. As a result, many of them got converted. Moreover, after their defeat both the Shona and the Ndebele realised that their only way out was to embrace the way of the Europeans. Thus, they sent their children to mission schools. At these mission schools it was a requirement that students be full members of the various churches that were in charge. This ensured an increase in the number of people that got converted to Christianity. At the time, when mission Christianity was flourishing in Zimbabwe, another form which is Pentecostalism found its way into Zimbabwe. The next section takes a closer look at Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe.

3.4 Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism is a global phenomenon (Achunike 2004:52) which has rapidly become one of the most prominent and influential religious movements across Africa (Anderson, 2013:180) and Zimbabwe is no exception. Hence, it warrants scholarly analysis. According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2007:340), “Pentecostalism” may be understood as that stream of Christianity that emphasises

personal salvation in Christ as a transformative experience wrought by the Holy Spirit; and in which such pneumatic phenomena as “speaking in tongues”, prophecies, visions, healing, miracles, and signs and wonders in general, are sought, accepted, valued, and consciously encouraged among members as evidence of the active presence of God’s Spirit.” Pentecostal Christianity has been referred to as charismatic and sometimes as fundamentalist due to its insistence on the literal translation of the Bible (Maxwell, 2008: 403). This kind of Christianity according to van Dijk (2001:217) “is very much the product of transnational and trans-cultural modernity.” From his perspective, Pentecostalism in modern African societies is both a debate within modernity as well as a discourse on modernity. Achunike (2004:18) asserts that the demographic picture of Pentecostals the world over has been very impressive and that their massive growth is a force to reckon with. Thus, subjecting Pentecostalism to scholarly analysis helps overcome the parochialism of certain perspectives on religion in the era of globalisation (Freston 2001:196). Anderson (2013: 180) sees the birth of Pentecostalism in Africa as a result of the influence of African Initiated Churches. This is highly debatable because there are other scholars like Togarasei (2005:350) who hold the view that African Initiated Churches emerged as a result of the influence of Pentecostalism. Either way, these two forms of Christianity have influenced each other.

Pentecostal movements are classified into various forms. For example, the *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* cited in Yong (2005:18) identify three types of Pentecostalism’s in the 20th Century. These are: a. The classical Pentecostal movement connected to the Azusa Street revival in 1906-1909; b. the charismatic-renewal movement in the mainline Protestant, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic churches beginning in the 1960s; and c. a neo-charismatic “catch all” category that comprises independent, indigenous, post

denominational groups that cannot be classified as either Pentecostal or charismatic but share a common emphasis on the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts, Pentecostal like experiences, signs and wonders and power encounters. These types are well represented in Zimbabwe as confirmed by Togarasei (forthcoming). Togarasei classifies Pentecostal churches especially in Zimbabwe into two types, namely, classical and Modern Pentecostal Churches (MPCs). Togarasei distinguishes modern pentecostalism from the classical version of the 1920s in that it attracts the urban middle class, the elite and the fairly educated into its fold.

In Southern Africa, Pentecostalism was first introduced in South Africa. Kalu (2008:207) posits that in “1908, one of the beneficiaries of Dowie’s healing ministry, J.G. Lake, went on a mission to South Africa where he founded the Apostolic Faith Mission.” The Pentecostal phenomenon in Zimbabwe dates back to the pre-independence era. Pentecostal churches like the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe (AFM), Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA) and many others were formed then. For years, Pentecostals were a weird form of Christianity and were always looked down upon. They were usually referred to as ‘*chechi dzemweya*’ (churches of the spirit) or ‘*chechi dzevanochema*’ (churches of those that cry). However, in the current epoch, Pentecostalism is fast emerging as a dominant brand of Christianity in Zimbabwe. Togarasei (forthcoming) says that Christian historians are now agreed that Pentecostalism was introduced in Zimbabwe in 1915 by Zacharias Manamela who was a migrant worker in South Africa and first preached in Shurugwi. However, there are other accounts which point to Paul Kruger as having been instrumental in bringing the Apostolic Faith Church to Zimbabwe. As a result, in its formative stages, AFM was referred to as *Chechi yekwaKruger* (Kruger’s Church). His first converts were Chiumbu, Masembe and Gwanzura Brothers (Petros, Enock, John, Ezekiel and

Samson), Mutemererwa, Mashavave, Mugodhi, Kupara who became pioneer pastors and evangelists in the church (Machingura, 2011:21). Of these, Mugodhi later seceded from AFM to form an African Initiated Church called Mugodhi Apostolic Church. There are also other Pentecostal churches that were born out of AFM in Zimbabwe. One of these churches is the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA). According to Maxwell (1998:351) “the movement was founded by a group of young Pentecostal Turks- Ezekiel Guti, Abel Sande, George Chikowa, Joseph Choto, Raphael Kupara, Kennedy Manjova, Clement Kaseke, Lazarus Mamvura, Aaron Muchengeti, Priscilla Ngoma, Caleb Ngorima- when they were expelled from the South African derived Apostolic Faith Mission in 1959 following a struggle with missionaries.” After their expulsion the group found support from Nicholas Bhengu’s South African Assemblies of God as well as the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. When in 1967 relations with these associates soured, Guti and friends moved on to form ZAOGA (Maxwell 2002:252). In the 1980s, Guti elbowed out ZAOGA’s co-founders in scenes that at times were very violent. In 1984, Cuthbert Makoni and Raphael Kupara moved out of ZAOGA followed by Joseph Choto and Abel Sande in 1988 (Maxwell, 2002:317). Along the years, there were also churches that were formed by former ZAOGA members. For example, Bartholomew Manjoro started the Faith World Ministries in 1992 and Richard Chiundiza formed the Glad Tidings Church in 1995. Pentecostal churches continue to be formed in Zimbabwe with some becoming prominent while others remain on the margins.

While some Pentecostal churches seceded from other Pentecostal churches, there are some which broke away from protestant churches. For example, Andrew Wutawunashe formed his Family of God Church from the Dutch Reformed Church in Zimbabwe in the early 1980s. In 2012, Togarasei Chivaviro broke away from the Wesleyan Methodist Church and formed the

Assemblies of Pentecostal Methodist Church. The major reason for this breakaway was that some members were not happy that the Methodist in Zimbabwe leadership was forbidding them from speaking in tongues and from giving credence to dreams. Those who dared do the forbidden were being disciplined. However, some mainline churches have sought to accommodate groups within their churches who wish to practice the Pentecostal phenomenon. Mainline churches like the Roman Catholic Church and recently the Dutch Reformed Church in Zimbabwe have seen the formation of groups within their churches which claim to be charismatic. These groups hold special sessions where they hold mass prayers as well as speak in tongues. Some of the Dutch Reformed Church assemblies have embraced the use of musical instruments during these sessions. The Celebration International Ministries was founded in 1979 by Tom Deuschle who is white. The church had close links with the Rhema Word Church and evolved to become Hear the Word Church before being renamed Celebration International Ministries. This church has drawn its membership from across the racial divide in a country where race has become an issue not to be ignored.

However, to the typologies discussed above, there has emerged in Zimbabwe a typically new Pentecostal phenomenon which the researcher has termed 'Prophetic Pentecostalism'. Some scholars would classify these as New Pentecostal Churches (NPCs). Prophetic Pentecostalism in this study refers to a new form of Christianity currently sweeping across Zimbabwe which has its anchor on prophecy. Basing their argument on Joel 2:28, this kind of Pentecostalism believes that God is still speaking to his people today. Founders of these churches allege that traditional Pentecostalism stifled the voices of prophets. Examples of these churches are United Family International Church (UFIC) which was founded by Emmanuel Makandiwa in 2010 who broke away from AFM in Zimbabwe, Spirit Embassy founded by Uebert Angel (2007), Kingdom

Embassy by Passion Java, Walter Magaya's Prophetic Healing and Deliverance (PHD) Ministries also breaking away from AFM in 2012. Most of the 'prophetic' Pentecostal churches emerged during Zimbabwe's socio-economic and political crises. 'Prophets' Makandiwa, Angel, Java, Magaya and many others have convinced their followers that they can predict their future as well as diagnose the causes of their misfortune. We see in their activities a close affinity with the African Initiated Churches or *mapositori*³ as they are called in Zimbabwe, in that while the classical Pentecostals rejected the foretelling and forthtelling by white garmented churches in Zimbabwe by viewing it as synonymous with the traditional practice of divination, these newly formed churches have embraced the practice. They have also made sensational claims of performing miracles of raining gold and money. This is what has come to be commonly known as 'miracle' money, gold and children. Also central to their teachings is the doctrine of fatherhood. This doctrine stipulates that each of them should submit to a spiritual father (Chitando, Manyonganise & Mlambo 2013:161). In this case, Makandiwa and Angel have Ghanaian Victor Kusi Boateng as their spiritual father; Angel is the spiritual father to Java while Magaya's spiritual father is the famous Nigerian 'prophet' T.B. Joshua. While the use of the term 'father' is not new in Christian churches, its use in these PPCs has taken on new forms. For Chitando, Manyonganise and Mlambo (2013:161), this doctrine needs to be understood within the wider contestations in masculinities as the prophets seek domination in terms of both space and power. We see in this doctrine the sidelining of these prophets' wives who, though referred to as 'Mama' or '*Amai*', their visibility cannot be without the 'Prophet' himself. All the time, the wives, when given the opportunity to speak, have to acknowledge that they would not be what they are if it were not for their husbands. Such a doctrine, therefore, puts into question the widely

³ Mapositori is a term that was originally used to describe members of white garmented churches in Zimbabwe. Currently, it is loosely used to refer to members of all African Independent Churches including Zionists.

held view that women are empowered in Pentecostal churches. While the issue of empowerment can be true in areas such as education, employment and at times leadership positions in the church, the study contends that scholars of religion need to make a critical analysis of the power dynamics that are at play in most of the Pentecostal churches on the African continent in general and Zimbabwe in particular as they permeate other social relations. This to a larger extent can be detrimental to critical processes of nation-building such as national healing and reconciliation. In Zimbabwe, in particular, one finds that in churches where men are leaders, women are given leadership positions that do not threaten the men. When one looks at most of the PPCs, one finds that the wives of the ‘prophets’ lead the charity arms of their husbands’ churches. For example, Ruth Makandiwa heads the Agape Family Care; Beverley Angel is the leader of the Hand of Mercy (H.O.M.E) while Yasmen Java heads the Heart in Service (HIS) (Chitando, Manyonganise & Mlambo, 2013:162-63). This, to a large extent, emphasises the patriarchal ideology of women as carers and nurturers and continues to relegate women to the traditionally acceptable feminine roles. Some of the issues that have been raised in this section can also be found in another broad category of Christianity in Zimbabwe which is African Initiated Christianity (AIC). The discussion below looks at this category.

3.5 African Initiated Churches

African Initiated churches (AICs) have become a common phenomenon in Africa especially in West, East, Central and Southern Africa to which Anderson and Tang (2008:107) suggest that by the year 2000, these churches comprised thousands of different movements. As such, they have become a very important aspect of Christianity in Africa such that it is no longer possible to ignore their growth and influence over African Christians. Zimbabwe has also witnessed a phenomenal growth of these churches. A study of these churches is particularly informative to

this study because some of the major AICs in Zimbabwe were founded in the Manicaland Province. A number of terms, including, ‘African Independent Churches’, ‘African Initiated Churches’, ‘African Indigenous Churches’ and ‘African International Churches’ have been used interchangeably to characterise [these churches] (Chitando 2004:119). This study has adopted the use of the term ‘African Initiated Churches’ for the sole reason that this term does not carry with it other connotations that may be confused with some main line churches’ characteristics. In this study, African Initiated Churches simply refers to churches that were started on the African soil with the initiative of black Africans.

Daneel has produced a detailed account of the activities of AICs in Zimbabwe in his various volumes on the subject (Daneel 1971, 1976, 1987 and 1988). These churches have been defined in different ways by various scholars. Ukah (2007:6) has defined them as “technically those churches which, at the beginning of the twentieth century, either broke away from mission churches or missionary/mainline Christianity or were founded independently of European missionary activities and are headed by Africans.” Mapuranga (2006:304) views AICs as “a group of Christian churches independently formed in Africa” while Shoko (2006:131) has looked at them as “Christian bodies in Africa established as a result of African initiatives.” African initiated churches were formed out of a desire to be independent in organisation, leadership and religious expression from the mission churches. Thus, Bosch quoted in Amanze (1998:63) defines them as

“a new movement arising from the interaction between a tribal community and its religion on one hand and a heterogeneous foreign culture intruding with its Christian religion on the other. In several aspects, the new movement deviates significantly from the classical religious traditions of both the culture involved, that is, not wholly traditional and not wholly Christian. Elements of both traditions are renewed, modified and embodied in a new religious system.”

Bosch's definition entails that African initiated churches try to strike a balance between Christianity and African Traditional Religion(s). Harold Turner also quoted in Amanze (1998:63) defines these churches as those that

“...have been founded in Africa, by Africans, for Africans to worship in African ways and to meet African needs as Africans themselves feel them.”

Kubi quoted in Amanze (1998:63) says they are “churches founded by Africans for Africans in our special African situations.”

The above definitions bring out the very basic fact that these churches emerged as a quest for identity; that is, out of a desire to be recognised as African in Christian worship. In Christian mission churches, African Christians had failed to comprehend the religion of the white missionaries. Thus, the contextualisation of Christianity meant that church became a place where the African could “feel at home”.

James Amanze (1998) traces the origins of African Initiated Churches back to the early 1700's when a Congolese girl by the name of Kimpa Vita from an aristocratic family was converted to the Roman Catholic Church. After her baptism, she claimed to have had visions and dreams. She also claimed to have experienced death and resurrection. She then left everything and began to preach. In her message, she attacked the rules and ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church. Key to her teachings was that Jesus was an African, that he identified with the oppressed (Africans) against their oppressors (whites)' and that the apostles were black among other claims. This, however, alarmed the Portuguese colonial government. Kimpa Vita was arrested in 1706 and was burnt to death. The teachings of Kimpa Vita are important in that they were a call for the gospel of the white missionaries to be relevant to the black African believer. It is equally important because it represents female resistance to the marginalisation of not only Africans but African women in mission churches.

African Initiated churches started to multiply in the 19th century when the first black clergy decided to form their own churches after being frustrated by being allocated less important positions in colonial churches. In South Africa, these movements grew out of contacts with similar movements in America among the Negro communities. The first initiated church in South Africa was founded by Mangena Mokone in 1892. Many such churches were formed in South Africa thereafter. Chitando (2004:120) posits that “by the 1920s, AICs had become a significant feature of the religious landscape in Southern Africa” as “Africans had taken it upon themselves to couch the Christian message in African idiom.”

These South African movements had a profound influence in the formation of similar movements in the whole of Southern Africa particularly Zimbabwe and Botswana. In Zimbabwe, Shona labour migrants who had worked in South Africa, on their return, founded these churches in their home communities (Farnadian 2007:49). These include Samuel Mutendi who brought Zionism from South Africa to Masvingo at Mbungo Estates. There were others who accompanied him and these were David Masuka and Andreas Shoko who formed the *Ndaza* or garmented Zionists (Daneel in Bourdillon 1977). Bishop David Masuka founded the Zionist Apostolic Church while Andreas Shoko founded the Zion Apostolic Faith Mission. The two were influenced by different Zionist Churches in South Africa. David Masuka had joined the Zion Apostolic Church of South Africa which was led by Elias Mahlangu in 1921, a church which he founded in Zimbabwe in 1923. On the other hand, Andreas Shoko (like his friend Samuel Mutendi) was influenced greatly by the Zion Apostolic Faith Mission (ZAFM) which was led by one Edward of Basutoland in South Africa. Upon his return to Zimbabwe, he established the same church. Samuel Mutendi’s Zion Christian Church (ZCC) became the largest branch of Zionists in Zimbabwe because it attracted more chiefs, based on Mutendi’s reputation as a

miracle worker, provider and leader, as well as his descent from the royal clan (Farnadian 2007:49). Other figures that formed AICs include Muchabaya Momberume (1912-1963) who changed his name to John at baptism at a Methodist Mission (Bourdillon 1987:298) and came to be known as Johanne Marange. He founded the African Apostolic Church in 1932 in the district of Marange in Manicaland. While having much in common with Zionists, Marange's church belonged to the subtly different 'Apostolic' tradition which avoided preoccupation with a single sacred city and tended to develop a more coherent ministerial organisation and greater evangelistic outreach, but also a harder sense of its own frontiers and of the profound difference between members and non-members (Hastings 1979:77). The church is currently the biggest African Initiated Church in Zimbabwe (estimates put the numbers at 1,8 million members). It has spread into most parts of other Southern African countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique. Johane Masowe founded the Apostolic Sabbath Church of God usually referred to as the *Masowe* Church in 1932. Born as Shonhiwa Masedza, he changed to Johane Masowe (John of the wilderness) (Mukonyora 1998:193) and was also known as John the Baptist. He founded his church in Makoni district in Manicaland province. Both "Marange and Masowe heard voices, had visions and dreams, and each claimed personal revelations" (Hastings cited in Machoko 2013: 5). Masowe proclaimed a message of withdrawal from European things- no bibles for his followers, though he had one himself from the start, no schools, no one was to be employed in companies (Machoko 2013:5). As they spread throughout the region, the Masowe Christians were known as the Korsten basket makers (though they also made tin ware and furniture) in South Africa because Masowe had emphasised the need for entrepreneurship. Their life was characterised by semi-industrialisation and they were effectively marketing their goods over a wide area (Hastings 1979:78). The Marange apostles followed suit

but were not very strict on their male children. They were flexible in that they allowed their male children to acquire an education. However, girls were/are allowed to get primary education only and should get married thereafter. Mai Chaza in 1955 founded the *Guta RaJehova* Church. Dube (2008:101) argues that “the story of Mai Chaza ... has been told from a variety of perspectives that emphasised different aspects of her calling and mission.” After her marriage, Mai Chaza was accused of witchcraft and she left her husband. It is important to note that Mai Chaza was a member of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. In 1948, it is reported that Mai Chaza temporarily died and she claims that she was sent back by God; was instructed to stop drinking alcohol, abstain from sexual intercourse and become a faith healer of women unable to have children, the sick and physically disabled and those possessed by *mashave* (alien spirits) (Dube 2008:102). The *Guta RaJehovha* Church was founded in Seke district in Mashonaland East province but was moved in 1954 to Zimunya district in Manicaland. Reasons for this move have not yet been ascertained. The focus of Mai Chaza’s call on women and the vulnerable in society needs to be located within the realm of her own experiences at the hands of a patriarchal society which victimised and perceived women as witches. She understood very well how the barren women were stigmatised in Shona societies hence, her ministry sought to restore the humanity of such women.

Apart from the AICs discussed above there were yet others that were formed in Zimbabwe. The African Congregational Church was founded by Mheke Zvekare Sengwayo in 1942. Sengwayo’s church is also known as *Chibarirwe*,⁴ probably referring to an indigenous brand of Christianity which he was propagating. Sengwayo established this Church in Chipinge district in the province of Manicaland. He was formerly an evangelist in the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. He was greatly influenced by his contact with leaders of the same church in

⁴ This term means ‘our place of birth’.

South Africa. Anderson (2001:60) argues that the church “became one of the most influential Ethiopian Churches in Zimbabwe because of its deliberate Africanisation policies, its anti-colonial sentiments, and its educational project.” The African Apostolic Church of Paul Mwazha was founded in 1951 when he moved out of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Mwazha has presented himself to his followers as *Mutumwa* (one who is sent or Angel).

The reasons for the AICs breaking away from mainline churches are varied. According to Shoko (2006) “the primary reasons, which feature prominently in the literature, are political, these being the racial bias and theological dominance of mainline churches, economic imbalances that bred migrant labour movements, a fundamental yearning for a gospel that addressed indigenous people’s socio-cultural needs, and theological interpretive disparities in religious spiritual worldviews.” Amanze (1998:66) posits that the Independent Church movement has quite often been considered as a form of popular protest against what Africans thought to be the white man’s intrusion in their cultural domain which provided them with some form of cultural identity. In this case, from a theological perspective, the AIC(s) “aimed at restoring to the African Church the vitality of the presence of the Holy Spirit, which was seen as accounting for the “dry denominationalism” of the mission churches (Asamoah-Gyadu 2007:341). Thus, Yong (2005:61) views AICs in Zimbabwe and South Africa as predominantly pneumatocentric, that is, oriented toward the Holy Spirit and featuring prominently charismatic manifestations and forms of worship, such as prophecy, faith-healing, exorcism, *glossolalia* (speaking in tongues), and dreams and visions. In this case, African Initiated Churches are considered important for challenging the mission denominations into rethinking their resistance to charismatic renewal (Asamoah-Gyadu 2007:341). In fact, AICs represent the assimilation or contextualisation of Christianity into traditional African contexts

Probably the major achievements of AICs in Zimbabwe from a gender perspective, is the acceptance of a woman leader in the form of Mai Chaza. Marie – Louise Martin in Barrett (1971) says that the Mai Chaza Church throws into relief the question of the position and status of women in the church. African women who in the pre-colonial period played pivotal roles in traditional worship had their roles overshadowed or restricted in Mission Churches. Mwaura (2007:103), though her views are debatable, argues that AICs changed the face of Christianity in Africa by their enlarging of religious space for women. There have been numerous other women who, though not celebrated, have founded their churches mainly on the basis of their gifts of healing and prophecy. These churches have appeared on the Zimbabwean scene in different forms.

Typologies of AICs have proliferated as fast as the groups themselves (Thomas 1995: 18).

African Initiated Churches can be put into three categories namely;

- The Ethiopian Churches
- The Zionist Churches
- The Apostolic Churches

The Ethiopian Churches are churches which lay no claim to prophetic or to have special manifestations of the Holy Spirit, and which modeled themselves on the European churches from which they seceded (Anderson, 2008: 109). They arose from the desire to be free from foreign domination in the church. Ethiopian-type churches were the first AICs to emerge chiefly “as political and administrative reactions to European missions, a reaction to the white missions’ conquest of African peoples” (Anderson 2008:109). Though they reject European leadership they maintain the organisational structure of the main line churches. Their emphasis is on black leadership. Ethiopia is very important to these churches, being inspired by a passage from Psalm

68:31. 'Let Ethiopia hasten to stretch out her hands to God'. This biblical text forms the centre of Ethiopian ideology. Oosthuizen (1968:197) says that Ethiopia is significant in that it is the only country on the continent of Africa that had at that time never succumbed to foreign rule. It was, therefore, a symbol of liberation and freedom from white domination both in and outside the church. However, Daneel (1987:39) argues that almost all the types of AICs in Zimbabwe are political making it irrelevant to distinguish these churches on socio-political lines. He, therefore, holds the view that these churches need to be differentiated along religious and organisational lines. Examples of Ethiopian type churches in Zimbabwe are Reverend Sengwayo's African Congregational church, Bishop Gavure's First Ethiopian Church (Topia) and Reverend Sibambo's African Reformed Church (Daneel 1973:160:161).

Historically, the Zionist churches are related to the Zionist movement in South Africa and ultimately to Zion City, Illinois in the United States of America due to their link with the Christian Catholic Church founded by John Alexander Dowie in 1896. The names of these churches usually refer to Zion in order to establish an ideological association between the new independent churches and the founding of Christianity. In this category, we find Mutendi's Zion Christian Church, David Masuka's Zionist Apostolic Church, Andreas Shoko's Zion Apostolic Faith Mission and many others. According to Daneel (1971:345), Mutendi described his own 'Zion Christian Church' as the restoration of the true line of Christianity.

The Apostolic type churches are closely related to the Zionist ones. These churches are usually referred to as spirit-type churches because of their emphasis on inspiration and revelation by the Holy Spirit. The Apostolic-type churches were closely linked with Zionist churches at the initial stages. These churches emphasize the phenomenon of speaking in tongues taking their reference from the Acts chapter two account of the Day of Pentecost. Many of these churches include the

evangelical churches, the Pentecostal movements and some charismatic movements (see the discussion above). Examples of Apostolic-type churches in Zimbabwe are the Johane Marange's African Apostolic Church, Johane Masowe's the Apostolic Sabbath Church, the African Apostolic Church of Paul Mwazha as well as the majority of Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, African Initiated Churches continue to emerge owing largely to leadership wrangles. In recent years, the economic challenges that have bedeviled the country have given rise to the formation of these churches as disgruntled members who feel deprived seek to form their churches in which they are able to control the financial activities. Most open spaces in Zimbabwe's urban areas have been turned into sacred shrines where the newly formed AICs meet. It is really difficult to maintain a register of these churches because of the rate at which they are sprouting. While the fissures in the churches have been blamed largely on leadership wrangles, in recent years there has been a lot of political influence which has caused turmoil. It, therefore, becomes prudent for this study to look at the historical involvement of the church in politics by specifically focusing on the struggle for independence as this lays the basis for the church's engagement in post-independent Zimbabwean politics which eventually leads us to analyse its role in the national healing and reconciliation process. This is also critical as it allows us to see how women experienced the struggle and how the church has or has not paid attention to these experiences.

3.6 The Church and the Struggle for Independence

After the suppression of the Ndebele-Shona Uprisings, the colonial government moved on to consolidate its power over the black population. At the same time, different Christian missions continued to come to Zimbabwe. While missionaries had sought the support of the government, some of them later began to question the way Africans were being treated. The various

repressive laws that were passed from the 1930s received mixed reactions from the missionaries, namely, the Land Apportionment Act of 1930, the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951, the Land Tenure Act of 1969 to mention but a few. Bishop Ralph Dodge of the United Methodist Church warned Ian Smith, the then Prime Minister of Rhodesia to improve the way the government was treating blacks and also to ensure that they were accorded enough space or political participation which would then lead to their contributing to decision-making or else their continued sidelining would result in them rising up against the regime. Ian Smith refused this constructive advice. Banana (1996:135) views Bishop Dodge as “an unwavering crusader of social change in Rhodesia.” Another notable missionary to consider here is Bishop Donal Lamont of the Roman Catholic Church. Through various pastoral letters, Bishop Lamont castigated the government for the way it was running the country. For example in 1959, he penned a pastoral letter entitled ‘*Purchased people*’ in which he criticised the racial policies of government (Verstraelen 1998:52). The major observations of the men of the cloth were that it was not prudent for the colonial government to monopolise power, responsibility and decision-making. Their criticism led Bishops Dodge and Lamont to be deported from Zimbabwe in 1964 and 1977 respectively. Racial segregation led black Zimbabweans to feel disenfranchised and they began to mobilise themselves politically. People like George Nyandoro, James Chikerema, Edson Sithole and others formed the City Youth League (CYL) which organised a bus protest in 1955 when bus fares were increased for the blacks in Harare. The CYL demanded that the blacks should boycott the buses. Some women and girls did not heed the call and as punishment they were beaten and raped by their black male counterparts. According to Lyons (2004:86) “16 women were raped for defying the bus boycott.” It is, however, surprising that the organisers of the boycott did not regret the rapes but actually justified them. From Lyons’ point of view, it appeared as if “the

raping of women was considered justified and in fact necessary for the sake of the broader nationalist struggle” (Lyons 2004:87). What is surprising though is the silence of the church in condemning this brutalisation of women by men.

It is the political organising of the CYL which led to the rise of African nationalism and the formation of formal political parties. At the rise of African nationalism, the church remained a key political player. In fact, the church became the source of the majority of the leaders of the nationalist movement. For example, Ndabaningi Sithole (who later led ZANU Ndonga after his expulsion from ZANU) was a product of a number of well-known local missionary institutions and an American theological seminary as well as an ordained minister of the UCCZ; Joshua Nkomo was a Wesleyan Methodist Church preacher before embarking on a political career (Brand 1977:76) in which he ended up leading the Zimbabwe African Patriotic Union (ZAPU), Robert Mugabe of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) had been mentored in the Catholic Church by the Jesuits and when Bishop Dodge was deported from Zimbabwe, he was succeeded by Bishop Abel Muzorewa, himself an ordained minister in the United Methodist Church who was later to form the United African National Council (UANC). However, it remains very clear that at the onset of African nationalism, some white missionaries were against it. Brand (1977:75) reveals that some church leaders issued statements in which they condemned African nationalism as ‘extremist’ and warned their followers not to participate in demonstrations or join the nationalist parties. Probably the major reason for this was that the church through its close cooperation with the state had benefited large tracts of land from the government and this had formed one of the key reasons for the struggle for independence in Zimbabwe. The other reason could be that the church feared that the civil war could disrupt their evangelisation activities as had been the case with the 1896-7 Ndebele-Shona Uprisings.

Maxwell (2008:401) argues that “most missionaries feared that a successful nationalism would promote either a revived paganism or communism, or both and hence they shunned it.” It is also important to note that as the struggle continued the church was divided between those that supported it and those that were opposing it. Soderstrom (1984:192) alludes to the fact that the Roman Catholic Justice and Peace Commission revealed and reported many unjust and inhuman deeds that were committed against the civil population by the Rhodesian forces. In their book, *Man in the Middle* (1975), the CCJP did not only report the atrocities committed by the Rhodesian forces but also condemned the violence that was being meted on the general public. The Commission noted that the generality of the populace were victims of both the insurgents and security forces. In its condemnation of the violence, the commission said

“we do say...with great emphasis and in all seriousness that violence in all its forms is abroad in this country of ours and that some of those whose duty it is to give a lead often seem to be persuaded that violence can best be met with violence. We condemn violence as being contrary to the whole ethic of Christianity and we draw attention to the fact that violence is neither simply defined nor is it necessarily merely a matter of physical injury. Violence and counter violence leave no room for reconciliation and it is Christian reconciliation, true justice and true peace which we seek for Rhodesia.”

This statement by the CCJP is informative in that back then in the struggle as it is now, the church was aware of how the violence of the war was tearing communities apart and leaving scars in their lives which form the basis even today for the call for national healing and reconciliation. The church denounced violence as being contrary to the spirit of reconciliation. The book, *Man in the Middle* (1975), exposes incidences where women were killed in the crossfire for collaborating either with the freedom fighters or the security forces yet some were shot dead for breaking curfew laws. Despite the church’s desire to deal with the cases of violence, it encountered a number of challenges mainly from the colonial government. The CCJP complained that

- (i) there is lack of any cooperation on the part of the authorities and indeed hostility towards any attempts to investigate incidents.
- (ii) It is entirely forbidden to enter many areas where incidents occur. Access to other areas is strictly controlled.
- (iii) Many people are frightened of being identified as a source of information because they fear reprisals.
- (iv) There is despair of any remedy being realised for the suffering of the people and a tragic acceptance of their plight is widespread (*Man in the Middle* 1975:3).

What made the above state of affairs worse was that the police at the time did not take any action on reported cases. The government did not order any independent investigation into any complaints that were lodged. According to the CCJP, the

“government of the day paid no attention to appeals for justice and decency which the church through the CCJP and other bodies made. Instead, the law was used to reinforce the political power of the ruling party, rather than to bring an end to the [violence]” (*Man in the Middle*, 1975:80).

A closer analysis of the behaviour of the state machinery that was there then and the one that is currently present in Zimbabwe shows that we have a political entity that has learnt and has learnt very well from the colonial government which is evidence to the fact that the structures of violence were not dismantled at independence in 1980. The CCJP needs to be commended for denouncing the culture of impunity that was being nurtured in Zimbabwe, a culture which is still very prevalent in Zimbabwe today.

Other Christian organisations supported victims of the war. For example, Christian organisations like Christian Care provided for the physical needs of the black activists who were detained. Clothing, school fees and subsistence allowances were allocated to numerous wives whose

husbands were kept in the detention camps year after year (Soderstrom 1984:192). The church at this point needs to be commended for positively responding to the plight of the women who in this case were secondary victims of the war by ensuring that when the traditional breadwinners in the families had been taken away, the families continued to be fended for. Furthermore, while the church had its own convictions on peace, non-violence and just war, the World Council of Churches (WCC) provided material, financial and logistical support to the armed forces through its 'Programme to Combat Racism' (PCR) in Southern Africa. Though the WCC had maintained that it was only giving humanitarian assistance to the families of those that were detained, the government interpreted this to be support for the African nationalists and quite a number of the WCC staff in Zimbabwe was deported by the colonial government. However, within the specific context of [Zimbabwe] the PCR made it clear that the church was directly implicated in political processes (Mapuranga and Chitando 2008:125).

Apart from mainline churches or Christian organisations aligned to them, African Initiated churches also took part in the politics of the day. The emergence of African Independent Churches on the African continent is on the other hand closely linked to the rise of African nationalism. African Christians noticed that their experiences in the church were not very different from what their brothers and sisters outside of church circles were experiencing.

Chitando (2004:121) concurs with the above view when he says that:

“The emergence of AICs in the region was also tied to the nationalist awakening. Colonial regimes were wary of the brazen confidence of African prophets who asserted the right of blacks to worship openly and unhindered. Many colonial administrators were worried about the spontaneity characterising AICs, rightly fearing that the Holy Spirit could blow in the direction of armed resistance. Prophetic utterances on the integrity of blacks coincided with the nationalist cry that Africa belonged primarily to Africans.”

However, Daneel (1987:129) notes that in Zimbabwe, the AICs “reticence with regard to national and party politics was conspicuous.” He however, agrees that in their preaching, the AICs sympathised with the black struggle for political power and Black Nationalist sentiments. This was despite the fact that the churches shunned active political participation. For example, Mutendi and other Zionist leaders were critical of active political participation. In April 1965, at a church service in Zion city, Mutendi appealed to his followers not to join the Black political parties (Daneel 1987:129). From Daneel’s point of view, Mutendi’s actions should be understood in the context of a church leader who wanted to protect his movement from state authorities since he was aware that the Central Investigations Department were watching him. Despite all this, Chitando (2004:120) notes that independence from white racism, paternalism and oppression is a salient feature of the AIC movement in Southern Africa. Mai Chaza, the founder of the Guta RaJehovha church also tried to be apolitical. However, Ranger (1967:381) posits that:

“Despite Mai Chaza’s own attempt to keep out of political activity, her movement was rapidly infused with notions linked to the Shona religious world of the nineteenth century and with millenarian expectations. Her followers believed her to call forth voices from the air, from rocks, from trees, even from the Zimbabwe ruins themselves. They organised themselves into khaki uniformed troops and expected the aid of ‘spirit soldiers’.”

Such mass emotions were later to find political expression in the political parties that were formed. Ranger (1967:381) clearly explains that the black political parties made use of the influence of independent church leaders as well as that of renowned African members of the mission churches.

Daneel (1987:130) notes that during the war of liberation, AICs did not openly join the guerillas or always support them. The freedom fighters detested the object of worship (Jesus) in AICs since they viewed him as the God of the whites who had oppressed the Black people for so long

and were the reason why they were in the war. As such, they forced AIC members to burn their Bibles. Those that refuse to comply were killed.

This analysis by Daneel reveals that there was no systematic mobilisation for the struggle by AICs. Probably this was due to the absence of a coordinating body representing AICs like there was for Catholics in the name of the CCJP. This, therefore, should help explain the varied responses offered by the churches towards the struggle for independence. For example, while some church leaders supported the fighters, there were some who were against it or who hesitated to openly support them. On the whole, Daneel (1987:131) concludes that:

“Fundamentally, [the AIC church leaders] identified with their people’s struggle for independence and power. Some bishops expressed admiration for the way their “young men”(vakomana) a popular name for bush fighters managed to vanish (nyangarika) government troops tried to hunt them down. At the same time, they were reserved and cautiously critical about the action which jungle fighters undertook against white churchmen and their own followers.”

The church’s involvement in the struggle, therefore, showed that it was not possible for it to remain silent in the face of gross violations. It sought to exercise its prophetic mandate by proclaiming equality of all before God. It is, however, striking that in doing all this, church historians have failed over the years to document the various ways in which women in the struggle for independence were violated let alone to acknowledge or speak out for them. As such, it would not be far from the truth to say that general history and the history of Christianity in particular has not seriously paid attention to women’s issues especially in the political turf, contributions and experiences which has resulted in their marginalisation and their continued abuse in present day Zimbabwe. In the following section, the study endeavors to give just a glimpse of how women in Zimbabwe experienced the struggle.

3.7 Women and the struggle for independence

A discussion of the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe is not complete without highlighting the significant role played by women and the challenges they encountered during the war. Nhongo-Simbanegavi (2000), Chung (2007), Lyons (2004) have looked at the horrendous experiences of women during the war.

The study is here looking at women soldiers, collaborators and women in the general public. At the initial stages of the war, women were significant in as far as they could perform the usual domestic chores for the male fighters. For example, they could cook and wash for the fighters. However, as the war progressed, the women were inspired to join the war as fighters. Some of them then crossed into Mozambique for training. Hungwe (2006:40) is of the view that the women soldiers had thought that they would gain some respect from their male counterparts by joining the war as fighters. For them, the struggle had unlocked female power and had gone beyond the usual gendered approach to war.

Civilian girls were usually sent to spend time with the fighters. The guerrillas themselves would reiterate during the *pungwes* (night vigils) that they would not sexually abuse the girls because their war code of conduct did not allow them to engage in sexual activities. This concept of *kuvaraidza vanamukoma* (entertaining the big brothers) led to many being sexually abused. A report by the Research and Advocacy Unit (2011:8) alludes to the fact that young girls were conscripted to offer sex to soldiers and militiamen during the Second Chimurenga. The concept of ‘entertaining’ alone should be condemned for reducing the girls to objects of entertainment. The sexual violence that occurred during the war shows that the women failed to get the expected respect. The male fighters continued to view them through societal patriarchal lenses which regard the woman as an object of sex whose sole purpose is to gratify the sexual desires of

the man. Hence, the perpetuation of their subjugation, which to a large extent continues to define women in Zimbabwean society today.

The topic on the sexual abuse of women during the war of liberation is a sensitive one. This could probably explain why there was silence on it soon after the war and when it was talked about, the narrativisation of this whole experience was skewed as it largely heaped the odium on Rhodesian forces. However, Chung (2007:127) presents Josiah Tongogara as a commander who often sexually abused young female guerrillas which led many of them to dislike him. Despite all this he was celebrated posthumously as the hero of the struggle. Chung's narrative reveals that even the female guerrillas were victims of sexual abuse at the hands of their male counterparts. Zimbabwean literary writers who are former freedom fighters have also attempted to show the prevalence of sexual abuse of women by both the male freedom fighters and government soldiers. Alexander Kanengoni in *Echoing Silences* (1997) and Freedom Nyamubaya in *On the Road Again* (1986) alludes to this fact. In her study of the health impact of participating in the struggle, Manyame-Tazarurwa (2011:145) posits that "women survivedthe brutality of rape, torture, sexual exploitation and unwanted pregnancies and became more vulnerable to health and mental health concerns." She reveals that "the majority of women who were sexually abused during the war have fertility problems" (2011:146) and she further posits that by the time of her research in 2011, most women who had experienced this abuse would break down as they tried to narrate their ordeals to the extent that they no longer wanted to be identified with the struggle. Such revelations point us to the various wounds that were left in the lives of the women; scars that were never given time to heal.

When the then Prime Minister (Robert Mugabe) extended a hand of reconciliation at independence it could have been mistakenly assumed by the victims, perpetrators as well as the

general populace that it could not be spoken about so that remedies could be found where possible. Particularly surprising is the silence of the victims which can be explained by the lack of proper official platforms like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to share their experiences. The glorification of the liberation struggle at independence evidenced by the celebratory narratives might have served to obscure and silence the voices of thousands of young girls and women involved in the struggle. The fighters were received as heroes. The nationalist historiography became exclusive (talked much about the heroism of the boys of the bush at the expense of the experiences of women fighters and collaborators). Nobody wanted to tell a different story of what had exactly transpired during the war. If anything the nation had to salute the sacrifices and heroism of the fighters. In this case, even rapists were celebrated as heroes of the struggle. Despite all this, Christian historians writing on Zimbabwe have not paid particular attention to these experiences that women went through during the struggle neither has the church in Zimbabwe demanded recourse for the women that were violated during this time. While applauding the CCJP for highlighting the suffering of the civilian population in *Man in the Middle*, Schmidt (2013:154) argues that the “full extent and immorality of the government atrocities which the commission admirably documented is not reflected in the metaphor ‘man in the middle’, nor the fact that often girls and women found themselves caught between guerilla and government forces demands.” Such silence is indicative of how the history of Christianity in Zimbabwe has marginalised women and ignored their experiences during times of political turmoil.

3.8 The Marginalisation of Women in the History of Christianity in Zimbabwe

History in general has not treated women kindly. Berger and White (1999:xxxix) have argued that “finding women in the histories of the non-Western, just as in the Western world requires

persistence due to the silence or obliqueness of “traditional” historical sources such as documents written by historical actors themselves.” Bock (1989) has argued further, that traditional historiography has excluded women not only inadvertently, but sometimes programmatically from ‘universal’ or ‘general’ history. In an article on women in history, Purvis (2004:40) further argues that “more traditional recordings of history have minimised or ignored the contributions of women and the effect that historical events had on women...” In the analysis of Purvis, the major reason for this exclusion is that history was written mainly by men and about men’s activities in the public sphere while women were usually excluded and, when mentioned, were usually portrayed in sex-stereotypical roles, such as wives, mothers, daughters and mistresses. For example, the discussion above has shown how women in Zimbabwe contributed to the liberation of the country and the various challenges they encountered along the way. Despite all this, most history books that were published in post-independent Zimbabwe do not take this fact into account. Lyons (2004:83) posits that “there is limited literature that represents women involvement in male-dominated nationalist events.” She further argues that “in most narratives of women’s involvement in the nationalist movement accurate details of events, places and women’s actions are missing.” However, Lyons (2004:97) avers that

“despite the lack of detail concerning women’s actions in many historical accounts of the struggle, women do have a presence and their experiences shed light on the history and how it has been told. It is important that such a women’s history is not treated as insignificant in mainstream histories.”

Lyons’ argument points to how critical it is to subject history to a gendered analysis in order to decipher the significant roles that women have played in their societies as well as to bring to the fore the various experiences that have to a large extent endangered their lives. The foregoing argument, therefore, leads us to take a closer look at how women have been treated in the history of Christianity in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular.

Locating women in the history of Christianity in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular is quite a daunting task because in “African Christian historiography, there is minimal documentation by African male and female scholars of the roles women have played, not only in presenting themselves for conversion, but also conducting evangelistic work among their own people” (Mwaura 2007:361). Phiri (1997:45) concurs with Mwaura’s view when she argues that studies on religion in Africa have predominantly centred on the role of men, both expatriate and local and have generally been silent on women’s involvement. Isichei (1995:190) attributes this to the fact that the first missionaries to come to Africa, both Protestant and Catholic were male. Isichei further argues that despite their contributions to the spread of the Christian message, missionary nuns are often invisible in general histories. This can also be said to be true of the black women who joined nunhood. The reason for this is that the roles of women in religion among other areas “have often been regarded as negligible, exceptional or irretrievable...” (Berger & White 1999:xxxix).

Yet when Christianity was introduced to Africa, women were its greatest recipients and even today the majority of church members are women. Women were often the first converts and the most enthusiastic local evangelists (Isichei 1995:190). Mwaura (2007:359-60) argues that when it came to Africa

“women experienced Christianity as empowering. It gave them a place on which to stand; from which they could challenge the male dominated sacred world and traditions. Such traditions were the killing of twins, the pursuit of alleged witches and polygamy. The missionary interest in the vulnerable women attracted the attention of the victims.”

In addition, Ward (2008:77) says that

“by the early twentieth century, the missionaries were women: wives, single women, or, in the case of the Catholics, members of a wide variety of religious orders. In the period after the First World War women demanded and in many cases obtained full recognition as missionaries and representation on their local and central boards...”

Their role in education, medicine and evangelism as well as in fostering Christian family life, was crucial to the whole mission enterprise.”

Furthermore, Mwaura (2007:359) notes that male and female missionaries prosecuted the modern missionary movement in Africa with women taking the responsibility of and the initiative to evangelise many black communities. The above discussion has shown the *Ruwadzano/Manyano* Movement as a movement of women who contributed immensely to the evangelisation of their various communities. From Denis’s perspective, “the *manyanos* represent an example of the dynamism of Christian women in Southern Africa” (2012:19). In Manicaland, where a girls’ school was opened as discussed above, these girls after returning to their kraals, became “informal Christian workers- assisting in evangelism and also teaching home arts to girls and women in the kraals (Copplestone 1973:51)” Moreover, Mai Chaza remains a beacon of hope for Christian women in Zimbabwe seeking recognition for their efforts and unique experiences in life. From Dube’s perspective, Mai Chaza exemplifies those Christian women who refuse to remain second-class citizens and peripheral to Christian development in Southern Africa (2008:101). She resurrected from African societal cultural thuggery and women victimisation which had sought to banish her to the dust bins of history to becoming one of the greatest church founders and leaders in Zimbabwe. This is despite the fact that on the ground history has acknowledged and recognised the role that was played by white male missionaries and the black male clergy at the expense of women’s contributions.

We need to view the silence on women from history as finding its roots in the African culture of patriarchy which tends to elevate men over and above women. The church has been so patriarchal in nature that women’s contributions have been labelled ‘trivial and irrelevant (Ogunrinade 2011). This view finds resonance in Sundkler and Steed (2000:680) who maintain that “the missions whether Catholic or Protestant originating in the nineteenth century, were

largely expressions of a patriarchal society and these attitudes seemed to fit an African society in its patriarchal and matriarchal form.” This prompted Mwaura (2007:360) to contend that

“A dominant male ideology has ensured that women continue being clients in the churches as they were in shrines of traditional society. Patriarchal ideology that props up the structure of African societies, whether matrilineal or patrilineal, has influenced the perception of gender roles in society. Patriarchy has defined women as inferior, thus perpetuating marginalisation and oppression of women. The resultant unequal gender relations have translated into male dominance and female subservience in church and society.”

This is true even in African Independent Churches and Pentecostal Churches which many scholars have praised for opening spaces for women. While to a large extent this may be true, restrictions against women’s upward mobility have remained in these churches. In her analysis of African Initiated Churches in Harare, Mapuranga (2006) observes how spaces in these churches are gendered with women occupying spaces at the margins. As mentioned earlier, women in these churches can only perform visible actions such as prophesying, healing and midwifery. They are, however, invisible when it comes to leadership positions. Many leadership roles in AICs are confined to males (Farnadian 2007: 52) while women are visible as clients. Ndeda (n.d) argues that “the African churches are like ‘inverted pyramids’ where the many women are led by the few men.”

Women’s invisibility also manifests itself in the African Christian historiography where “writings have been locked into an entirely androcentric perspective in treating the theme and no attention is given to gender differences” (Mwaura 2007:361). Commenting on the way the history of Pentecostalism has been written, Wacker cited in Anderson (2004) argues that early histories of Pentecostalism suffered from a ‘ritualisation of Pentecostal history’ that included a ‘white racial bias’ that ignored the central influence of black culture on Pentecostal worship and theology, and in his opinion, the ‘more serious distortion’ is of a persistent gender bias’ in which

the leading role of women was overlooked. For example, in Zimbabwe, we have had several women founding their own Pentecostal Ministries. Some of these are Victoria Mpofo of Women Weapons of Warfare, Florence Kanyati of Grace Unlimited Ministries, Patience Hove of El Shaddai Ministries and many others. What is surprising though is that those ministries that have been founded by men are the ones that receive a lot of media coverage chronicling their achievements, challenges and shortcomings. Women leaders of these ministries have remained at the margins and when the history of Christianity in the country is written, their contributions and experiences are made invisible because no one is taking notice when these women are active in the field. Thus, Ndeda (n.d) argues that “in many societies women have active religious lives, yet ecclesiastical hierarchies rarely include women, and official or great traditional religious concepts generally reflect men’s and not women’s priorities and life experiences.” Yet women in Zimbabwe have over the years faced challenges of poverty, hunger and violence among others which are gendered issues and require the church to pay particular attention to. From the year 2000, women in Zimbabwe have fallen victim to political violence resulting from the political instability that has become characteristic of the nation. For the sake of any national healing and reconciliation process, it is vital to look at how the whole process should be located within the context of how women have experienced political violence in post-independent Zimbabwe.

3.9 Conclusion

This Chapter has provided an overview of the history of Christianity in Zimbabwe. It has discussed the various forms of Christianity or Christianities as they are found on the Zimbabwean soil. What has been highlighted in this chapter is how women throughout history have been victims of both political and social violence. All these kinds of violence have condemned women to the margins of history where they are either marginalised or totally

ignored. The chapter provided a framework for understanding how religion, in this case, Christianity has always been part and parcel of the violence that women face in the religio-political spaces. What this chapter has brought out is the fact that, while the church has on one hand been complicit in the violence that Zimbabwean society has experienced over the years, it has also on the other hand stood by its prophetic voice to condemn the injustices that political leaders perpetrate against the people, though it has tended to ignore the gendered aspects of this violence. The following chapter focuses on how political violence in Zimbabwe has had implications for church-state relations especially concentrating on the period 2000 to date paying particular attention to how women have experienced it.

Chapter 4

Political Violence in Zimbabwe: Implications for Church-State Relations (2000 to date)

4.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter the researcher gave an overview of the history of Christianity in Zimbabwe highlighting incidents where women experienced violence in the pre-independence era. This chapter endeavours to discuss the occurrences of political violence in Zimbabwe at the dawn of the millennium and beyond. The reason for this is that the problems of politically motivated violence after the year 2000 in Zimbabwe are a subject for deep introspection. The manner in which violence was perpetrated against ordinary people demands that we take a closer look at its implications for church-state relations in this period. Women have suffered along with men and children, and this study makes a critical look at how women experienced this violence by taking a closer look at the major historical episodes within this period. By focusing on women, the study is by no means trivialising the violence that men and children experienced during this period. What it is simply doing is to recognise that men, women and children experience political violence differently and that any national healing and reconciliation process needs to take cognisance of this fact. This chapter, therefore, theorises political violence against women so that we find its connections with the discourse on national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe.

In this case, what the chapter does is to look at the church and political violence in Zimbabwe from 2000 to date considering its implications for church-state relations. The major reason for the inclusion of such a chapter is to capture the environment within which the current calls for national healing and reconciliation are emerging. It would also lead us to the context within which the Churches in Manicaland (CiM) as a forum emerged. Critical moments notable in this

period include the 2000 constitutional referendum, the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP), Operation *Murambatsvina*⁵, and electoral violence from 2000 to the current period, among others. However, for us to understand these moments in history, we need to first look at political decisions that were made soon after independence in 1980 that may have helped in the perpetuation and nurturing of the culture of violence in Zimbabwe. The rushed national reconciliation policy after independence, the *Gukurahundi* massacres as well as the manner in which elections were conducted in the period before the new millennium are a case in point.

4.1 The 1980 Reconciliation Policy

The 1980 independence came within an atmosphere of uncertainty as to what was going to happen to the former colonisers. There was a lot of anxiety on the part of the former colonial government which feared retaliation from the then newly formed black government. However, President Mugabe's speech which called for reconciliation shocked many across the racial divide. Mugabe had said:

“If yesterday I fought you as an enemy, today you have become a friend and ally with the same national interest, 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” (CCSF 2009:9).

It is important to note that in his speech, Mugabe acknowledges that the Zimbabwean nation was coming out of the war wounded. What is shocking, though is his quick call for the injustices of the 'past' to be forgiven and forgotten without really naming them or those responsible. At the same time, he assumed that by gaining independence those who were violated during the war had had their wounds beginning to heal, hence, trying to get recourse from those responsible could only be characterised as stupidity. The long and short of Mugabe's speech is that he was not

⁵ This refers to the operation that was launched by the Zimbabwean government in which perceived illegal structures were demolished in all urban areas.

appealing to the people but was dictating his own terms of healing and reconciliation. Makaye and Dube (2014:23) are of the opinion that this speech by Mugabe “was meant to allay the fears of the local whites who could have emigrated en mass given the atrocities committed during the armed liberation struggle.” Thus, Huyse (2003:34) has termed it ‘the politics of reconciliation’ while Bratton and Masunungure (2011:9) calls it ‘racial reconciliation’. Huyse (2003:34) has accused Mugabe of not emphasising reconciliation within the black community where two groups (namely ZANU PF and PF ZAPU) had fought bitter conflicts, both in the far past and as rivals in the liberation movement (Huyse 2003:34). What Mugabe did in his speech was to silence Zimbabweans from discussing publicly the atrocities of the war of liberation. Huyse (2003:36) argues that the imposition of official amnesia on the populace

“drew a veil over the human rights violations of the Rhodesian secret service, army and police. It was, at the same time appreciated by the leaders of the liberation movements because it meant also closing the books on their violence against civilians in Rhodesia and against their rivals in the training camps in Mozambique.”

Of the atrocities committed during the war, one cannot forget the sexual abuses (as discussed in Chapter 3) that women endured at the hands of both the Rhodesian forces and the freedom fighters. Huyse (2003:36) also reveals that women members of the liberation movements have spoken out about sexual assaults by their male companions in the camps. Thus, the imposition of silence and amnesia meant that they had to live with their pain. Women in particular had to live with the horrors of their experiences of rape and other forms of sexual violation without the state officially acknowledging these experiences. To this end Huyse (2003:37) argues that

“the various parties in the negotiations that led to Zimbabwe’s independence imposed the politics of reconciliation on the black population. It was a project conceived and developed at the level of the elite. There was no society-wide debate or involvement. Victims and survivors were not consulted, but rather watched powerlessly as many perpetrators of human rights violations went unpunished and even took on key roles within the Zimbabwean Army and secret services. As a consequence, the need to forgive and forget was not internalised by

the general public...Imposed reconciliation fed, rather than eased, the unresolved grudges.”

In the same vein, critiquing the 1980 reconciliation policy, the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2010:1) argues that the policy of reconciliation did not go beyond rhetoric as no solid measures were taken to heal wounded communities. The Forum blames the approach that was taken by government which from its point of view was not holistic and lacked the participation of the people. With all these weaknesses of the 1980 reconciliation policy one would then wonder where the church was? Fisher (2010) has completely removed the church from the formulation of this policy. She argues that the church did not play any role in the framing of the policy which in itself was a concern for quite a number of church leaders. She says “the 1980 national reconciliation was presented by the state as a moral discourse and was not infused with religious values or portrayed as a Christian approach to healing the nation” (2010:46). In her study, Fisher quotes an evangelical church leader who reveals that as church leaders they were concerned with Mugabe’s stand regarding reconciliation as essentially political and economic. This church leader further argued that

“there were no Desmond Tutus or Alex Boraines in the Zimbabwean context. The churches in Zimbabwe let an important chance go by. The new government did not claim a role. The black churches were at the time prepared to let Mugabe deal with the concept politically, whereas white church leaders were too busy dealing with their own racism.”

Dorman (2014) has also shed some light on the predicament that the church in Zimbabwe faced after independence. She argues that “the political environment that the churches found themselves in was strongly constructed by the state- they were to ‘bless’ the state and ‘work in unity’ with it, but not to challenge it” (2014:5) a situation which placed the church in controlled and restrictive spaces. Except for the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference which actively sought to challenge government to be accountable in the face of human rights violations, most

churches chose silence. They found it difficult to position themselves outside “the discourse of unity” (2014:5). As a result, in and after 1980, the church in Zimbabwe failed to claim that space where they could have ensured they had influence over the way in which reconciliation and healing of the Zimbabwean nation was supposed to be done. They ignored the unvoiced groaning of pain and the silent cries for help from the various women who were sexually abused by the guerrillas and the Rhodesian soldiers; women who at times were members of their various parishes. The occurrence of the *Gukurahundi* Massacres needs to be read among other things as a failure by these critical institutions in Zimbabwe to lay a strong foundation for healing and reconciliation at the point of independence. The following section takes a brief look at what transpired during the *Gukurahundi* Operation, how women were affected as well as the church’s response.

4.2 The *Gukurahundi* Massacres

The reconciliation policy that was announced in 1980 was short-lived. The fall-out between ZANU PF and PF ZAPU in 1982 led to the break out of violence in the Matabeleland and the Midlands regions. This is commonly known as the *Gukurahundi* Massacres. This operation was meant to eliminate all dissidents in Matabeleland and those who supported them. *Gukurahundi* forms part of the history of conflict in Zimbabwe and remains one of the scars of post-independent Zimbabwe (CCSF 2009:13). Various explanations for the conflict in Matabeleland have been put forward. While some would like to explain it in political terms there are others who have placed it within the discourse of ethnicity. For example, Ncube (2014:194) sees this conflict as having gained ethnic connotations while Dzimiri, Runhare, Dzimiri and Mazorodze (2014:230) view the *Gukurahundi* violence as predicated on both ethnicity and party-politics. In whatever way, one may want to explain it, what remains apparent is the fact that the people of

Matabeleland extremely suffered at the hands of the Government's Korean-trained Fifth Brigade. It has been estimated that about 20 000 Ndebele people were killed in this operation. Quite a number of scholars who have written on *Gukurahundi* have established that the Fifth Brigade went on the rampage murdering as well as raping women and girls (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2002:25; Alexander, McGregor & Ranger 2000; Mashingaidze 2005: 85; Melber & Jones 2007:209; Maseko 2010:98; Ndakaripa 2014:34). These rapes were justified as an attempt to create a Shona generation to compensate for the young women and men who had been raided by the Ndebele (Ndakaripa 2014:34) during the pre-colonial times. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2002:25) has termed this the 'Shona-isation' of the Matabeleland region. In addition, mothers who could not account for the whereabouts of their sons were also killed (Alexander, McGregor & Ranger 2000). From a gender perspective, one can conclude that men and women suffered during the *Gukurahundi* operation, but women suffered in some other ways that men did not. Explaining the modus operandi of the Fifth Brigade, Ndakaripa (2014:31) says

“In many cases, the Brigade rounded up civilians and forced them to sing Shona songs praising ZANU PF while beating them with sticks. These gatherings usually ended with public executions. Those killed would be ex-ZIPRAs, ZAPU officials, or anybody chosen at random, including women. The largest number of the dead in a single massacre involved the deliberate shooting of 62 young men and women on the banks of the Cewale River in Lupane on 5 March 1983. Seven survived with gunshot wounds; the other 55 died. The Fifth Brigade also committed mass killings by burning large groups of people alive in their huts.”

The torture, murders, kidnappings were out of proportion. However, women's experiences of rape and other forms of sexual assaults were unique in these circumstances. Some of these women were actually raped before they were killed. In a research carried out by the Church and Civil Society Forum (CCSF) in 2012, women in Nkayi reported that apart from the rapes, some pregnant women had their wombs ripped open to kill the babies inside and others were forced to pound their babies using pestle and mortar (2012:24). They also reported that their genitalia was

beaten and referred to as ‘dissident possessions’. From Ganiel and Tarusarira’s perspective, “*Gukurahundi* was just the beginning of Mugabe’s betrayal of the vision for reconciliation he outlined in his independence speech” (2014:57), and for Togarasei and Chitando (2011:212) “the *Gukurahundi* atrocities are one among the many reasons for the need for national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe.”

When Operation *Gukurahundi* started, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Conference (ZCBC) responded. It issued a pastoral statement entitled ‘*Reconciliation is Still Possible*’ in which the bishops condemned the atrocities and called on government to maintain law and order in the country (CCJP 2007:53). The bishops further pointed to the ordinary man/woman as the ones who were being affected by the conflict. They accused the media for failing to reveal the truth about the “wanton killings, woundings, beatings burnings and rapings” (CCJP 2007:53) and called on the government to find ways of reconciling the nation. The CCJP and the LRF in ‘*Breaking the Silence: Building True Peace*’ documented the *Gukurahundi* atrocities. The book exposes government’s brutality against its citizens. In this case, the Catholic Church through the CCJP needs to be commended for the courage to speak for the voiceless, the victimised and the vulnerable at a time when almost all men of the cloth had chosen to remain silent. An analysis of the document on a case study basis shows that the Commission paid attention to the sexual abuse experiences that women went through in each of the Matabeleland districts looked at and quantified the number of rape cases. The only weakness comes when the Commission was analysing and discussing the impact of the various forms of violence on the Matabeleland community. It left out the impact of sexual violence on the victims and this is evidenced by the general silence of women victims of sexual violence from the interviews carried out. This study places the omission in the broader context of not only trivialising women’s experiences of sexual

violence, but societal neglect of issues that directly affect women. In this regard, the CCSF (2012:12) argues that “although the report is commendable, there is no gender disaggregated data which examines the way the violence differently affected men and women.”

Despite the gravity of these atrocities, no justice has been served to date. In fact, in 1987, ZANU PF and PF ZAPU signed a Unity Accord on 22 December 1987 which ended the hostilities. Various scholars have critiqued the Accord. For example, Bratton and Masunungure (2011:10) view the Accord as a way devised by ZANU PF to co-opt PF ZAPU into the Shona-dominated party thereby entrenching ZANU PF hegemony. Furthermore, they argue that “while the 1987 Unity Accord enticed a top layer of ZAPU leaders into the ruling group, it failed to cement a durable grand coalition” (2011:14). Mhandara and Pooe (2013:9) argue that the Accord was “not a negotiation between ZANU and ZAPU, but was rather a mere presentation of a completed document to ZAPU for minor amendments and subsequent acceptance.” This argument points to the fact that ZANU PF coerced ZAPU into the agreement and that ZAPU for fear of continued deaths succumbed to the pressure. In addition, Sachikonye (2002:340) is of the opinion that, “although the accord and merger brought much needed peace to Matabeleland, it was more of a case of ‘unity from above’ than ‘unity from below...’ . This same view is shared by Sibanda cited in Machingura (2010:340). Mashingaidze (2005:86) sums it up well when he says

“the Unity Accord ended the war but did not bring peace and reconciliation. It was elitist and embodied a top-down approach to governance. Nkomo and Mugabe signed the Accord and then sold it to the people. The grassroots were never consulted in the peace-making process and no reconciliation efforts were made.”

In fact, “there was and remains no official acknowledgement of guilt, no apology, and only extremely limited redress” (Huyse 2003:37).

Churches played a pivotal role in supporting the peace negotiations. For example, when in 1987 it seemed like the negotiations had failed, the ZCBC approached Enos Nkala and Joshua Nkomo and encouraged them to dialogue for a peaceful solution to the conflict. Banana (1996:278) indicates that the Methodist Church like other churches also supported the unity negotiations. Banana (1996:229) actually hails the Accord as a stepping stone towards peace in Zimbabwe describing it as a magnanimous achievement. This study argues that the praise of the Unity Accord by Banana is absurd and the only plausible explanation is that he was still part of the political establishment when it was signed. Moreover, almost all the scholars including church historians who have looked at the Unity Accord have not brought out its gendered dimension. In this case, questions that quickly come to mind are: Who negotiated the agreement? What was the composition of the negotiating parties? How were women represented in these negotiations? There is scant literature that has looked at these issues. However, generally, women were excluded from the negotiations of the Unity Accord. Vambe (n.d) has posited that the voice of women was absent at the centre of the male politicians who negotiated for the 1987 Unity Accord between ZANU and ZAPU. This, therefore, implies that their experiences of *Gukurahundi* were never put into perspective when the Accord was signed. Listening to the current debates on the massacres, one tends to hear competing male voices trying to get credit for the Accord which points to the fact that the negotiations were a ‘men-only’ affair. Thus, when President Mugabe issued the Clemency Order of 1988 in which he pardoned all violations committed by all parties between 1982 and the end of 1987, violations not only against other men, but severely so women in Matabeleland, he was repeating what he had done in 1980, that is, covering the atrocities of his male soldiers and forcing the violated to forget and move on. Banana (1996:230) talks of the amnesty as one that benefited the perceived dissidents and ZAPU

political leaders. He is, however, silent on how the amnesty was first and foremost meant to ensure that the Fifth Brigade which had caused so much suffering to the Ndebele people do not stand trial. It is particularly shocking that he chooses to describe the Accord as “the extension of the hand of peace [which] was an act replete with sincerity and the acclaimed virtue of forgiveness” (1996:230), yet he ignores the issues of, among other things, truth-telling and justice that were not served by the Accord. The CCSF (2012:12) is of the opinion that the Accord was a political negotiation which had neither gender considerations nor any transitional justice. It totally ignored the violent atrocities of *Gukurahundi*. This should be understood as the reason why *Gukurahundi* has refused to go away from Zimbabwean society. People in Matabeleland are still demanding that *Gukurahundi* be explained and that they be allowed to hold memorial services for their loved ones who were killed, but the government has been clamping down on them. According to Scarnecchia (2008:70) “the shadow of *Gukurahundi* is still an issue because of the culture of impunity it created.” Mashingaidze (2005) has viewed the Accord as a case of unity without reconciliation. The foundation of the unity was not strong, hence, the continued violence which manifests itself in Zimbabwe’s different historical epochs including during elections.

4.3 Electoral Violence (1985- 1995)

Elections have never been happy moments for Zimbabwe because, since the country’s first elections in 1980, election campaigns and post-election politics have gone hand in glove with violence and death (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012:7). Kriger (2005) has documented the pattern of violence that characterised Zimbabwe’s elections from 1980. She highlights that ZANU PF won the 1980 elections through violence and intimidation. The same tactic was to be repeated in the subsequent elections. For example, the 1985 elections were held during the *Gukurahundi* conflict

(Hove 2013:79) implying that they took place within a context of increasing violence (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012:7) and intimidation of opposition supporters. ZANU PF won the elections but PF ZAPU won all the Matabeleland seats. This seems to have annoyed President Mugabe who then gave a speech telling his supporters to go out and uproot the weeds from their gardens. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012:8) “Mugabe’s supporters understood this to mean that they should attack anyone considered to be a PF ZAPU supporter, and three days of violence ensued that included killings and evictions of people identified as PF ZAPU supporters. In this violence, the ZANU PF women’s and youth leagues killed a “ZAPU candidate and several others-with axes-including two pregnant women” (CCJP and the LRF 2007:63). It is worth noting that in this instance, women were at the fore front of perpetrating violence to the point of even killing their counterparts. This serves to support the point made earlier in the study that women in Zimbabwe cannot be viewed as innocent victims of violence because there are times when they were also perpetrators. As such, as the church participates in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe, it needs to be aware of these shifting identities.

The 1990 elections were held when Edgar Tekere who was the ZANU PF secretary-general had been expelled from the party for having branded ZANU PF cabinet ministers as a “vampire class” of corrupt leaders (Bratton and Masunungure 2011:15) and had formed his own party called the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM). ZANU PF and PF ZAPU had joined together, hence, the political context had drastically changed. However, like the 1985 elections, these elections were also violent. Bratton and Masunungure (2011:15) argue that in 1990, ZANU PF used violence on Tekere’s supporters. Commenting on these elections, Sithole and Makumbe (1997:135) posit that “the violence perpetrated against the opposition during the 1990 election was the worst in an election year since independence, culminating in the shooting of Patrick

Kombayi who dared challenge Vice President, Simon Muzenda in the Midlands city of Gweru. This analysis could have changed after the 2008 election violence which is now seen as the worst in Zimbabwe's election history. This shall be discussed later.

In 1995, Zimbabwe held another round of elections. The political context then had changed because one of ZANU PF's ministers, Margaret Dongo, had moved out of the party and formed the Zimbabwe Union of Democrats (ZUD). Most of the traditional opposition parties in Zimbabwe boycotted the elections citing intimidation of their supporters and the uneven electoral turf which favoured ZANU PF. As such, not much violence was witnessed except for Dongo's supporters who were tortured and arrested arbitrarily (Mutandiri 2009). In these elections ZANU PF came out the winner and Mugabe issued a Presidential amnesty to perpetrators of violence. In fact, "the 1995 Presidential amnesty officially excused all politically motivated violence mostly by ZANU PF supporters" (Huyse 2003:39).

Churches in Zimbabwe during this time offered varied responses to the election violence. The CCJP documented the political violence of these election periods. However, it appears that it was a lone voice in the middle of silence by other churches. The other churches remained silent in the face of the violence. In his study of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe (Wesleyan Methodists), Banana (1996:275) acknowledges that "the Church seemed to have been found tongue-tied given the reported violence accompanying the 1985 elections." Though he does not give reasons why this was so, he goes on to suggest that the Church should have carried out some investigation of the situation to enable it to make an informed judgement and to confront those responsible for the violence with facts, with a view to curbing similar violence in the future. The observation by Banana is commendable but the researcher also finds it to be full of pretence. Banana was at this time still the President of the Republic and remained a Methodist minister, so for him to act like

he did not know why the Methodist Church remained silent and is ignorant of those who were responsible for the violence is in itself pretentious. In this regard, Kriger (2005:12) notes that “most studies of the 1985 elections either ignored or did not make much of ZANU PF’s orchestrated violence and threats against ZAPU.” This study would also go further and assert that these studies have also neglected to highlight the gendered nature of the election violence from 1985-1995 which information would have been very informative to the violence we witness in Zimbabwe in the new millennium.

4.4 Zimbabwe at the Dawn of the New Millennium

Zimbabwe entered into the new millennium facing great challenges on both the socio-economic as well as the political fronts. Socially, it faced the daunting task of dealing with the scourge of HIV and AIDS. As a country, it had one of the highest statistics of HIV infections in Southern Africa. Its population was being wiped out by the pandemic and a lot of orphans were being left behind. Economically, the government faced one of its harshest periods since independence. In the first place the decreasing government income led to economic reforms that negatively affected the attempt to consolidate a market-oriented economy. In 1990, Zimbabwe introduced the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) that was recommended by the Bretton Woods institutions. This boosted some parts of the economy like imports but unfortunately led to capital over-accumulation. In fact, “there is no dispute that, in Zimbabwe, over-accumulation characterised the transition to independence in 1980, that from 1990, structural adjustment induced a rapid deterioration of the economy, and that from 1997 this deterioration intensified” (Moyo and Yeros 2007:104). Problems of the reforms have been cited and discussed comprehensively in different forums. ESAP is viewed as having facilitated economic activity, and many individuals were enriched through stock exchanges and speculative investments.

Unfortunately, the political climate was unhealthy for economic activity leading to liquidity problems in the private sector. As a result, most businesses closed shop. Those companies that resolved to continue being operational resorted to retrenchments and many workers lost their jobs. Those that were retained were working under severe labour conditions.

This led the Zimbabwean work force to resort to strikes and demonstrations. Chirongoma (2009: 78) puts this rightly when she says

“The currency crash was so severe, the worst ever experienced in such a short time in modern history, and it worsened circumstances for the working class, which was already struggling to survive on meager salaries. The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) rapidly organised the country’s first post-independence stay-away to protest against this move ... The police reacted violently to the peaceful demonstrations who in turn became violent and started overturning cars and looting the shops. The Zimbabwe dollar again fell from around 21 to 40 against the US\$, leaving the economy in further disarray.”

In response, the government increased income tax from 15% to 17.5% and electricity and a fuel surcharge of 20 cents per litre in 1997 to raise money to pay ex-combatants and to support the war in DRC in the same year.

The government made a second error by intervening militarily in the Democratic Republic of Congo to support Laurent Kabila, where a million US dollars were used daily leading to overspending unbudgeted for funds (Bond & Manyanya 2003:72). In the country, the labour union further organised mass job stay-aways, that along with government policy failures, further worsened the already dire economic situation, resulting in a worse inflation in a country outside a war situation (Mkwezalamba & Chinyama 2007:6). In addition, another of the worst economic policy failures was the rewarding of fifty thousand dollars to each war veteran, the money that was not budgeted for in the national fiscal and monetary budgets. The result of the award, among other things was the printing of more money to offset currency deficits and liquidity problems due to the increased outflows. By 2008, inflation had skyrocketed (Moyo and Yeros,

2007:104). Poverty increased in both urban and rural centres (ZCBC, ZCC and EFZ 2006:5). In towns, the ruling elites who took over most business enterprises lived in affluence in contrast to the urban poor majority (De Waal 1990: v).

In the 1990 economic comatose, the church which had historically shied away from active participation in politics gradually involved itself in the broader political, social and economic affairs of society (Muzondidya 2009:195). The effects of ESAP had generally led people to seek support from the churches. Muzondidya (2009:196) notes this well when he says “...against the backdrop of mounting social and economic pressures, not only did more people turn to the churches for both material and spiritual support but the churches themselves became critical of the state.” Thus, “in 1994 a small group of church-based Non-Governmental Organisations came together under the aegis of the Ecumenical Support Services, formed in the early 1990s, to review the impact of ESAP on their members” (Muzondidya 2009:196). The effects of the economic meltdown led the church to call for visionary leadership (Chitando & Togarasei 2010:153); a call which was generally ignored by the politicians.

The economic challenges triggered by ESAP led people to seek political solutions. The majority of Zimbabweans felt that Zimbabwe had found itself in this quagmire due to a lack of pragmatic political leadership. Zimbabwe, therefore, witnessed the formation of a strong opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999 which was to campaign against the adoption of a new constitution in 2000. The initiative for a new constitution was started by the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) which was officially launched on 31 January 1998 and has roots in the Zimbabwe Council of Churches through its employee, Tawanda Mutasa. The role of the ZCC in the initial formation of the NCA was a major contribution by the churches to the broadening of political participation in the democratisation process of Zimbabwe” (Ruzivo,

2008:7), although it finally went away with civil society. It was formed for the “widening of the democratic space in the country” (Ruzivo, 2008:6). It was realised that since the formation of the Lancaster House Constitution, there had been no serious discussion on the national constitution. So the NCA was formed, according to Kagoro cited in Ruzivo (2011:7) with the following objectives:

- Initiating, engaging and enlightening the general public on the Lancaster House Constitution;
- Identifying the Lancaster House Constitution and debating possible constitutional reforms;
- Organising broad-based and participatory constitutional debates;
- Subjecting the need for the constitutional making process to be in people’s hands;
- Encouraging the culture of popular participation in decision making processes,

The NCA made notable gains as a civil society organisation, and staged vigorous campaigns against the government initiated constitution through the Constitutional Commission of Zimbabwe. The MDC described the proposed draft constitution as a “ruse to keep the ruling party in power [and] conscientised the whole population to vote against it” (Chirongoma 2009: 79). Members of the NCA were concomitantly future members of the MDC, leading to their arrests, brutalisation and detentions. A referendum on the new constitution was held in February 2000. The majority of the voters voted against the new constitution. In this case, the NCA was the first organisation to register a win against the Mugabe-led ZANU PF. Chirongoma (2009: 79) says, “the referendum marked the first political defeat for the leadership of ZANU PF and became a watershed year in Zimbabwe’s political history. Thus, the MDC emerged against this background, as a formidable challenge to the ruling party. Most scholars are now agreed that the

rejection of the government constitution in 2000 marked the onset of the Zimbabwean crises which climaxed in 2008 (Sachikonye 2003:30; Taringa & Sipeyiye 2013:54; Togarasei 2013:99). In order to prevent intra-party unrest, undermine the MDC and civil society and reinvigorate the president and his party's image, Mugabe evoked the memories of the liberation struggle to introduce a violent, chaotic, militant and "virulent strain of nationalist demagoguery" (Bond & Manyanya 2003:75) to deal decisively with the land question, protect his own image for the failing economy and terrorise MDC supporters. It becomes necessary, therefore, to put the discussion on land in Zimbabwe into its historical context.

4.5 The Land Question in Zimbabwe

Land ownership has been a central issue in Zimbabwe since 1890 when the Pioneer Column set foot in Zimbabwe. The 1890 invasions by the Pioneer Column led by Cecil John Rhodes disenfranchised Africans from their land rights among other things. They took away from the kings and their representatives, the custodianship of the land (Bakare 1993:40). The whites enacted laws that disenfranchised and took away the rights from the Africans such as the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 and the Land Husbandry Act of 1971, among others. It apportioned the land area equally between whites and blacks, with 50.8% of good-weathered fertile soils for the white minority and the rest for Africans and wild animals (Essof 2012:23). Actually Africans were given 30% of the low-rainfall poor soils (Masengwe 2011:23; Christopher 1971:39), leading to the war of liberation. Chirongoma (2009:75) states that

"The 30% containing the poorer soils and receiving the lowest rainfall was for the Africans. It subsequently became inadequate as their numbers increased, leading to several wars aimed at reclaiming lost land from the invaders. The most notable are the 1893 Matabele war and the 1896-7 Ndebele-Shona uprisings, which were both ruthlessly crushed by the power of the settlers' superior weaponry."

She further stated that “the land issue has remained a bone of contention in Zimbabwe and the main goal of the liberation struggle was to reclaim the land” (Chirongoma 2009:75). This continual fight for land which was once squashed by superior settler weaponry (Hunter, Farren & Farren 2001:2) changed when Africans began to unite their people into nations, and for Zimbabwe, as the people were aggrieved by Smith’s Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965 and the introduction of the Land Husbandry Act. As more and more people left the country, and Zimbabwean politicians formed parties to confront Smith government, using the rhetoric of restoring land to the masses, thereby gaining support from among people in rural and urban areas (McLaughlin 1996: 290-293). At independence, there was a lot to be addressed to return people into living normal lives. Unfortunately, the 1980s did not address the immediate needs of the majority of the people due to the quick announcement of the peace and reconciliation by the ZANU PF government (as discussed above). Such underlying issues became the root causes of Zimbabwe’s conflicts. Zimbabwe failed to address the land issue and put in place governance systems that were intolerant to dissent.

As alluded to above, at the time of independence approximately 6 000 white farmers owned over 50% of Zimbabwe’s most fertile farmland, while in Communal areas, 700 000 families occupied less than 50% of the least fertile agricultural land (Essoff 2012:23). The protection of the small white minority was contained in the Lancaster House Constitution which propelled the willing-buyer willing-seller approach. After independence, the government engaged itself in the first phase of land reform and resettlement which was meant to decongest the ‘reserves’ that had been created in the pre-independence period and also to enable the rural people to access arable land. Unfortunately, the government plans could not materialise with speed due to a number of issues some of which were economic. The policy of willing seller/willing buyer also became an

impediment to the government. Masiwa (2004) has dealt with this issue at greater length. In order to deal with the economic challenges, the government convened a donor's conference in 1998 which was aimed at soliciting for external financial support for the second phase of the land reform and resettlement programme. Donors who pledged funding for this exercise made it clear that the government should first come up with a clear land policy and should establish transparent and accountable mechanisms for land acquisitions and redistribution. From Essof's point of view "the donor conference held in 1998 forced the government to concede that any land taken would be paid for up front" (2012:25). All this happened in the face of growing opposition from civil society, trade unions and the general public. Hence, when the 2000 constitution was rejected, it provided the government with an opportunity to take the land forcefully. Various explanations have been given as to why at this particular point the government of Zimbabwe chose to compulsorily take away land from the whites. Chan cited in Sachikonye (2003:31) views the land invasions as serving two purposes. First, it was meant to seize the land and thus punish the white farmers for their political stance and second it was meant to close off the commercial farming areas to campaigning by opposition parties. In the section below, we look at how the land reform was conducted.

4.6 The Fast Track Land Reform Programme

The land reform of 2000 was officially termed the 'Fast Track Land Reform Programme' (FTLRP) or Third *Chimurenga*. In some circles, it has been viewed as 'land invasions' or 'land occupations' and unofficially it has been called *jambanja*. Shoko cited in Taringa and Sipeyiye (2013:54) explains that *jambanja* is an informal Shona euphemism for violence. In this case, it denotes the violent nature with which land was taken. Sibanda and Maposa (2013:132) posit that "the *jambanja* was characterised by the use of unprecedented force leading to unprecedented loss

of blood.” In the same vein, Saunders (2011:124) argues that *jambanja* marked the reintroduction of systematic political violence under the patronage of the state...”. Sachikonye (2003:31) is of the view that the overall image that the invasions gave was one of a degeneration into lawlessness and violence. This is clearly evidenced by the way white farmers and their workers were displaced from the farms with a lot of other abuses taking place in the process. Ganiel and Tarusarira (2014:58) observe that the farm invasions were accompanied by a wave of anti-white rhetoric and violence which the security forces largely ignored. Chitando (2011:44) concludes that the philosophy of *jambanja* (militancy) that had emerged during the FTLRP implied that the rule of law could no longer be guaranteed. As such, the FTLRP is viewed in Zimbabwe as the starting point of the Zimbabwe crises in the new millennium. The discussion below looks at some of the incidents of violence that stand out from 2000 to the current period.

4.7 Electoral Violence (2000-2005)

The FTLRP in 2000 was used as a campaign tool for the parliamentary elections that were slated for June of that year and for politically mobilising the nation. Raftopoulos cited in Taringa and Sipeyiye (2013:54) is of the view that the rejection of the government constitution in February 2000 gave notice to ZANU PF that it faced a real threat of electoral defeat and loss of state power in the forthcoming general and presidential elections in 2000 and 2002. ZANU PF's popularity was put to the test in the June 2000 elections in which the MDC took 57 seats, “sweeping most urban centres, and sending shockwaves throughout the ruling party, which from then on, grew increasingly suspicious and resentful of the urban electorate” (Mlambo 2008:18). The period before and after these elections was characterised by the vilification of the MDC by the ZANU PF leadership where the MDC was presented as the ‘stooges’ of the West bent on derailing the gains of the liberation struggle. As a result, MDC supporters faced various forms of

violence to which the government remained silent. For example, two months before the elections, political violence targeted white farmers, black farm workers, teachers, civil servants and rural villagers believed to support opposition parties (Human Rights NGO Forum 2000:28). Raftopoulos (2009:215) notes very well that most of these atrocious activities were being carried out by the ZANU PF youth militia. The militias burned down homes and businesses of perceived and real MDC supporters in both urban and rural areas. Moreover, known MDC activists were kidnapped, tortured and killed. The Physicians for Human Rights (2002:8) estimated that the political violence instigated by the government in the run-up to the 2000 elections resulted in more than 100 deaths, thousands of assaults, threats and widespread property destruction. After the elections, this violence continued with the farm invasions becoming more violent. The violence continued in 2001 and at least 48 people died in that year due to political violence (Manby 2002:10).

Although ZANU PF won the 2000 parliamentary elections, it was not without recognising that the MDC had become a political force to be reckoned with. This threw it into a panic mode as the 2002 presidential elections approached. Sachikonye (2002:17) notes that as the 2002 campaign unfolded, it became clear that ZANU PF found it difficult to re-invent either itself or its message. It then went to the electorate with the slogan 'Land is the economy, the economy is land'. The 2002 and presidential elections were held in a more violent environment. In order to intimidate opposition supporters, in a style reminiscent of the liberation struggle, ZANU PF set up about 150 'militia bases' in various parts of the country to spearhead its campaign; bases which quickly developed into a notorious reputation for intimidation and torture of opposition supporters (Sachikonye 2002:18). During the presidential election campaign, the security sector heads produced a joint statement in which they declared that they were not going to salute

anyone who has not fought in the liberation struggle because for them ‘the gun was mightier than the pen’. This joint statement of the military, police, intelligence and prison heads was a barrage aimed at informing both the opposition and the international community that an election would not lead to a democratic transfer of power (Zinyama 2012:144). As such, when the elections were finally conducted, the whole process was militarised by appointing military figures and war veterans as the majority of election monitors. According to Shale (2006:114), “the involvement of the military brings an interesting dimension to the Zimbabwean political conflict-where the army sees its interests being threatened by a growing political competition between MDC and ZANU PF.” The 2002 election was marred by violence and intimidation from the Border Gezi trained youth who are generally referred to as ‘green bombers’. These youths were never tried in a court of law because in 2002, the President issued a blanket amnesty to those that had committed political crimes between 2000 and 2002. This impunity has characterised the Zimbabwean political terrain to this day. The Physicians for Human Rights note that impunity had been consolidated for the state by obscuring its hand in politically motivated violence: the war veterans and youth militia became agents enforcing the violent policies of ZANU PF (2002:11). Commenting on the 2002 electoral violence, Zinyama (2012:141) says

“the reality of Zimbabwean politics was about muzzling opposition or suppressing dissent. Zimbabwe degraded into the politics of impunity where those who killed people, stole money, violated human rights and behaved as bastards escaped the wrath of the law on the basis of their affiliation to ZANU PF.”

The same violent electoral environment also marked the 2005 elections. Despite significant electoral reforms prior to the elections, incidents of conflict were still reported countrywide where the opposition supporters were mainly the victims (Shale 2006:115). Moreover, legislation such as the Access to information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) favoured the ruling party and hindered the opposition parties from

using public venues for their rallies (Shale 2006:116). As a result, these elections were swamped in accusations of vote rigging, violence and intimidation. With the economy slumping down, ZANU PF used food as a political tool which opposition supporters could not access. After ZANU PF was declared the winner of the elections in 2005, the MDC on 4 April 2005, held a demonstration against the manner in which the elections had been conducted. The demonstration turned violent and property and shops were destroyed. The Human Rights NGO (2005) has captured most of the post-election violence that occurred across the country including Manicaland Province.

4.8 Operation *Murambatsvina*

In May 2005, government's violence against its electorate was again manifested in Operation *Murambatsvina*. This term is translated differently by different people (Shale 2006:117). While some have called it 'Operation Clean Up', 'Operation throw out the trash', 'Operation clean the dirt', others refer to it as 'Operation Restore Order'. The term 'Operation *Tsunami*' is also popular with local people because of the speed and ferocity of the exercise which resulted in the destruction of houses, business premises and vending sites in Zimbabwe's towns and cities (Chibisa & Sigauke 2008:39). The term '*tsunami*' was borrowed from the occurrence of the same after the 26 December 2004 earthquake that happened in the Indian Ocean resulting in a *tsunami* that caused a lot of destruction of human lives and property in several Asian countries. With Operation *Murambatsvina* coming just four months after the Asian *Tsunami*, Zimbabweans found a good reference point. In this Operation, government demolished all perceived 'illegal' structures and the United Nations Report compiled by Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka estimated that about 700 000 people were affected by this operation. The Operation targeted 'illegal' street vendors and 'illegal' structures such as shacks, markets and houses (Shale 2006:117).

The operation came after ZANU PF had won a controversial parliamentary election in March 2005 and as mentioned above the MDC had publicly contested the result. The urban electorate had also shown its support for the opposition. From Mhiripiri's point of view, the evictions of 2005 can best be understood in the matrix and dynamics of Zimbabwe's national politics (Mhiripiri 2008:152). Thus, the election had brought to the fore issues of legitimacy and support for those that were in power. The official justification for *Murambatsvina* given by government is that it wanted to arrest "disorderly and chaotic urbanisation, including its health consequences; stopping illegal, parallel market transactions, especially foreign currency dealing and hoarding of consumer commodities in short supply; and reversing damage caused by inappropriate urban agricultural practices" (UN Habitat cited in Chibisa & Sigauke 2008:39). However, while government argued that the Operation was meant to remove 'dirt', *Murambatsvina* can be seen in part, as an attempt by government to punish the urban poor for having turned their backs on the ruling party, and also to dilute MDC support in the cities by forcing large numbers of people into the rural areas where they could be better controlled and monitored (Shale 2006:119; Mlambo 2008:21; Potts 2008:53). The assumption that was made then was that all blacks living in Zimbabwean towns and cities had a rural home and, therefore, had somewhere to go. No consideration was made for those that were born and bred in towns and cities as well as those that were of foreign origin. In a study in Mutare Urban, Chibisa and Sigauke (2008:42) found out that foreign nationals especially from Mozambique were made homeless. If the Operation was meant to punish the MDC urban supporters, it unfortunately also affected ZANU PF supporters. However, though the Operation affected supporters of the ruling party, there is a strong perception that post-*Murambatsvina* programmes by government such as 'new sites for informal traders' and 'new housing schemes under Operation *Garikayi/Hlalani Kuhle* were meant to

benefit them (Shale, 2006:121). For one to benefit from these programmes, they had to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that they belonged to ZANU PF, thereby encouraging the issue of politics of patronage. In this case, Shale (2006:120) sees Operation *Murambatsvina* as “a continuation of the historical trend towards violent conflicts inflicted by the ruling party on opposition parties dating back to the 1980s.” This violent trend was to be witnessed in the subsequent elections.

4.9 Electoral Violence (2008-2013)

When Shale (2006) wrote on Operation *Murambatsvina* he had predicted that if nothing was done to deal with violence during elections, there was a likelihood of violence recurring in future elections. This is what Shale said then:

“Since the historiography of elections in Zimbabwe points to the fact that Zimbabwean elections are always accompanied by violent conflict, the possibility of having similar kinds of conflict in future elections cannot be ruled out. It can only be hoped that some form of settlement between the two parties is reached before the next presidential elections in 2008” (2006:122).

Shale’s fears were to be confirmed in 2008. The political violence that occurred in Zimbabwe in 2008 has been described as the worst in the country’s history to date. The 2008 elections were scheduled for the 29th of March. The period in the run-up to the elections was characterised by violence. For example, on 11 March 2007, The Save Zimbabwe Campaign called for a prayer meeting which was also attended by the opposition leaders. Tsvangirai and other leaders were beaten and arrested. Tsvangirai’s stronghold in Harare was subsequently subjected to a campaign of abductions, torture and police intimidation (Alexander & Tendi 2008:7). When the elections were closer, the ruling ZANU PF party had tried to open up the political space, where the opposition parties were allowed to campaign even in traditionally perceived ZANU PF rural strongholds. When voting finally came, the MDC-T won in most constituencies. The greatest

shock was delivered to ZANU PF in its rural strongholds (Alexander & Tendi 2008:8). The major reasons for this have been given as the multiple crises with the economic challenges topping the list. Chitando and Togarasei (2010:153) have aptly captured the environment within which the 2008 elections were held. They argue that

“the beast of inflation had refused to be tamed, forcing Gideon Gono, the embattled governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, to resort to printing money endlessly. The Zimbabwe dollar became worthless, with most workers deciding that it was better to stay at home than go to work.”

The other reason for the loss as enunciated by Chitando and Togarasei (2010:154) is that ZANU PF struggled to package a convincing message to the electorate, having exhausted the trump card of ‘land to the people’ in the 2000 general elections and 2002 presidential elections. Though the MDC won most of the seats, the official narrative which is still being debated today is that Tsvangirai did not win the presidential election with an outright margin. In what has been seen as the first acknowledgement of defeat in the 2008 presidential election, Mugabe in December 2014 while addressing the securocrats revealed that Tsvangirai had beaten him by 73%, though his party was quick to say it was just a slip of the tongue. The delay in announcing the presidential results was seen by many as confirming that Tsvangirai had won the election outrightly, but ZANU PF was engineering a way of manipulating the results so that there could be a rerun. As Masunungure (2009:80) notes,

“the results were frozen for five weeks, well beyond the timeline for holding the run-off election. Government extended the period for the second round election from 21 days to 90 days after the announcement of results.”

The extension has been viewed in Zimbabwe as designed by ZANU PF to give it time to cow the electorate into voting for it through violence.

When results were finally announced on 2 May 2008, they showed that none of the presidential candidates had garnered the necessary 50% plus one vote necessary to avoid a run-off. It was then announced that the run-off would be held on 27 June 2008. The April-June campaign period was characterised by unimagined violence. Masunungure (2009:82) has described it as a ‘militarised moment’ while Chitando and Togarasei (2010:153) sees it as ‘hell on earth’. Various scholars have identified the Joint Military Command which is made up of the military, police, prisons and intelligence as playing a pivotal role in the period leading to the run-off (see Alexander & Tendi 2008:11; Masunungure 2009:79; Chitando & Togarasei 2010:155; Sachikonye 2011:xx). According to Sachikonye (2009:79) the” militarisation of the 27 June elections was part of the militarisation of the state that had started several years before....” The security forces were the organisers and perpetrators of violence, often using party youth and youth militias, war veterans to carry out beatings, intimidation and torture (Alexander and Tendi 2008:11). In a style reminiscent of the liberation struggle and the 2002 presidential elections, bases were set up by the militia and war veterans at schools, clinics, formerly white owned farms as well as in mountains and bushes. At these bases, in an operation code-named ‘Operation *Makavhoterapapi*’ (Operation who did you vote for) those that had ‘wrongly’ voted for the MDC were forced to confess and to burn MDC regalia. For the first time, these bases were also set up in Zimbabwe’s urban areas. Beatings and attacks on property were common as was forced attendance at all night *pungwes*⁶ at the bases (Alexander and Tendi 2008:13). Mungwini cited in Chitando and Togarasei reveals that “in the language of the Bible, a slogan to do with the date of the rerun and ZANU PF’s rejection of any winner other than Mugabe went ‘June 2008, verse 27: *Handichazofizve ndakafurirwa kubva panababa* Mugabe (I shall never again in my lifetime be fooled to betray Father Mugabe in a vote). Apart from torture, beatings and intimidations, those

⁶ *Pungwe* is a Shona word for night vigils.

that were found to have voted for the MDC in the March elections were made to pay in cash and/or in kind. Some had their livestock forcibly taken and used for food at the bases. The bases were seen as sites for reorienting the perceived ‘rebels’ to the ZANU PF’s party ideology before the 27 June 2008 vote. Chitando and Togarasei (2010:157) have aptly described what took place in the run-off campaign. It is, therefore, only prudent to quote them at length. They say

“The period between March and June 2008...represents one of the darkest periods in the postcolonial history of Zimbabwe. MDC activists who had come out during the ‘window period’ of political tolerance were hunted down and murdered, tortured, brutalised and harassed. A reign of terror was unleashed, with Sierra Leone-like amputation of limbs being employed against MDC supporters and activists. The state literally declared war on its citizens, as Mugabe’s retention of power became its major focus. Youth militia, war veterans, soldiers and outright criminals descended on villages to exterminate activists and intimidate MDC supporters. The rural areas were sealed off and cars coming from cities targeted for destruction. ‘WW’, ‘win or war’ (this was one of the slogans) were two options given to the voters. For the first time in postcolonial Zimbabwe, systematic violence visited the urban areas, with ‘bases’ being set up in the high density areas. Not even the safety of those staying in up-market suburbs was guaranteed, as ZANU PF sought to ‘re-educate’ those it accused of wanting to ‘return sacred Zimbabwe to the whites’.”

This violence resulted in the death of 200 MDC political activists (Chitando and Togarasei 2010:155). There were murders of a number of MDC politicians and their families, as well as reports of death list of key grassroots activists, some of whom were abducted and killed with a professional ruthlessness (Alexander and Tendi, 2008:13). On 5 July 2008, giving a summary of the violence, Tsvangirai indicated that 1500 activists including 20 Members of Parliament and parliamentary candidates were in police custody on charges related to political violence, 103 supporters were killed while 5000 supporters including many polling agents and council candidates were missing after having been abducted (Alexander & Tendi, 2008:14). Masunungure (2009:97) describes the prevailing political environment throughout the country at the time as tense, hostile and volatile as it was characterised by an electoral campaign marred by

high levels of intimidation, violence, displacement of people, abductions and loss of life. In a nutshell, this violence reduced the run-off contest to a battle between the bullet and the ballot (Masunungure, 2009:84). Eventually, Tsvangirai withdrew from the elections citing the uneven play-field as a result of the violence and also as a way of protecting his supporters from further violence. Mugabe went on to win the elections in which he was the only candidate. Though he emerged the winner, critical institutions around the world which had observed the elections refused to endorse them as either free or fair. Hence, rather than resolving the legitimacy question [that had arisen in 2005 elections] the run-off election deepened it (Masunungure 2009:97).

Basically, the 2008 elections failed to resolve the Zimbabwean crises. The South African mediation in the talks that followed between the major political parties in Zimbabwe led to the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) in September 2008 which gave birth to the Government of National Unity (GNU) in 2009. The GNU brought together ZANU PF, MDC-T led by Tsvangirai and MDC-N led by Welshman Ncube. The general expectation was that political violence would cease since the political parties had agreed to work together. However, political violence increased in 2011 under the auspices of the Inclusive Government (IG). For example, on 21 February 2011, the Herald reported that political violence had claimed a life in Mbare. Moreover, reports of torture of MDC supporters in the rural areas and their being coerced to attend ZANU PF meetings were being reported in most of the independent media.

The three Political parties under Article 4 of the GPA had agreed to come up with a new constitution. It was agreed that unlike the Lancaster House constitution which was a result of political negotiation, the new constitution should be a result of wide consultations. It was the right of every citizen to contribute to the constitution-making process. However, when

consultations began in 2009, it became apparent that ZANU PF did not want the common people to air out their desires for the new constitution. In an Operation code named Operation *Chimumumu* (Operation Keep Quiet) unauthorised villagers were barred from contributing at out-reach meetings. ZANU PF supporters went on the rampage beating and coaching individuals to support their party position through reading scripts they had prepared for them (Dziva, Dube & Manatsa 2013:88). Those that dared disobey the command to keep quiet faced the wrath of the militias once those conducting the out-reach meetings had gone.

Once the referendum of the new constitution was held in March 2013 and the new constitution adopted, new elections to end the GNU was scheduled for 31 July 2013. The run-up to the elections as had become common in Zimbabwe was also violent. Before the constitutional referendum, Christpowers Maisiri, a 12 year old son of an MDC-T parliamentary aspirant for Headlands (Manicaland) was burnt to death during the night of 24 February 2013 allegedly by ZANU PF supporters (Mushava & Nleya 2013). In the period between January and June 2013, Sokwanele (n.d) published 2094 cases of political violence. Of these only 4 had been perpetrated by MDC supporters, the rest by ZANU PF supporters. In the same period, Heal Zimbabwe Trust (2013:1) recorded politically motivated violence across the country. In this report, Manicaland province just like other provinces witnessed cases of harassment, intimidation, assault, unlawful arrests, abductions, forced attendance of meetings organised by ZANU PF, unfair distribution of maize among others. There was also inter-party violence in the MDC-T's primary elections to confirm parliamentary candidates for the elections in the Chikanga-Dangamvura area of Mutare Urban district. Militia bases resurfaced as a way of reminding the people of the 2008 violence. What is also noticeable in these elections is the continued participation by the security sector. On the day of voting, villagers in the rural areas were marched to the polls by chiefs and headmen.

MDC supporters were commanded to feign blindness or illiteracy so that ZANU PF people would assist them in voting. Though Mugabe claims to have won the 2013 elections ‘resoundingly’, the election result has brought back the issue of legitimacy into Zimbabwe’s politics.

The post-election period has not been peaceful. It has witnessed violence in both the MDC-T and ZANU PF. The MDC-T had a violent split when Tendai Biti and Elton Mangoma led some of the MDC-T members to leave the party and form the MDC-Renewal Team. In 2014, ZANU PF saw the violent ouster of the former Vice President, Joice Mujuru and members of the party who were allegedly aligned to her. The general outlook is that political violence in Zimbabwe is still prevalent and there is little hope that it will be dealt with any time soon. What is particularly worrying is how political violence in Zimbabwe has been feminised.

4.10 The Gendered Dimension of Political Violence in Zimbabwe

Any discussion on the Zimbabwean political crises would not be complete without considering its gendered dimension with a particular focus on how women were affected by the political violence that ensued in the various historical episodes that characterise the Zimbabwean nation in the new millennium. It is disheartening to note that many scholars who have written about political violence in Zimbabwe from 2000 have not paid much attention to the gender dynamics of the period. Ranchod-Nilsson (2008:647) posits that the gender dynamics of this period are not fully understood, but there is evidence of women becoming targets of sexual violence because of their association with the MDC. Moyo (2013:19) locates the general silence on women’s experiences of political violence from 2000 within the broader framework of the whole sidelined narrative of women who at different epochs have been silenced in attempting to expose abuses by key political male figures who were seen as indispensable for different political goals.

The Human Rights NGO Forum (2013:10) then pinpoints patriarchy as the major culprit in this whole exercise. It argues that “Zimbabwe as a patriarchal society allowed the conflict to be a space where perpetrators committed gender-based violence including rape against women as part of the overall strategy of violence” (2013:10). Patriarchy as a social-political order is based on male hegemony through dominance and denigration of other experiences; it concentrates power in public and private spheres within the male (Ayiera 2010:12). In this case, women’s bodies become sites where these struggles for power are manifested.

In this case, we need to see women as the major victims of the Zimbabwean political violence. Though women, men and children were victimised in this violence in Zimbabwe, there is a way in which women were uniquely victimised, that is through rape and other forms of sexual violence. For example, in the course of the violent seizures of land, women who were workers in the farms encountered sexual violence from the youth and war veterans. According to <http://www.avert.org/> “violence against farmers was practically encouraged, a climate of lawlessness ensued in many areas and rape became increasingly common, making women more vulnerable to HIV infection. The issue of sexual violence against women runs across all the electoral periods from 2000 and also occurred in the wake of Operation *Murambatsvina*. Bhatasara (2011:320) agrees that women farm workers suffered different forms of violence and that the chaotic nature of the FTLRP left scars on some women across the country. In 2006, a report produced by the Zimbabwe Torture Victims on Operation *Murambatsvina* showed a “considerable rise in the incidence of rape and other forms of sexual abuse since 2000, indicating that rape and other forms of sexual violence had risen to between 12-30%,...” (Zimbabwe Torture Victims 2006:4). Various studies have shown how rape and other forms of sexual

violence became tools of punishing opposition supporters since 2000. For example, Bastick, Grimm and Kunz (2007:67) argue that

“After 2001, rape and sexual abuse became more common place. Rapes often occurred in front of neighbours or family members as a form of punishment, leaving an impact on a wider group of people than just the individual concerned.”

In reference to the bases that were set up by the militia and war veterans, they further posit that “women were abducted and raped in pro-government militia camps, men were forced by militia to commit sexual assault on other men and women, and people were sexually assaulted in public” (Bastick, Grimm & Kunz 2007:67). Human Rights Watch moved around the country during the 2008 violent period and reported that ZANU PF militias, the army and supporters had erected bases and quite a number of these were in Manicaland. For example, eleven of these bases were in Chipinge East and Central alone. Many women who were taken to these bases were physically and sexually abused at times for days and weeks (Aids Free World, 2009:16). Aids Free World (2009:23) captures an incident in Manicaland in which one young girl was locked up and raped everyday by different men. The Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU) and Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights (ZADHR) in 2010 produced a report in which they traced the occurrence of politically motivated sexual abuse of women in Zimbabwe from 2001 to 2008. They recorded that the sexual abuse includes “extreme violence, gang rape and insertion of objects- bottles and sticks into the women’s genitals.” In the Mutasa district of Manicaland province, Pauline Moyana was gang raped by four ZANU PF militias at night, just outside their base during the 2008 elections and this was punishment for her support of the MDC (Makanga 2008). Aids Free World (2009) interviewed seventy women who were rape victims of the 2008 political violence and two witnesses of these rapes. In these interviews, it found out that victims of these rapes were aged from five years to elderly grandmothers. It corroborated RAU

and ZADHR report that gang rapes were common. Aids Free World further reveal that “many women were forced to watch their husbands, children, and parents killed or tortured before they were raped” (2009:12). The sexual violence that women experienced was meant to intimidate, humiliate and punish them and by extension, their families for their political affiliation (Aids Free World, 2009:13). For example, some women were raped when their husbands had fled from the violence leaving their wives at home alone. The Church and Civil Society Forum in Zimbabwe (2012:21) notes that the absence of men increased women’s vulnerability and compromised their security and that the abuses perpetrated against them was meant to force the men who had fled to return.

The rapes left women vulnerable to HIV and AIDS. For example, nine of the women interviewed by Aids Free World (2009:12) “believe that they were infected with HIV and AIDS as a result of the rapes, and an additional seventeen women also tested HIV-positive in the months following the rapes, raising the possibility that rapists infected them.” In addition to the infection, some women fell pregnant due to the rapes and now have to look after children who are at times sick themselves. Operation *Murambatsvina* disrupted access to information on HIV prevention and treatment to many women who were living with HIV and AIDS. Chirongoma (2009: 86), argues that an estimated “79 500 persons over 15 years of age living with HIV [were] displaced”, consequently leading to increased vulnerability and risk to gender violence and risky sexual behavior. Women and men failed to continue with their Anti-Retroviral treatment leading to the loss of life of several of them.

Throughout the years of political violence in Zimbabwe from 2000, women have suffered displacements. During the FTLRP, women farm workers were displaced from their areas of work, with some relocating to urban, peri-urban or rural areas. In a research in commercial

farming areas, Sachikonye (2003:45) ascertained that due to the FTLRP, most female farm workers had left the farms, though at the time he could not establish where these women had gone to or how they were living. He, however, established that due to the displacements, the impact of job losses on women had been profound, especially because a large proportion of them were single or single parents, widowed or separated. The condition of women was compounded by the politics of exclusion that accompanied the FTLRP. Despite some women having participated in the land invasions, they were not considered for land ownership. Instead they were forced to offer sexual favours in exchange for their names to be put on the redistribution list. A study on Nyabamba in Manicaland Province by Chingarande, Mugabe, Kujinga and Magaisa (2012) established that there were glaring gender disparities in land ownership. Goebel cited in Bhatasara (2011:320) argues that the gendered nature of the violence during the FTLRP has not been addressed as there were no frameworks for women victims of violence during the programme to seek justice and recourse.

When Operation *Murambatsvina* was executed, a lot of families who were staying in the demolished structures were displaced and the majority of them relocated to the rural areas. From figures released by the United Nations (2005), about 700 000 people were directly affected by the operation. The Church and Civil society Forum in Zimbabwe (2012:15) posits that through Operation *Murambatsvina*, “women were greatly affected as they had to take care of their children and extended family members in the open, on the streets.” The demolitions also affected the livelihoods of a number of women. According to CCSF (2012:39) women were disproportionately affected by *Murambatsvina* especially widows who depended on rentals for survival and women in the informal sector. Before the execution of Operation *Murambatsvina*, women depended on flea markets and vegetable vending to make a living. This came to a sudden

halt due to the operation. Human Rights Watch cited in Chibisa & Sigauke (2008:43) contends that women were the worst affected since they did not own properties in rural areas and depended on flea market trading in urban areas for their livelihood. Vambe (2010:76) argues that

“...Operation *Murambatsvina* targeted this informal sector and undermined the economic rights and legal status of women. Young black women not yet married or those in marriages out of community of property who ran the thriving flea markets were hit hard by *Murambatsvina* when the authorities confiscated their goods. Without anybody to turn to, and unable to raise capital to restart their businesses, Most of the women lost their economic independence and some were forced to choose the hard option of prostitution.”

These views by Vambe are supported by the Human Rights Watch (2005:27) which noted the plight of widowed women and mothers with children living with disabilities. In its analysis, the Human Rights Watch (2005:28) argued that “displaced women and girls were also vulnerable to various forms of abuse and harassment including sexual abuse and domestic violence.” Thus, the operation induced unprecedented scales of poverty, homelessness and vulnerability with both immediate and long-term effects (Hammer 2008:31) especially for women.

From 2000, the violence during elections also caused women to flee their homes in the rural areas and seek refuge in the cities and towns. The Human Rights Watch posits that the 2008 political violence displaced more than 36000 people. In Manicaland, it recorded about 500 people, men, women and children who were sheltering in the MDC’s regional headquarters in Mutare to try to escape state-sponsored violence. All of the women interviewed by Aids Free World had fled the 2008 political violence and were then living in South Africa and Botswana.

4.11 The Church’s Response to Zimbabwe’s Crises

Churches in Zimbabwe are grouped along four major bodies namely the Zimbabwe Council of churches (ZCC) representing the Protestant churches, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) representing the Catholic Church, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe

(EFZ) which represents evangelical and pentecostal churches and the Union for the Development of African Churches in Zimbabwe Africa (UDACIZA). These groups emerged in different contexts which are beyond the scope of the study. What is important for this particular study is to look at how these umbrella ecumenical bodies representing the church in Zimbabwe responded to the crises.

As shown earlier, the Zimbabwean church has been involved in the life of the state since the 1890 colonial event. In this discussion, the church-state relations are discussed in light of the church's advocacy and prophetic role to the state. This is located within the context of the crises that Zimbabwe faced from 2000 to the current period. What needs to be noted is that relations of church-state have never been the same for they varied due to changing circumstances (Hallencreutz & Moyo 1988) neither have the churches related with the state in the same way. While churches have related to the state through the above-mentioned umbrella bodies, there are some which have sought to relate to the state in their individual capacities. To a large extent, this has brought the varied responses from the churches in Zimbabwe as some church leaders have been co-opted into supporting the establishment. In essence, the years beyond 2000 posed a big challenge to the life of the church especially pertaining to its pragmatic work, its social ethics and teaching and its activities in relation to human dignity in the face of a marauding Zimbabwean state. Chitando (2011:43) notes that since 2000, the church has offered varied responses to the Zimbabwean political crisis especially in the wake of political violence. In this case, while some church leaders stood up to condemn the brutality of the state, there are some who supported it. For example, Reverend Obadiah Msindo of Destiny of Africa Network (DANet), Nolbert Kunonga of the Anglican Church, Bishop Trevor Manhanga of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Zimbabwe and former head of the EFZ, Andrew Wutawunashe of the Family of

God Church and Paul Mwazha who is the Arch Bishop of the African Apostolic Church have been known to support President Robert Mugabe and ZANU PF. All of these church leaders have sought in one way or the other to sacralise the personhood of the President much to the disdain of those who have been victims of his government.

On the other hand, the Zimbabwean government has, in most cases where the church was critical of the state, attempted to limit the church's activities to prayer, morality and charity. Prior to 2000, the church in Zimbabwe except for the CCJP seemed to have subscribed to this notion. However, the immense human suffering, deepening national crisis, attacks from the state and criticism from church members and partners in the post 2000 era, pushed the Zimbabwean churches to a point where common reflections and action were the only answer (Zakeyo n.d). Hence, Zimbabwean church leaders refused to subscribe to the government's narrow interpretation of the mission of the church and endeavoured to make a difference in a heavily polarised political environment" (Chitando 2011:43). From 2000, the church in Zimbabwe has sought to speak and not to remain silent in the face of government atrocities as well as to find ways of dealing with political violence that is becoming endemic in Zimbabwean society. Andrew Wutawunashe created a nationalist campaign, 'Faith for the Nation', an initiative done along his Pan-African thinking that also converges towards those of President Mugabe (Togarasei 2006:223). His campaign sought to infuse Christian ideals into the national body politic wherein the people were encouraged to take responsibility for the national fortunes. For him, it was vital for all Zimbabweans to put aside their political differences and to work together for the national good" (Chitando 2011:44). However, people generally ignored Wutawunashe's campaign due to his close relationship with the state.

From 2007, the church also sought to bring the warring political parties to the negotiating table in a bid to salvage the situation. For example, the Heads of Christian Denominations (HOCD) bishops encouraged political dialogue between ZANU PF and MDC parties. The heads of three ecumenical bodies, “Bishops Patrick Mutume, Sebastian Bakare and Trevor Manhanga [of ZCBC, ZCC and EFZ, respectively held meetings with leaders of the two main political parties and encouraged them to shun divisive attitudes and to promote a shared national agenda” (Chitando 2011:44). The three church bodies will go into Zimbabwe’s history books as the ones that first initiated dialogue between these major political parties in the country. These church leaders pleaded with the President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai “to consider the welfare of ordinary men, women and children – and they maintained that there was more to unite the different political actors than to divide them” (Chitando 2011:44). They called for a compromise in political ideologies and challenged the political leadership of ZANU PF and MDC to set the stage for national reconciliation in a deeply polarised country (Muchena 2005:265). In this case, the Government of National Unity (GNU) that governed Zimbabwe from 2009 to 2013 should be seen as the brainchild of these leaders.

Further, HOCD leaders interrogated ZANU PF and MDC on the problems in the economy, society and politics in the country. The HOCD issued pastoral letters that highlighted various aspects of the national crises, exposing falsehoods that were being peddled by the official media. These letters called on the government to respect civil liberties and challenged the government “to tackle the severe economic crisis with greater creativity than the endless printing of the local currency” (Chitando 2011:45). In this way,

“pastoral letters confirmed that the mission of the church was not merely to preach the gospel, but to stand shoulder to shoulder with ordinary people in their hour of need. And when one remembers that these pastoral letters were published in an environment saturated with fear and intimidation, one begins to appreciate

the remarkable courage that church leaders demonstrated, especially as Mugabe always contested these prophetic pronouncements by church leaders and criticised them for playing a dangerous game” (Chitando 2011:45).

Zakeyo (n.d) notes that when Operation *Murambatsvina* was unleashed on the people, the churches in Zimbabwe reacted swiftly and spoke out boldly against the government action. He further posits that

“The ZCC, ZCBC and EFZ all issued separate statements decrying the wanton destruction of property and cruel treatment of poor citizens. The church organised joint meetings with government ministers and also met with the UN Special Envoy on Habitats and Settlements, Mrs Anna Tibajuka, providing evidence of the impact of the evictions and demolitions from testimonies of thousands of families who took up refuge in churches across the country.”

After the occurrence of political violence in Zimbabwe from 2000 and Operation *Murambatsvina* in 2005, the HOCD started to issue joint pastoral letters. One of the collaborative efforts between the ecumenical bodies was the publication in 2005 of a joint pastoral letter entitled ‘*A Call to Conscience- Zimbabwe Silver Jubilee 1980-2005*’. In biblical times, jubilee was a time for freedom for those that were captive (slaves), the poor and the downtrodden. The publication of this pastoral letter was timely. It came at a time when the general citizens felt that they had been enslaved by the political leadership. The pastoral letter charged that ‘a house of fear’ had been built in Zimbabwe and the majority of the people were afraid of speaking their mind. In their own words, the church leaders said Zimbabweans had lived each day like “prisoners in a concentration camp from the Zambezi to the Limpopo” (2005:5) Describing Zimbabwe as a prison was in contradiction with the nationalist ideological narrative which had encouraged all Zimbabweans to ignore their sufferings and uphold their independence. They were being forced to chant slogans like ‘Zimbabwe will never be a colony again’ yet black political leaders had turned it into their personal possessions. Probably, a good reminder is President Mugabe famous “Blair keep your England and let me keep my Zimbabwe’ rant. Such statements are unfortunate

because they cease to view the nation as ‘our’ collective responsibility, a nation in which we are all equal regardless of our race, tribe, gender or class. Hence, the need to respect even those we regard as minority groups in Zimbabwe (2005:7).

The title of the pastoral letter presupposes a nation that had chosen to ignore its conscience. In fact, the church leaders blamed Zimbabwe’s challenges to a ‘death of a conscience’ (2005:5). They contended that people had chosen to bury their conscience because they could no longer bear living with it yet the same was crucial for them to choose the good from the evil.

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

In their analysis of the situation the church bodies noted that the attainment of independence did not bring freedom. They said

“Freedom has been won but it is like a parcel that is held up in customs. You know it is there but you cannot have it (2005:6).”

The above statement is very striking in that it accuses the political leadership of withholding the only thing that the liberation war was fought for; which is freedom. The other greatest challenge that Zimbabwe had was that of some people infringing on the freedom of others. In this regard, the church leaders called for accountability for the failures encountered in Zimbabwe and warned against always blaming ‘our’ failures on others. They argued

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

In this instance, the church leaders were exposing the selfishness of Zimbabwe’s political leaders who blamed everybody else except themselves and desired that all the attention should be placed on them.

The other notable undertaking by the ecumenical church bodies was the publication of the National Vision Discussion Document (NVDD), *The Zimbabwe We Want: Towards a National Vision for Zimbabwe* in 2006. From the church leaders’ point of view, Zimbabwe’s major challenge was that it lacked a common vision since 1890. The NVDD sought to come up with this common vision after national consultation. Thus,

“Whereas many politicians constantly advised Christians to stay away from politics, consultations on the national vision document reminded Christians that they had an obligation to participate in political processes. The consultation process also helped Christians to realise that, while they might subscribe to different political ideologies, they all shared a common destiny” (Chitando 2011:44).

As one reads the document, one gets the feeling that the church leaders had managed to diagnose the real problems that Zimbabwe faced at the time, some of which it still faces today. Chitando (2011:44) is of the opinion that

“The document undertook a penetrating and honest assessment of the achievements and failures of independent Zimbabwe. It did not spare the church from criticism and invited Zimbabweans to work towards developing a shared national vision.”

One of the strengths of the NVDD is that it provokes thinking in the direction of a vision of the humanisation of women, where in a section on gender equity, it states that a number of issues cannot be avoided such as women’s dignity and agency as well as women’s capabilities. The document further argues that the church is at the centre of the reconciliation debate, and that churches have built their work on the solid foundation of Christian responsibility. This naturally positions the church to play a notable role in the reconciliation agenda.

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

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

Thus, having made a correct diagnosis of Zimbabwe's problems and suggested a prescription for its healing, the church leaders failed to lead in the administration of their suggested prescription. They allowed the politicians to lead which led to the dismal failure of the initiative. The CCSF (2012:32) is not wrong in its analysis when it says "the NVDD process ended with its launch and there was no implementation game plan and resources to take it forward" Hence, Zakeyo (n.d) argues that " a process that started with much promise was to be compromised...to appease President Mugabe."

After the 29 March 2008 Harmonised elections, HOCD published a pastoral letter entitled '*Concern Over the Deteriorating Situation in Zimbabwe: Message from the Heads of Christian Denominations in Zimbabwe*'. The pastoral letter was published at a time when the political situation in the country was deteriorating. As discussed above, the ruling party ZANU PF had been beaten by the MDC in the 29 March harmonised elections which then resulted in people beaten, killed, raped and maimed for having voted 'wrongly' in the elections across the country. In the pastoral letter, the church leaders in the HOCD designate themselves as the shepherds of the people. In other words they had the responsibility of looking out for the welfare of the people. In this regard, they condemned the organised violence that was taking place. They also condemned the deterioration of the humanitarian situation by highlighting that the cost of living had sky-rocketed and had gone beyond the reach of many. People were hungry and the health system had crumbled. Having noted these challenges the HOCD encouraged the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to intervene and warned that Zimbabwe was at the brink of genocide. It called on the government to stop the violence against opposition supporters and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) to release the presidential poll results.

Furthermore, it urged the general people to refuse being used by politicians and to embrace political tolerance.

In February 2009, the HOCD issued a press statement on the political situation obtaining in the country at the time. In this statement, it congratulated the nation for the formation of the Inclusive Government (IG). It urged those in the IG to take cognisance of the fact that the arrangement was short term, hence the need to work hard towards the accomplishment of the goals of the IG which were from the point of view of the HOCD: coming up with a new constitution, granting citizens their fundamental freedoms, revamping of the economy, ensuring political participation by every citizen, the equitable distribution of land among others. The church leaders condemned the violence that was taking place after the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) and called for national reconciliation and healing.

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

As a complement to the joint pastoral letters by the HOCD, the individual ecumenical bodies responded to the crises in their own capacities. For example, the ZCBC in 2007, published a scathing pastoral letter entitled ‘*God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed*’. The bishops categorically blamed the national political leadership for the various crises the nation was going through. The ZCBC pinpointed bad governance and corruption as the major weaknesses of the political leadership of that time. Chitando (2013) analyses the pastoral letter and concludes that it spoke truth to power through the use of blunt language. What the pastoral letter achieved despite its weaknesses was to suggest to the political leaders that they had lost the moral stature required to guide a modern nation-state (Chitando 2013:88). This was an incisive analysis of the crises. Apart from pastoral responses by the ecumenical bodies to the crises, individual churches offered humanitarian support to the survivors of political violence. For example, churches bore the brunt of the displacements that were caused by Operation *Murambatsvina* and the 2008 political violence. According to Chitando and Togarasei (2010:157-158)

“Many families were displaced and churches were at the forefront of offering accommodation and food. This was a highly risky undertaking as the state machinery was ruthless when dealing with all those who sought to provide assistance. Many pastors put their lives at risk when they offered humanitarian assistance to survivors of political violence and to MDC supporters who had sought refuge at Harvest House in Harare, the party’s headquarters.”

In this context of political violence, apart from traditional ecumenical bodies, other religious groups emerged to confront the vice. Sisulu, Richard and Kibble (n.d) posit that

“...there was increasing concern from church leaders, although most of them saw their role as one of attempting to bring reconciliation, rather than openly leading opposition to the government and its actions. However, a number of pastoral initiatives which chose a more confronting approach also materialised at that time. In both Bulawayo and Mutare, ecumenical groupings emerged that focused on justice and peace.”

In this case, we find the emergence of the Zimbabwe Christian Alliance (ZCA) in Harare, Grace to Heal (GtH) in Bulawayo, the Zimbabwe National Pastors' Conference (ZNPC), the Student Christian Movement (SCM), Churches in Bulawayo and Churches in Manicaland among others. These were loose and informal rather than officially representative of churches, sidestepping difficult questions of ecclesiology (Sisulu, Richard & Kibble n.d). Each of these groups sought to deal with political violence as well as to bring healing and reconciliation to the affected communities. While noting the various contributions of these groups, this study focuses mainly on Churches in Manicaland (CiM). However, before we look at Churches in Manicaland as a forum, it is critical for this study to first outline the geographical boundaries within which the Forum operates.

4.12 The Mapping of Manicaland as a Province

Manicaland is one of the ten provinces in Zimbabwe. It lies in the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe and stretches north and south along the eastern border with Mozambique. In the 2012 national census, the Zimbabwe Statistical Agency established that the province had at that time a total population of 1 752 698 made up of 830 697 males and 922 001 females. These statistics show that women number more than men. The province has a total of eight districts namely Nyanga, Makoni, Mutasa, Mutare Urban, Mutare Rural, Buhera, Chimanimani and Chipinge (See Appendix C). Though Mutare Urban and Mutare Rural are at times regarded as separate districts, they are politically and administratively seen as one. Hence, some people take the province to have only seven districts. According to Ranger (1991:121), it is the Portuguese who called this region which was under the Manyika chieftaincy by the name Manicaland.

Apart from the province having the different districts, it is also made up of various ethnicities. Usually, these ethnic groups are identified by their languages. Various scholars have presented

the Shona of Manicaland as a homogeneous group identified mostly as *Manyika*, while others have tried to distinguish between the *Manyika* and the *Ndau*. This study disputes this presentation which has turned a blind eye to at times invisible diverse and multiple ethnic identities which characterise the Manicaland Province. The exposition of these ethnic groups is critical for any process of post-conflict reconstruction such as national healing and reconciliation. The issue of ethnicity becomes crucial because ethnicity has continued to shape and influence the economic, social and political life of Zimbabwe since the achievement of independence in 1980 (Gatsheni-Ndlovu 2011:28). However, there has been silence on how discourses of ethnicity manifested themselves among Zimbabweans in the political violence that engulfed Zimbabwe since 2000. This study notes that ZANU PF from 2000 deployed militias from one area to terrorise those in other areas so that those victimised would fail to recognise the perpetrators. In this case, a clear exposition of the various ethnic and sub-ethnic groups in Manicaland is relevant in this context.

The most common ethnic group in Manicaland is the *Manyika* which is found in Mutare Rural, Mutasa, Makoni though the majority of the people in Makoni are commonly referred to as the *VaUngwe*; the *Ndau* who are found in Chipinge and Chimanimani (it needs to be noted though that among the *Ndau*-speaking people in Chipinge are other groups that have been subsumed). These are the *VaGova* and the *VaDanda* who are mostly found around Mt Selinda. There is also the *VaBocha* who are found in Marange and some parts of Buhera, the other parts of Buhera speak *Chikaranga*, a language mostly found in Masvingo; *VaJindwi* who occupy the Zimunya area; *VaBunji* in Rusape and *VaGarwe* in Nyanyadzi. Apart from these groups, there is also the *Hwesa* people who are found mostly in the Nyanga district. Ndhlovu (2009:60) explains that

“the *Hwesa* belongs to the *Sena-Senga* group that includes *Sena*, *Barwe*, *Nsenga*, *Chikunda*, *Hwesa-Senga*, *Rue* and *Podzo*. This language is spoken by people

found in Manicaland province. While Nyanga District is sparsely populated, it has a fair share of linguistic diversity with four languages spoken in the district. These are Manyika, Hwesa, Barwe and Budya.”

When political violence erupted in Zimbabwe from 2000 as discussed above, the province of Manicaland was not spared. This violence was most intense in Mutambara in Chimanimani, Mapungwana in Chipinge, Katerere and Nyakomba in Nyanga, Headlands, Buhera, Mutasa and Marange (Waziweyi 2011:52). It is in this context that Churches in Manicaland (CiM) emerged. This study focuses mainly on Mutare Urban and Mutare Rural.

4.13 Churches in Manicaland: A Voice Emerging in the context of Political Violence

CiM was formed in 2000 as a forum of church leaders that is not aligned to any particular political interest group or party. All the CiM officials interviewed for this study gave political violence as the major reason that led to the formation of the Forum. In 2001, in its first pastoral letter to the ‘christians in Manicaland and other people of good will’ entitled *Life in Abundance*, CiM said “since May 2000, Churches and church organisations in Manicaland, numbering forty in total, have been seeking together the guidance of the Holy Spirit in taking action to curb violence in our society, to give direction to public decision-makers, and to encourage our people to live by the ethics of Jesus in this troubled time.” In May 2000, a deepening crisis of violence and intimidation in the run-up to the June parliamentary election (as discussed above) brought church leaders in Manicaland together to discuss the church’s response. According to Sebastian Bakare who can be regarded as the brains behind the formation of CiM, the Forum started as an action in response to violence that was being perpetrated against white farmers in Manicaland. These farmers were using cell phones to organise themselves and they were arrested and detained at police stations in Mutare without food or water. Sebastian Bakare who was then the Bishop for Manicaland for the Anglican Church was approached to help these people. He then

called on Pentecostals, some churches under the ZCC and Catholics to come together and mobilise resources in terms of food and water. It was a way of supporting the people who had been displaced from their farms. However, violence escalated and the churches started dealing with people who were running away from political violence in the rural areas of Manicaland and were seeking refuge in the city of Mutare mostly at churches. A classical example is that of Roy Bennet's⁷ farm workers who sought refuge at St Johns Anglican Church in Mutare Urban. They were so many of them such that the churches did not have the capacity to cater for them. Sebastian Bakare then contacted Arnold Tsunga of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights who provided tents which saved the people from the rain. Alarm was also raised with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) which supported with food and blankets. This gave a rude awakening to churches in Manicaland (Interview with Sebastian Bakare 20 May 2015). As such, several church and lay leaders from all major denominations and ecumenical church-based organisations began to have regular meetings. They were responding to a specific political situation and at that point, the objective was not to establish an ecumenical forum which would continue to operate after the 2000 election. However, the churches and church organisations discovered later that the root causes of the violence were not going to disappear easily and the churches had a lot of work to do to strengthen just peace in Manicaland. Thus, the notion of CiM as a permanent forum emerged out of an intense period of activity resulting in the Forum becoming a cooperative meeting space rather than a formally constituted organisation.

As such, CiM can be regarded as a religious voice emerging in Manicaland in the context of political violence. The Forum is a space which is open to participation on a voluntary basis by church and lay leaders from all churches existing in Manicaland. Ganiel and Tarusarira

⁷ Roy Bennet was a white farmer in Chimanimani and had also joined the MDC where he was its treasurer.

(2014:69) view CiM as “an ‘ecumenical’ gathering of members from Christian denominations and organisations in the province of Manicaland.” In the same vein, Chitando and Togarasei (2010:156) view the Forum as providing an ecumenical platform for responding to political, social and economic issues in the province and in the country. At its inception in 2000, CiM had a membership of 40 churches⁸ and church organisations affiliated to it and the churches are made up of Catholics, Protestants, Pentecostals and AIC members. What can be deduced from this composition is that CiM has tried to bring together Christians of different doctrinal backgrounds. The Forum does not have a formal structure, but is run by a steering committee which is made up of men and women leaders of the churches that are operational in Manicaland. Adopting this informal structure has enabled CiM to avoid undermining the existing church membership organisations to which CiM participants already belong. As shall be shown in chapter five, it is also a way of subverting political victimisation.

In 2007, CiM appointed a coordinator who coordinates the activities of the Forum. As one looks at some of the names of the people who constitute the steering committee of CiM one finds that they are also members in other ecumenical bodies in Zimbabwe. For example, Bishop Patrick Mutume of the Catholic Church is also a leader in the ZCBC. In trying to find out why CiM emerged in a context where other bodies such as the ZCBC, ZCC and EFZ were already operational, the Coordinator of the Forum responded thus:

⁸ The churches are: Abundant Life Ministries, Africa University Faculty of Theology, African Catholic Church, Ambassadors of Christ, Anglican Diocese of Manicaland, Apostolic Church of Pentecost, Apostolic Faith Mission, Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe, Catholic Diocese of Mutare, Catholic Development Commission, Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), Church of Christ Zimbabwe, City of Faith Christian Ministries, Elim Pentecostal Mission, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, Faith Ministries, Full Gospel Church, Independent African Church (Muchakata) Living Word Church, Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, Mubatanidzwa weMadzimai (Mutare), Mutare Ministers Fraternal, NewDay Ministry, One Way Ministries, Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAOZ), Presbyterian Church, Salvation Army, Scripture Union, Southern African Churches in Ministry with Uprooted People, Student Christian Movement in Zimbabwe, United Apostolic Faith Church, United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, United Baptist Church, United Methodist Church, Victory Tabernacle Chikanga, Way of God Church, Word of Faith and Zimbabwe Assemblies of God in Africa (ZAOGA).

“We had dealt for a long time with these organisations and had become tired of the bureaucracy. Most of these organisations have their headquarters in Harare and it would take years for an issue sent to Harare to be solved. We, therefore, needed space where issues in Manicaland could be dealt with expeditiously without necessarily referring them to Harare” (Interview with Abel Waziweyi 21 May 2015).

It is in this vein that Tarusarira (2014:88-89) locates the emergence of CiM within the broader context of an irrelevant theodicy of mainline churches. He argues that mainline churches have held a theodicy that has legitimised perpetrators of political crisis in Zimbabwe. From his perspective, the theodicy of mainline churches did not provide answers to questions of violence, suffering and reconciliation. Ganiel and Tarusarira (2014:68) argue that the emergence of CiM needs to be justified with the perceived ineffectiveness of groups like ZCBC, ZCC and EFZ. In such a context of irrelevance and ineffectiveness, new religio-political organisations emerged to offer a new or alternative theodicy informed and characterised by radical, scripture-based analysis of the crisis. Using sociological theoretical perspectives, Tarusarira (2014), Ganiel and Tarusarira (2014) have classified CiM under religious non-conformist groups. Religious non-conformism has been defined by the University of Leizig cited in Ganiel and Tarusarira (2014:137) as “not just a stubborn and arrogant departure from norms but ‘a potential resource for alternative ways of interpreting the meaning of life, establishing social values and creating ways of life’, which makes it an element of cultural tension and dynamism.” The basic characteristics of religious non-conformist groups have been seen to be applicable to CiM. Ganiel and Tarusarira (2014:68) views CiM as having the following characteristics:

- [It] is relatively well-structured and established, thus easily identifiable in the public space;
- [It] is a direct response to the degeneration of the socio-economic and political situation;

- Bases [its] activities on religious motivation. In this case, it is not just political actors who happen to be religious, but religious actors who, based on their religious beliefs and ideas, pursue political objectives;
- [It] is networked with other groups, therefore, may be able to be more effective;
- [It] is ecumenical and inclusive in that it deals with people from all Christian doctrinal backgrounds and does not discriminate based on creed, race, rural or urban based, ethnicity or economic status.

When it was incepted, CiM had two key areas of focus namely human rights and governance. In these areas, CiM sought to bring human rights issues to the awareness of the communities in Manicaland as well as empowering church leaders in issues of governance in order to enable them to intervene in crisis situations. The Forum also sought to bring political and traditional leaders at the community level to discuss issues. CiM claims that when Bishop Mutume, Bishop Bakare and Bishop Manhanga initiated the dialogue of political party leaders (as shown above), they were actually representing the Forum also because of their participation in its activities. Probably, this cannot be far from the truth since at the time of the mediation by the three bishops, they were all resident in Manicaland. Throughout the years, the areas of focus have increased as the Forum seeks to be relevant to emerging issues in Zimbabwe. In order to be effective, CiM has different committees that work on different areas. The committees are made up of volunteers and report to the Steering Committee and their activities are then shared with the larger group of church leaders (Waziweyi 2011:59). One of the areas in which CiM has sought relevance is national healing and reconciliation. After the formation of the GNU in 2009 and the establishment of the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI), CiM

has intensified its programmes which are meant to bring healing and reconciliation to communities in Manicaland. Hence, from 2000, CiM has involved itself in a variety of activities some of which are going to be discussed in detail in the next chapter so that we appreciate how they have been useful to CiM in the national healing and reconciliation process.

4.14 Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the problems of politically motivated violence that happened between 2000 to the present in Zimbabwe. The chapter has looked at how from 2000, political violence took a gendered dimension. It has also examined how violence was perpetrated against women at the instigation of the state. The chapter also highlighted the mixed response of the church in Zimbabwe to the violence that engulfed the nation. What the chapter also did was to critically look at the various historical episodes in which violence against women took place. As a background to understanding political violence from 2000, the chapter discussed the effects of the 1980 reconciliation policy as well as the *Gukurahundi* Massacres. From 2000, important historical periods such as the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP), Operation *Murambatsvina* and election violence that characterised Zimbabwe's electoral periods among others, were discussed. These discussions were meant to provide us with a context within which CiM which is the focus of the study emerged. The mapping of the province of Manicaland was provided inclusive of the ethnic and sub-ethnic groups within it. The major reason for this provision was to delimit the geographical area where CiM operates. The chapter proceeded to discuss how CiM was formed and how it has been viewed by some scholars who have studied it. The next chapter looks at the role being played by CiM in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe by specifically focusing on its activities in Manicaland

Chapter 5

Churches in Manicaland in the National Healing and Reconciliation Process in Zimbabwe

5.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present data collected from pastoral letters, interviews and other relevant documents on how CiM is participating in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe focusing specifically on Manicaland province. While Chapter four dealt with the occurrence of political violence in Zimbabwe from the dawn of the millennium to the present, how women were affected by the same violence as well as the effects of political violence on church-state relations, this chapter focuses on presenting data from CiM on the national healing and reconciliation process. Therefore, the thrust of the current chapter is to present the research findings as mentioned in the methodology section in chapter one.

The voice of the church in the national healing and reconciliation process is vital so that we can see whether it is gender-sensitive in this process. It is also important to consider the voices, perceptions and views of the female victims as well as those who witnessed political violence in Manicaland regarding their expectations in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe especially in as far as the role of the church is concerned. Through interviews, both structured and semi-structured as well as Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), responses to questions on whether the church prioritises women's experiences of political violence in the national healing and reconciliation process can be elicited. If answers to the question on whether Churches in Manicaland (CiM) are cognisant of women's unique experiences of political violence are in the affirmative, there is still need to analyse the content of such prioritisation; if not there is need to interrogate the structures that can influence such neglect. In this case, in order to allow phenomena "to speak for itself" Matikiti (2012:255), the researcher for this study

interviewed CiM officials, traditional leaders in Manicaland as well as female survivors of political violence and those women and men who witnessed violence and are active in CiM's activities. The sample for the interviews comprised 13 CiM officials (8 men and 5 women), 9 female victims of political violence taken from Mutare Urban as well as Mutare Rural, 10 women who witnessed violence also sampled from Mutare Urban and Rural and these were put into one focus group, 3 men who were active in CiM's activities and among them was one traditional leader from Mutare Rural. Data gathered from pastoral letters is going to be presented first. However, before this presentation, a brief background to national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe is going to be provided.

5.1 Locating the Discourse on National Healing and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe in its Context

Chapter four provided a brief background of the Zimbabwean discourse of reconciliation through its discussion of the 1980 reconciliation policy and the 1987 Unity Accord. We noted very well the absence of any concept of national healing in these endeavours despite the scars that were left by both the liberation struggle and the *Gukurahundi* Massacres. After the violence that manifested in Zimbabwe from 2000, we begin to see 'national healing' becoming part of the discourse on reconciliation. Zimbabweans began to feel that what is needed is not only reconciliation but they also need healing as a nation. From 2000, the church among other stakeholders echoed the sentiments for a comprehensive national healing and reconciliation process despite these calls being ignored by politicians who had chosen violence as a political tool to remain in power.

After the 2008 political violence and the three major political parties had signed the GPA as already indicated, one of the critical points of the agreement pointed to the need for national

healing and reconciliation. Article 7c of the GPA states that parties to the agreement will “give consideration to the setting up of a mechanism to properly advise on what measures might be necessary and practicable to achieve national healing, cohesion and unity in respect of victims of pre- and post-independence political conflicts.” This in itself was enough acknowledgement by the government that prior efforts at reconciliation were not effective. The formation of the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) needs to be seen in this context. In this case, another dimension to post-conflict reconstruction was added which is ‘integration’. Furthermore, the new constitution in Zimbabwe that came into force in 2013 created the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission. As stated in the constitution, the functions of the Commission are to:

- ensure post-conflict justice, healing and reconciliation;
- develop and implement programmes to promote national healing, unity and cohesion in Zimbabwe and the peaceful resolution of disputes;
- bring about national reconciliation by encouraging people to tell the truth about the past and facilitating the making of amends and the provision of justice;
- develop procedures and institutions at a national level to facilitate dialogue among political parties, communities, organisations and other groups, in order to prevent conflicts and disputes arising in the future;
- develop programmes to ensure that persons subjected to persecution, torture and other forms of abuse receive rehabilitative treatment and support;
- receive and consider complaints from the public and to take such action in regard to the complaints as it considers appropriate;

- develop mechanisms for early detection of areas of potential conflicts and disputes, and to take appropriate preventive measures;
- do anything incidental to the prevention of conflict and the promotion of peace;
- conciliate and mediate disputes among communities, organisations, groups and individuals; and
- recommend legislation to ensure that assistance, including documentation, is rendered to persons affected by conflicts, pandemics or other circumstances (Constitution of Zimbabwe, Section 252a).

It is clearly stated in the constitution that people who are going to be members of this Commission are to be chosen for their integrity and their knowledge and understanding of, and experience in, mediation, conciliation, conflict prevention and management, post-conflict reconciliation or peace building. In 2015, Vice President Phelekezela Mphoko was appointed to head the new Ministry of Healing and Reconciliation. He has since acknowledged that the church is key in reconciliation and that some commissioners would be chosen from the clergy (Katongomara 2015). Although CiM has been advocating for and working towards the healing and reconciliation of communities in Manicaland without political support since 2000, the formation of ONHRI added impetus to its efforts at national healing and reconciliation. This was an opportunity which CiM seized and sought to make the best of. The formation of a NPRC should be seen as further strengthening CiM's participation in this process.

5.2 CiM in the National healing and Reconciliation Process in Zimbabwe

By participating in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe, CiM hopes to achieve the following:

- To bring healing to the minds and hearts that have been wounded during Zimbabwe's violent history.
- To have all places in the province where bodies have been violently dumped en masse opened and decent burials conducted.
- To have individuals and communities reconciled and restored to wholeness and to learn peace-building methods of leadership.
- In the process of healing, CiM aims to see a rebalance of power in communities so that everyone participates freely without fear of oppression from others.

In trying to achieve this, CiM endeavours to make use of churches in the various communities within Manicaland. The justification for this approach is that CiM recognises that congregations in the affected communities are the 'face' of the church on the ground and CiM has an opportunity to witness through and with them. CiM also recognises that in communities victimised by underlying or open violence these local congregations may not have the freedom to analyse, act and speak openly. In this case, CiM's support role is carefully worked out in order to ensure that the urgency of the church's influence in the affected communities is not delayed while at the same time protecting and strengthening the local congregations. Below is a presentation of the role that has been played by CiM in the national healing and reconciliation process in the Province of Manicaland since 2000.

5.3 Pastoral Letters: CiM's Voice to the Zimbabwean Nation

It is important to note that since its formation in 2000, CiM has been committed to the healing and reconciliation of communities in Manicaland within the overall framework of building peace in Zimbabwe. From 2000 to date, the Forum has been issuing pastoral letters in which they analyse the socio-political situation in the country.

On July 4, 2000, CiM published a pastoral letter titled *A Statement from the Churches in Manicaland to the People of Zimbabwe Concerning the Way Forward after the Elections*. The purpose of the letter was to map the way forward after that year's parliamentary elections. Chapter four has already indicated that these elections were held in an atmosphere of violence. In this pastoral letter, CiM said that after monitoring events taking place in Manicaland, it wanted to commend voters for the dignity and calm with which they had conducted themselves during and after the elections. It urged Zimbabweans to continue creating a stable environment which would enable national issues to be addressed and maintain a peaceful nation. The Forum noted that there were acts of revenge being perpetrated in some communities in Manicaland and, therefore, urged all elected political leaders to use their influence in bringing about an atmosphere of mutual tolerance and understanding.

Using Mtt 5:9 and Mtt 22:37-39, the Forum implored people in Manicaland to take the responsibility upon themselves to build peace with their neighbours, but also noted that the prerequisites for building peace are justice and mercy. In this case, CiM highlighted the need for the legal system to take its course so that people would take responsibility for their actions. It discouraged communities from enforcing retributive justice against those that had wronged them.

It said

“...we urge all community members to ensure that justice is carried out not for the sake of retribution but in a manner that restores healthy relationships within the community. Reconciliation means dealing with pain and resentment, hurt and anger, and we appeal to our church members, those faithful to other religions and indeed to all community leaders to give their every effort to assisting the healing process.”

Having said this, the Forum condemned the unconcealed violence that had characterised the year 2000.

In March 2001, CiM came up with a pastoral letter entitled *Life in Abundance (John10:10): A Christian Reflection on our Responsibility to God for the Building of our Society*. As indicated in Chapter four, this pastoral letter was signed by forty churches and church organisations. In this pastoral letter, CiM called on all church congregations and the public in general in Manicaland to observe certain principles in their personal and group life in relation to the major challenges that the nation was facing. The letter is addressed to Christians in Manicaland and to all the people of goodwill. From the onset, CiM stresses that the statement is rooted in scripture and seeks to enable readers and hearers to create a vital link between their Christian faith and their experience of life in Zimbabwe during that period. The Forum also affirmed that as a Christian grouping, it sought abundant life for all the people as the focal scripture John 10:10 says “I have come that they may have life in abundance.” It further affirmed its commitment to the central Christian principles of justice, truth, mercy, peace and compassion as enunciated in Mtt 23:23.

The pastoral letter condemned the degeneration of social order and security. It charged that social order and security are based on mutual respect and service, and on humility that comes from knowing that each person is made in the image and likeness of God before whom all the people are equal. CiM, therefore, reminded Christians in Manicaland and all people of good will of God’s greatest commandment in Mk 12:28-31 which calls on people to love God and one’s neighbour. It argued that

“Love of God is false unless there is genuine love of neighbour through mutual respect and service. We are acceptable to God for the welfare of our neighbour and will be judged according to how we do this” (Mtt 25:31-46).

In this pastoral letter, CiM also defined its prophetic role in the country as one that is not only to monitor but to actively shape the moral climate of society in Zimbabwe. It explains its

responsibility as that of moulding the ethos of society from which conscious and unconscious decisions emerge and from which Zimbabwe's institutional and systematic values are drawn.

Analysing Zimbabwe's socio-economic and political environment at the time, CiM noted that there was a very serious erosion of honesty and freedom. From the Forum's perspective, greed, the desire for power and control had led to the distortion of people's conscience which naturally resulted in the devising of elaborate schemes meant to hide the truth for personal and public gain. It further noted the use of intimidation and fear to silence people and the determination by the silenced to do everything within their power to save themselves from violence. The result was that some people ended up oppressing others. This created hatred which led to acts of revenge. Furthermore, CiM highlighted in this pastoral letter the abuse of national institutions by politicians for personal and political gain. It deplored the partisan behaviour of the security sector especially the police. In its own words, CiM said "we see that those who are charged with upholding and protecting the rights of our citizens are often no longer impartial in the manner in which they carry their duties" with some of them even perpetrating violence against citizens.

In addition, the Forum revealed how political party affiliation, ethnicity and race had become instruments of division and causing the tearing apart of families and communities. This was worsened by the fact that the political leadership of the country had ceased to respect the judiciary during the FTLRP. CiM argued that though the FTLRP was said to be correcting past injustices of colonialism, there was a danger of it being undermined by self interest and the abuse of power. In this regard, CiM condemned the ascribing of political value on land by making it a voting issue and called on the government to ensure that land redistribution policies benefit the poor and landless and also that the programme does not leave out farm workers who had tilled the land for many years and had only known the farms as their home with nowhere else to go.

From CiM's analysis, what has been discussed above had among other things led to the general breakdown of discipline which had led to the development of a culture of violence. Thus, CiM condemned the violent activities that took place during the build up to the 2000 elections and called on the political leaders to be servants of the people. To this end, the pastoral letter called on people to: listen to the frustrations that were at the time giving rise to or feeding conflicts in the country; seek peaceful solutions to halt the extremely dangerous culture of violence before it was too late; use creative gifts to ensure that the country is governed by a 'home-grown' constitution that truly embodies the people's ideals and values and be disciplined, abiding by their own religious convictions and faithfully upholding the constitution as an inviolable contract between the people. In the pastoral letter, CiM revealed that they had from 2000 engaged with the political leadership in Manicaland over issues of concern in the nation. It also highlighted that it had intervened where violence and human rights abuses had occurred. In the end, the Forum emphasized its political non-partisanship.

In February 2002, CiM published a pastoral letter entitled *An Affirmation of Faith and Statement of Concern for our Nation*. This pastoral letter was signed by 20 denominations and organisations⁹. This letter builds on the 2001 pastoral letter. Its intended audience are all the people who were in a position to influence the development of the political processes in Zimbabwe and was aimed at providing them with some "absolute tenets which must not be violated lest we put the future of the nation in serious danger." The publication of the letter was

⁹ These are the United Methodist Church, Salvation Army, Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, Elim Pentecostal Mission, Reason of Hope Church, Eastern Highlands Christian Fellowship, Victory Tabernacle, Mubatanidzwa weMadzimai (Mutare) Christian Care, Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, Roman Catholic Church, Anglican Church, Pentecostal Assemblies of God, Evangelical Lutheran Church, United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, Baptist Church, Mutare Minister's Fraternal, Scripture Union and Africa University Faculty of Theology.

in response to the use of violence, intimidation, discrimination and the undermining of the people's freedom for self-determination. The Forum called for the secession of the beatings, torture and the killings that were rampant in Zimbabwe at that time. It argued for the observation of the sanctity of life by both individuals and political entities and called for the prosecution of those who continued to violate other people. Apart from the call for people in Zimbabwe to take note of the importance of human life, CiM called for the respect of people's choices in elections. Moreover, the Forum reiterated its call for the equality of all Zimbabweans irrespective of race, ethnic group, sex, age, socio-economic status, religious affiliation, physical ability or disability and other circumstances of life. As such, "it is the duty therefore of every person of influence and authority in Zimbabwe to ensure that in our common search for national leadership, people do not suffer prejudice and discrimination and that the true spirit of nationhood is not broken." This, CiM said is possible in an orderly society which is based on social and economic justice for all.

One of the important tenets highlighted in this letter is reconciliation. The Forum opined that "reconciliation is a basic requirement that God makes of each one of us." For CiM, it was not enough for people to talk about reconciliation without "the honest confession of one's wrongs toward the other, repentance, and remorse on the part of the wrong-doer, healing of anger and the spirit of revenge in the victim, slow and careful rebuilding of trust between the two and mutual restoration of the relationship." CiM, therefore, highlighted that Zimbabwe as a nation was deeply in need of reconciliation between people of different ethnic groups, races and political positions and called on all those in authority to ensure that they positively influence the closure of rifts in Zimbabwean society, by making sure that all decisions and actions taken contribute to genuine reconciliation of Zimbabweans. Above all this, CiM called for those in leadership to be

divinely inspired so that they could desist from abusing power and all Zimbabweans to pay attention to the welfare and living conditions of the most vulnerable citizens.

The February 2002 letter was followed by another one on 5 March 2002 titled '*A Time to Choose*' which was a pre-election statement. In this letter, CiM highlighted that restrictive and oppressive conditions made it evident that the preparations for the elections were neither free nor fair for the public voting. On 15 March 2002 another pastoral letter titled '*A Time to Reflect*' was issued and it provided a comprehensive analysis of the way CiM viewed the electoral process. The Forum noted that there was peace during the voting period in Manicaland. However, they raised concern over the following issues:

- Polling agents and members of support groups of the main opposition party were harassed, beaten and detained during the voting period;
- Independent election observers, including church observers, were also detained during the voting period;
- Some independent observers were abducted and their whereabouts subsequently unknown for several days.

The absence of observers at polling stations threw the voting process into doubt. This led CiM to reject the legitimacy of the electoral process and declared them not free and fair. It noted that in the post-election period, there existed a mood of deep suspicion and mistrust between ZANU PF and MDC. In this case, CiM urged calm, restraint and wise counsel and urged the government to restore trust and confidence in the electoral process and the general public to observe peace towards one another. It said

“As Christian leaders, we urge all followers of Christ to recognise that love of God and neighbour (Mk 12:28-31) is the mark of a true Christian. At an individual level, my neighbour includes my political rival and love means doing to him/her what I would wish him/her do to me (Mtt 7:12). In a wider context,

love means continually striving to realise the basic Christian principles of justice, mercy and compassion (Mtt 23:23) in the society in which we live. This will require rejecting the culture of lies and hypocrisy, intimidation and violence that has flourished in recent times and the promotion of honesty, truth and self-sacrifice within private and public institutions.”

Prior to the 2005 election, CiM issued a pastoral letter titled *True peace, Justice and Freedom*.

The letter was an appeal to the various stakeholders in this election namely the candidates for the election, the electorate and those in authority. To the candidates of the election, CiM encouraged them to among other things meet with the electorate, not only to put forward their party political position, but to listen genuinely to their vital concerns, to prevent any intimidatory or violent conduct being used to influence voters, to desist from manipulating youth for unscrupulous vote-buying, to refuse to use food for ‘buying’ votes and to campaign in a manner that promotes a good relationship with all members of their constituency. The electorate was among a number of things implored to value democratic principles which include tolerance of opposing viewpoints. Those in authority were entreated to put a stop to any threats of violence, to bring to justice those who have broken the law especially those who committed politically motivated crimes, and to ensure that no one is above the law and immune from justice, to ensure that all people have access to food and to other basic necessities without discrimination along party political lines.

After the 2005 elections, the Forum issued a post-election pastoral letter titled *Healing the Electoral Environment* in which it acknowledged that a healthy electoral environment was absent during the elections. From CiM’s perspective, the absence of a healthy electoral environment affected the integrity of the 2005 electoral process. The Forum explained a healthy electoral environment as one where inclusion, participation, dialogue, openness, honesty and accountability are espoused values that promote the flourishing of human dignity and human life. On the other hand, an unhealthy environment is one where there is closure of public space,

partisan media, absence of debate, divisive rhetoric, secrecy, suspicion, threats, intimidation, fear and physical violence. It then suggested a number of priority issues that needed addressing and these are:

- *The need for inclusion and dialogue* – In this instance, CiM noted with concern the exclusion of perceived enemies from dialogue due to the continued political impasse. The call for inclusion and dialogue was premised on the people's desire for dialogue and reconciliation and not confrontation and animosity.
- *The building of confidence in the electoral institutions* – CiM highlighted people's lack of trust in the institutions that oversee the running of elections. In this case, the Forum called for electoral reforms to conform with SADC electoral guidelines of 2004.
- *The need for a new home grown constitution* – From CiM's point of view, the Lancaster House constitution was not a home-grown constitution. It was a document that was put together for political expediency and not the people's desire. Moreover, the several amendments to the document showed that it was not a sustainable document. In this regard, CiM made a call for a new home-grown constitution.
- *The right to food* - The generality of Zimbabweans were suffering from hunger and there depending on food aid. CiM deplored the use of use of food as a political tool. It noted with concern that many vulnerable groups in rural communities in Manicaland were threatened with the withdrawal of food aid because of their political affiliation in the run up to the 2005 election.
- *The need for continued zero tolerance to intimidation and violence* – On this point, CiM condemned the use of intimidation and violence for political gain. The Forum argued that the threat to one's physical body demeans one's inalienable human dignity.

Violence and intimidation undermine what Zimbabwe as a nation stands for. CiM, therefore, called on the nation to learn to resolve existing grievances and to manage conflicts in a mature and responsible manner. Law enforcement agents were encouraged to protect all citizens irrespective of their political affiliation.

Making reference to the 2002 post-election pastoral statement, CiM appealed to the elected, the electorate and those in authority to observe the principles of justice, mercy and compassion as espoused in Mtt 23:23.

In March 2008, the Forum issued a pre-election pastoral letter titled *Pastoral statement on the Harmonised Elections of March 2008*, in which they were calling on all stakeholders to play their part in ensuring that the election was free, fair and credible. The Forum called on the people to exercise their right to vote for a person of their choice and to do so in peace, to allow others to vote in the same manner, refuse to participate in intimidatory behaviour and observe the ethics of equality, truth and mercy in their behaviour. Political party leaders and candidates for the election were called upon to desist from using force to gain votes, refrain from using the youth in intimidatory behaviour and destructive activities and to use non-violent means in their campaign as well as uphold dialogue as an alternative to force. Law enforcement agents were encouraged to ensure that no one was above the law, to respond timeously in situations of violence and use legal and peaceful means of controlling violence and to bring to justice those who have broken the law, including those causing violence as a result of party politics. The youth and unemployed were called upon to among other things refuse to be used by others who wanted to bring chaos and violence to the community and to encourage other youths to abstain from behaviour that is intimidatory, violent and disrespectful of people and their property. To the media, CiM called for fairness in reporting as well as responsible dissemination of truth during the volatile period of

elections. Finally, the Forum called on traditional leaders not to be partisan, to be instruments of justice and peace as well as to continue being the custodians of Zimbabwe's cultural virtues and traditions by fostering a spirit of tolerance and co-existence.

When the announcement of the presidential results were delayed after the 29 March Harmonised elections, CiM wrote a letter to the chairman of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) appealing for the release of the same. In the letter, CiM noted that the voting was done peacefully in Manicaland and that the voting public had hoped that the results would be announced swiftly and truthfully. Concerning the delay of the results, CiM said

“We are deeply concerned that the results of the presidential vote have not yet been announced. Delay is causing unnecessary anxiety to the Zimbabwean public and the world at large....The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission's delay in making the announcement creates a dangerous power vacuum, sets up conditions for chaos, and delays the important process of national cohesion and healing.”

Grave Concern Over Continued Deterioration of Human Support Systems is a pastoral letter that was issued by CiM in December 2008. By this time the political context in Zimbabwe had somehow changed because the three major political parties had signed the GPA. In an environment polarised by extreme levels of violence, ongoing fragmentation of human social and support institutions and the background of societal trust, the Forum highlighted the need for openness on the part of the political formations which were part to the GPA. CiM indicated in this letter that the IG which was going to be the result of the GPA is what they had been calling for in all their previous pastoral letters. Among other things, CiM emphasized the need for national reconciliation. The call was made against a backdrop of a resurgence of violence and the loss of life in the Chiadzwa diamond fields in Marange. All this was happening in an environment of impunity. Citing Judges 21:25, CiM noted that the nation had a leadership

vacuum. CiM saw the lack of national consensus as plunging Zimbabwe into worse political quagmire with more and more people losing their lives. From the Forum's perspective, political leaders needed to have the interests of Zimbabweans at heart and prioritise these in all deliberations.

In February 2012, the Forum published a pastoral statement titled *Pastoral Statement on the Meeting of the Principals on Politically Motivated Violence* in which they applauded principals in the inclusive government for their call to citizens of Zimbabwe to end political violence. The Forum implored the political leaders to be sincere in their call and to desist from saying one thing while meaning the other. It called for the leaders to deal with the real issues causing violence by bringing to book those that were benefitting from the violence. Drawing from Jeremiah 6:13-14, the forum rejected the talk of peace without justice. It said "Yes we too, 'the prophets and priests', are called up for examination whether we should endorse a peace that covers up injustice and treats the wounds of the people lightly'. The Forum also rejected the cultivation of 'negative peace' where political parties only "allow for the surface calm while the real problems causing animosity continue to fester and grow under the surface.

Before the July 2013 elections, the Forum issued a pastoral statement entitled '*Recognising God's Moment: A Pastoral letter from the Churches in Manicaland*' with its Shona Version '*Tiri Vanhu veTariro Imwe Chete*' (We are a people of one hope). The statement was disseminated through a mass distribution drive. The statement aimed at guiding the voting public, candidates for the election and all relevant public leaders in the way the churches hoped the election would be conducted and endorsed previous appeals from national church leaders for a peaceful process. It also implored the general public and state institutions critical during elections to observe peace and shun violent behaviour. Reflecting on the 2008 political violence, the Forum said that the

2013 elections was a defining moment for Zimbabwean politics: that it was either peaceful elections or the country would plunge into chaos. The Forum reminded people about the brokenness of the Zimbabwean community which was a sure sign that there was need for healing to take place and, therefore, indicated that it was Zimbabwe's most important agenda at that time. It also noted that there were structures, individuals and systems in Zimbabwe that were benefitting from political violence and argued that for a strong peace-building process there was a critical need of analysing this situation.

Furthermore, it implored the government which was going to be elected in 2013 to give its support for the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission in order to aid the national healing and reconciliation process. The Forum also said that the process of healing and reconciliation cannot be halted until the Commission had been appointed but encouraged Zimbabweans to begin to practice the principles of justice, healing and reconciliation. In this case, the Forum called on the people to among a number of issues, devote their lives to national healing irrespective of their area of responsibility and also to lead by example, the complex but essential process of reconciling people in Zimbabwe. For this to happen, CiM called on people to do the following among other things: seek forgiveness if they had wronged anyone, seek to genuinely forgive if they have been wronged and the churches said they were ready to assist people in doing this, listen to mothers and sisters who have wisdom and experience to offer in social cohesion-building and to promote opportunities for women to offer their leadership in the peace and reconciliation process.

The Forum also condemned the suffering of people not only in Manicaland Province but in the whole nation. It noted with concern that the discovery of diamonds in Manicaland had not helped in lifting the general people out of poverty due to greed and corruption. From CiM's perspective,

where there is corruption, greed and self-serving leadership, there can be no peace. It condemned politicians for disrespecting the public's intelligence by using scare tactics to get votes.

5.4 The Compendium: A Call for Social Justice

Probably one of the Forum's major productions is the book, *The Truth will Make You Free: A Compendium of Christian Social Teaching* (2006). The book represents the Forum's engagement in civic duties which is one of the church's responsibilities. It covers important topics such as values and principles, community, governance, economy and responding to crisis. In the book, the Forum declared that:

“The social teaching of the churches is much more than a theoretical body of knowledge. It is a guideline for committed action and involvement for justice. It will only be really understood through concrete commitment to social action in defending and enabling the poor and vulnerable” (2006:ii).

The document rejects the view that churches should stick to spiritual issues while leaving politics to politicians and goes on to justify the involvement of the church in political issues. Of particular interest in this document is the discussion on political violence, reconciliation, healing and forgiveness. While advocating for forgiveness and reconciliation, the Forum takes note of the fundamental place of justice in the process as it states 'there is no peace without justice, no justice without forgiveness' (2006:10). Elaborating on justice, the book says that the aim of justice is not only to change situations that are wrong but to bring people into right relationship of love and trust with their creator and with each other. Therefore, it encourages the adoption of restorative justice over and above retributive justice. In the book, the Forum said

“We urge the creation of new justice systems, which focus on restorative justice which focus on care and restoration of all those concerned- victims, offenders, criminal justice officials and the wider community....When relationships are broken through crime or political disputes, restorative justice seeks to repair the damage, right the wrong and bring healing to all concerned, including the victim, the offender, the families and the community” (2006:9).

The book also deals with the themes of reconciliation and healing. From the Forum's perspective, the issue of [national] healing should not focus only on the current hurts, but should go back to the hurts from the past, for example, the *Gukurahundi* massacres of the 1980s. This is seen as enabling the nation to bring out the tensions that continue to be hidden and to expose injustice. It argues that justice needs to be ensured in a way that restores relationships.

The section looking at community deals with issues of how children, youth and women are to be treated. On the issue of women, the book dwells on domestic violence and shows how they are affected by it. On governance, the Forum, in the compendium repeated its 2005 call for the healing of the electoral environment.

These findings from pastoral letters and the compendium are complemented by interview responses from CiM's Steering Committee members. These are presented below.

5.5 Responses from CiM's Steering Committee Members

5.5.1 The Church's Responsibilities in a Nation

When asked what they thought the responsibilities of a church in a nation are, the CiM officials gave varied responses. Elizabeth Maaraidzo Mutambara, a lay member of the United Methodist Church in Mutare Urban and a lecturer at the Africa University as well as a Steering Committee member of CiM saw the responsibility of a church in nation as one of calling the people in leadership to account and this refers to leaders in all facets of life. The church should help people in government to account to the people. She also argued that the church needs to be the eyes of the people to see issues that affect people in a negative way and should speak on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves. She further opined that the church has the responsibility of bringing people together, for example, where people are divided in various ways, the church should help people transcend these divisions. Hence, in a nation, "the church should serve as an

example of what we need to be as a people by upholding the values we believe are important as a church, values such as integrity”, she argued. In her opinion, the church has the responsibility of responding to both the spiritual as well as the material needs of the people. In this case, she sees the role of the church as a prophetic one. Pius Munembe, a bishop at Elim Pentecostal Church in Mutare Urban shared the same views with Elizabeth Maaraidzo Mutambara and argued that the church needs to stand for the rights of the people. In this case, the church has to be the voice of the voiceless because the majority of the people do not have access to information while some do not know how to present their challenges. In such cases, the church can be their voice in general. In special times, such as those times when people’s livelihoods are threatened by circumstances designed by human beings or natural causes, the church also needs to stand with the people.

Philemon Chikafu who is one of the founding members of the Forum and is a pastor in the United Methodist Church is of the opinion that the church is a religious organisation and, therefore, should promote religious activities. He also views the church as a social institution which deals with social issues that affect society. From his view point, these definitions reveal the holistic nature of the church; especially that the church does not deal with spiritual issues only but also issues that affect society. Therefore, he argues that “people need to understand the church also as a political institution.” In this regard, he refused the views of some politicians in Zimbabwe which seek to confine the church to the pulpit and opined that the church will always be involved with the society dealing with bread and butter issues. In concurrence, Sebastian Bakare in a statement said “the churches main agenda in a nation is to speak about justice.”

Abel Waziweyi, a pastor in the Anglican Church and the current CiM co-ordinator is of the opinion that the responsibilities of a church in a nation are three-fold namely: spiritual, socio-economic and political. He further explains that “the church needs to meet the spiritual

aspirations of Christians, where there are socio-economic challenges, the church needs to play a mediatory role and in politics, the church needs to exercise its prophetic mandate.”

Lloyd Nyarota who is a pastor in the United Methodist Church and a Steering Committee member of CiM said that the church generally is the conscience of the nation. In reference to Martin Luther King Junior’s philosophy, he said “the church should not seek to be the master neither should it be the servant, but should always strive to be the conscience of the nation.”

Marian Dangare, a lay member of the Anglican Church in Mutare Urban as well as a member of the CiM Steering Committee, opined that “it is the responsibility of a church to help people because the people generally respect the church.” Through the messages that are preached in church, behaviour change can be realised. She also said that people get comfort in church in their times of sickness or other challenges since the church is able to provide counselling services to them for free. In the same vein, Shirley Dewolf who is a woman pastor in the United Methodist Church in Mutare Urban said that the church primarily has the responsibility of providing a fellowship of people working together to bring the salvation of Jesus Christ in the world. She said, however, for the salvation to become a reality, the church needs to interact with the world around it because the duty of the church is not only spiritual, but is anything that has to do with the lives of the people.

Peter Rore, an Overseer at the Eastern Highlands Christian Church and Obert Shatai, a pastor in the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe (Wesleyan Methodism) gave a religious explanation to the responsibilities of a church in nation. They both view the church as the light of the world. Rore further describes the church as the salt of the earth and from his perspective salt is a symbol of healing, therefore, the church heals any situation in a nation. As the light, Rore and Shatai view the church as having the mandate of guiding the nation by basically showing it the way to go.

Some of the views of CiM officials are echoed in minutes of meetings that the Steering Committee holds regularly. At a steering committee meeting held on the 25th of August 2014, CiM noted that:

- the churches have a mission to introduce and promote peace building at a very practical level. The church cannot expect people to learn alternative ways to conflict and power-mongering unless the church is directly engaged with them at a personal level. The church cannot expect people to know and accept the grace of God unless the church is willing to be instruments of that grace. The church cannot expect people to uphold basic values important to the Christian faith unless it helps them to make value-based decisions.
- the church must minister freely and boldly to all people without fear of being pulled into prevailing negative trends. It must make its witness not only by what it says and does, but also by what it refuses to say and do. The church must stand its ground on clear principles and offer a new way of thinking and being.

5.5.2 The Role of the Church in Zimbabwe in National Politics

All the participants concurred that the church in Zimbabwe has a role to play in national politics. Nyarota gave an emphatic ‘yes’ to this question and explained that historically the church has played a pivotal role in national politics. From the colonial period, the liberation struggle to post-independent Zimbabwe, the church strove to build the conscience of the nation by giving a voice and making a call to the nation and the government to take serious the dignity of the human person. Closely linked to Nyarota’s views are the views of Dewolf and Mutume, who subscribe to the notion that the church should participate in national politics. Dewolf is of the opinion that the church in politics has a role to play in safeguarding the moral fibre of society. It has to

reclaim political life as moral ground though the church must not engage in party politics. Mutume said “the church in Zimbabwe has to guard politics because politics can degenerate into decadence of morality.” Therefore, the church’s duty is to guard against all that. Rore like Nyarota said that the church in Zimbabwe has a role to play in national politics because from the armed struggle it has played its part. He also argued that the church owns some of the best schools, clinics and hospitals in Zimbabwe and that some of the politicians we have in Zimbabwe today, are products of the schools. From his point of view, in whatever the politicians do, they need to hear what the church says particularly in the area of conflict resolution where the church can effectively play the mediation role.

Munembe argued that the role of the church in Zimbabwe in national politics is a prophetic one. He said “the church needs to be the Elijah, Nathan or Jeremiah of today.” He argued that although some people would like to dispute the church’s involvement in politics, the church should speak out without fear or favour. For example, prophets in the Old Testament spoke God’s word to the nation, they rebuked injustice. He is, however, of the opinion that the church, while speaking must remain non-partisan. The views of Munembe were also echoed by Bakare who argued that the gospel of Jesus Christ is about politics. He rejects the government’s view that seeks to confine the church to the pulpit because for him, Jesus was never restricted inside the Synagogue. He was out there with the people speaking against the injustices that were perpetrated by the rich and the Roman Empire on the vulnerable in society. The issue of justice was reiterated by Simango who said

“A! Chaizvo, chechi ine chokuite ngepolitics ngekuti chechi inode justice. Tingatoti isusu pairwirwa nyika ino, chechi yakapleya ebig role kuitawo manegotiations. Zvinoitika mupolitics zvinoaffecta mainnocent people. Matongerwo enyika anoinvolvhawo zvinhu zvakawanda. Politics kazhinji dzinokonzera kutambudzika kwevanhu. Saka pakadaro chechi inotaura against injustice.” (A! Yes, the church has a role to play in politics because the church

loves justice. We can say when this country was being fought for, the church played a big role in the negotiations. What happens in politics affects innocent people. The way a country is ruled involves a lot of things. Many times, politics causes the suffering of people. So, in that regard the church speaks against injustice).

Chikafu argued that the church should involve itself in national politics by virtue of its origins. He further explained that Jesus was killed because the Jews perceived him to be siding with the poor people of his day. The Roman Empire also thought that he was mobilising people against it. If Jesus had been pre-occupied with spiritual things only, the Roman government would not have joined the Jews in crucifying Jesus. So, from his perspective, it is not true when the government says the church must not play a role in national politics because the church is part of the political culture. Chikafu further argued that “the church cannot focus on spiritual reconciliation while ignoring social reconciliation because the former cannot happen without the latter.” In this regard, the duty of the church among others is to promote relationships, well-being and peace. This was also voiced by Shatai who said that it is difficult to separate the bible from politics because the bible itself is full of politics. He went on to argue that “in Zimbabwe, 80 percent of the population are Christians and they are the ones who do the politics everyday.” In that regard, the church is directly affected by the politics that the members of the churches get involved in. Dangare said that the church in Zimbabwe should get involved in politics because it has the potential to bring peace. She said “through the pulpit the church can discourage people from fighting and the church can encourage political tolerance.” In the same vein, Mutambara posited that “politics is not outside of the realm of the things that the church should be involved in.” From her point of view, the church can assist its members in matters relating to elections so that they are aware of issues at hand. In this regard, she sees the role of the church as a prophetic one

and she also argued that the church in Zimbabwe should be non-partisan in its political participation.

Therefore, all the CiM officials agreed that the formation of CiM was the church's response to the politics of the day which had sought to dehumanise Zimbabweans. Back then in 2000, CiM officials felt that the politics of the day was dividing instead of uniting the nation. In that regard, as churches, they needed to reflect on what they were supposed to do with those who were perpetrating the violent atrocities. The church in Manicaland broke its silence and began to speak for the people. As such, the CiM officials are agreed that it is within their mandate to participate in politics.

5.5.3 The Successes of CiM in Zimbabwe's Political Arena

On the question of what the successes of CiM has been since its formation, CiM officials felt that the Forum had achieved a lot, though more still needs to be done. Munembe is of the view that CiM has achieved a lot of things since its formation. For example, it has managed to bring awareness to the people about their rights. CiM has also helped people who were running away from violence and it provided safe houses for them. When these people felt threatened, CiM moved them to other stations privately. Furthermore, with the help of the Human Rights Commission, CiM managed to provide free medication for the injured. Some were hospitalised and treated for free. In addition, he is of the opinion that the creation of a forum where people aired their views without looking over their shoulders and where they could not be punished was a great success for the CiM.

Simango also believes that CiM has achieved quite a number of things. She said that during the FTLRP, a lot of farm workers in Manicaland were displaced and CiM worked hard to help them. She also highlighted that CiM negotiated with Members of parliament (MPs), governors, etc, to

see where the displaced would go. She further said that CiM monitored the way food aid from Christian Care which was then an arm of CiM was being distributed in the rural areas. She herself and a colleague went to see how food was being distributed especially in Chisumbanje which is a drought prone area in Manicaland. She also recalled that during the 2002 elections, a lot of election observers were arrested in Manicaland especially in Hauna. CiM then provided food for the arrested and lawyers to represent them in court. So for her, “*CiM raiva dziso rekuona kuti anhu aisabatirirwa*” (CiM was an eye to see that people were not being oppressed). Moreover, she also highlighted the visit made by CiM to chiefs, the police, the governor and the MPs as an achievement. The other thing she is proud of about CiM is how it has become an entry point for other Christian organisations into Manicaland. She pointed out that in 2002, when political violence was escalating in Chimanimani, one Christian organisation whose name she has forgotten visited Manicaland with the aim of accessing Chimanimani. The organisation approached CiM first and she was then seconded to accompany this organisation to Chimanimani.

The above views resonate with those of Chipu Dube, who is a lay member of the United Church of Christ and a Steering Committee member of CiM. She, however, added that in 2000, some women who were accommodated at the Anglican Church in Mutare Urban gave birth at the church and CiM helped in providing both the material and emotional support. Bakare remembered very well one expectant mother who delivered a baby at the church and while preaching a Christmas sermon on 25 December 2000, he declared that the mother and the baby were their Mary and Jesus of the day.

Waziweyi narrated that CiM has achieved a lot since its formation. From his perspective, the GNU was a product of CiM. This view is also shared by Rore, Shatai and Mutambara. He also

said as a Forum, they have from the time of the GNU visited some Manicaland rural communities where CiM held community-based workshops with traditional leaders, war veterans and councillors. In his opinion, some positive change was noticed towards peace in the areas where workshops were held. He also noted the collaboration that happened between CiM and JOMIC and revealed that women in politics in Manicaland actually commended them for bringing them together. In addition to Waziweyi's views on CiM's successes, Rore stated the publication of pastoral letters as another achievement while Shatai pointed out that CiM contributed a lot to the stability of Manicaland by calling for the cessation of violence. Mutambara added that the participation by CiM in the reburial of bones discovered at the Grange Mine in 2014 was another success for the Forum. She argued that though there was a lot of politics involved, CiM managed to bring people together, that is, those who are members of CiM and non-members alike. In this instance, she said "CiM provided material, spiritual and emotional support to the community in that area."

For Chikafu, the first success for CiM was that for the first time, the church managed to speak with one voice at least in Manicaland. People in Manicaland knew that there was an organisation that could help them and the government knew that there were people who could speak on behalf of the people. The other success for him was that a forum was put in place where the church could mediate in political disputes. He intoned that "CiM tried to provide a bridge where the state and its machinery could enter into dialogue with the church rather than speak through the media." For the first time, the church and the state made efforts to speak face to face, so boundaries were broken. He added that as CiM, they engaged the political leadership in Manicaland when the distribution of food had become politicised.

Nyarota said CiM has achieved a lot since its formation. For once, the church managed to take a stand and establish a pastoral ministry of presence to the many victims of political violence. He also said CiM managed to visit prospective candidates for elections and talked to them about the need for peaceful elections. He further mentioned CiM's visits to chiefs as a way of trying to share with them its views on political violence since they are the custodians of the traditions and rights of the people. He also said that, CiM provided sanctuary for the people who were running away from their villages due to violence as well as visiting those that were jailed. The other achievement is that CiM managed to bring different political parties together. Nyarota lauded the issuing of pastoral statements by CiM in response to what was happening in the country at each historical epoch since its formation.

Dewolf said they managed to hold very frank and open discussions with the political leadership of the province. She said that the Forum has managed to influence policy at both the administrative and the provincial level. For example, during the GNU, they played a key role in JOMIC. She pointed out that probably their biggest impact is in bringing the social justice ministry to Manicaland's rural communities. Prior to the formation of CiM, Dewolf noted that there were a few times that the people had consulted the church and that there was no history of a social justice ministry based on theological and biblical sources. CiM, therefore, published a book, *The Truth will Make You Free* which was widely distributed. In order to strengthen this initiative, CiM pulls together trainers to train the clergy so that they are able to intervene in social justice. She also highlighted that CiM managed to bring people from different Christian backgrounds to come together to make common statements. Hence, CiM proved that it is possible for people with divergent views to come together for the common good. From her

perspective, CiM helped to give witness to the true unity of the church as well as encourage church leaders to look beyond their own congregations.

Like the other study participants, Mutume said that the successes of CiM are many. He noted that the Forum managed to publish many statements against violence, immorality, falsity, abuse of women and children among other things. He also sees the provision of safe havens for people who could no longer live in their localities due to political violence as a major success for the Forum. He also mentioned that as a Forum, they managed to provide food for people who were jailed for political reasons and pressured government to bring the people to trial so that those who were found innocent would be released. The other thing that they managed to do according to him is that they talked to village heads in a bid to dissuade them from being used as political tools because this was causing them to lose credibility among the people they were leading. He said that the village heads were under a lot of pressure from politicians who wanted their backing and were used to threaten people with eviction if they did not vote for the headman's preferred candidate.

All the CiM officials confirmed that the Forum holds regular meetings with political leaders in the Province. For example, a meeting was held on 6 March 2012 with political party provincial representatives. At that meeting, CiM wanted to know what political parties were doing at the grassroots on the issue of violence especially after the GNU principals had condemned political violence on 11 November 2011.

5.5.4 Challenges faced by CiM

Despite the successes noted by CiM officials, they also highlighted the challenges that they have faced over the years. Shatai said their major challenge has been that politicians in Zimbabwe do not want the church to engage in politics while some members of the church also view politics as

a dirty game. His views were also echoed by Dangare who said that people think that the church needs to preach only. From Rore's perspective, CiM has faced the challenge of being viewed as a political group because politicians do not understand its activities. The other challenge has been lack of support from fellow ecumenical bodies like ZCC, ZCBC and EFZ. This challenge is noted against a background of CiM having committed itself to supporting initiatives of other ecumenical bodies. For example, in 2009, CiM issued a solidarity statement in support of the ZCBC, ZCC and EFZ's Press Statement which was issued on 7 March 2009 (as discussed in chapter four). The third challenge that he mentioned was that of lack of financial resources which has adversely affected CiM programmes.

For Munembe, fear is one of CiM's greatest challenges. He says the fear is very real to the extent that in order to reduce that fear, the Forum does not have a permanent structure. This was meant to disguise the church leaders so that the powers that be may not know who is driving CiM. He, however, notes that the fluidity in the leadership of CiM means that it cannot be formalised and, therefore, it becomes difficult to get funders or to mobilise for funds because donors always want to know the people who would account for their money. On the other hand, Chikafu said the challenges were purely political where they were told one thing and political parties went on to do the other. He posited that in meetings with political parties they would be told what they wanted to hear but not what political parties intended to do. Like Chikafu, Waziweyi bemoaned the political atmosphere that they had to operate under. He said that at times they failed to hold workshops in certain areas in Manicaland because they were barred from doing so by ZANU PF. There were also times that people were followed by the security apparatus of government and, therefore, fear gripped the Forum. The other challenge similar to what Munembe said and was also mentioned by Waziweyi as well as Mutambara is that of the structure of CiM which does

not have a permanent leadership. They said, apart from presenting challenges of getting financial donors, it also has got its own challenges in the implementation of programmes because no one really takes responsibility.

The issue of lack of resources was also echoed by Nyarota, Dewolf and Dangare. However, Nyarota further noted that it was very difficult to bring political parties together because at times ZANU PF refused to come. The few times that they came, they would question who CiM is due to its informal structure. On the other hand, Dewolf highlighted the challenges that emanated in the initial stages of CiM's formation, that is, that of bringing different denominations together. The challenge they face now as a Forum is the continued shrinking of the space for dialogue in the political arena. Mutume lamented political interference in some of the programmes that they would like to undertake as well as the infiltration of the Forum by the Central Intelligence Organisation. He gave an example of the Grange Mine incident where bones of hundreds of people were discovered in 2014 and needed to be reburied. CiM played an important role of ensuring that tempers would not flare out of control in the spirit of healing and reconciliation. When it was time for the bones to be reburied, politicians took over and the church was marginalised and yet, he claims, CiM wanted to lead the process.

For Simango, CiM has been accused of favouritism as it tried to mediate in the political conflicts. She also said as a Forum they are not allowed to criticise the government. As such, she said they are not allowed to gather people together and then discuss the atrocities that have been perpetrated on the people or else they will be labelled 'rebels'. In that regard, she highlighted how state security agents would sneak into their workshops and two of CiM's members were once called for questioning about CiM's activities. In Dube's opinion, the infiltration has been as

a result of some of the founders of the forum being bought by the perpetrators of political violence.

5.5.5 CiM's Views on Zimbabwe's National Healing and Reconciliation

Most of the participants expressed their own reservations for the government-initiated national healing and reconciliation process. From Munembe's perspective, the national healing and reconciliation process that was instituted in Zimbabwe in 2008 was not done correctly. He argued that the South African Model of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission is the best model for Zimbabwe. People should speak the truth of what they did (perpetrators) and victims must be given a chance to tell the nation what happened to them. He said the current scenario in Zimbabwe is wrong because we cannot have perpetrators of violence being the same people who are talking and organising reconciliation. In his opinion, the process needs to be run by an independent organisation and the church must be playing a much bigger role.

Dewolf said the need for that process was very obvious after all the violence in the country. However, she said the process was not out of goodwill but out of pressure. In her opinion, it was put in place for political expediency and that is where the whole plot was lost. As a result, she said, the process did not take root. It is interesting to note that for Dewolf, there are two processes of national healing and reconciliation, that is, the official process announced by government as well as the unofficial process which is taking place in the communities. She said that in Manicaland, there is a wave that has been sweeping the communities where people are beginning to realise that they need to work together to develop their communities. From her perspective, this community initiative needs to connect with the national one and the national initiative needs to build on the community one.

Nyarota is of the view that the process of national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe from 2008 did not achieve anything. For him the process failed because it was led by victims and perpetrators. The parties that came up with the process had things to hide. He argued that the political parties should have come to listen to communities and they should have been prepared to tell the communities what they had done. Generally, there was no political will to reconcile the nation. Thus, he felt that there is need for a different approach where other institutions such as the church, civil society and the judiciary are leading the process. For him, such an approach should be independent of any political influence. Mutume shared the same views with Nyarota as he argued that the government-led process is not going to work because the people who are in the structures are the ones who perpetrated violence. For him, the process has not been properly thought out. He also views the process as highly politicised. He suggested that Zimbabwe needs to find a way of coming up with a good national healing and reconciliation process. In his opinion, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (SATRC) provides a good example for Zimbabwe. There should be a willingness to see if this model can work for Zimbabwe. He argued that all previous efforts failed to bring permanent healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. He said communities in Zimbabwe are tired of people who are just talking and doing nothing towards the process with some rejecting even the very idea of reconciliation. They argue that *“muri kuda reconciliation mwana wangu achadzoka here, murume wangu achadzoka here, where are my goats?”* (You want reconciliation, is my son going to come back, is my husband going to come back, where are my goats?).

Shatai and Rore said the process was a good one. However, for Shatai, the process is failing to take root because the government is paying lip service to it. He argued that the process was only effective during the era of the GNU when JOMIC was put in place. For him, after JOMIC, there

is nothing to talk about. For example, the promises by government that it was going to put committees on national healing and reconciliation in all the districts have not been fulfilled. On the other hand, Rore was of the view that government should have incorporated the church fully in this process. If anything, it should have handed over the process completely to the church because government is full of politicians who have wronged each other. From his point of view, the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission should be led by the church with government only offering support. He argued that reconciliation is the mission of the church. These views were shared by Dube who said about the national healing and reconciliation process:

“Hatisi kunatsa kuionaba nekuti vanhu vachiri kungorovana. Itai Dzamara uripi? Haina kubudirira. Dai vakatorawo vanhu vemachechi sezvatakaona kuSouth Africa, vanaDesmond Tutu vaivamo. Hazviiti kuti vanhu vairwisana ndivo voda kutungamirira. Zvinoda an independent person like the church.” (We are not seeing it because people are still beating each other. Where is Itai Dzamara?¹⁰ It was not successful. They should have taken people from the church like we saw in South Africa, people like Desmond Tutu were there. It is not possible that people who were fighting each other are the ones leading the process. There is need for an independent person like the church).

Waziweyi said that from his own perspective, the government-led national healing and reconciliation process put in place during the GNU was elitist. It did not, in his opinion, get to the grassroots because it was put in place by politicians who had their own agenda. He mentioned that during the GNU, as they would move with JOMIC into some of the areas that were no-go areas, ZANU PF would complain that those spaces were being opened to the MDC. He also intoned that although the ONHRI managed to reduce physical violence in Zimbabwe during the GNU, it did not address the real issues in as far as national healing and reconciliation is concerned.

¹⁰ Itai Dzamara is a political activist who was abducted on 9 March 2015 by suspected CIOs and has not been seen or heard from since then.

Chikafu viewed the process as very confusing and difficult to articulate. He said “it is a complex process. There are many philosophies. He then highlighted the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission model and explained that in this model people have to confess before reconciliation. In other words, there is no reconciliation before confession. The current process, he explained, was born as a result of the 2008 political violence and people wanted a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) model of reconciliation. The second philosophy which he explained is the one that says one does not need to know everything that happened in a conflict for one to have reconciliation and he said he subscribes to the second philosophy. His argument is that one cannot quantify evil; there is no small evil or big evil. For him, admission of guilt is enough to warrant forgiveness. He further argued that perpetrators of violence do not need to be remorseful for healing to occur. He noted that the challenge with the current national healing and reconciliation process is that it was conceived at a bigger scale yet the process should have started small before it could become a national agenda. For him, for a successful national healing and reconciliation process, the government should provide a political framework so that nationally people understand what is expected; a public announcement should then be made to make the public aware so that everyone participates in the process. He further argued that healing and reconciliation should be gender-sensitive and therefore should not be conceived in general terms.

Dangare argued that though the government set in motion a process which it said was intended to bring healing and reconciliation, the process has not achieved much. She said

“Maronda haasi kupora. Iye zvino vanhu vakangotambudzika, vari kudzokera kumashure. Healing haisi kubuda” (The wounds are not healing. At the moment when people face challenges they are flashing back. Healing is not taking place).

Dangare’s views were also echoed by Simango who said

“Inonetsa kuti nditi pane chayanyatsoachivha. No achievement. People still have their wounds. Nyamasi zvinhu zvekuseri hazvisati zvagadziriswa zvakavharwa. Ikezvino tinozwa kuti kune Peace Commission asi kwazi haine funding. Hapeno, asi anhu anode kupiwa mukana wekutaure zvinoarwadze. Kunyangeyo pasine compensation, anhu ngaapiwe mukana wekutaure kuti anzwisise what was done. It will be a good start.” (It is difficult to say there is anything real that it has achieved. No achievement. People still have their wounds. Up to today, things of the past have not been dealt with, they are covered. Now we hear there is a Peace Commission, but it is said it does not have funding. I don’t know, but people need to be given a chance to say what pains them. Even if there is no compensation, people should be given the chance to speak so that they understand what was done).

In the same vein, Bakare described the process as “a waste of time because the people who are championing the process and those that selected them are of no repute.” In his opinion, “the appointees are mere safe-valves for the perpetrators of injustice, hence they are not courageous enough to point out the perpetrators of violence.” From the fore-going argument, Bakare said from 2008 when the process was initiated, no healing has taken place.

5.5.6 CiM’s Contributions to the National Healing and Reconciliation Process

In response to the question on how CiM has contributed to the process, Munembe said they held various meetings with the political leadership where they sought to clarify their position regarding the process. They also involved the HOCD so that as the church in Zimbabwe, they could speak with one voice. In addition, he said as a Forum, they have been organising themselves to visit traditional leaders in Manicaland. He said

“We have organised ourselves to visit chiefs in Manicaland in order to find out their challenges as custodians of traditional law and also to hear their position regarding political violence. We also wanted to understand what they were doing to make sure that there was no violence in their areas. We even offered to speak to their people ourselves. I visited chief Saunyama in Nyanga while others went to Honde Valley, Chimanimani, Buhera and Chipinge.”

He also indicated that they have offered free counselling services to victims of violence as well as organising one day workshops for pastors and lay leaders in the various churches in

Manicaland so as to discuss what would be taking place in their constituencies concerning violence and how they can help to bring peace. He, however, acknowledges that CiM still has a lot to do in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe.

Dangare, Simango and Dube alluded to the fact that CiM has contributed to the process through pastoral letters. Dube, however, added that they have tried to engage both the victims and perpetrators of violence. She also added that the messages which are preached in churches have also helped to bring healing to the people. Simango said she attended a ten-day workshop in South Africa where she learnt how to deal with issues of national healing and reconciliation. She added that they have held workshops together with CCJP where people were given the opportunity to speak about their experiences. She also highlighted that CiM has performed a monitoring role. For example, it monitored the way the constitutional consultative process was being done. This is confirmed by minutes of a meeting held on 21 October 2010 in which CiM raised concern over the constitution-making process. The Forum noted that the environment was not conducive for the constitution-making process because the political parties were advancing their own political ideologies through their supporters, hence, the people were not genuinely airing their views. It also noted that there were cases of violence erupting in some areas like Nyanga, Chipinge, and Makoni where meetings were disrupted. As a result, for the Forum, the national healing and reconciliation programme initiated by government had remained an idea without much happening on the ground. They, therefore, resolved in the meeting to call for the halting of elections until the national healing and reconciliation programme was complete.

Dangare said they are having lessons with women in the *Mubatanidzwa weMadzimai* in which they are teaching them that by-gones are by-gones thereby encouraging them to forgive the perpetrators of violence. She highlighted that as mothers, they understand the use of the bible.

She also indicated that CiM is offering pastoral counselling as well as inter-church counselling where those from one church can be counselled by people from a different church.

Waziweyi said as a Forum, they engaged JOMIC when it came to Manicaland in 2009. At the end of its mandate, he said JOMIC acknowledged that of all the provinces in Zimbabwe, Manicaland was the only province where the church had actively participated in the implementation of healing and reconciliation programmes. Waziweyi said this commendation was in reference to the various workshops which were held with rural communities in Manicaland. He said

“We managed to organise workshops in Chipinge, Nyanga, Chirinda, Honde Valley, Hauna, Samaringa and Makoni. In 2009, we held a workshop in Nyanga with traditional leaders and before the end of the workshop, some of them stood up and said ‘let us forgive each other, we wronged each other’.”

These meetings which were mentioned by Waziweyi are confirmed by the minutes of a CiM Steering Committee meeting held on 9 June 2011. In this meeting, it was reported that CiM had in months before this date held meetings with political and traditional leaders in Chipinge, Checheche and Rusape. Other meetings were lined up in Chimanimani, Nyanyadzi, Marange, Buhera, Headlands, Nyanga, Mutasa, Honde Valley and Nyazura. Simango also confirmed the workshops and meetings as one way that CiM has contributed to the process of national healing and reconciliation. Waziweyi added that they have been trying to bring healing and reconciliation to communities in Manicaland through what they call ‘peace tournaments’ and ‘peace prayer rallies’. The peace tournaments were held in both rural and urban areas in Manicaland while the peace prayer rallies have been held in Mutare Urban only. The peace tournaments comprised netball and soccer. Waziweyi said

“Through sport we were given the opportunities to address the people and tell them that in a competition there are winners and losers but at the end of the game we don’t fight but shake hands. We would also tell that even in politics we are

just competitors and not enemies. After elections, when some have won and others have lost we should be able to work together because we are different players with different ideas but we are not enemies.”

In reference to the peace prayer rallies, he indicated that representatives from different political parties are invited. The church then addresses the public before representatives from each political party speaks about peace. He, however, acknowledged that peace prayer rallies have not been held in the rural areas which are the places where violence occurred the most. He said “areas that mattered the most were not accessed.” However, at the end of the 2008 pre-election pastoral letter, CiM indicated that it had set aside 24 March 2008 as a day of prayer for the 29 March elections. It indicated that churches would be gathering both within Mutare and outlying districts for that purpose.

Nyarota and Shatai averred that they have written concept papers in which the Forum has shared with the political leadership in the province as a way of guiding the process. Shatai indicated that the concept papers were submitted to ONHRI as well as the former governor of Manicaland, Christopher Mushowe. In these papers, the Forum shared their concern for the healing of communities in Manicaland. Nyarota also viewed the production of the book, *The Truth Will Make You Free: A Compendium for Christian Social Teaching* as a special way in which CiM engaged with communities in its call for healing and reconciliation. He further argues that

“as CiM we are operating on the shop floor, right where the conflicts are taking place. The ground floor is where we are operating from.”

In confirmation of what Nyarota said, Dewolf said that many times they have intervened to stop violence. She also indicated that they have helped leaders make wise decisions and that in their pastoral letters, they have pointed out what makes for peace. She further said that they are explaining reconciliation as a way of making it more understandable to people. When asked why they are focusing on reconciliation, she said

“We are focusing on reconciliation because many people do not want to hear about it. They think it is a cover up. So, we are in the process of having a series of discussions, retreats and studying the scriptures. We are going to come up with a position paper which we are going to share with other institutions.”

Mutambara confirmed what Dewolf said by acknowledging that the National Healing and Reconciliation Committee was working on a document which was intended to come up with a position on reconciliation and healing. She also indicated that CiM’s participation in the Grange Mine reburials was part of the healing process. Minutes of a meeting held on 27 May 2014 by the CiM working group on reconciliation confirm that the Forum was engaged in a process of coming up with a document on national healing and reconciliation. In this meeting, those present noted that for many years, there has been talk of the need for reconciliation in Zimbabwe, but no specific agenda. Reflecting on the 1980 reconciliation policy, they noted that the church made the mistake of urging political leaders to take up the rhetoric of reconciliation, but then left it to the politicians to provide the leadership and direction for putting reconciliation into practice. From their perspective, this was a serious mistake and Zimbabwe is today living with the consequences. Participants at the meeting resolved that the church must take up the ministry of reconciliation seriously at this time in its history and offer the nation a practical way forward. Mutume argued “if we do not, then there may be constitutional structures such as the National Commission on Peace and Reconciliation, but they will again serve a political agenda and Zimbabwe will not move forward.” It was also agreed at the meeting that though reconciliation had been a priority area for CiM, the Forum had not yet developed a programmatic approach. Furthermore, church leaders were tasked to meet to define reconciliation in Zimbabwe’s current context and also to come up with a practical programme for the church’s engagement. When this researcher was collecting data, the document to the above effect was presented at a CiM meeting

held on 26 May 2015. The document could not be availed to the researcher because it was not yet a public document.

5.5.7 Ways in which women were affected by Violence in Manicaland

All the members of the CiM Steering Committee interviewed for this study concurred that women have been the major victims of the political violence that occurred in Zimbabwe from 2000 to date. Rore and Shatai opined that women are the most vulnerable group whenever there is violence. This was supported by Waziweyi who said from 2000, women in Manicaland suffered emotional, verbal and sexual abuse.

For Munembe, we cannot talk about women victimisation through the use of political violence focusing on the violence that engulfed Zimbabwe from 2000 alone. We need to go back to the liberation struggle where women in Zimbabwe in general and Manicaland in particular bore the brunt of the war. They had to cook and meet all the other needs of the freedom fighters. Since women constitute the largest percentage of the Zimbabwean population, they are the ones who are coerced into attending rallies where they are most of the time threatened with violence. When violence occurred from 2000, it is the women who cared for the victims. Women themselves incurred losses when their houses and granaries were burnt. Some women were injured, there were MDC pregnant women who were beaten up.

Bakare said that from 2000, men disappeared whenever violence erupted leaving women to look after children. Mutambara said in their rural area of Mutambara, women were beaten up especially those that were viewed as opposition supporters. She indicated that her cousin's wife was badly beaten up because her husband was an opposition supporter and had also fled from the perpetrators of violence. She also said

“In 2008, generally, women became very unsafe and uncomfortable. They were stopped from driving and were commanded to board buses. It took some time

before I travelled back home. When I finally went, I found out that our home had been broken into and a lot of things like beds and clothes had been taken away. I thanked God because at least the houses were still intact. For others in the neighbourhood, their homes had been burnt down, people beaten and others killed. I remember very well how the headmaster of Mutambara High School was beaten up together with his wife and were left for dead. They were only rescued by a war veteran who defied all odds and took them to hospital.”

She said that bases were set up in her rural home area and this to a large extent restricted the movement of people especially women. Of concern to her was the fact that some of the perpetrators are well-known, but they are walking freely. For her, this brings into question how reconciliation is supposed to be done in Zimbabwe.

Mutume opined that the history of Zimbabwe has been a violent one and a very sad page when considering women’s experiences. He said

“After independence, women have had a raw deal in Zimbabwe. They are an angry people because from the liberation struggle up to today, women are being raped, killed, and burned. From 2000, many women have been killed because they become defenceless. These people beat the husband first, when he is powerless, they then deal with the woman. Food has also been used to pressurise women. Here in Manicaland, there are certain areas where women were not allocated food and were barred from accessing the borehole or boarding the bus if they did not have a certain party card.”

He also indicated that Zimbabwean society has been silent on the sexual abuses that women have endured throughout the conflict in the country. For him, women have been forgotten.

Chikafu concurred with Mutume and said that women were affected in a very big way. He argued that when a husband is affected, the wife is also affected. From his perspective, some stories will never be told. In this case, people need to understand the various dimensions of language, that is, people need to be good interpreters of body language. He argues that for us to understand how women were affected by violence, they do not need to verbalise everything because society has values and a way of communicating their feelings. He said “I disagree with people who say people should speak out because people have many ways of speaking out.”

For Dewolf, women were the most affected by political violence because they have been on the frontline. She said women generally maintain the home and pass on community values. However, they have been affected at many levels because their role of passing values has been affected by the various ways they have been violated. She said

“women have been physically violated and they have also been violated by the environment. Their very identity has been put into question because generally their voices have been silenced. They cannot bring social cohesion in their communities because that role has been violated.”

In her opinion, although there is a ministry responsible for gender in Zimbabwe, there has been a culture of impunity in Zimbabwe; a culture that subjects women who do not have an education because they are not seen as individuals but as collectives. Despite this, Dewolf said there are rumblings on the ground, that is, from the grassroots women.

Simango said women were affected by political violence through displacement because in most cases, the husbands were not there. Most of the displaced women lost their livelihoods after the displacement. She also indicated that women were traumatised when their children were arrested as most of the women had to spend time searching in jails. Furthermore, she said that some women had their property destroyed while others especially farm workers were sexually abused. She indicated that she had personally met a woman from a farm in Chimanimani who had been raped in 2000.

Nyarota, Dangare and Dube mentioned that women were displaced, lost their homes and property. Nyarota said most women could not run away leaving their children, hence, they suffered the most. He pointed out a case which he said he still remembered vividly of a woman who was abducted in Nyanga and had stayed in the bush for three days with her abductors. The husband had managed to flee from the abductors. When she was finally released she fled to the

city of Mutare together with her children and husband and found refuge at one of CiM's safe houses. When she was narrating her story, Nyarota said he could feel that there were gaps and he suspects that the woman could have been sexually abused. Dube said men were running away to Harare and South Africa leaving women vulnerable to the violence. She highlighted that those that were displaced were in great trouble because some of them were pregnant and were giving birth in the open. Others had children of school-going age who could not attend school and this traumatised a lot of women. Dangare added that women also suffered the pain of losing their husbands and children who were killed in the violence.

5.5.8 CiM and Women's Experiences of Political Violence

In response to the question on whether CiM prioritises women's experiences of political violence, the Steering Committee members of CiM were not agreed as to what they had done to address this issue. Munembe says he was not very sure where they are, but remembers in some of the meetings that they had identified women and the youth as those groups that needed to be heard and had resolved that these should benefit from livelihood programmes. At the end of the interview, he, however, confessed that as a Forum, they had not addressed women's issues. In addition, he said that even if they had wanted to prioritise women's experiences of violence in this process, it is difficult to have women attend meetings and articulate their experiences. He said most women require the permission of their husbands to attend and for those that do attend, it becomes difficult for them to express themselves.

Waziweyi said

“Not really. We have not focused on women, maybe because the church leadership is male dominated. We have been looking at communities as a whole.”

For Waziweyi, the challenge they face in putting the experiences of women at the fore of the national healing and reconciliation process is financial. They have not so far allocated any funds for women's programmes due to budget constraints. He, however, indicated that the failure to mainstream gender in their activities was "purely administrative rather than the lack of zeal." To this end, he said "we need a shift in our thinking so that we have programmes specifically for women so that we focus on women specifically."

This was also echoed by Nyarota and Rore. Nyarota said:

"I don't think there has been a specific intention to say we are attending to women. CiM attended to victims in general, anyone who needs support. Gender has not been part of the agenda."

Furthermore, Rore said

"Not fully. We responded to violence generally. There was one meeting for women, but it was not well-attended."

Rore said that at times it is difficult to focus on women because the national healing and reconciliation process has happened on a bigger scale. He also said the fact that they do not have a gender desk has led CiM to look at survivors of violence as a collective group.

Other CiM Steering Committee members shared the above views. For example, Mutambara said national healing and reconciliation has been at the heart of CiM, but she was not sure whether gender has been its focus. The reason for this, she said could be that there are not a large number of women in the Steering Committee. She, however, noted that of late, there has been a number of women coming to join the Steering Committee. She also noted that in its activities in the communities, CiM has also targeted leaders and these leaders happen to be men. She hopes that if the church and communities can have more women leaders, they can bring the gender-dimension to the national healing and reconciliation process. Specifically, she hopes that in CiM

the more women they have, the more the stories they will be able to capture of women's experiences of political violence.

Chikafu said

“CiM failed the women. We created awareness but did not implement healing programmes on the ground especially for women.”

He said the space is overcrowded by men to the extent that women's voices are not being heard. From his perspective, men think that their language is the women's language or the bishop thinks that his language is the women's language. He gave the analogy of the kitchen, the well and that of gathering fire wood. From this analogy, he said, these spaces are culturally designated for women. They are spaces where women could share their experiences without any interference from men. He, therefore, argued that the church has failed to provide such spaces to women in the national healing and reconciliation process.

Dewolf said they have not specifically looked at women's experiences of political violence in isolation of what men and children went through. From her point of view, the main reason for this could be that most members in the CiM Steering Committee have been men because most of the clergy in churches are men. She also said they are trying to have a broader perspective where they would invite lay members of the church to be part of the Steering Committee so that they would have more voices coming from women. This has not been easy because of the multiple jobs that women do at home which hinder them from attending meetings. She also noted that men have easy access to vehicles which makes it easy for them to attend the meetings which are usually held in the evening. However, she said “what we are trying to do is to call for a women's only gathering where we intend to get women's voices from all districts and to enable the women to name the challenges that they are facing.” Simango confirmed that they have not looked at women in particular and like Dewolf said that “there is need to have a programme to come up

with a workshop so that women would discuss their challenges.” She, however, said at the Grange Mine incident, they tried to speak to the women to allay their fears. For her, the challenges are that women do not come out in the open about their experiences because of fear.

She said

“Maybe it’s the way they have been socialised. Culture. They are not able. They fear to come out in the open. They say out not exactly what they are going through.”

In her opinion, the problem could be that men are the majority of the people in the CiM Steering Committee. She, therefore, said that CiM should not put male pastors in the front of the national healing and reconciliation process especially on issues that concern women. She argues

“women should deal with pastors’ wives and lay women in church. *Ndivo vanoziwa zvevanamai* (they are the ones who know what concerns women). The problem is CiM seems to be putting emphasis on the male pastors.”

Dangare, Dube, Shatai and Mutume said that CiM has prioritised women’s experiences of political violence in the national healing and reconciliation process. Mutume did not elaborate on how they have been doing this. He, however, said that though they may want women’s experiences to be dealt with on a broader scale, they face a number of challenges. He highlighted that in the rural villages most leaders are staunch ZANU PF supporters and they do not want to hear about anything that may prejudice the party. He further said one of the problems of reconciliation is that women are restricted and in his interactions with them, women have been complaining that they had not been given space to talk.

Dube said

“*Tinozvikoshesa zvakanyanya. Tinotsvaga nzira dzekuvabatsira nadzo. Nguva yeMurambatsvina, CiM yakaratidza Kajumulo Tibaijuka nzvimbo dzaive dzakavigwa vakadzi vakawanda vaive vaputsirwa dzimba dzavo nehurumende. Takavapawo zvekudya.*” (We give them great attention. We find ways of helping them. During Murambatsvina, CiM showed Kajumulo Tibaijuka where a lot of

women whose houses had been destroyed were hidden by the government. We also gave them food).

Dangare said they have formed groups of women who were affected by political violence. She said most of these women do not have any livelihoods. In this case, in the *Mubatanidzwa weMadzimai*, they have formed groups in which women are being encouraged to have savings. She also said in their individual churches they have women's morning prayers, a space where women have the opportunity to testify about their experiences. Women in the CiM Steering Committee take these testimonies and discuss them in the CiM meetings and they are advised on how to help them. The challenge they face when dealing with the women is that women are not free to share all of their experiences of political violence especially sexual abuse. She said most of the women who were raped during the violence choose to keep quiet about it as a way of safeguarding their marriages. She also said they fear the stigma and discrimination that may result from opening up about rape. She also indicated that though they want the women to talk about their experiences, they do not know what to do with them afterwards because they do not have the resources to support the women in the process of healing. For her, it is not only a matter of simply discussing about the political experiences of violence but also about what to do with them.

Shatai said

“Yes. When we have meetings we call women from the *Mubatanidzwa weMadzimai* around Mutare in order to equip them about their rights. As CiM, we have also partnered the Ecumenical Church Leaders Forum (ECLF) and have three-day workshops with women and the youth on peace-building.”

He, however, said the challenge they face is that women are very suspicious. After the violence, most of them fear what they see, so, they fear being questioned why they attend the meetings. For fear of victimisation women choose to sit back and keep quiet.

In order to confirm what CiM official said, interviews were also carried out with people from the communities from which CiM operates as indicated above. The section below presents the responses.

5.6 Responses from People in the Communities in which CiM Operates

In this section, the researcher presents and analyses data gathered from people who live in the communities in which CiM operates. These include female victims and witnesses of political violence. The witnesses of violence comprised women who were put in one focus group as well as three men who were interviewed individually. The study participants were drawn from Mutare Urban and Mutare Rural. The reason for the inclusion of people from the communities was to ascertain if CiM has had any impact on women survivors of political violence in as far as healing and reconciliation is concerned. The other reason was to also provide a space where they could share their experiences of political violence and what role they expect the church to play in bringing healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. In order to protect the identity of the interviewees, codes were allocated. In this case, they are coded as Interviewee A to L and the views from the FGD are presented collectively.

5.6.1 The Responsibilities of a Church in a Nation

Various responses were given to the question on what the people thought were the responsibilities of a church in a nation. All the interviewees were agreed that the church has the responsibility of helping the needy through the provision of food, clothes, accommodation among other things. This was also echoed in the FGD. However, there were other views given.

For example, Interviewee A said

“Basa rechechi munyika nderekupodza, kubatsira kuti munyika muve nepeace. Chechi inomira pakati peside rinokonzera mhirizhonga nerisingakonzeri. Haifaniri kupinda mumapato.” (The responsibility of a church in a nation is to bring calmness, to help the nation to have peace. The church stands in the middle

of the side causing violence and the one not causing. It should not get into party politics).

The above views were also shared by Interviewee B who referred to calming the environment and the intermediary role of the church but also added that the church should constantly preach against political violence. For Interviewee G, “it is the church’s duty to stop political violence and to reconcile people.” Interviewee H said “*chechi ine basa rekuita kana panenge paita mhirizhonga, inofanira kuuya neminamoto nezvimwe*” (the church has a role to play where violence has occurred, the church should come with prayers and other things). Yet for Interviewees J and L, the church has the duty of bringing people together so that people can unite as well as intervening by bringing peace where there is violence. Interviewee K opined that

“Church for me is the mother or umbrella body. It should attend to all the problems that affect the community seeing to it that the needs or rights of people are being observed. The church has a responsibility to Christians and non-Christians alike.”

All the above views were also echoed in the FGD except that the FGD added that the church is the light of the world and therefore should show the nation the way it should go.

5.6.2 The Role of the Church in National Politics

On this question, Interviewee A said that the role of the church is to pray pleading with God that the nation may have peace. For her, this would lead people to understand that people are not supposed to be abused. For Interviewee B, the church needs to preach to politicians because they tend to forget God. While not aligning itself to any political party, the church should reconcile warring political parties. This was also echoed by Interviewee D who added that the church should as well play the role of a counsellor showing people how to engage in politics the right way. From Interviewee E’s point of view, the church can ensure the reduction in the incidences of violence as well as encouraging people to love one another. This view was also echoed by

Interviewees I and L. Interviewee L added that the church can also encourage people to unite and to have respect for one another. Interviewee G argued that

“The church has a role to play in politics because its members are the ones engaged in politics. It should teach the Christians that people should vote freely without intimidation.”

For Interviewee K, the church has the major role to play in politics whether it is party politics or normal politics because whatever is being done affects its flock. For him, the church cannot stand aloof otherwise it loses its relevance. He argues

“The church should not be reactionary but should advocate for what should happen before problems emanate. It should speak out against bad policies.”

Interviewees C, F and H shared different views from the rest of the others. They rejected that the church has any role to play in national politics. Interviewee C argued that the church cannot engage in politics because it should be non-partisan. For Interviewee F, it is ungodly for the church to engage in politics while Interviewee H argued that the church should not engage in politics but should just pray from afar.

5.6.3 Women and Political Violence in Manicaland

A number of stories were told on this question. Before each story is recorded, a brief biographical data of each interviewee is going to be provided. Interviewee A is a 58 year woman who resides in Sakubva in Mutare Urban and is unemployed. She is a single parent. She said that women in Manicaland were affected by political violence in a unique way because when their husbands or children were beaten, it also affected them. She herself is also a victim of political violence. Her story goes thus:

“After the March 2008 elections, we were preparing for the June run-off some people came to my house in the dead of the night and knocked on my door. I refused to open. I could hear them looking for something to force-open the door. Fearing that they were going to destroy my door, I opened it. The people were looking for my son because he was a known MDC supporter. When I opened,

they entered and took my son. They started to beat him using metal weapons and they injured him seriously in the head. I then questioned why they were beating him, and they began to assault me. They pushed me and I fell hard on the ground and I broke my back. One of my backbones actually came out from the flesh (she showed the researcher the bone). In the morning, I was taken by MDC people to the doctor. The doctor did not treat me well because he had been threatened not to attend to those that had been beaten up for political reasons. Another organisation then took me to the general hospital. Though I was treated, the bone has not gone back to its place and I can't do any hard work anymore."

Interviewee B is a 55 year old widowed woman who resides in Chikanga in Mutare Urban. She is a Roman Catholic Church member and is self-employed. Interviewee B said women were beaten, raped and their property taken. They were also left to foot their medical bills. Narrating her experience, Interviewee B said

"In 2008, I was in opposition politics together with my daughter. I was not very active though but my daughter was. After the March elections, ZANU PF people came to my house around 12 mid-night. They were looking for my daughter specifically. Unfortunately, on that day, my daughter and my son were putting on jeans of the same colour and similar woollen hats. My son is a quiet person and was never involved in politics. They commanded us to open the door and we refused. They used metal weapons to open the door. They started beating my son. When I realised that they were almost killing him, I decided to intervene. My daughter, it was death either way, so I jumped through the crowd and tried to free my son. That is when they started to beat me also. They pulled me for a distance and hit me against the wall. They injured my back. They only realised later that they had beaten the wrong person. When they had gone, I then tried to use hot water to treat my son's wounds. So I switched on the lights and put water on the stove. However, the people came back and told us to switch off the lights and the stove. They then left some people to guard us. In the morning, we reported our case to the police because we knew the people who had beaten us. They were not arrested. The police only gave us a letter to go to the doctor. The doctor we went to refused to attend to us and only gave us pain-killers. He told us never to come back to his surgery. We then went to the general hospital and were told that my son's eyesight was badly affected. He needed further attention. I did not pursue it because I did not have the money, so my son's condition has not changed since then. I also still have problems with my back. My daughter also started bleeding and it took days. The doctor said it was stress. Even now, she menstruates abnormally. She says she continues to think about the experience and she feels guilty for causing her brother's condition."

Interviewee C is a 57 year old woman who lives in Dangamvura in Mutare Urban. She is unemployed and is a member of the Christian Marching Church (CMC). She indicated that women were beaten, raped, had their property destroyed and their food stolen. She said

“I was beaten together with my ailing daughter and her child. The windows to my house were all broken. My daughter has since died. At that time my grand daughter could not attend school because she was injured. I am still pained. I know the people who did this to me but I can’t do anything. Even then, nothing would take place if you report.”

Interviewee D is a 38 year old woman who lives in Zimunya in Mutare Rural. She is married and is a member of the Anglican Church. She indicated that in her area women were affected by political violence in a big way. They were raped, their livestock confiscated and their homes burnt down. Some also had their daughters raped at the bases. She said

“Ndiri mugari wemuno maZimunya. Pamhirizhonga ya2008 ari manheru, takabudiswa mumba tikaendeswa kubhesi kumadhirihori. Tainzi tiimbe uye zvainzi vanamai vanofanira kuuya nehuku nechikafu. Anenge atadza kuuya nehuku aipiwa punishment yekuzodziunza dzave mbiri. Ini pamba pangu vakapisa imba imwe chete, vakatora mbudzi mbiri nehuku dzese. Ndakaudza mapurisa asi haana zvaakaita” (I am a resident here in Zimunya. During the political violence of 2008, at night, we were made to go out of the house and were taken to a base at the drying halls. We were made to sing and it was said mothers should bring chickens and food. Anyone who failed to bring the chicken was given the punishment of bringing two chickens. At my home, they burnt one hut, took two goats and all the chickens. I reported to the police but they did nothing).

Interviewee E is a 28 year old woman, self-employed and lives in Sakubva in Mutare Urban. She is a member of the Roman Catholic Church. She said in 2008, she was beaten by ZANU PF people who demanded that they produce ZANU PF party cards. She together with others were dipped in Sakubva River. Since their homes were no longer safe, she said they used to sleep in trees and only come back to their homes in the morning. She was saved by an MDC-T MP who took her and others to his offices.

Interviewee F is a 54 year old woman from Zimunya in Mutare Rural and is a member of the Roman Catholic Church. Like Interviewee D, she said women in that area were affected by violence through beatings and rapes. Narrating her story she said

“I have never been involved in politics all my life. In 2008, when they were calling people to attend political rallies, I refused to attend because I was not interested. They then came to me and said ‘*imi hatizivi zvamunofunga kumisangano hamuuye*’ (We do not know what you think, you don’t come for meetings). They indicated that they suspected that I was an opposition supporter. They then took me to their base where they beat me and I was injured (She showed this researcher a deep scar on her thigh to prove the severity of the beatings). I could not go to the clinic because the nurses had been warned not to attend to us.”

Interviewee G is a 45 year old woman from Sakubva in Mutare Urban and a member of the Roman Catholic Church. She is unemployed. She indicated that women in Sakubva suffered in the 2008 political violence because their property was destroyed, their wares were confiscated and burnt. They were forced to leave their homes. Interviewee G herself escaped from home when the perpetrators of violence were close to her home. Although she was not active in opposition politics, her landlord was. She said she sought refuge at an MDC-T MP’s offices because her own place of residence was no longer safe.

Interviewee H is a 49 year old woman, a member of the United Baptist Church and now lives in Sakubva but is originally from Chipinge where she ran away from because of political violence.

She said

“*Ndakasangane nemhirizhonga iyi muna2008. Ndainga ndichigara mudunhu rokwaMandowa kuChipinge. Ini ndakasiwe nomurume wangu ngekuti ndainga ndabara mwana akaremara. Saka pakapera maelection aMarch, taizi tiende kumisangano kunyangwe pakati peusiku. Ini ndaisakona kuenda ngekuti mwana wangu anode attention nguwa nenguwa. Saka rimweni zuwa akauya paumba pangu akati mhosva yangu yaiva yokusaenda kumusangano. Akapise dzimba dzangu dzose, akandirove ini pamwe ngemwana wangu akaremara. Zvinhu zvangu zvose zvakaparara. Saka yaya angu akanditore ndave kugara muSakubva. Hupenyu hwakandiomera ngekuti handina wekusiira mwana wangu kuti ndishande kuti ndiwane mwamuchengetere*” (I encountered this violence in

2008. I was staying in Mandowa Village in Chipinge. I was left by my husband after giving birth to a disabled child. After the March election, we were called to attend meetings at times during the night. I could not attend because my child requires attention all the time. So one day, they came to my home and said my crime was that I was not attending meetings. They burnt all my huts, beat me together with my disabled child. All my belongings were destroyed. So my sister took me and I am now staying in Sakubva. Life is difficult because I don't have anyone to leave my child with so that I can fend for him).

She also indicated that she is still traumatised by this experience. Her problem is that the people who did this to her are not known to her. Though she says they could have been from Manicaland, she says they were not from Chipinge because some of them were speaking languages that are not common in the area.

Interviewee I is a 36 year old woman from Bocha in Marange. She is not employed and is a member of the Christian Congregation Church. She said her own brother was beaten to death because he was an MDC-T supporter. Both her parents later died because they failed to come to terms with the death of their son. She now carries the burden of taking care of her brother's children despite her being unemployed. It pains her all the time to think that had it not been for the violence, her parents and brother could be alive today.

Interviewee J is a 50 year old man from Marange and a member of the Roman Catholic Church. He said in Marange, women were greatly affected by violence because their husbands were killed and some men managed to flee leaving their wives behind. Women were left to fend for the families. In most cases, they failed to take care of their livestock leading some people to take advantage of the absence of the husbands and would steal their cattle and other things. He also added that where husbands fled, families were separated and some have not seen each other up to now. This has resulted in most mothers failing to send their children to school.

Interviewee K is a 32 year old man from Sakubva, a member of the Roman Catholic Church and a former social worker with the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) and a volunteer with CCJP Mutare. From his perspective, women were the major victims because everything that affects the household affects women more. He pointed out that women lost their dignity because some of those who were beating and raping them were very young and qualified only as their children. He also added that due to displacement, the majority of women lost their source of income. These women do not have capital to resume livelihood projects. As a result, he said the women have become more vulnerable with some turning to sex work as a way of fending for their families.

Interviewee L is a 65 year old man from Mutare Rural and is a traditional chief. He is also a member of the United Methodist Church. He indicated that women under his jurisdiction suffered greatly because they were beaten and young women were raped. He, however, said what is worrying him now is that the husbands of some of the women are failing to come to terms with the sexual abuse that their wives went through. As a result, he revealed that he is dealing with an increased number of domestic violence cases.

In the FGD, a lot of the points raised above were also echoed. However, there are three cases that warrant highlighting in this study. One of the FGD participants narrated a case in which a woman was humiliated at one of the rural bases in Zimunya. She said the woman was made to remove all her clothes and was made to roll in the mud while she was being beaten. She was forced to chant the ZANU PF slogan. After beating her, she was told to leave the base while in the nude. Only one woman was courageous enough to give her a wrapper to cover herself. The other case is that of a woman from Bocha who fled her home from ZANU PF supporters and lived in the bush for some days. Her husband was working in Harare. Her property was taken

away. However, the problem now is that her marriage has broken down because the husband is questioning why she ran away to the bush and not to his relatives. The husband has left the family and the woman is struggling to take care of the children. The third case is that of two women, who were gang raped by ZANU PF militia at one of the bases in Marange. They were infected with HIV but they never told their husbands about the rapes. The husbands are now late. The women are now coming out in the open about the sexual abuse after the death of their spouses.

5.6.4 Interaction of Communities with CiM

The study also sought to understand if people in the communities were aware of CiM and whether they had interacted with the Forum at any level. Responses to this question showed that the majority of women are not aware of the Forum, yet some are not familiar with the term ‘Churches in Manicaland’ but ‘*Mubatanidzwa weMachechi eManicaland*’. Interviewee A, B, C, D, E, F and I said they were not aware of the Forum. However, Interviewee A said in 2005, herself and others in Sakubva received blankets from *Mubatanidzwa weMachechi eManicaland* (the Shona name for Churches in Manicaland) when Operation *Murambatsvina* (see section 4:8) was effected. Interviewee J said he had heard that CiM gather people to pray for the nation and also that the Forum is involved in national healing and reconciliation. Interviewee G said she knows the Forum and has participated in some of its activities. She said

“I know the Forum. I participated in their peace prayer rallies at Civic Centre and Chisama grounds. We were praying that we may have peace and prosperity in the nation. We were coming from different churches praying for one thing. What I liked about the gathering was that there was no discrimination along religious lines because the people from AICs were singing for pastors from other churches and vice versa. To show our oneness, we were asked to hold each other’s hands. At the end of the prayer rally, people praised the organisers for bringing people together for a common cause.”

Interviewee K said he knows the Forum and has participated in many of its activities. He said he participated in their public meetings and mass prayers. To this end, he said he knows the various

activities that the Forum is engaged in, in the national healing and reconciliation process in Manicaland. He said

“CiM engaged the political leadership in Mutare during the violent period. It used other key figures in the province like Bishop Bakare, Mutume and Manhanga to confront the political leadership in Zimbabwe about political violence. In fact, it is CiM which kick-started the process of national healing and reconciliation and its members were instrumental in the production of the Zimbabwe we want document.”

On being asked whether there are any other organisations operating in the process of national healing and reconciliation in Manicaland, Interviewee K named CCJP, Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights and the Legal Resources Foundation. On comparing these with CiM, he said these other organisations are there on paper and not on the ground. In his opinion, CiM is incomparable because for him, what it has achieved is life long. He gave the example of the production of the book *The Truth Will Make You Free: A Compendium of Christian Social Teaching* as an example. For him, it is CiM which initiated the idea of the GNU. All in all, he opined that CiM opened a space for constructive engagement between the church and the state in a very different way because prior to its formation, the government did not want anything from the church but listened when CiM spoke. He further said, from 2000, the strength of the church was seen in Manicaland through CiM.

Interviewee L said he was aware of the Forum and he interacted with it when CiM came to his rural area speaking with traditional leaders. In these talks, he said, CiM sought to understand how people were living and they were encouraged to denounce political violence. He said apart from denouncing violence, they were also persuaded to bring people together as well as to encourage their people to respect other people’s political choices. He said CiM called for people in the rural areas of Manicaland to forgive each other and not to seek revenge.

All the participants in the FGD were aware of the existence of the Forum. Some said they had interacted with CiM through the reading of the compendium and pastoral letters while others indicated that they were at times selected by their church leaders to attend workshops which were being run by the Forum. They said at these meetings, they were encouraged to uphold peace in their communities. On being asked if they knew some of the activities which CiM is engaged in, they stated all night vigils and mass peace prayer rallies. Some of those from the rural areas attested to their participation in the peace tournaments and professed that these somehow brought people together because people from different political parties were put in the same team and had to play to win together. They said tensions were eased and people managed to interact thereafter.

5.6.5 CiM and Women's Experiences of Political Violence

Those that did not know about CiM and had not interacted with it did not have anything to say on this question. Those that knew about it and had interacted with it had varying views on CiM's prioritisation of women's experiences of political violence. Interviewee G said she sees CiM as prioritising women experiences of political violence because during the mass peace prayer rallies, though men were also present, women were the majority of those in attendance. Interviewee K said in its activities, CiM does not have any programme that specifically targets women because "it emerged as a reactionary organisation to a situation of violence." He elaborated that the victimisation was being done to both men and women, so from his perspective, women benefitted together with men from CiM's activities towards healing and reconciliation. For example, he said CiM has from 2000 been going out of its way to bargain for a friendly environment on behalf of all Zimbabweans and this is inclusive of women. The pastoral letters issued are also seen by interviewee K as denouncing political violence from

which women were the major victims. This for him shows that the Forum recognises what women went through during Zimbabwe's violent period and is of the view that CiM needs to be commended for the great role that it has played in Manicaland province in advocating for peace, healing and reconciliation. Interviewee L said CiM prioritises women's experiences of political violence because it has encouraged them as traditional leaders to teach their people to live in harmony every time they have meetings with them.

The participants in the FGD were also not agreed on this aspect. There were some who held the view that though they had participated in CiM's activities, there was no point at which women's experiences were singled out as requiring attention. Women from the rural areas indicated that when CiM members come to their areas they deal mostly with the leaders in their communities and not the people that were really affected by political violence. However, others felt that CiM recognises women's experiences of political violence because women are also involved in CiM's activities, for example, they attend the workshops and that the *Mubatanidzwa weMadzimai* is actively empowering those affected by violence financially by encouraging them to engage in livelihood projects. It was also indicated that women constituted the largest number of participants at all the all night vigil prayer meetings and mass prayer rallies.

5.6.6 Expectations from the National Healing and Reconciliation Process

Research participants from the communities indicated their expectations from the national healing and reconciliation process and how CiM can improve its role in the same. Interviewee A showed a lot of bitterness towards the politicians who seemed to have deserted them after their victimisation. She said she was not ready for the national healing and reconciliation programme because at the moment, it is a process being done in the papers and at the top and has not really addressed issues at the grassroots level. She said for her to accept the national healing and

reconciliation programme, justice should be served on the perpetrators of violence. She indicated that the culture of impunity that currently prevails in the country means that it is difficult for the victims of violence to get justice. She said

“Matare angavapo, asi nemamiriro akaita zvematongerwo enyika muno hapana kwavanoendeswa. Vanhu vakawanda vakauraiwa, vakaremadzwa asi nyangwe ukafunga nezvemutemo, hapana kwaunozviendesa.” (The courts may be there, but with the political situation in this country, they won’t be taken anywhere. Many people were killed and maimed but even if you think about legal recourse you can’t take it anywhere).

In this case, she said if the church wants this process to be successful, it should be prepared to help the victims of political violence practically or to advocate that the perpetrators of violence take responsibility for their victims’ medical bills. She said she still needs medical attention for her backbone which is not in place but cannot get medical help now because she does not have the money. For her, it is only after she has received this help that she is able to forgive otherwise she cannot just forgive “from nowhere”. She also added that the church needs to come down to the people to speak to them and comfort them so that they are able to go through the trauma of the violence they experienced. Interviewee B echoed the same sentiments as Interviewee A. She said unless she is compensated for what she went through she cannot forgive or heal because she used a lot of her financial resources for medical bills for her and her children as a result of the beatings they received from the perpetrators of the 2008 political violence. She is also of the view that without justice, there can be no healing or reconciliation. She said “we can’t forgive because we are seeing the perpetrators everyday. She advised CiM to gather people especially women who were victimised from 2000 and provide a space where they can speak about their issues. For her, the church should continue performing its mediatory role and should specifically devise a way of helping those who were

sexually abused during this period because some of them were infected with the HI Virus. For her, “the church should come out of hiding” and become visible in the national healing and reconciliation process.

Interviewee C viewed the process of national healing and reconciliation as having the potential of bringing Zimbabweans together. She said the church should help women whose livelihoods were destroyed due to political violence with empowerment programmes so that they are able to put food on the table for their families. She also highlighted that she expects the church to emphatically denounce political violence during elections. She said

“I want peaceful elections. Beating people does not pay. *Ngozi haiuye kumba kweatuma inouya kumba kwako* (the avenging spirit does not come to the home of the one who sent you but to your home). Churches should tell that to the people.”

In Interviewee D’s opinion, women should be given the first preference in this process because their dignity was violated during the violence. For her, the church should advocate for the restoration of their dignity. For Interviewee E, the current national healing and reconciliation process is a disgrace because it has forgotten about the real victims of political violence. She further explained that the church should pay attention to those who were widowed and orphaned due to political violence by providing humanitarian assistance to them. In doing this, she said the church should not fear politicians who may misinterpret the church’s activities for engagement in politics.

Interviewee G is of the opinion that CiM should hold several workshops specifically for women. For her, this would bring women together and the Forum can then guide the women on how to move forward in the aftermath of the violence. Interviewee H said that she has not paid much attention to the discourse on national healing and reconciliation because she cannot forgive the perpetrators who beat her disabled son for no apparent reason. She does not see any possibility of

reconciliation for as long as her home is not restored. In this case, she said she does not understand how people can call her to heal and reconcile with perpetrators she does not know. From her point of view CiM should then come and teach people on how it is possible to heal and reconcile under these circumstances. She also desired that the church ensures that what happened in Zimbabwe in 2008 is not repeated because it is painful. Interviewee I indicated that she expects CiM to ensure that women's rights are recognised in the national healing and reconciliation process.

Interviewee K said he expects to see the government acting on restoring the dignity of women. He said at the moment "government is looking on while women are being degraded" From his perspective, the national healing and reconciliation process should be broad-based, where even the school curricula should incorporate it, so that children in Zimbabwe can also learn not to abuse women. Coming to the church, he said the church is generally respected in Zimbabwe and, therefore, should be instrumental in advocating for policies that empower women. He further explained that the church should be prophetic by speaking against things that affect women before it happens. In this case, it should cease to be reactive but proactive by speaking out against violence against women even before it happens. Interviewee K also felt that though UDACIZA has become a member of CiM, the participation of AICs in CIM's programmes is limited. He feels that it is important that CiM looks at this issue critically because the churches are being abused by politicians and generally the position of women in these churches requires attention.

Interviewee L said CiM should continue to remind people about the importance of peace. He also said it could also help by empowering traditional leaders on how to deal with domestic violence which has increased as a result of political violence. He said "*vakadzi vakashungurudzwa*

munguva yemhirizhonga yezvematogerwo enyika vave kushungurudzwezve ngevarume vasinganzwisisi saka machechi ngaabatsirewo ngekutsiura mhirizhonga iyi” (women who were victimised due to political violence are now being victimised by husbands who do not understand, so the church should help by denouncing this form of violence). He also indicated that he expects CiM to continue being visible in the rural areas encouraging men to respect women so that they are given the space to heal from the wounds inflicted upon them as a result of political violence.

In the FGD, participants indicated that the process cannot be approached in a simplistic manner like what they are witnessing. One of them said

“chiri kunyanya kutinetsa ndechekuti nyaya yekupora kwemaronda ane vanhu inenge iri kungotorwa sechinhu chinoitika nyore. Imbofungaiwo munhu akabatwa chibharo akapiwa chirwere cheAIDS anopora sei? Angangonzi here regerera, kanganwa uye batana nemunhu akakupa chirwere. Aiwa! Pakaoma ipapo” (What is troubling us is that the issue of healing the wounds which people have is being taken as something that happens so easily. Imagine someone who was raped and infected with AIDS, how do they heal? Can they just be told to forgive, forget and reconcile with the person who infected them. No! Its difficult.)

They advocated for a comprehensive process which clearly looks at the various ways in which people were violated so that solutions to their healing can be found and reconciliation can be possible. In this case, they explained that the role of the church, specifically CiM would be to create platforms in the various churches where people can share their experiences of violence. Furthermore, they said the church needs to initiate livelihood programmes for women especially for the women in the rural areas. It should also persuade the government to rehabilitate those who were displaced. Their argument was that “there can be no healing for the women if their lives are not restored.” The women from the rural areas said CiM needs to increase its presence in the rural areas and endeavour to understand how women are faring after the violence. They also highlighted the need for CiM to demand justice on behalf of the women. Those that have

attended the CiM workshops explained that there was need for CiM to devise ways in which feedback to the community churches is done effectively because most of the time they do not have the space to properly engage with the people in the communities to tell them what they would have learnt.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the responses of CiM officials as well as those from some of the communities in which CiM operates. The findings presented in this chapter relate to the responsibilities of a church in a nation and the role of the church in national politics. It highlighted the successes and challenges of CiM in Zimbabwe's political arena in relation to its role in the national healing and reconciliation process. The chapter also explored the views of CiM on how it has dealt with women's experiences of political violence in this process. The section focusing on the communities in which CiM operates bring out the insights from victims of political violence as well as witnesses of violence on the gender-sensitiveness of the Forum in its national healing and reconciliation activities in Manicaland. The chapter captured the stories of the victims of political violence as a way of justifying the adoption of a woman-centred model for the national healing and reconciliation by the church in Zimbabwe. It also provided space for the women to express their expectations in the national healing and reconciliation process and how they expect the church to be useful. The next chapter provides a discussion and analysis of the data presented in this chapter. In the end, it also argues for a womanist model for national healing and reconciliation as the one that is useful if the church is going to contribute meaningfully to the process.

Chapter 6

Towards a Womanist Model for National Healing and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe

6.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher presented data from interviews, as well as CiM documents. The intention of this chapter is to discuss and analyse the data. What this chapter does is to discuss emerging themes from the interviews and the documents. The discussion and analysis of themes focusing on how CiM deals with women's experiences of political violence in the national healing and reconciliation process in Manicaland is done using gendered lens. By focusing on the experiences of women in the national healing and reconciliation process, we are also correcting history from the 'centre'. Chapter three has shown how women's contributions and experiences have largely been left out of the 'official' history of Christianity in Zimbabwe. What this chapter does is to bring to the attention of the church in Zimbabwe that women's experiences of political violence are worth the church's attention and that they form part of the church's historical account of how it has dealt with post-conflict Zimbabwe. Women's issues can no longer be placed at the margins while society continues with business as usual. This chapter, therefore, proposes the adoption of a womanist model for national healing and reconciliation. The need for this kind of model arises from the worldwide recognition that women are among the major victims of any political conflict. In the discussion below, the researcher analyses the main themes emerging from the pastoral letters and interviews presented in the previous chapter. A critical analysis of the data presentation brings out major issues that relate to the church in Zimbabwe and the role that it is playing in the national healing and reconciliation process. The discussion is going to be done under four broad themes, namely, the church and politics in Zimbabwe, CiM, national healing and reconciliation in Manicaland, gender in CiM's national

healing and reconciliation activities and probing CiM's silence on women's experiences of political violence. The sub-themes that emerge are going to be discussed as the chapter unfolds. In order to bring clarity to the data interpretation and analysis, this chapter will continue to make reference to the data presented in the previous chapter.

6.1 The Church and Politics in Zimbabwe

From the interview data and pastoral letters, it is evident that despite the majority of the study participants locating the responsibilities of a church in a nation in the socio-economic as well as the political domain, CiM has had to grapple with the issue of the contestations of the church's political role in a nation. These contestations arise from politicians in the country who have since 2000 tried to restrict the role of the church to the pulpit. Chitando (2011:44) has shown how politicians, particularly Robert Mugabe, have sought to limit the church to prayers and offering guidance on moral issues. Some of the responses of the people from the communities in Manicaland have shown that most people, especially those from the rural areas, have bought into this narrow view of the role of the church in a nation. However, Kudajie and Aboagye-Mensah cited in Yirenki (2000:326) argue that "the church has a valid case to be involved in the affairs of the state in all aspects including national politics," a view which is also shared by Nyarota (2013).

As such, CiM has refused to subscribe to Zimbabwean politicians' analysis, choosing instead to define its place in Zimbabwe's political space. The 2001 pastoral letter, the compendium, the responses from CiM officials, as well as some of the people in the communities specify their conviction that the church has a critical role to play in national politics, especially in Zimbabwe where violence characterises the political space. Commenting specifically on the compendium, Chitando and Togarasei (2010:156) argue that it questions Mugabe's favourite division of labour

whereby the church attends solely to spiritual issues while politicians dabble in politics. The views of the study participants are also corroborated by Muchena (2004:260) who argues that

“the church has played a critical role in the social, economic and political life of Zimbabwe for many decades. It cannot be divorced from the challenges facing the country today, as it is the only institution that can claim to have a high degree of contact with people at all levels. Also it is the only institution that can still claim to stand on neutral ground and thus offer itself as a centre of hope, a centre for the reconciliation of ideas, opinions, positions and people.”

It is important to note that the majority of the research participants in the context of Zimbabwe view the responsibilities of the church as those of advocating for peace, healing and reconciliation. From Chimuka’s point of view, “the church... is regarded as a fountain of hope, of healing, of reconciliation and as such it has a critical role to play in social construction (2008:73). In Zimbabwe, the national healing and reconciliation discourse has been located in the political domain. Hence, if the church is to contribute meaningfully to the process, it has to practically involve itself in the political processes of the nation. Most of the research participants are agreed that in doing this the church should be non-partisan and at the end of each pastoral letter, CiM reiterates that it is not affiliated to any political party. This view is supported by Botman (n.d) who posits that the church needs to be “...provocative- to be political, without being bound by loyalty to a specific political party.” However, this is disputed by Nyarota (2013:19) who argues that

“individual Christians and Christian communities are not exempt from the temptation to play it safe and expect others to do the hard and dangerous work. The example of Jesus Christ makes it clear that a mediator cannot remain neutral and that the work of confrontation for the sake of reconciliation is bound to be supremely costly.”

Nyarota’s analysis is very telling in a political environment such as Zimbabwe where one political party, ZANU PF, has been known to instigate violence against its perceived opponents (the study is aware that the opposition MDC has also been implicated in some cases of violence,

though perhaps not at the same level as ZANU PF). As the church confronts this evil, it is bound to pay the price of being labelled as favouring one party over the other. Simango attested to this experience where CiM has been accused of partiality when condemning political violence. In this case, while neutrality may be important, attaining it can be difficult because confronting evil requires naming it, as well as its perpetrator.

From the data presented, the majority of CiM's Steering Committee members view the church as the moral conscience of the nation. Responses from Nyarota, Dewolf and Mutume made a direct reference to the moral responsibility of the church in Zimbabwe. In this case, the church is seen as guarding and guiding how politics is done. Simango referred to CiM as the 'eye' of the people which enables it to monitor political activities in Manicaland and from Chikafu's response it made politicians aware that there were people monitoring the activities of the politicians. Through this role, CiM condemned corruption, the abuse of political power and the partisan distribution of food on political party lines. Practically, CiM, through the involvement of people like Simango monitored how food was being distributed in the rural areas. In a way, the Forum was calling the nation, those in political leadership in particular, to adhere to a code of ethics which recognises among other things the equality of all the people; a call which comes out clearly in most of CiM's pastoral letters. Thus, Matikiti (2012:345) looking at the responsibility of the church argues that

“the church should demand obedience to a code of social ethics in the manner of the eighth century prophets. The code of social ethics is a dimension of religion that touches upon life and welfare in this world...Whenever any component of society, eg. Debases human dignity by violating basic human rights, the church becomes involved by upholding the moral order. The church has the divine right to guide and direct God's people by criticising and condemning unjust and oppressive social structures...Whenever political violence touches and affects the moral order then the church speaks out of her competency.”

This is also supported by Muchena (2004:259) who says that the church can help to lay the foundation and provide moral support for the process of reconciliation.

6.2 CiM, National Healing and Reconciliation in Manicaland

All the CiM Steering Committee members alluded to the fact that the Forum is involved in various activities in a bid to bring healing and reconciliation to the province of Manicaland. Of particular significance is how CiM has played a dual role in this process. Through its prophetic mandate, CiM has challenged the state's use of political violence against the public. The pastoral letters that CiM has issued over the years, have to a certain extent fulfilled the church's prophetic role in Zimbabwe. These pastoral letters, as shown in Chapter five, have focused on the political crisis in the country and have suggested ways of transcending it. CiM officials view the letters as one way that they have managed to communicate with the political establishment as well as the public in Zimbabwe. The pastoral letters issued from 2000 show how the Forum has consistently condemned the use of violence for political gain. For example, in the 2005 post-election pastoral letter, the Forum categorically denounced the use of intimidation and violence against the electorate.

The Forum needs to be commended for translating some of the pastoral letters into the vernacular so that it reaches a wider audience including those that cannot read English. The pastoral letters are also placed on the internet and in some of the privately-owned newspapers. The use of pastoral letters is similar to what the Catholic church employed in Togo in its reconciliation process. From the perspective of Badonte and Lambon (2008:64), these pastoral letters were effective in dealing with Togo's political crisis because they were widely distributed in French as well as Togolese indigenous languages. The youth in Togo would photocopy the letters and distribute them at public places. The pastoral letters were also aired on public, private

as well as community radios and this benefitted those Togolese who were illiterate. The experience of Togo is slightly different to the CiM one in that the Forum has not devised ways of reaching those communities in Manicaland who are illiterate. The major challenge could be that Zimbabwe does not have community radios and the public ones are controlled by the ZANU PF government which is the major protagonist in Zimbabwe's political violence. A number of community radio licences were issued in 2015, but there has been suspicion of those receiving them being aligned to the ruling party, ZANU PF. However, one thing coming out clear from the Togo experience is that discourses of national healing and reconciliation need to reach everyone within the affected communities. In the absence of supportive radio services, CiM can encourage the clergy within the province to emphasise the contents of the pastoral letters during their church services as what is done by the Catholic church in Togo (Badonte & Lambon, 2008:64). The CCSF (2012:16) argue that

“the church through its clergy must speak against violence, no matter what the fears, what the opposition, what the criticism. When the church goes silent in these circumstances, it means it has failed in its mandate.”

As such, the Forum continues to act as the mouthpiece of those that cannot speak for themselves, thereby fulfilling the interview participants' view that the church should be the voice of the voiceless.

CiM also assumed the humanitarian role within the communities in Manicaland in a context of political violence. Bakare, Nyarota, Simango and Dangare clearly enunciated how CiM managed to mobilise Christians and communities in Manicaland to respond to the plight of the people who were displaced from the farms during the FTLRP and those who were running away from political violence that was occurring in Manicaland's rural areas. Through this response, CiM managed to provide food, shelter and emotional support to those who were made vulnerable by

political violence in Manicaland. By opening up their churches and providing safe houses for victims of political violence, CiM to a large extent ensured the safety of the public. This is in stark contrast with the experiences of Rwandans in the 1994 genocide where even churches became places of massacre for those who had sought refuge (Van Butselaar, 2001:38; Nowrojee, 2005:1). Through the engagement of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), CiM brought the plight of these people onto the international scene and ensured that they received enough material support. During Operation *Murambatsvina*, CiM gave blankets to the affected. In addition, CiM ensured that the injured got free medical attention while those arrested and kept in custody without trial were offered legal representation so that they could get a fair trial. This, in a way, introduced the people to the path towards healing, especially when it was coupled with the provision of free counselling services.

One of the areas that CiM has registered success in the national healing and reconciliation process is in organising workshops for political and traditional leaders in Manicaland. From what CiM officials and the traditional chief from Mutare Rural said, the workshops have enabled traditional leaders across the political divide to review their attitudes and treatment of each other. From Waziweyi's response, the workshops have led to traditional leaders forgiving each other for the political violence meted against each other in Manicaland. At one of the workshops hosted by the Peace-Building and Capacity Development Foundation (PaCDEF) in 2008 and where the Coordinator of CiM facilitated on the role of the church in peace-building and conflict management, it became apparent that even the perpetrators of violence are bothered by their actions as they sought forgiveness from their victims (PaCDEF:2008). It also became evident at this workshop that the centrality of the church to healing and reconciliation cannot be ignored.

To this end, Ganiel and Tarusarira (2014:70) are of the view that the workshops that are run by CiM are important to facilitate civic values needed for a better Zimbabwe.

Workshops are also held with selected people from the churches in communities in Manicaland as indicated by Shatai, Interviewee K and the FGD participants. These workshops serve as a monitoring mechanism of hot spots that need CiM's attention. They also bring awareness to the attendees of the need for observing peace in their communities. However, the major challenge with these workshops is that they are for a selected few who find it difficult to disseminate the acquired knowledge on peace-building to their communities.

The other activity which is critical for national healing and reconciliation that CiM is involved in as mentioned by Abel Waziweyi and FGD participants as well as Interviewee G is that of peace tournaments, peace prayer rallies as well as night prayer vigils. From the interviews, it is evident that the peace tournaments have resulted in the reestablishment of community relationships.

According to Waziweyi (2011:101)

“peace tournaments are a new phenomenon that is meant to create interaction between two groups of people, the victim and the perpetrator of violence... These are community based initiatives which devise parameters of recovering the truth.”

The tournaments have created spaces where the Forum can teach communities about political tolerance especially in the rural areas where political violence has been vicious as well as the need for political opponents to accept defeat with dignity. The tournaments also provide opportunities for communities torn by conflict to meet each other on a platform that is not political. Serena (2009:11) posits that “having the opportunity to meet each other, the communities can begin to re-establish new contact, finding common ground and reducing anger.” As such, sport is viewed at this point as a “very powerful, neutral, simple, universal and useful means for a precise end, a social change for lasting peace.” (2009:11). In their analysis of

the significance of sport in Rwanda's post-genocide reconstruction processes, Dills and Muyango (2008:56) view sport as spaces for communion and argue that it was used as a means of communication for transmitting messages about a culture of peace. FGD participants for this study indicated that the peace tournaments eased tensions between community members and enabled people with opposing views to interact with each other after the tournaments. This confirms Waziweyi's assertion that the motive of peace tournaments is to open communication and constructive dialogue (2011:101). It is clear how CiM in these peace tournaments has included both men and women. Hence, social inclusion is one of the strengths of using sport in the national healing and reconciliation process.

On the other hand, the peace prayer rallies, while serving the same function as the peace tournaments, also enhance religious tolerance by bringing together people of diverse doctrinal backgrounds. From Interviewee G's testimony, one of the prayer rallies that she attended exhibited a rare show of unity by Christians from different denominational backgrounds praying for peace in the nation. The prayer rallies also afforded the opportunity to leaders of different political parties to publicly denounce violence. Ganiel and Tarusarira (2014:71) view the peace prayer rallies as a radical approach employed by CiM since these can easily develop into politically charged demonstrations. It is noticeable that though the prayer rallies are presented as an 'innocent' call for peace in Zimbabwe, they are in a way a subtle call for the politicians to account for the political violence that the general public continues to experience. It is also an effective way of disempowering the perpetrators of political violence when they see their leaders denouncing it.

Prayer rallies have been used in other countries such as Uganda and Liberia, among others. In Uganda, the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) has called for peace prayer rallies which are interreligious and bring together politicians, cultural representatives as well as government and rebel soldiers. As in the case of CiM, these peace prayers mobilise for reconciliation and advocacy for peaceful co-existence and end of conflict (Thompson, 2008:139). In Liberia, during the conflict that started in 2000, the Women of Liberian Mass Action for Peace (WLMAP) “gathered daily in Monrovia’s fish market where they prayed, danced, sang and chanted their simple but powerful demand, “We want peace! No More War” (Quellet 2013:14).

From the FGD responses, the Forum has also been calling for night prayer vigils (*pungwe*) where people come together and pray for peace in the nation. The all night prayers are meant to bring Christians of different political as well as spiritual backgrounds together for a common cause, that is, to denounce violence and embrace peace. For Presler (1995:14), the *pungwe* functions as a formative yet flexible arbiter of social and religious discourse as it both requires accountability to culture and releases communal power. In post-conflict communities like Manicaland, the *pungwe* has become an effective way of ensuring social cohesion and unity. This confirms Quellet’s argument that religion can be an influential and compatible framework in which to ground reconciliation processes because most ethics of non-violence abide by the principles of positive peace (2013:18).

As CiM engages in the national healing and reconciliation process, it has had to deal with critical issues such as justice, truth, impunity, healing and reconciliation among others. The discussion below looks at these in detail.

6.2.1 Justice

A critical analysis of the pastoral letters shows that CiM upholds retributive justice and restorative justice as critical for national healing and reconciliation. It, however prioritises restorative justice over and above retributive justice. The central scripture for CiM's call for justice is Mtt 23:23 which appears in the Forum's three pastoral letters, that is, the 2001, the 2002 post-election as well as the 2005 post-election pastoral letters. From 2000, CiM has called for the police to bring to book all the perpetrators of political violence so that they could be made to account for their actions in a court of law. The compendium and the 2012 pastoral letter make the case for justice by CiM very clear. The Forum brought out the relationship between peace, justice and forgiveness: elements which are seen by the Forum as mutually reinforcing imperatives. In its opinion, peace prevails where justice is served and there can be no justice where forgiveness is absent. Thus, in the 2012 pastoral letter, the Forum refused to endorse a peace that is devoid of justice. The call for these two types of justice was also made by some of the women survivors of political violence in Manicaland. These women have refused any calls to national healing and reconciliation without bringing to book those that violated them as well as without compensating them for their losses, thus, confirming Sooka's argument that "although healing and reconciliation are important, justice for victims should be given priority by ensuring that it is part of the transitional process" (2006:316).

By calling for both justice systems, the women and the Forum are refusing to accept a justice that only focuses on the perpetrators while neglecting the victims. The issue of retributive and restorative justice is an on-going debate among transitional justice scholars. Some of these debates have been dealt with in Chapter one. In the case of Manicaland, what comes out clearly is that the church and the survivors of violence want both systems to be adopted, basically with

the view that while retributive justice gives voice to the perpetrator, restorative justice gives the victims an opportunity for their voices to be heard. Daye (2004:109) is of the opinion that retributive and restorative justice are compatible though he explains that “restoration will ultimately depend on a broader social transformation to create full equality in society among victims and perpetrators, while at the same time addressing particular offences such as gross human rights violations” (2004:110). In this regard, Togarasei and Chitando (2011:216) argue that “the peacemaking role of the church should not be isolated from the church’s mission to work for justice” because from their point of view, “without justice, there can be no sustainable peace; neither can healing and reconciliation be attained without justice.” Even women survivors of political violence implored the church to demand justice on their behalf. By demanding justice, CiM has departed from Machingura’s observation that the church in Zimbabwe has been shy from talking about justice in the reconciliation processes that have been implemented in Zimbabwe since independence (2010:334). However, in the calls for retributive justice, CiM and the people from the Manicaland communities have had to also deal with the issue of impunity.

6.2.2 Impunity

The 2001 and 2005 pastoral letters as well as the 2008 pre-election letters, the Forum implored the security sector, especially the police, to ensure that no one was immune to the law particularly focusing on the perpetrators of political violence. The women survivors of political violence in Manicaland alluded to the fact that they could not report their victimisers because the police were not willing to arrest them due to their political affiliation. This confirms the findings of a study carried out by CCSF (2012:14) across Zimbabwe which showed that “impunity was rife and at grassroots levels, perpetrators of violence had not been prosecuted.” This is also

supported by Matikiti (2012:331) who avers that “a culture of impunity has been allowed to thrive in Zimbabwe.”

The major challenge in breaking the culture of impunity in contexts such as Zimbabwe is the involvement of the security sector in the perpetration of political violence. As a result of this, in the 2001 pastoral letter CiM noted that the security sector was no longer impartial in the discharge of their duties because some of them were active in committing acts of violence against perceived opponents of the ruling party, ZANU PF. That security officials in Zimbabwe were part and parcel of the violent machinery is confirmed by Alexander and Tendi (2008), Masunungure (2009), Sachikonye (2011) and finds support in a study of the Rwandan genocide by Nowrojee and Ralph (2000) who found out the active participation of the security forces in the killing and raping of women. In tandem with happenings in Zimbabwe, Nowrojee and Ralph say that in most cases, perpetrators of violence against women go unpunished. In this vein, Matikiti (2012:332) argues that

“Without the critical threat of punishment, perpetrators of violence receive a message that it is acceptable to intimidate and violate, and that such practice can continue. The state authorities and police have sided with ZANU PF perpetrators of political violence for political reasons. They are agents of ZANU PF’s stay in power.”

He further argues that “the importance of bringing human rights violators to justice is that this is a declaration that no one is above the law, not even party functionaries” (2012:332). Thus, according to Tsunga (2011:50) “any transitional justice and national healing in Zimbabwe has to be oriented towards the goal of breaking the cycle of impunity rather than obstructing the truth and violating the right to know.”

6.2.3 Truth-telling

Truth-telling is also another issue that is critical for CiM in the national healing and reconciliation process. While the church has not dealt with the issue of truth-telling in detail in most of its pastoral letters, the 2001 pastoral letter condemned schemes by politicians to hide the truth for personal and public gain. Zimbabwe has never dealt with its violent periods in an honest way, where the truth of what happened is told. The nation is still ignorant of happenings of the liberation struggle as well as the *Gukurahundi* massacres because, as indicated in Chapter four, the government failed to put in place a framework where the truth was told. However, from the sentiments of study participants, there is need for such a framework. Some of the study participants felt that a model in the form of a South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission needs to be put in place in Zimbabwe in order to enable perpetrators and victims to tell the nation what they did and what they experienced respectively. Nesiya (2006:1) discussing the significance of truth commissions says “they can document human rights violations and identify the individuals and institutions responsible for abuse while acknowledging survivors’ experiences and giving them a forum to testify about their experiences.” In the same vein, Togarasei and Chitando (2011:219) argue that “truth-telling at least gives survivors of violence the chance to know their tormentors and to understand their motivations.”

From the responses of CiM Steering Committee members, it is evident that the wounds of the people in Manicaland are not healing because platforms for truth telling have not been provided. Women survivors of political violence who are participants in this study echoed the need for such opportunities when they requested the church for workshops where they can talk about their experiences. The researcher observed that for the survivors of political violence, it is a way of dealing with their pain where the public at least is made aware of what they went through and

their pain is publicly acknowledged. Togarasei and Chitando (2011:218) using the biblical allusion of John 8:32 aver that the “church has a theological mandate to seek the truth, as the truth sets people free.” McEwan (2003:746) sees truth telling as having historical, political and healing significance. However, it needs to be noted that knowing the truth is just a part of the healing and reconciliation process and does not remove other conditions for healing and reconciliation. Seils (2002) cautions people on the significance of truth-telling in transitional processes. It is important to quote him at length in order to understand his argument. He argues

“It has been said the truth will set us free. But, at least as far as transitional societies are concerned, we should be clear. The truth can, if accepted, set us free from denial of the past. It does not set us free from the damage caused or the causes of the damage. It deals with the moral operation of recognition, not with contrition or reparation or forgiveness. Truth is almost certainly a precondition to a successful transition, but it is only a gateway to lasting solution” (2002).

Seils’s point of view is in contrast with Simango’s response which called for the truth to be told even if no compensation is to be paid by the perpetrators of violence. For her, in the absence of compensation, truth telling is enough to start the process of healing and reconciliation. Her views find resonance in Walker’s analysis of truth-telling as reparative (2010:534). She argues

“Truth telling projects come in many forms and face many limitations, but truth telling that puts fresh evidence and testimony into circulation and at the disposal of victims, parties responsible for wrongs or their repair, and their societies potentially opens a field of epistemic and moral interaction. It enhances the power of victims and witnesses to speak with basic credibility about what victims have suffered and its effects; it closes off some routes of escape for their listeners through denial or diversion” (2010:537).

Walker’s argument is that reparative truth telling deals mostly with the corollary upon individuals caused by silence, pervasive denial, and massive distortion after violence (2010:537) and Sooka (2006:324) identifies the benefactors of political violence as the majority of those who refuse to acknowledge the truth. This analysis fits well into the Zimbabwean situation where

ZANU PF has denied the involvement of its supporters in political violence choosing instead to blame it on the opposition unfortunately whose supporters are the majority of the victims. While Walker's analysis may be true, women survivors who are study participants for this research from the communities in Manicaland want truth telling that is accompanied by compensation and their demands are in tandem with Vengeyi's observation that "in the cultures of the black Zimbabweans, there is no forgiveness or healing without restitution" (2013:36). In Vengeyi's analysis, unconditional reconciliation is alien to the people of Africa (2013:37). In addition, the Chairperson of the National Transitional Justice Working Group in Zimbabwe (NTJW), Alec Muchadehama argues that compensation of victims of political violence must be made mandatory and that the reparations should be proportional to the gravity of the violations and the harm suffered (Mushava 2015).

6.2.4 Healing and Reconciliation

Issues of healing and reconciliation have been at the core of CiM's activities in Manicaland. These aspects recur in most of the pastoral letters, as well as the interview responses from CiM officials and people from the communities. The basic understanding of CiM is that it is the church's responsibility to ensure both spiritual and social reconciliation of communities in Manicaland. Chikafu emphasised the need for the church to focus on social reconciliation in as much as it concerns itself with spiritual reconciliation. This view confirms Ezeogu (2010:350) who says

"The ministry entrusted to the Church is the ministry of reconciliation and the message that the Church proclaims is the message of reconciliation. Reconciliation is the mission of the church, the mission that was entrusted to her by her founder, Jesus Christ. This reconciliation is presented in the scriptures as having two dimensions: The vertical dimension of reconciliation, is a reconciliation with God, and the horizontal dimension of reconciliation is a reconciliation with men."

Ganiel and Tarusarira (2014:60) focusing on Zimbabwe argue that “it is also the case that people acting on behalf of the state with its history of violence and human rights abuses against its citizens may lack the legitimacy to promote reconciliation.” In this case, the majority of study participants saw the leadership of the church in the process as critical.

In dealing with the theme of national healing and reconciliation, CiM has had to grapple with contentious issues within the process in Zimbabwe, one of them being the period from which Zimbabwe should start looking at when considering healing and reconciliation. The Compendium suggests that the process of national healing and reconciliation should not only focus on the current cases of political violence (the ones occurring from 2000) but needs to look at past atrocities as well and it mentions the case of the *Gukurahundi* massacres. The sentiments of some of the study participants also point to the need to include past violations in the current process. One of Zimbabwe’s weaknesses in past reconciliation gestures has been its failure to confront the past so that the future is built on a strong foundation of true peace. Father Fradereck Chiromba of the ZCBC said that it was regrettably taking long to have an inquest into Zimbabwe’s violent past and most of the witnesses are dying, a case in point being the *Gukurahundi* witnesses whose death will rob Zimbabwe of the opportunity to know the truth (Mushava 2015). The CCSF (2012:33) opines that

“Reconciliation represents the point of encounter where concerns about the past and the future meet. Reconciliation must find ways to address the past without getting locked into a vicious cycle of mutual exclusiveness inherent in the past. At the same time reconciliation must envision the future in a way that enhances interdependence.”

In the same vein, Murambadoro (2014) is of the view that ignoring the past only helps to perpetuate the cycle of violence that remains prevalent in Zimbabwe, particularly during election periods. Women survivors of violence indicated their fears deriving from the environment of

uncertainty regarding further occurrence of political violence. From this, they implored the church to engage in voter education which brings awareness to the perpetrators of political violence of the right of voters to exercise their constitutional right freely. From the researcher's observation, this is only possible if past violations are dealt with, with a view to understanding their causes so that similar occurrences in the future can be avoided. The major challenge in Zimbabwe is that there seems to be no political will in this regard. For example, the NPRC which was supposed to be created soon after the adoption of the new constitution in 2013 has not been put in place yet (two years down the line). The commission has a life span of ten years meaning that it ceases to exist in 2023. What this means is that it now only has eight years to deal with atrocities that were committed since 1983. With no indication as to when this commission will be constituted, public sentiments in Zimbabwe are that this was one of the many dummies that politicians have sold to the people. Study participants showed a general lack of trust in the people who will appoint the commissioners and view those who will be appointed as mere political stooges who will not be able to bring the politicians to account for their past political crimes.

The other issues that the Forum looks at, is how national healing and reconciliation may be achieved. In this case, CiM in the February 2002 pastoral letter discusses the significance of confession and repentance in healing and averting the anger of the victims of political violence. In the 2013 pre-election pastoral letter, CiM called on perpetrators to genuinely seek for forgiveness and the victims of political violence to forgive. In all this, the Forum locates its role as that of mediation between victim and perpetrator. Dangare also alluded to the fact that they have tried as a Forum to bring perpetrators of violence and victims together as they sought to restore relationships among community members. The issue of repentance and confession is

critical for healing and reconciliation. According to Sundqvist (2011:169) “reconciliation between individuals or groups requires the involvement of two or more parties in an interaction of apology and forgiveness and the willingness to embark on a new relationship based on acceptance and trust.” However, Montville cited in Sundqvist (2011:169) posits that the process of confession depends on shared analysis of the history of the conflict, recognitions of injustices, and acceptance of moral responsibility. Yamamoto (1999:168) concurs with Montville when he argues that “confession recognises the historical roots of contemporary conflict and examines responsibility of underlying hurtful actions of one group toward others.” He further avers that after confession, repentance follows and it requires acts of contrition, acts reflecting the acknowledgement of responsibility for the historical roots of contemporary conflict. From his perspective, “confession and repentance need to be supported by appropriate restitution to restore what has been destroyed.” Reconciliation should then follow after the aggrieved forgive the perpetrator of violence. However, CiM seems to have encountered challenges in cases where restitution is not possible. For example, where lives were lost or women survivors of sexual abuse were infected with HIV. Mutume clarifies this point when he pointed out that questions are often asked by victims of violence why they should reconcile with their victimisers when their loved ones who were killed cannot come back to them. FGD participants highlighted the difficulties of forgiveness in cases where women survivors of sexual abuse are now living with HIV (see Appendix D). The afore-mentioned attitudes underscore the challenges of healing and reconciliation in the context of HIV and AIDS as well as in cases where, what was lost due to violence is deemed irreplaceable. Daye (2004:8) confirms the above attitudes when he says “just as many offenders refuse to apologise, many victims refuse to forgive.” Furthermore, complications also arise where the perpetrator is unknown like in the case of Interviewee H. Her

questions are pertinent as to how she is expected to reconcile with an unknown perpetrator which brings to the fore the salient ways in which ZANU PF deployed ethnicity especially in the 2008 political violence.

CiM does not only call for the healing of physical, emotional and psychological wounds inflicted upon the people, but also the healing of institutional processes such as elections. The 2005 post-election pastoral letter and the compendium called for the healing of the electoral environment and suggested various ways in which this healing could be achieved. The call for the healing of the electoral environment is premised on the understanding that Zimbabwe's electoral history from 1980 has generally been violent as shown by Kriger (2005, see Chapter four). In this case, the Forum pinpoints the cessation of political violence as critical for national healing and reconciliation to take place. Reading through the pastoral letters, we find that CiM has been courageous enough to confront the state for its various vices which usually results in violence. The pastoral letters have spoken truth to power in ways that are somehow unimaginable in Zimbabwe's political context. Complemented by the various meetings between the Forum and the political leadership in Manicaland, CiM has brought politicians to that space where they are called to account for the violence that occurs in the province.

6.3 Gender in CiM's National healing and Reconciliation Activities in Manicaland

The issue of the church taking seriously the issue of gender in Zimbabwe's national healing and reconciliation process cannot be overemphasised. The testimonies given by the women survivors of political violence in Manicaland act as evidence of the prevalence of violence against women during conflict in a way that CiM cannot simply afford to ignore. However, it is extremely difficult to locate women in CiM's national healing and reconciliation framework. Despite coming up with pastoral letters that gave an incisive analysis of the Zimbabwean political

situation and programmes that are useful for healing and reconciliation, the Forum has over the years failed to capture the unique experiences of political violence by women in Zimbabwe. It would appear as though the Forum assumes a uniform experience of violence by different social groups in Manicaland Province, thus turning a blind eye on the uniqueness of how women experience violence. There is a general silence on the way women were violated in the various incidents of violence from 2000. A random picking of the pastoral letters issued from 2000 shows this general silence. For example, a closer look at the priority areas in the 2005 pastoral letter shows that the Forum did not categorically name the political violence that women experienced as one area that needed and still needs to be prioritised. The 2013 pastoral letter made an effort to bring women into the discourse of national healing and reconciliation. Without necessarily articulating the way women were violated by political violence, the letter acknowledges the contribution that women can bring to the process through their wisdom and leadership skills. However, naming the experiences of political violence that women go through would have provided a sound basis for the Forum's call for women leadership in the national healing and reconciliation process.

The book, *The Truth will Make You Free: A Compendium of Christian Social Teaching* is important as it provides a relevant critique of the issues that were and still are bedeviling the nation in the social, economic, religious and political spheres of life. It raises pertinent questions focusing on how the political leadership was and still is running the country. Chitando and Manyonganise (2011:96) posit that the book is impressive because it covers issues of values and principles, governance and economy, and carefully responds to the crisis. Furthermore, it equips its readers with Christian values and principles and how to apply these in contemporary Zimbabwe. It is, however, noticeable that the document failed to enunciate women's experiences

of political violence and how these experiences should form the backbone of the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe. The book concentrated on women as victims of domestic, social and economic violence, but failed to capture one of the kinds of violence that has dehumanised women in Zimbabwe over the years, that is, political violence. Having published this book in 2006, the Forum seemed to have quickly forgotten about the violence that women experienced in the run-up to and during the 2005 elections.

6.4 Probing CiM's Gender Silence

The silence of the Forum on women's experiences of political violence can be viewed from a number of perspectives as indicated by interviewed research participants. These are itemised below.

6.4.1 Lack of a clear national framework

From the onset, the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe seems to be a complex one. The complexities arise from the fact that the state has failed to provide a clear national framework within which the process should take place neither has it endeavoured to consult the grassroots on how the process should be conducted. During the GNU, the HOCD published a pastoral letter in which it indicated that the church was then concerned about the lack of a clear national framework on the healing and reconciliation process which is a critical component of the transitional process (HOCD, 2011). From the sentiments of the CiM officials, the official national healing and reconciliation process lacks consensus because it is being driven from the top. Machakanja (2012:5) opines that "the problem with national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe is that the approach taken has been politically institutionalised and highly prescriptive, with political elites taking dominant positions in the leadership and governance of the process." As a result, there appears to be suspicion between the church and the

state on issues surrounding the process, while the majority of the people in the communities are not even sure whether the process is going on or has not started. Some of the CiM officials seem to agree that what the Forum is engaged in is a parallel process to the official one, while others feel that the church in Zimbabwe should be leading the official process. The Forum and the survivors of violence are wary of politicians leading the process because of their complicity in the violence that occurred in Zimbabwe. However, even the Forum's parallel process also has no clear framework and as such, has not paid particular attention to women's issues. Hence, women continue to be marginalised in both processes. With the absence of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in Zimbabwe, women's experiences of political violence continue to be placed at the margins. The study is aware that there have been scholarly debates that TRCs do not automatically engender their processes. However, drawing on Manjoo's analysis, the study argues that "TRCs can successfully make visible and legitimise women's experiences, if the mandate is gender-sensitive and explicitly reflects the nature of violence and human rights violations against women" (2004:4). In cases where the national framework is clear and gender-sensitive, institutions (the church included) participating in the national healing and reconciliation process will have no option but to engender their activities towards the process. Muchena (2004) is of the view that the failure by the government to draw a framework for reconciliation rests on the fact that it is difficult to categorise Zimbabwe as a post-conflict nation because the conflict has never ceased owing to the persistent turbulent political climate.

6.4.2 The existence of a volatile political environment

The political situation in Zimbabwe remains volatile. As the researcher was conducting fieldwork, political violence was taking place in Hurungwe West, Mashonaland West Province in preparation for the June 10, 2015 by-elections. Walking through the streets of Mutare and the

villages in Mutare Rural, one cannot help but feel the fear-dense atmosphere. Dosekun (2007) in reference to South Africa, describes the rape-dense culture that exists as women are subjected to rape that is not politically related. This study borrows her discursive analysis to enable it to discuss how fear has become endemic in Manicaland. It is a fear of all kinds of violence. For example, members of CiM's Steering Committee revealed that they could not formally register the Forum because they feared retributive action from the state, while women survivors of violence could not allow the researcher to tape record their responses because they feared for their lives. This political volatility appears to have made it difficult for the church to require that women be given a platform where they can tell their experiences of political violence as this can be misinterpreted in political circles. For example, the state has been complicit in most of the post-independence violence that occurred in Zimbabwe. Mutume confirmed this development when he alluded to the fact that staunch ZANU PF supporters, especially in the rural areas, do not want to hear anything that discredits the party being talked about.

In this case, the church has failed to provide space for the memorialisation of women's political violence experiences or demand justice without the state misconstruing it for confrontation. The Church and Civil Society Forum in Zimbabwe (2012:31) notes correctly that despite the church's message of healing, forgiveness and reconciliation becoming part of the transitional justice discourse, the church [in Zimbabwe] found itself in a precarious position as those who condemned and spoke openly about violence were labelled as opposition supporters and faced persecution by the state. This has led to silence for fear of persecution. The state also infiltrated some churches and some members became mouthpieces of the state (2012:31). Simango and Mutume have alluded to the fact that CiM has also been infiltrated by the Central Intelligence Organisation.

The above analysis represents what was taking place in Manicaland after the June 2008 presidential run-off election. An interview carried out by Chitando and Manyonganise (2011:103) with the coordinator of the Forum revealed that church leaders in Manicaland were being monitored closely by state security agents, with some being threatened with death if they did not change the way they were preaching against the state. He further revealed that at times they were actually offered gifts so that they could speak favourably about the state. This to a large extent confirms Muchena's observations that the church faces challenges of harassment, political labelling, intimidation as it tries to bring healing and reconciliation to Zimbabwe (2004:26). In his assessment, Muchena (2004:267) notes the inclusion of churches in the growing groups of organisations under surveillance by the state security agents. From the responses by Munembe, Mutume and Simango, we are presented with a fearful church endeavouring to bring peace, healing and reconciliation to communities in Manicaland; fear which arises from the government's misconstruing the activities of the church for political meddling. Muchena (2004:267) says "more often than not, church leaders and groupings are finding themselves on the defensive as the government labels them 'political' and accuses them of having hidden agendas." In such a situation, where church leaders themselves are fighting for their own survival, it becomes very difficult for them to agitate for healing and reconciliation with a particular focus on a specific social group such as women. Thus, Munemo and Nciizah's assertion that during the transition, the church should have taken this opportunity and the largely violence free atmosphere that was prevailing to seek resolution to the major sources of conflict on the Zimbabwe's political landscape (2014:68) seems to be blind to the fact that violence continued, though not very pronounced, during and after the transitional period mainly due to the

fact that the structures of violence remained and continue to be intact. For example, Machakanja (2012:13) interviewed women from Zimbabwe's rural areas who revealed that various forms of violence continued, and that women were not free to discuss issues related to the traumatic experiences of the 2008 political violence.

6.4.3 Patriarchy

Theorising patriarchy in the context of the church's participation in Zimbabwe's national healing and reconciliation process is significant in that it informs us about the way the church, in this case, CiM has dealt with women's experiences of political violence. Walby (1990:20) defines patriarchy as a "system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" while Sultana (2010-2011:3) looks at patriarchy as the "manifestation and institutionalisation of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general. In this case, one of the major reasons that appears to have led CiM not to prioritise women's experiences of political violence is that the church has to a large extent remained a patriarchal institution. Kayonga cited in Suda (1996:72) argues that "the church is a patriarchal structure allied to those who wield power." In the same vein, Phiri (1997:55) is of the opinion that Christianity maintains and justifies the oppression of women. The majority of CiM officials confirmed that the Forum's Steering Committee is overcrowded by men who, whether by design or not, have conveniently ignored the uniqueness of how women experience political violence in the national healing and reconciliation process. Njoroge (2009:5) avers that "the subordination of women is one common thread that runs through many religious communities, in the Bible, in African religion and culture, and in most of the world's cultures and religions." In this case, the Church and Civil Society Forum has noted

that gender equality is a contentious issue in most churches and women, though constituting the majority of followers, do not have the same status and rights as men (CCSF 2012:31).

The writings of most African women theologians have exposed the intersections of gender and religion in the church in Africa. Browning (2011:20) notes that theologians from the Circle have critiqued the church by pointing out how women are pushed to the margins. Mwaura (2015:14) argues that “African women theologians regard their theology as being a gift to the church and to women because it privileges women’s voices by doing theology from the perspective of African women’s experience.” In other words, African women theologians have dealt with the lived experiences of women in Africa though none of their works has looked at women’s experiences of political violence. In the context of this study, it is noticeable that there are few women in the Steering Committee of CiM. This could be because some churches in the Forum do not condone the ordination of women as highlighted by Dangare. This confirms Suda’s analysis that “the full ordination of women in the Christian church remains one of the most contentious issues in gender-power politics both within and outside the church” (1996:75). As such, Crumbley (2003:595) argues that when the missionary churches barred women from the pulpit, they sent an explicit message of exclusion from church hierarchy. This statement is true of CiM. Of the five women interviewed from the Forum, only one is an ordained minister from the United Methodist Church. The reasons for women not being ordained include specific conservative biblical interpretations within the patriarchal societies (Mombo & Joziase n.d). When women are absent or few at the decision-making level, it becomes difficult to have their real concerns correctly articulated. There is also a general tendency to overlook those experiences that really matter for them because “patriarchy undervalues female experiences and knowledge” (Kivai 2007:22). In this vein, Reilly (2007:158) argues:

“if transitional justice is to take women seriously, the gender biases underpinning discourses of nationalism, war/peace/security, human rights, liberalism, and so on must also be called into question. This means asking with respect to each: whose experiences matter, in what ways, under what conditions, and with what concrete effects, especially for women?”

From Mutambara’s response, one can feel the lament of a woman for the inclusion of more women in the Forum as a solution to enabling the capturing of women’s experiences of political violence by CiM. From the foregoing, churches that aim to contribute meaningfully to issues of healing and reconciliation at the national level need to start recognising women within their own walls. This will surely equip them to deal with women’s issues at a broader level such as that of national healing and reconciliation. As such, Bloomfield *et al* argue that ‘gender is an indispensable dimension of reconciliation at the official and institutional level’ (2003:13). They further argue that ‘a gender perspective illustrates some of the “small conflicts”’ that lie beneath the main conflict and which need to be addressed in order to create a sustainable peace and a democratic society (2003:13). As such, Chikafu’s images of the kitchen, the well and firewood gathering is meant to dismantle patriarchy within the churches by creating spaces where women can afford to air out their concerns, painful experiences and aspirations. Chikafu’s analysis that the patriarchal voice of the men and the bishop in church need not be regarded as the be-all and end-all of all that is to be said needs to be taken seriously as it seeks to provide spaces where women’s voices are also heard. CiM has too many male voices overshadowing those of the few women within its ranks. Thus, Njoroge (2009:3) argues that “it is of great importance that when we engage in gender discourse in theology, in the search for recognition, reconciliation, healing, justice and fullness of life, that we confront the fundamental problems of patriarchy and sexism.” To this end, Zimbabwean women theologians have bemoaned the violence that women endure as

a result of political machinations of the ruling elite and the deeply entrenched patriarchal system (Chitando, Mapuranga & Taringa 2014:183).

The impediment of patriarchy is also prevalent within the communities in Manicaland. Study participants from CiM indicated that in cases where they have tried to include women in some of the programmes, a few or none of them turned up. This scenario is confirmed by the number of women survivors of political violence who indicated that they did not know the Forum, yet the men from the communities knew it. The major reasons provided were that women require the permission of their husbands, due to their expected roles of caring for children it is not always impossible for them to attend and also that when it comes to CiM meetings, the time may not be friendly to women because the meetings are mostly held in the evening. All these restrict and exclude women from fully participating in healing and reconciliation programmes because patriarchal gender roles confine them to the home. Thus, confirming Manyonganise's view that "...in African societies, women have their physical mobility controlled" (2010:16).

6.4.4 The absence of a gender desk/committee

The absence of a gender desk or committee on gender points to the lack of a gender perspective to national healing and reconciliation by CiM. What this has done is to create a distance between the Forum and women at the grassroots who are the main victims/survivors of political violence. While the majority of CiM Steering Committee members viewed the state's national healing and reconciliation process as elitist, when one looks at the responses of the majority of women survivors of violence in Manicaland, one gets the feeling that the Forum is really not operating from the 'shop floor' as claimed by Nyarota. When the Forum holds workshops in the rural areas, it deals with traditional leaders who are men. The whole process then becomes a men's affair- a process by men for the men.

6.4.5 National vs Community healing and reconciliation

The very idea of conceptualising healing and reconciliation as national processes makes it an overwhelming task for participating institutions who want achievement at a grand scale. From the views of Chikafu and Rore, we hear sentiments that the process of national healing and reconciliation needs to start small, that is, from families, communities until we get to the national level. Starting the process at national level may make it difficult for institutions such as the church to focus on individual social groups such as those of women because the national process itself has not created room for those categorisations. Nyarota confirms this when he said that as CiM, gender was never part of their agenda since they adopted a victim-centred approach to dealing with all the victims of political violence. Leigh (2009:29) is of the view that focusing on ‘national’ healing and reconciliation makes the concepts abstract in the face of most women’s immediate reality as their lives are lumped together with overall national healing to the extent that ‘her’ personal experiences are simply one of many who survived to tell their story. Segalo (n.d) confirms this when he says that

“people’s personal memories are trivialised when the state/government seeks and focuses on national healing while disregarding individual experiences. This may lead to a ‘controlled’ form of remembering which does not take into account the differences between types of suffering experienced by individuals, and particular contexts in which the suffering is experienced.”

In this regard, Leigh argues that religious leaders are complicit in this ‘umbrella approach’ by promoting healing in a package of confession and apology performances. We have seen from Marian Dangare’s response how women who have interacted with CiM have been encouraged to forgive and move on, without due processes that lead to forgiveness being followed. In her analysis of the ‘forgive and forget’ ritual in Greece’s reconciliation process, Stefatos (n.d: 211) argues that “through such actions, women’s experiences and stories of suffering and trauma... are

not only marginalised, but are often silenced under the pretext of forgiveness and a narrowly defined national reconciliation.”

6.4.6 Enforced and self-imposed silence

The issue of political violence and its effects on Zimbabweans, especially women, has not gained prominence in the country’s official narrative. A critical analysis of the national healing and reconciliation process shows that no ground work has been done to ensure that voice is given to women survivors of violence. Thus, the state has imposed silence on the women survivors of violence, thereby creating the illusion that healing and reconciliation is taking place. For the majority of the women survivors of political violence interviewed, it is evident that for them national healing and reconciliation is happening somewhere but not their immediate environment while CiM officials attested to the fact that survivors of violence continue to suffer with no redress. The Forum itself has enforced silence on the women survivors because it fears retribution from the state and it cannot guarantee the security of those who want to break the silence. From Dangare’s response, the Forum is also in a dilemma because without enough material resources, it is afraid of capturing women’s experiences of political violence with no guarantees of meaningful help. However, Nowrojee and Ralph (2000:163) conclude that “silence about abuses against women hides the problems that devastate, and sometimes end women’s lives.”

Apart from enforced silence, women survivors also remain quiet about their experiences of political violence. Simango, Dangare, Munembe and Mutume indicated that women themselves have largely remained silent about the way they experienced violence. Simango blamed culture and the way women have been socialised as the causes of their general silence especially on issues of sexual violence. Culturally, the discourse on sex and sexuality has largely remained a

secret in African societies (Arnfred 2004; Tamale 2011). It becomes worse in the context of political violence where the women have to deal with the sexual violation of their bodies through rape, with some being raped by various men. Dangare pointed out that, maybe, the women survivors of sexual violence are afraid of stigma and discrimination because the society they live in abhors sexual violation. Nowrojee and Ralph (2000:163) posit that

“in many places women who have been raped dare not reveal publicly that they have been raped for fear that they will be marked as rape victims and may be ostracised by their families and community. Women know that integrating into their communities and resuming their lives will be more difficult if their rape is known.”

In their analysis, Nowrojee and Ralph show how rape results in humiliation, pain and terror that is inflicted by the rapist(s). The act of rape itself degrades not only the individual woman but also strips the humanity of the community from which she is part. Thus, Nowrojee and Ralph (2000:163) argue that “the rape of one person is translated into an assault upon the community through the emphasis placed in every culture on women’s sexual virtue: the shame of the rape humiliates the family and all those associated with the survivor.” As such “the harm done to the individual woman is often obscured or even compounded by the perceived harm to the community” (2000:163). In analysing the transitional process in South Africa, McEwan (2003:745) argues that there were intense cultural and other pressures placed on women that deterred them from testifying [which] include discourses of shame, collusion and complicity that prevent women from discussing in public the sexual violence that is privately acknowledged to have been rife.

The church as an institution is a product of a society within which it finds itself. Manyongalise (2013:147) has projected it as the microcosm of the larger society when she argues that “the church itself is not an isolated institution which is free from societal and cultural influences.”

What makes the issue of rape in relation to the church complex is the fact that the church moralises the sex and sexuality discourse. As a result, it becomes difficult for the CiM leaders, who are largely male and the survivors of violence, the majority of whom are women, to come to a place where they can talk about issues of sexual abuse. Simango lamented the incapacitation of the male church leaders in dealing with women's issues and implored them to leave it to their wives with whom women in church may feel free to share their experiences of political violence. The other reason that leads to the silence by women survivors of violence has to do with their security. Gutlove (2009:190) emphasizes safety as a key aspect in the healing process (see section 1.10.2). Mutambara, Interviewee A and B indicated that the perpetrators of violence are roaming the streets, meeting with their victims on a daily basis. Thus, women are often reticent to talk because some of the perpetrators may still live among them (Nowrojee and Ralph 2000:163). In such cases, there is no guarantee that the perpetrators will not repeat the same violence on the survivors. Nowrojee (2005:22) notes that in Rwanda, the women survivors of sexual violence were threatened with further violence after testifying to the ICTR. In the Zimbabwean context, therefore, the culture of impunity (see section 6.2.2) has largely served as a tool for enforcing women's silence over their experiences of sexual violence during the country's turbulent period. Reports of continued sexual abuses of women were reported in Hurungwe West constituency in the run-up to the June 10, 2015 by-elections, projecting a scenario where the safety of women from sexual violence is not guaranteed.

6.4.7 Lack of resources

The Forum's lack of financial resources has been blamed mostly by CiM officials on the informalisation of the organisation. Varied reasons were given for this state of affairs. What is apparent is that regardless of the reasons why the Forum is not formalised, donors have not been

forthcoming to fund CiM's programmes. This, to a large extent, has left the Forum with no option but to depend on well-wishers and contributions of Steering Committee members where the need arises. The programmes that are funded from these contributions have not been designed from a gender-sensitive point of view. The discussion above has noted how CiM reflects the patriarchal nature of the church in Zimbabwe (see section 6.4.3). To a large extent, it is patriarchy within the church that has led the Forum to neglect the allocation of financial resources to issues that are specific to women. It is true in most societies and/or institutions that when resources are few, women are almost always marginalised. A research carried out by the Committee on the Ethical and Legal Issues relating to the inclusion of women in Clinical Studies noted that the allocation of resources is not gender-neutral as it affects women and men in different ways thereby reflecting the uneven distribution of power within society (1994:139). This is also reiterated by Tiessen (2007:102) who further explains that the programme activities that an organisation engages in and the resources allocated to them reinforce certain privileges for specific groups of people. However, Waziweyi views this unequal distribution simplistically as merely an administrative oversight without really paying attention to the gender-power dynamics that go with resource allocation within societal institutions. By adopting a gender-neutral approach in the process of healing and reconciliation, CiM has shown its disregard for the specific needs of women in the process. To this end, Teissen (2007:105) argues that "the perception of gender neutrality within organisations can be a significant obstacle to sensitivity, and thereby produce gendered consequences." Within the context of this study, a specific gender analysis framework in the allocation of resources could have enabled CiM to focus on the needs of women and men differently in its programmes.

6.4.8 The invisibility of CiM at the grassroots level

This study strongly argues that it is difficult for CiM to demand justice without the identification of those who are experiencing injustice neither is it possible to bring healing and reconciliation when it does not have the knowledge of the people who were violated. It is evident from the interview responses taken from the people in the communities in which CiM operates that only a handful of the women survivors of political violence are aware of the Forum's national healing and reconciliation activities in Manicaland. Only two of the six women survivors of political violence in Mutare Urban were aware of the Forum's activities. This is despite the Forum's base being in Mutare Urban. All of the three women survivors of political violence from Mutare Rural were not aware of CiM. Even the two women from Mutare Urban who were aware of some of CiM's activities had not personally interacted with the Forum, with one of the women having just attended the Forum's prayer rallies, while the other had benefitted from the Forum's humanitarian assistance after the 2005 Operation *Murambatsvina*. There has been a general call from study participants for CiM to come down to the people. This is a plea to the Forum to be visible to the people at the grassroots level both in the urban and rural areas. Ganiel and Tarusarira (2014:14) indicate that the repressive nature of the [Zimbabwean] state makes it easier to pursue reconciliation by building relationships, quietly at the grassroots. The church is capable of building strong bonds with the women survivors of political violence because taking from Dangare's response, the people generally trust it because of its messages that encourage peaceful coexistence. For the church to be able to do this, there is need for the adoption of a womanist model that directs its activities in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe.

6.5 A Womanist Model for National Healing and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe

One of the main objectives of this study is to argue for the adoption of a womanist model for national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. The study noted that women, though acknowledged as the major victims of the violence that engulfed Zimbabwe, they are often neglected or they come to the minds of those who are leading the post-conflict reconstruction processes like national healing and reconciliation as an after-thought. Studies carried out elsewhere have confirmed this development (see Manjoo 2004; Nesiah 2006; Partis-Jennings & Huber 2014) where in most cases women's experiences of political violence are often neglected in transitional justice approaches.

The womanist model for national healing and reconciliation is not presented in this study as the panacea to the neglect that women experience in post-conflict reconstruction processes. The study does agree with Jacobs (2013:28) when she posits that “no amount of theory will address the unmet needs and suffering of women in Africa.” However, the study argues that the adoption of a womanist framework for national healing and reconciliation as suggested below will ensure that women's experiences of political violence are taken on board and the church in Zimbabwe can draw insights from it in the national healing and reconciliation process.

6.6 Defining the Features of the Womanist Model for National Healing and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe

The study has shown the gendered nature of political violence in Zimbabwe from the year 2000 to the present. Chapter four highlighted the various historical episodes in which women became victims of political violence in Zimbabwe. Chapter five among other things captured the views of CiM officials on how women experienced political violence as well as the voices of women victims/survivors of political violence in Manicaland and it also showed the general silence of

CiM on women's experiences of political violence, revealing how gender has not been used by CiM as a tool to inform its participation in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe. In this section, the researcher outlines the significant traits of a womanist model for national healing and reconciliation. The views of the study participants are important in constructing this model. Theoretically, the study relies very much on African womanism and Africana womanism. Womanist approaches provide a foundation for situating women's experiences of political violence within the broader spectrum of the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe. In this case, a gendered perspective on national healing and reconciliation affords us an opportunity to unpack the effect of excluding women's experiences of political violence from the process and the benefits of utilising an inclusive model that enables institutions such as the church to bring women's experiences of political violence in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe to the centre. This is done cognisant of Gymah's argument that "the absence of women and silence in peace processes of women's needs perpetuates and institutionalises their marginalisation in the post-conflict political system-and including them in peace processes underscores their relevance to the restructuring of social order and in making such processes effective, and accordingly influences the identification of reconstruction priorities in the transition phase" (2009:4). The diagram below provides the basic components of the womanist model for national healing and reconciliation. In coming up with this model, the study is indebted to Clenora Hudson Weems diagram on Africana womanism. However, paying attention to the responses of study participants, the study adapted the diagram to focus on the specific issue of gender, healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe.

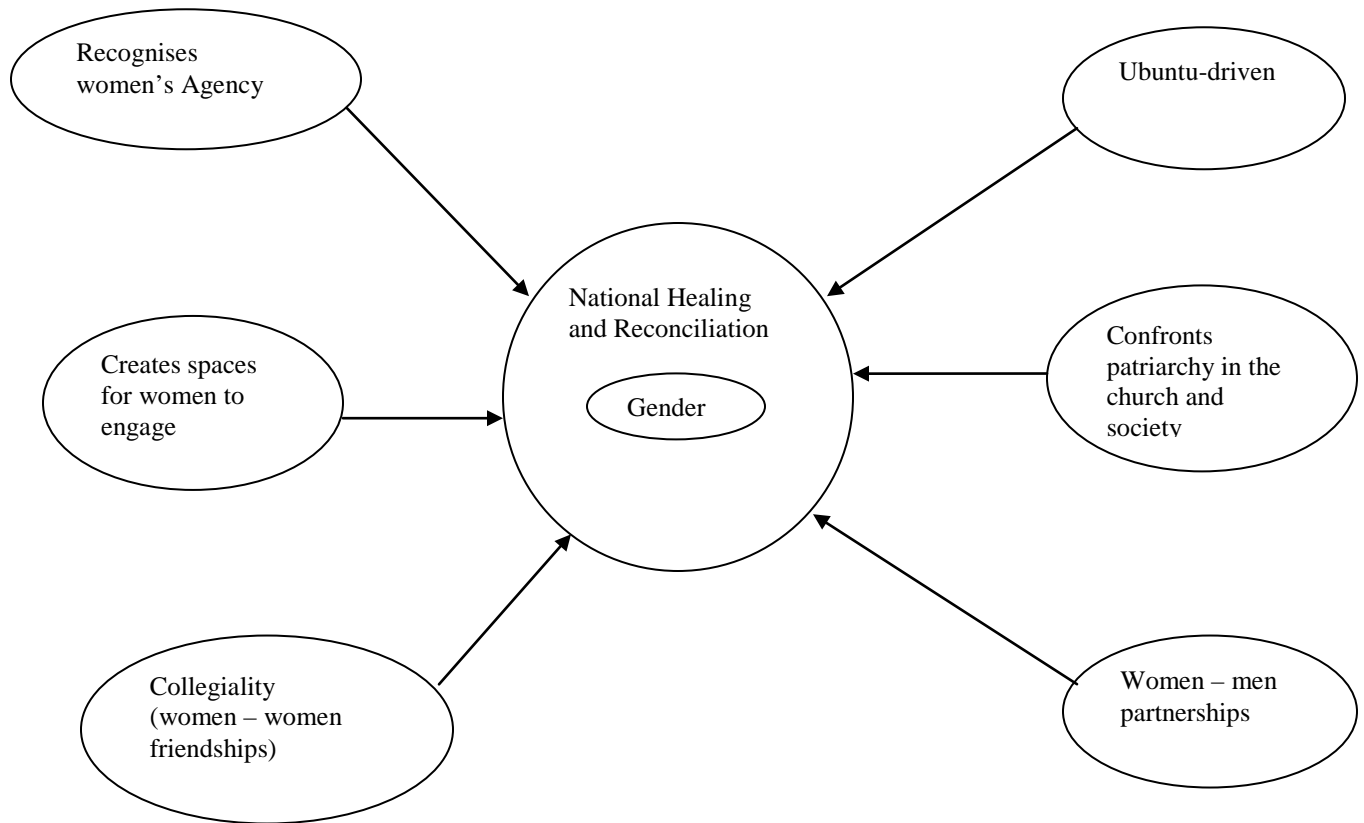


Diagram 1: A Womanist Model for National Healing and Reconciliation

6.6.1 Making Gender the Agenda of the National Healing and Reconciliation Process

From the onset, a womanist model for national healing and reconciliation makes gender the agenda of the process. Such a framework is built on the acknowledgement that women are the major victims of the political violence that defines Zimbabwe's political terrain from the year 2000. Making gender the agenda of the national healing and reconciliation process is also a recognition that the process is "automatically gendered since men and women are differently affected by war" (Olivera 2005:1). In her study of Peru, Allesandra (2008:77) notes that the weaknesses of the TRC in that country lies in that it failed to address and translate into its reform priorities a recognition of a gender unequal order and a gender differential impact while her analysis of the TRCs in Sierra Leone and East Timor showed their successes because they

engendered their processes from the onset. The Zimbabwean case is a complex one because the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission has largely remained on paper. However, in this study, all the study participants concurred that women in Manicaland were the majority of the victims and they were victimised in some other ways that men were not. In this case, a model that reaches to these women is important as it ensures that they are healed from the wounds of the violent period. In this case, a womanist model of national healing and reconciliation ensures that the church interacts with women survivors of political violence so that it does not only understand their experiences of political violence, but prioritises their needs in the process as well.

6.6.2 Confronts Patriarchy

The study has shown how the silence by CiM on women's experiences of political violence in the national healing and reconciliation process has been, among other things, a result of the Forum being male-dominated. All the study participants from CiM have noted that the male-domination of the Forum has largely contributed to the neglect of women's experiences of political violence. In such a case, a womanist model for national healing and reconciliation confronts patriarchy within and outside the church. This should help in decongesting the space of the men who have overcrowded it so that women are also accommodated. Kwinjeh (2010) argues that there is need for a paradigm shift within the transitional process from a male dominated model to a holistic gendered one in which women's participation is recognised and appreciated in the ushering in of a new democratic society. Confronting patriarchy entails challenging hurtful forms of masculinities within Zimbabwean society which are in most cases exhibited in the country's political culture.

6.6.3 Ubuntu-driven

The womanist model for national healing and reconciliation is driven by the positive aspects of the African *ubuntu* ethic; those aspects that recognise the humanity of women. The model draws insights from attitudes, sayings and proverbs from Zimbabwean culture (the use of the phrase ‘Zimbabwean culture’ is done with the recognition that there may not be a homogeneous Zimbabwean culture but in reference to that culture that gives the indigenous Zimbabwean his/her identity) that affirm women’s place in society. Study participants recognise that political violence in Zimbabwe undignified women and robbed them of the social cohesion role they have traditionally played as women and mothers. Yet the Shona have sayings and proverbs which reflect on the importance of women. Some of these are:

- *Musha mukadzi*- for a home to be a home there should be a woman.
- *Baba muredzi, mwana kuchema unodaidza mai*- A father can look after a child but when the child cries it calls out to its mother.
- *Mai musuva usingasehwi mumuto*- a mother is like a morsel which needs no dipping in soup.
- *Amai vafa, vana vorezviwa nani*- A mother has died, who will take care of the children.

The Shona saying ‘*musha mukadzi*’ arose from the acknowledgment of women’s capabilities to hold households together. Van Stam says that this expression “indicates the existence of a pivotal role of women as mothers of communities in *ubuntu* society.” In this regard, Suda (1996:71) avers that

“The female influence on the moral character of African society is arguably one of the most enduring marks in the history of humanity. Part of the reason for this is women’s traditional care-giving roles, which put them in a unique and strategic position not only to produce and sustain life, but also to help instill socio-religious

values and morals in the family and society as a basis for establishing good and appropriate relationships between members. Through various structures, African women have devoted their lives and time to promote the welfare of all.”

Chabata and Mashiri (2012:105) argue that “because the Shona people’s identity and personhood is premised on the family institution, proverbs that celebrate the role of the mother display unmistakably the main value-orientations of the indigenous society.” As such, the three proverbs above show the centrality of women as mothers in Shona society. They are looked up to, to provide care and comfort to the children. As such, children are taught to regard every woman as a mother. Traditional Shona culture cherishes motherhood and according to Manyonganise (2015) “the philosophy of *ubuntu* or *hunhu* encourages children to respect their mothers” (that is, both their biological mothers as well as other women in the community). Study participants indicated that though women are the backbone of families and communities, they were beaten, raped and humiliated in most cases by young people who were fit to be these women’s children, pointing to a departure from what societal values stipulate. This study, therefore, argues that the deployment of the above saying and proverbs from Shona culture enables the womanist model to restore the dignity of women in Zimbabwe and serves as a constant reminder to the men and boys of the importance of respect for women. Interviewee K reiterated the need for teaching children and young people the need to respect women. Writing on Burundi, the UNESCO Culture of Peace Project (2003:23), calls for a return to communal education and reinstatement of the values that women traditionally embodied within their homes and communities as this is the only way forward towards building a healthy society which is at peace with itself. Churches can inculcate these values in men and boys during the men’s meetings, youth meetings and even in Sunday Schools. This would fulfil interviewee L’s desire that the church should continually

teach men to respect women, as this would provide women with spaces to heal from the wounds of political violence.

Taking into cognisance that womanism “is a social change perspective that focuses on harmonising and coordinating difference, ending all forms of oppression and dehumanisation, and promoting well-being and commonweal of all people, or origins” (Layli 2006:xxxvi), a model for national healing and reconciliation arising from this theoretical approach needs to draw its inspiration from cultural aspects that promote healing and reconciliation. Zambara (2015:4) is of the view that local traditions and indigenous knowledge systems can play a crucial role in the healing process of both individuals and communities. This is supported by Chimuka (2008:111) who posits that “when one looks into the Shona traditions one is confronted with the once cherished ideas that the ancients ‘utilised to cement intra-personal ties as well as intra-group harmony all of which were construed as promoting stable and peaceful living environments.’ CiM has recognised the significance of traditional leaders as the custodians of culture. There is, however, the need to go further and draw insights from culture itself. The Shona, for example, have got proverbs that encourage peaceful coexistence. The following proverbs are a case in point:

- *Kugara hunzwana*- living together requires mutual understanding.
- *Chara chimwe hachitswanyi inda/ Rume rimwe harikombi churu*- one finger does not crush a louse/one man does not surround an anthill.
- *Mhosva hairovi*- crime cannot be swept under the carpet.

The *kugara hunzwana* proverb concedes that the regulation of personal relationships outside the family circles and friendship in the Shona tradition finds expression in living together harmoniously in mutual understanding (Chimuka 2008:112). For Mandova (2013:362) the

proverb shows that “the Shona people call for the harmonious totality of existence among them.”

He goes on to explain that

“The Shona people place humanity at the centre of the universe and construct everything around the person. Behaviour that is acceptable in Shona society is generally that which promotes solidarity and harmony in human relationships.”

Historically, *kunzwanana* (mutual understanding) was conceptualised as the recognition by one (or a group of people) of the humanity of the other or a group of people; recognition which meant the creation of space for the other (Chimuka 2008:117). In the aftermath of political violence, *kunzwanana* can be utilised to cultivate political tolerance. It is even more critical for the healing and reconciliation process because it encourages dialogue between victims and perpetrators for the common goal of peaceful coexistence (*kugarisana*). The issue of peaceful coexistence runs through CiM’s pastoral letters and is latent in the verbal responses of study participants.

The proverb *chara chimwe hachitswanyi inda* or *rume rimwe harikombi churu* calls for collective responses to community activities. From Mandova’s perspective the proverbs are

“Profoundly reflective of the binding philosophy of the Shona people. An individual views his position in relation to the aspirations of the community. A fragmented stance subverts the possibility of positive participation.”

In pursuit of the intended meaning of these proverbs, national healing and reconciliation becomes the business of whole communities and from a gender perspective, it becomes a shared responsibility between men and women. In this case, women cease to be viewed as the ‘other’ in a holistic model of national healing and reconciliation. Through the deployment of these proverbs, a womanist model of national healing and reconciliation offers women survivors of political violence the opportunity to re-negotiate their social exclusion from the process.

Mhosva hairovi is grounded in the belief that *mushonga wengozi kuripa* (the best way to deal with the avenging spirit is to retribute). The belief in avenging spirits has always encouraged the Shona to seek peaceful coexistence with their neighbours. In cases where one violates the other, the Shona believe in accepting responsibility and finding ways of paying the offended. In the process of national healing and reconciliation, perpetrators of violence are encouraged to own up and devise ways of compensating those they have wounded physically or otherwise. Study participants echoed the need for the church to teach communities that the avenging spirit comes to the person who commits violence irrespective of whether they had been sent by politicians. The issue of *kuripa* (restitution) is crucial in the traditional methods of bringing individuals or communities together among the Shona. Dodo, Nyoni and Makwerere (2012:9) view *kuripa* as a long-term cultural method of healing. The ritual performance of restitution usually opens the door to reconciliation.

6.6.4 Recognises Women's Agency

A womanist model for national healing and reconciliation recognises women's agency in the process. The study has shown how women in Manicaland through the *Mubatanidzwa weMadzimai* have not waited for the men in the CiM Steering Committee who automatically are leaders in their various churches to chart the way women are healed from their experiences of political violence. Through their morning prayers, this women's group has provided spaces where women can testify about their experiences though at a smaller scale. They are in a way challenging the silence surrounding political violence in Zimbabwe. This confirms Oduyoye's observation that

“In the struggle to build and maintain a life-giving and life enhancing community, African women live by a spirituality of resistance which enables them to transform death into life and to open the way to the reconstruction of a compassionate world. African women live by a resurrection motif...With this

affirmation, African women confront, survive, and overcome violence” (2004:163).

The savings clubs that the women have started are a true recognition that healing and reconciliation cannot take place where the victims still experience poverty since study participants indicated that political violence destroyed the livelihoods of the majority of women. The clubs also provide opportunities for the women to network for healing and reconciliation. This clearly shows that in the absence of male leadership, women can subvert patriarchy and come up with practical ways to healing and reconciliation, thus, confirming Jacobs’ view that with their collective responses to the economic, social, and political issues, ordinary community women can quietly challenge existing conditions of gender inequality (2013:31). According to Izgarjan and Markov (2013:309) the solidarity that women’s clubs bring to women “enables different groups of women to support each other without insisting that their situation be identical” as well as enabling “women to form alliances with oppressed groups of men.”

6.6.5 Collegiality (women-women friendships)

Building on the fore-going, a womanist model of national healing and reconciliation rests on collegiality while building partnerships with men who are like-minded. While on fieldwork, one of the CiM officials (in an informal discussion), asked the researcher why women survivors of political violence were finding it easy to open up to her. Although the researcher could not understand why the question was being brought up, she was reminded that it was because she was also a woman. What came to mind quickly was how an effective model of national healing and reconciliation could be built on women-women friendships; where as women time and space are created so that the victimised can narrate their stories, lift up their dresses to show how they were physically injured during conflict as a means to attaining healing. Such spaces can be created within the churches where women-women friendships can be encouraged and

conversations started. Nowrojee (2005) in her research of women survivors of political violence in Rwanda found out how these women feared dying without having told their story. Where political will is absent, such as in the Zimbabwean context, the church is capable of providing such spaces in the women's meetings such as the Thursday meetings. As Salbi (2007:7) posits, "once the door is open and a safe space is created, women can emerge from their isolation and secrecy, own their histories and create their futures."

6.6.6 Creation of Spaces where Women can Engage

One of the ways to ensure that collegiality is built among women in the process is through the holding of women-only workshops. Such workshops are important because they can enable women survivors of sexual violence to open up. Going through the narratives of women survivors of violence who were part of this study, we find that none of them testified to having been sexually abused in the mayhem that Zimbabwe went through. They, however, acknowledged that women they know were raped by the ZANU PF militia. Questions may arise though why it is only other women who were sexually abused. The study is by no means doubting their accounts, but only suspects that where trust has not been built and confidentiality promised, women can withhold some of their experiences of political violence. The FGD participants also highlighted the lack of a clear enunciation of women's issues during the combined workshops held by CiM. In contrast to this experience, in Burundi, where the African Evangelistic Enterprise (AEE) was involved in the national healing and reconciliation process, it held several workshops with women and it was noted that the workshops created safe spaces for all to share their wounds openly and that issues thought to be personal especially by women were shared in the workshops. The workshops also created time for women to talk, pray, cry together and share experiences (Ndondo Wa Mulemera, Niyungeko & Abuom 2008), an opportunity

which African societies do not normally accord women. CiM can learn from the success of AAE's workshops as it plans the women-only workshop which Dewolf said the Forum intends to hold as a starting point. Hence, one of the defining tenets of the womanist model for national healing and reconciliation is the creation of spaces such as these where women can talk about their experiences of political violence as a way of finding healing and eventually reconciliation. Study participants have called upon the church to create such spaces. In the same vein, Manyeruke (2011:99) calls upon respective institutions to accept the problems that women encounter during violence and make provisions to give them space to talk, to heal and progress. From Noma's point of view, "women's narratives are tremendously valuable tools for identifying the needs of women during and after periods of violent conflict and, indeed, for transforming conflict itself..." (2007:9). In pursuit of peace, she argues that the "narrative genre and the voices it amplifies serve as alternatives to filtered media portrayals and expose the gender-specific ways violence affects women" (2007:9).

6.6.7 Building Women-Men Partnerships

Building partnerships with like-minded men is crucial for this model. What came out clear in chapters three, four and five is how men have been the majority of perpetrators of political violence against women in Zimbabwe. Chapter five has also brought out the issue of how in post-conflict Manicaland, women survivors of political violence are being subjected to domestic violence by husbands who cannot come to terms with the way their wives were violated. In most cases, the husbands feel that their wives were complicit in the sexual violence they experienced. In such cases, there is need to forge women-men partnerships where the two genders can journey together in the process of healing and reconciliation. Olivera (2005:8) says that building the culture of peace is a process which should involve men to question different types of violence,

injustice and discrimination and the Native Women's Association of Canada (2010:17) notes that a gender-responsive reconciliation model requires the shared efforts and commitment of both women and men in order to end the invisibility of harms suffered by indigenous women. This is one of the strengths of the womanist model. Manyonganise (2015:6) argues that

“The strength of womanism is on its insistence on women working with men to eradicate the oppression of women. It creates spaces for dialogue between men and women on how to deal with this oppression...This way is one in which men and women come to realise that men have been enjoying the patriarchal dividend at the expense of freedom and empowerment of women.”

This study acknowledges that it is not easy for men to let go of the patriarchal dividend, but it is necessary for forging strong partnerships with women for the success of the national healing and reconciliation process. Such partnerships should advocate for the inclusion of women in leadership positions, in this case, within CiM and its committees on peace-building so that women's voices can be heard. When women-men partnerships are created, men can no longer speak on behalf of women, because women cease to just be physically present in communities and institutions like the church, but to fully participate in issues that directly affect them.

From this model, the church is called upon to play a critical role of building on it so that it comes up with a comprehensive African Womanist Theology of national healing and reconciliation. Such a theology is one that affirms the humanity of women survivors of political violence; a humanity that is derived from a gender-sensitive reinterpretation of the biblical scriptures which traditionally have dehumanised women by denying them leadership roles or spaces to actively engage in critical discourses that shape or affect their own lives such as national healing and reconciliation; it is a theology that arises from the need to restore the dignity of women and one that promises that never again will women be politically victimised while the church is in existence. The study is very much aware that when demanding this from the church in

Zimbabwe's political context, there is need to look at what the people's expectations of the church are and what the church is capable of doing. Regardless of this, the study argues that healing and reconciliation for women can only happen when they are sure that though politicians continue to be insensitive to their experiences and vulnerability, the church, to which the majority of them belong, is gender-sensitive and gender-competent enough to deal with their political violence experiences in the process of national healing and reconciliation.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed and analysed data that was presented in the previous chapter. What has significantly come out from the analysis of CiM's pastoral letters and responses of study participants with the knowledge of the forum is that CiM has participated in various programmes which are aimed at healing and reconciling communities in Manicaland. When (and if) such activities are replicated in other provinces, they should contribute significantly towards national healing and reconciliation. The chapter also highlighted how CiM deals with issues of truth telling, impunity and justice among others as it seeks to contribute meaningfully to the process of healing and reconciliation. From a gender perspective, the chapter has shown that CiM is generally silent on women's experiences of political violence. The chapter probed the possible reasons for this silence drawing from the responses of study participants. This provided a strong justification for the argument for the adoption of a womanist model for national healing and reconciliation. Hence, the chapter provided the womanist model for national healing and reconciliation and explained in detail each component of the model. This was intended to provide the church with a resource from which to draw in order to formulate an African Womanist Theology of national healing and reconciliation. The next chapter summarises the study, draws conclusions and provides recommendations for further research.

Chapter 7

Summary

7.0 Introduction

The previous chapter analysed and discussed the themes that emerged from the data that were presented in chapter five. The discussion and analysis was done from a gendered perspective, specifically drawing insights from womanist approaches, namely African womanism and Africana womanism. The chapter also introduced the Womanist Model for national healing and reconciliation from which the church could map contours of an African Womanist Theology of national healing and reconciliation. This chapter summarises the entire study and research, draws conclusions and provides recommendations for further research.

7.1 Summary

As the study draws towards a conclusion, it is important that we have a review of what has been done so far. In chapter one, we introduced the study and provided its orientation. The chapter looked at the area of study, statement of the problem, justification, methodology among other issues. We also provided the definition of key terms in the study. Most of the terms were shown to be problematic. However, the researcher endeavoured to situate each term within the context of the study.

Chapter two reviewed relevant literature relating to the history of Christianity, political violence, women and political violence, national healing and reconciliation, gender in national healing and reconciliation, as well as the church, national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. Literature on gender in national healing and reconciliation revealed how women and their experiences are often ignored in transitional processes. Studies done in other contexts outside Zimbabwe confirmed this phenomenon and these provided comparisons with the way the church in

Zimbabwe has been conducting its business in the national healing and reconciliation process. What also came out clearly from the review of literature is that scholars in Zimbabwe have not paid particular attention to the role of religion on national healing and reconciliation, especially from a gendered perspective.

Chapter three provided an overview of the history of Christianity in Zimbabwe. One of the main objectives of providing this overview was to provide a mapping of the churches in Zimbabwe in general and Manicaland province in particular. This later gave us an understanding of the churches that are part and parcel of the forum called Churches in Manicaland. The other objective was to show how Christian historiography in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular has excluded women's contributions to the development of Christianity on the continent and in the country respectively. The church was shown to have generally ignored the experiences of women. In this case, the chapter endeavoured to show the gendered nature of the history of Christianity in Zimbabwe. This was done by showing how the various strands of Christianity found in Zimbabwe, namely mainline, Pentecostal and African initiated have throughout their historical development, marginalised women's contributions and experiences. This is, despite the fact that throughout the history of the church in Zimbabwe, women have been victims of violence which at times was sanctioned by the church itself. Without really painting the church only in the negative, the chapter also highlighted points in history where the church stood for the vulnerable, at times speaking on behalf of the violated women. The chapter came to the general conclusion that the church in Zimbabwe has to a large extent minimised the visibility of women.

In chapter four, we analysed the church and political violence in Zimbabwe, paying particular attention to how this shaped church-state relations from the year 2000 to the present. In order to understand the occurrences of violence in the period under review in this study, the chapter provided a historical account of how violence was ingrained in Zimbabwe's political culture in post-independent Zimbabwe. This provided a context within which to understand its valorisation from the year 2000. The chapter discussed in detail how violence was used during the critical historical periods such as the FTLRP, Operation Murambatsvina as well as the elections of 2000, 2002, 2005, 2008, as well as 2013. The gendered nature of this violence was also discussed in this specific chapter. Of particular significance in the chapter is the discussion on how the church responded to the violence. Through the various church bodies such as the ZCBC, ZCC, EFZ and the HOCD, the chapter brought out various initiatives by the church to engage the state. Pastoral letters (some of which were discussed in the chapter) were used as a means of communicating with those in power to rethink the way they were running the country. The chapter showed that it is within this context that CiM emerged as a Forum seeking to respond to the political violence that occurred in Zimbabwe from the year 2000. While ZCBC, ZCC, EFZ and HOCD are national ecumenical church bodies, CiM was shown in this chapter to be an ecumenical forum of churches responding to provincial issues in Manicaland, though at times in their pastoral letters, the CiM officials address all Zimbabweans of goodwill. A discussion on the emergence of the Forum was undertaken in this chapter, providing a historical background which was significant for the presentation of data of the Forum's activities in the national healing and reconciliation process in Chapter five.

Chapter five was the presentation of data from CiM's documents (a book, pastoral letters and minutes of meetings), as well as data from interviews of CiM Steering Committee members and

women survivors of political violence, women and men who witnessed violence against women in Manicaland. The presentation of the data from pastoral letters and the book was meant to show how CiM has responded to the challenges that Zimbabwe has faced since the year 2000, especially its response to political violence and the call for national healing and reconciliation. Furthermore, the study wanted to find out if the Forum has used this medium to articulate women's experiences of political violence. The chapter further captured the voices of the officials from CiM in trying to understand the meanings they attach to their role in the national healing and reconciliation process. The voices of the people from the communities were also captured so that the researcher would understand their views on the role of the church in national healing and reconciliation. Focusing on the major objective of the study; which is the place of women's experiences of political violence in CiM's participation in the process of national healing and reconciliation, the chapter also captured the voices of both CiM officials as well as people from Manicaland communities on how the Forum has dealt with women's issues pertaining to political violence. This was done in order to understand whether CiM prioritises women's experiences of political violence in the national healing and reconciliation process. The chapter afforded the Forum the opportunity to articulate the challenges it has faced and how, going forward, it can bring women's experiences of political violence to the centre of the national healing and reconciliation process. Study participants from the communities were also accorded the chance to articulate their expectations from the national healing and reconciliation process and how the church can play a more meaningful role in bringing healing and reconciliation in women's lives. Chapter six discussed and analysed the data presented in chapter five. The major themes that emerged from the data were looked at in this chapter specifically from a gendered perspective. We revisit these themes in the discussion below.

7.1.1 Summary of the Major Themes

The theme on the church and national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe brought out issues pointing to the contestations over Zimbabwe's political space between the church and politicians (see section 6.1). Politicians have always tried to define the role of the church by limiting it to the religious domain. However, the church in Zimbabwe, basing its argument on its teaching on social justice has refused this limitation choosing in stead to engage actively in the national political discourse. This has guided CiM's participation in the national healing and reconciliation process. Its participation is premised on the understanding that politicians in Zimbabwe are responsible for the political violence that the nation experienced since the year 2000 and, therefore, cannot be entrusted with the delicate process of bringing healing and reconciliation to people. The need for the church to be non-partisan was discussed under this theme, though the difficulties of this need were highlighted as lying in the need to name evil. For example, as the church denounces political violence, it is difficult to maintain impartiality where one political party continues to mete violence against supporters of other political parties.

The theme on CiM, national healing and reconciliation in Manicaland brought out the key activities that CiM is engaged in as it endeavours to ensure that there is healing and reconciliation within communities in Manicaland (see section 6.2). The discussion showed that the use of pastoral letters, workshops for traditional leaders, as well as people from both urban and rural communities, peace tournaments, mass peace rallies and night prayer vigils have been instrumental in ensuring the cessation of political violence in Manicaland. These activities have also contributed to the peaceful co-existence of people with diverse political opinions. The chapter showed that CiM has been playing both the prophetic and humanitarian roles through its activities aimed at healing and reconciliation.

Under the theme on national healing and reconciliation, the chapter also looked at some problematic issues that the Forum has dealt with in the healing and reconciliation process. These are justice, truth, impunity, healing and reconciliation. CiM's views on justice in this process are summarised well in the 2012 pastoral letter in which the Forum refused to endorse any peace that covers injustices (see section 6.2.1). The chapter showed that the Forum's view find resonance in the feelings of women survivors of political violence who indicated that it was not possible for them to heal as they had not been compensated for what they lost during the violence and the perpetrators of violence had not been punished for their crimes.

The other contentious issue in national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe discussed in this chapter is that of impunity (see section 6.2.2). The chapter showed that CiM from the year 2001 has implored the state to enforce the law on the perpetrators of political violence. However, there has not been political will in this regard. The major reason has been that the security sector in Zimbabwe is complicit in the violence that has occurred in the country. It was also shown that women survivors of political violence could not report their victimisers because the police were not willing to investigate the crimes. The major question that arises from such a scenario is: How is healing and reconciliation possible in an environment where impunity is rife?

A discussion on the need for truth also brought out diverse opinions (see section 6.2.3). Study participants were agreed on the need for truth and some even suggested the SATRC model. Differences arose on whether truth alone without compensation is enough. While some CiM officials held the view that truth without compensation can be enough, women survivors of political violence reiterated the need for truth that is accompanied by compensation.

National healing and reconciliation is another issue that the Forum has had to deal with (see section 6.2.4). From pastoral letters and study participants' responses, the chapter showed that

there is general consensus that the process should be inclusive of past atrocities such as the *Gukurahundi* massacres. In addition, the Forum laid conditions of confession, repentance and cessation of political violence as crucial for national healing and reconciliation to take place.

The theme on gender in CiM's national healing and reconciliation activities in Manicaland generally showed that the Forum has not made any deliberate effort to make women's experiences a priority (see section 6.3). Through the analysis of a number of the Forum's documents, the chapter showed that CiM has generally been silent on the way women experienced violence in Manicaland.

Having failed to locate women in CiM's healing and reconciliation activities, the chapter probed this silence using study participants responses (see section 6.4). A detailed discussion of CiM's gender silence was done under the following sub-themes: lack of a clear national framework, the existence of a volatile political environment, patriarchy, the absence of a gender desk/committee, national versus community healing and reconciliation, enforced and self-imposed silence, lack of resources and the invisibility of CiM at the grassroots level. Through an in-depth discussion of these sub-themes, the chapter showed how they have acted as impediments to the considerations of gender in CiM's activities that are aimed at healing and reconciliation in Manicaland. This led us to the proposal for the adoption of a womanist model for national healing and reconciliation.

The chapter proposed the adoption of a womanist model for national healing and reconciliation (see section 6.5). In coming up with the model, the chapter drew insights from African womanism and Africana womanism, while also utilising responses from study participants. The chapter identified seven components of the womanist model for national healing and reconciliation (see section 6.6). Central to this model is gender. The chapter showed that making gender the agenda of the national healing and reconciliation process would enable the church to

disaggregate women's experiences of political violence from men's experiences of the same and would also ensure that women's needs are met (see section 6.6.1). Confronting patriarchy in church and society is the other component of the model discussed in the chapter (see section 6.6.2). Having noted that the church and society in Zimbabwe have largely remained patriarchal, this component empowers the church to confront the vice both within its own walls and society at large, so that patriarchal notions that have caused women's marginalisation in the national healing and reconciliation process are done away with. Furthermore, the chapter identified *ubuntu* as an important component of the model (see section 6.6.3). In this case, the chapter showed the importance of the model, drawing insights from traditional wisdom repositories such as proverbs and sayings that speak about the importance of women in society as well as the importance of peaceful co-existence. This was seen as foregrounding women's position in society. The other component identified in this chapter is the recognition of women's agency in coming up with practical ways that facilitate healing and reconciliation in communities (see section 6.6.4).

The chapter showed also that collegiality is a fundamental component of the womanist model for national healing and reconciliation (see section 6.6.5). This component emphasises women-women friendships as important in the process of healing and reconciliation. Building on collegiality, the other component identified in this chapter is the creation of spaces where women can engage in the process (see section 6.6.6). In this case, the holding of women-only workshops was suggested as providing that space where women can express themselves without restrictions. Last but not least, the chapter identified women-men partnerships also as crucial for this model (see section 6.6.7). The importance of these partnerships lies in that they enable women and men to journey together in the process of national healing and reconciliation. The chapter then

suggested that from the model, the church can come up with an African Womanist Theology of national healing and reconciliation which would inform its activities in the process.

7.2 Conclusions

The study about the role of CiM in Zimbabwe's national healing and reconciliation process leads us to draw the following conclusions:

In the wake of political violence that engulfed Zimbabwe from the year 2000 and which continues in the country unabated, the church in Zimbabwe assumed its prophetic ministry through speaking on behalf of the marginalised population of Zimbabwe. In fact, the study showed that CiM emerged in this context of political violence to be the voice of the voiceless as well as to encourage communities in Manicaland to desist from using violence as a political tool. The main aim was to bring healing and reconciliation to communities in Manicaland. The study has shown the various activities that CiM is engaged in as a means towards peace-building. These activities compare very well with what has been done in other contexts and serve to show that religion in general and the church in particular has a critical role to play in national healing and reconciliation processes.

A gender analysis of the way CiM has participated in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe with a specific focus on communities in Manicaland has shown that the Forum invisibilises women's experiences of political violence. Chapter three clearly showed how throughout the history of Christianity in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular women's lived experiences have been placed at the margins. CiM seems to be carrying that legacy forward. Despite the fact that women have benefitted from the Forum's activities towards the attainment of peace in Manicaland, the study contends that there has not been any deliberate effort by CiM to disaggregate women's experiences of political violence from men's experiences

of the same. The study concludes that women's benefit from the Forum's activities is purely accidental rather than a clear programme of action. This is strongly supported by the fact that the majority of the women survivors of political violence at the grassroots have not personally benefitted from the Forum's activities. This brings into question the gender-sensitiveness and the gender-competences of the church in dealing with issues of healing and reconciliation in contexts such as Zimbabwe. For example, the workshops, peace prayer rallies, all night prayer vigils, pastoral letters, present CiM with good opportunities to emphasize how different social groups within the communities are affected by political violence and to denounce violence that is peculiar to women. CiM has failed to take advantage of these opportunities. Aids Free World (2009:9) is therefore correct in saying that "the world is blind to women."

Drawing from the above, the study also concludes that CiM faces various challenges in its participation in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe. This has to a large extent led to an oversight on its part on the need for making gender the agenda of national healing and reconciliation. While some challenges are beyond the Forum itself, some are a result of the church's own making. The politicisation of the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe has weakened the churches capacity to respond to women's needs. Study participants from CiM pointed out the fear of political reprisals as their chief challenge because women were the majority of victims of the violence and trying to understand how they were violated would be misapprehended for confrontation by the political establishment. It, therefore, becomes difficult for the church to demand a clear national framework for national healing and reconciliation in an environment where political will is non-existent. Such a framework pays attention to the way women experienced violence and is one that is intended to fulfill women's expectations and desires where possible.

The study also concludes that patriarchy in church and society continues to be an impediment to CiM's incorporation of women's experiences of political violence in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe. From study participants' responses, it is evident that men have continued to dominate church leadership positions, while women continue to occupy the pews. A comparative analysis of the number of men and women in CiM's Steering Committee showed this trend. This has resulted in the men who are church leaders treating victims of political violence as collectives, thereby paying no attention to specific gender needs and experiences in the national healing and reconciliation process. From Sweetman's analysis, "lack of a gendered analysis of the impact of...post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building policies ignores specific interest of women and men" (2005:26). Failure to understand the gendered nature of national healing and reconciliation processes has led CiM to ignore gender-targeted budgeting for its programmes, as well as putting in place a gender desk which would respond to women and men's needs accordingly. The result has been that women have failed to directly benefit from the Forum's healing and reconciliation activities. Furthermore, patriarchy in society restricted women's mobility to public activities of CiM, thereby denying them a chance to actively engage in the process.

The researcher concluded that useful information had been elicited from study participants to propose the adoption of a womanist model for national healing and reconciliation. Study participants suggested ways in which women's experiences of political violence could be brought to the centre of the national healing and reconciliation process. The study used these views to construct a womanist model for national healing and reconciliation. The major components of this model were shown to be crucial in giving women survivors of political violence not only a voice, but also spaces to effectively engage in the national healing and

reconciliation process (see section 6:6). The study argued that the model becomes useful to the church in Zimbabwe in that it enables the church to come up with an African Womanist Theology of national healing and reconciliation. Such a theology, the study argued, is one that affirms the humanity of women because it is “grounded in the human dignity of all persons” (Furrow, 1999:49). It is also a theology that speaks to the very survival of women through listening to the stories of women of how they experienced political violence.

7.3 Recommendations

Going forward, further research focusing on the role of the church in national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe needs to focus on the following areas:

- The Church and women leadership in national healing and reconciliation processes;
- The Church and socio-economic justice for women survivors of political violence;
- The role of religion in the depoliticisation of the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe and
- The church, gender, national healing and reconciliation in other provinces in Zimbabwe.

The researcher hopes that other researchers will pursue the suggested themes that this study has not dealt with in detail. This would help in bringing balance to the present study and would also contribute towards a more detailed analysis of gender, the church and peace-building in Zimbabwe.

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Interview with Interviewee L in Mutare, 29 May 2015.

Appendices

Appendix A : Interview Schedules

Interview Questions for Churches in Manicaland (CiM) officials

Age.....

Gender.....

Position held.....

Denomination.....

1. What in your opinion are the responsibilities of a church in a nation?
2. Does the church in Zimbabwe have a role to play in national politics? Please explain.
3. Briefly explain why Churches in Manicaland was formed?
4. What successes have you achieved since the formation of your Forum?
5. What have been your challenges?
6. How do you view the national healing and reconciliation process currently under way in Zimbabwe?
7. How have you as an organization (Churches in Manicaland) contributed to this process?
8. In what way have women in your constituency been affected by political violence?
9. As a Forum, do you think you have prioritized women's experiences of political violence as you participate in the national healing and reconciliation process? Please explain.
10. What challenges have you encountered in trying to ensure that women's experiences of political violence are put at the fore of the national healing and reconciliation process?
11. Any other comment?

Interview Questions for people in communities where Churches in Manicaland operate

Age.....

Gender.....

Occupation.....

Name of Organisation.....

Religion.....

Denomination.....

1. What in your view are the responsibilities of a church in a nation?
2. In your opinion, does the church in Zimbabwe have a role to play in national politics? Please explain.
3. Are you aware of the Forum called Churches in Manicaland?
4. In what way have you interacted with the Forum?
5. Are you aware of the Forum's activities in the national healing and reconciliation process?
6. If your answer to 5 above is yes, can you please list the activities?
7. From 2000, Zimbabwe witnessed increased incidences of political violence. In what way do you think women were affected by this violence?
8. Do you think churches in Manicaland (CiM) as a Forum places much importance on women's experiences of political violence in Zimbabwe as it participates in the national healing and reconciliation process? Please explain.
9. How can the Forum improve its role in the national healing and reconciliation process in Zimbabwe?
10. What are your expectations in the national healing and reconciliation in terms of what the church can do for women?
11. Any other comment?

Appendix B: Pastoral letters

CHURCHES IN MANICALAND: PUBLIC STATEMENT A TIME TO REFLECT

The Churches in Manicaland, on March 5, 2002, issued a pre-election statement, "A Time to Choose", to the people of Zimbabwe. In this post election period we wish to issue a further statement to the people of our country.

In our pre-election statement we noted that restrictive and oppressive conditions made it "evident that the preparations for the elections were neither free nor fair for the voting public".

We recognise that largely peaceful conditions prevailed in our province of Manicaland during the days of voting. However, we observed with serious concern that:

- polling agents and members of support groups of the main opposition party were harassed, beaten and detained during the voting period;
- independent election observers, including church observers, were also detained during the voting period;
- some independent observers were abducted and their whereabouts subsequently unknown for several days;
- because of the absence of agents and observers, serious doubts have been raised regarding the security of the ballots both during and at the close of the voting period;
- a number of listed polling stations did not open during the polling days;
- a number of unlisted polling stations were opened without due notice being given to the voting public;
- one polling station was closed down by war veterans on the first day of voting.

As a result of these serious irregularities, a considerable number of voters in our province were unable to vote freely and the integrity of the voting process was greatly undermined.

If one views the pre-election period and the days of voting as part of a single overall process, it is clear that the Presidential Election of March 2002 was not conducted in a free and fair environment in the province of Manicaland. Reports from other provinces indicate that what happened in our province was repeated in other areas. From our experience on the ground, we cannot accept the legitimacy of the electoral process and therefore its outcome cannot be free and fair.

We are shocked by the conclusion of some African observers - particularly the ministerial observer team from the SADC region - in regard to the conduct of the election. The electoral process ignored the basic minimum electoral norms and standards compiled and accepted by the SADC countries. We are further deeply concerned that electoral standards universally recognised and accepted are apparently seen as non-applicable in our African situation.

In the aftermath of the election we recognise that there is a mood of deep suspicion and mistrust between members of the two main political parties. We urge calm, restraint and wise counsel at this time. The restoration of trust and confidence is a process that requires courage and determination.

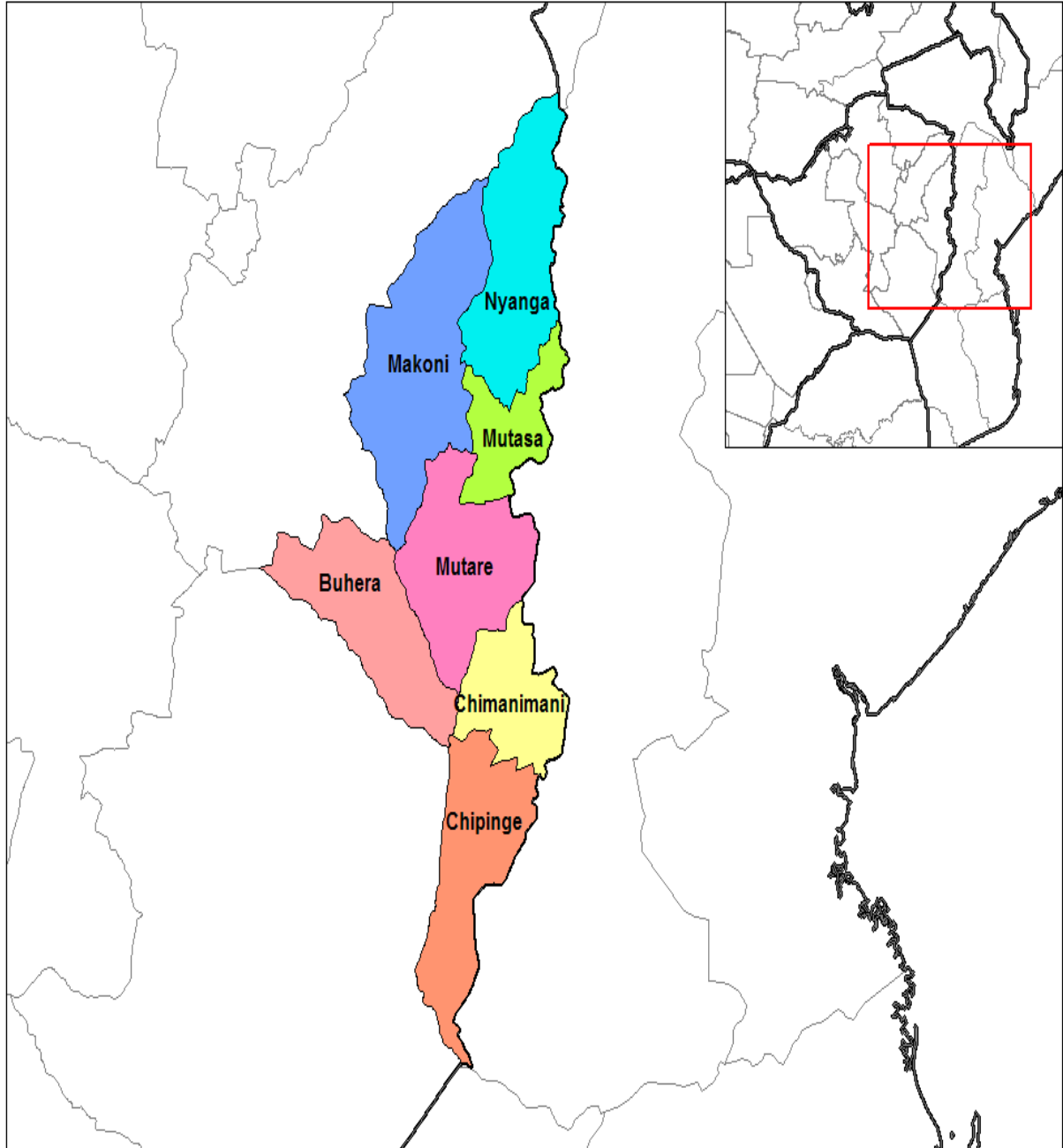
As Christian leaders we urge all followers of Christ to recognise that love of God and neighbour (Mark 12:28-31) is the mark of a true Christian. At an individual level, my neighbour includes my political rival and love means doing to him/her what I would wish him/her to do me (Mt. 7:12).

In a wider context, love means continually striving to realise the basic Christian principles of justice, mercy and compassion (Mt. 23:23) in the society in which we live. This will require rejecting the culture of lies and hypocrisy, intimidation and violence that has flourished in recent times and the promotion of honesty, truth and self-sacrifice within private and public institutions.

As Churches we are not aligned to any particular interest group or political party. We are strictly non-partisan in regard to party politics. Yet we cannot be non-partisan in regard to right and wrong, truth and falsehood, good and evil. Our enemy is the evil and falsehood that oppress and deny the innate dignity of each human being made in the image and likeness of God (Gen.1:27). An authentic Christian cannot be neutral in regard to good and evil. We pray that our vision may be embraced by all members of society so that our beloved country may experience greater freedom and the fullness of life and love.

Mutare March 15, 2002

Appendix C: Map



Manicaland districts taken from <https://www.google.com/search> (26 August 2015)

**Appendix D: Media Report of Gang Rape of Women during the 2008 Political Violence
Taken from www.newzimbabwe.com**

Zanu PF violence victims reveal harrowing experiences at the hands of their tormentors



Infected with HIV after Zanu PF gang rape then deserted by her husband ... Christine Tinorirashe

27/06/2015 00:00:00

■ by Chief Correspondent

A 40-YEAR-OLD Buhera MDC-T follower has been condemned to living the rest of her life with the dreaded HIV which she contracted during a gang rape by five Zanu PF supporters on the eve of the bloody presidential run-off election 2008.

She was being punished for daring to support “the enemy”.

The lean framed Christine Tinorirashe revealed her life-changing experience in front of hundreds of people, among them fellow political violence victims, who thronged Harare’s Anglican Cathedral, venue for Friday’s UN international day in support of victims of torture.

“I am a mother of two who was raped on 26 June 2008 just before the Presidential run-off election,” said Tinorirashe in Shona.

Now using a pair of glasses after she lost her eyesight was affected during her simultaneous beating, Tinorirashe said she did not mind her real name being known.

She said she had found that speaking freely about the ordeal was another way of relieving herself of the deep frustrations she has taken as a result of the incident.

“I am in deep pain,” she said, “As a result of my rape, I was dumped by my husband together with our two children.

“During that period, it was still frightening to walk into a police station to try and report your rape or assault because you would find yourself arrested instead.

“As a result, I failed to seek help within the recommended 72 hours in which a rape victim can get the necessary assistance to avoid contracting HIV.”

"For someone who now survives with HIV," she added, "I am no longer able to toil as much as I used to when I enjoyed good health, and as I said, my situation was worsened by my husband walking away from me during my hour of need."

Evidently touching the hearts of those who listened in dismay as she related her nightmare, Tinorirashe declared she will never allow the wishes of her tormentors to prevail by dumping MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai.

“Asi ndiripo ipapo, handisi kubva panonzi MDC. Veduwe ngatishungurudzwei asi ngatirambe takabatira pamkombero waTsvangarai (I will not leave the MDC-T. Let them terrorise us but we should never leave Morgan Tsvangirai’s party),” she said.

One of many

Tinorirashe is not alone in her ordeal.

Edson Gwensure, from Masvingo’s Zaka area, is among five MDC followers who were, during the same period, also doused with petrol and torched by suspected state agents who found them manning a party office during the tension filled period.