

**TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF RECONSTRUCTION FOR POST - COLONIAL  
ZIMBABWE: A MISSIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

**BY**

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## **DEDICATION**

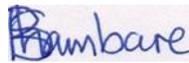
This study is dedicated to my children (Mukundi Hugh, Mitsidzo Karen, Makomborero Ethan) for them to know that achievement is not an event it is through dedication and commitment. To my dearest, lovely wife Florence, the time you spent in prayer and being lonely when I was busy. *I love you, family!*

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## DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled; *Towards a Theology of Reconstruction for Post - Colonial Zimbabwe: A Missiological Perspective* is my own work. All those sources I have consulted and used have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete standard reference.

Signed

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Blessing Shambare". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light blue rectangular background.

Date

BLESSING SHAMBARE

## **ABSTRACT**

The issue of reconstruction has appealed to many nations that have moved from significant transitional periods, be it economic, social, and or political. This has made the reconstruction theology, a relevant theology. This study is a result of realities unfolding in Zimbabwe which left many to ask what is missing in Zimbabwe in order to have a better society.

The study seeks to contribute to the reconstruction theology debate from a missiological perspective which is based on asking and answering the question, “what is the role of the Christian Church in reconstruction?” At the onset, the study seeks to assert the applicability of the Ezra - Nehemiah Motif in Zimbabwe. The research is motivated by the premise that the church ought to have the capacity to adequately formulate a public-social theology which meets the demands of society. It is on this basis that the research will grapple with the concerns for justice, aspects of difference in relationship to human life- human dignity, policies of democratisation and democracy, social development and societal peaceful coexistence.

The theology of reconstruction has been argued as a praxis and deed-oriented model of rebuilding. Whilst appreciating the Liberation Theology and its value to Zimbabwe, it could be argued further that the liberation has served the purpose and the need for a complementary theology; - Reconstruction Theology. However, if this assertion is to be upheld, questions may be raised as to whether Reconstruction Theology seeks to replace Liberation Theology. It is therefore through this research that it can be established whether there is a replacement of or a complement of liberation theology with reconstruction theology.

This research then aims to analyse the deplorable Zimbabwean, socio-economic and socio-political fibers that require reconstruction and transformation, to enable development of a better society in which human dignity is respected. Further to that, the research explores and reflects upon the theological and missiological models of reconstruction that could be considered in post-colonial Zimbabwe. It is in this research that some alternative cultural variables, which could help achieve national reconstruction are deconstructed in light of reconstruction of

Zimbabwe. To achieve this research utilises African Renaissance as its theoretical framework and informed by social construction theory.

This research engages in the quantitative and qualitative research methods, supported by interviews and questionnaires. There is a plethora of produced in published and unpublished literature that enriched this thesis. Furthermore, the research utilised various methodological approaches which includes theological, sociological, and post-colonial. The research will then comprise nine chapters subtitled depending on the matters of concern.

**Key Words:** Theology of Reconstruction, Church, Mission, Reconstruction, Zimbabwe, African Renaissance, Transformation, Renewal, African Theology, Community Integration, Wholeness, Justice, Whose community Zimbabwe is, Nationality, Belonging

## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AACC	All African Conference of Churches
ACCZ	Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe
AICM	African Independent Christian Movement
AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
A-Level	Advanced Level
ANC	African National Congress
ANC	African National Council
ANM	African National Movement
AR	African Renaissance
AU	African Union
AYAH	Anglican Youth Association of Harare
BSAC	British South Africa Company
CCJP	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
CCMP	Church Community Mobilisation Process
CDLA	Cattle and Dog Levy Act
CYL	City Youth League
DDF	District Development Fund

ECEA	European Colonial Expansion Agenda
EFZ	Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
EU	European Union
FRELIMO	Mozambique Liberation Front
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNU	Government of National Unity
GPA	Global Political Agreement
HIV	Human Immuno Virus
HTA	Hut Tax Act
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRP	Intensive Resettlement Program
JPC	Justice and Peace Commission
LAA	Land Apportionment Act
LEP	Look East Policy
LMS	London Missionary Society
LTA	Land Tenure Act
MCA	Maize Control Act
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDC-M	Movement for Democratic Change-Mutambara
MDC-N	Movement for Democratic Change-Ncube

MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvagirai
MERP	Millennium Economic Recovery Programme
MHM	Matebele Home Movement
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
NDEM	National Discipline Efficiency
NDP	National Democratic Party
NERP	National Economic Revival Programme
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisation (s)
NPRC	National Peace and Reconciliation Commission
NRZ	National Railways of Zimbabwe
NVDD	National Vision Discussion Document
OAU	Organisation for African Unity
O-Level	Ordinary Level
ONHRI	Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration
PCM	People Centred Model
PCR	Program to Combat Racism
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
RCC	Rhodesia Christian Council
RF	Rhodesian Front
SADC	South African Development Community
SGR	Strategic Grain Reserve
SMEs	Small and Medium Entrepreneurs
SRANC	Southern Rhodesia African National Congress

SRBVA	Southern Rhodesia Bantu Voters' Association
SYL	Salisbury Youth League
TTL	Tribal Trust Lands
UANC	United African National Council
UDACIZA	Union for the Development of African Churches in Zimbabwe
UDAR	Unilateral Declaration of Autocratic Rule
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
WCC	World Council of Churches
ZANILA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African Union Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African Patriotic Front
ZAYA	Zimbabwe Anglican Youth Association
ZCA	Zimbabwe Christian Alliance
ZCBC	Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop's Conference
ZCC	Zimbabwe Christian Council
ZCC	Zimbabwe Council of Churches
ZCTU	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
ZIDERA	Zimbabwe Development Recovery Action
ZIMASSET	Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Social and Economic Transformation
ZIMFEP	Zimbabwe Foundation for Education with Production

ZIMPREST	Zimbabwe Programme of Economic Social Transformation
ZIMSEC	Zimbabwe National Schools Examination Council
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army
ZNYP	Zimbabwe National Youth Policy
ZPF/People First	Zimbabwe People First Party
ZUD	Zimbabwe Union for Democrats
ZUM	Zimbabwe Unity Movement
ZUM	Zimbabwe Unity Movement

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1. TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF RECONSTRUCTION IN ZIMBABWE

#### 1.1. Setting the Scene

There is a range of realities that have impinged on communities and have often demanded a theological, sociological or missiological response. Zimbabwe is no exception, with some “impinging progression social and political veracities, that have prompted responses from theologians, politicians and sociologists” (Hanlon, Manjengwa and Smart, 2013: 19). This research is a result of actualities unfolding in post-colonial Zimbabwe concentrating on understanding the tragedies that include repression, selective application of the law, violence and intolerance that ensued after colonisation. There are aspects of blaming and counter-blaming the socio-economic, socio-political and socio-religious decadence that left people focusing on antagonising one another (Kamugisha, 2012: 23) rather than centring on the bigger picture of development and upholding people-centred policies.

This thesis contends that theological discourses are both contextual and situational; therefore, Zimbabwe has become a fertile ground to allow the reconstruction discourses to take off, without disregarding completely other theologies propounded and being proposed such as liberation, black, feminist, African, and eco-theology, that have lasting significance in the nation. This research asserts that these other theological discourses on Zimbabwean ground can be referred to as theologies of particularity, thereby implying theology of reconstruction to be a theology of praxis. Charles Villa-Vicencio (1992: 7,41) rightly argues that “reconstruction has to deal with moving from the haunting past experiences of colonialism of racism, prejudices, hurt, repression, intolerance, and injustice to the collective rebuilding of a post-colonial society”.

This thesis aims to contribute to the post-colonial Zimbabwe reconstruction debate from a missiological perspective. It takes reconstruction concepts of other theologians (Villa-Vicencio, 1992); (Mugambi, 1995); (Karamaga, 1997); (Geuti and Obeng, 1999); (Dedji, 2003); (Gunda, 2009) into dialogue with missiological perspectives of renewal, transformation and reconstruction within the Zimbabwean context. What will be the face of reconstruction theology when concomitant with the Christian mission mandate ‘to participate in the *Missio Dei* (God’s mission)’? (Bosch, 1991). Duncan Forrester (the editorial preface in *A Theology of*

*Reconstruction; Nation-building and Human Rights*) observes that “religion (Christianity) has become a renewed force, recognised as an important factor in the modern world in all aspects of life; cultural, economic, social and political” (Villa-Vicencio, 1992:10). As for Africa, religion infiltrates in bloodstreams. Jose Chipenda asserts that “Africans are incurably religious” (Chipenda, 1997: 26). Therefore, reconstruction of society is possible when religious principles are interpreted transformatively. In this research, Christianity, the church and mission will be the bases of interrogation.

Zimbabwe’s transformation is possible if the church stands on the superiority mission of justice and transformation. Reconstruction is a phenomenon of transforming the structures of society from an egocentric model which is oppressive and manipulative, to a ‘people-centred model’, which is inclusive and co-operative (Mugambi, 1995: xv). Mugambi observed the need for new language, another shifting of gears and new understanding of the situation given the “New World Order” (*ibid*: xv). Therefore, reconstruction theology is a necessary paradigm in post-colonial Zimbabwe, as a “new language” and a “new theology” of emphasis (Mugambi, 1995: xv). This theology addresses and contributes to the socio-economic, socio-political, socio-religious and cultural/moral development in Africa (Chitando, 2009: 130; Farisani, 2002). These structures affect and shape the daily lives of African people therefore, they are existential social structures.

## **1.2. Interest of the Study**

The observance of the socio-political, socio-economic status and well-being of the nation of Zimbabwe in the post-colonial era has triggered the interest of this research. A community has been born and bred with wounds of politically motivated acts of intolerance, economic deprivation, manipulation and repression. It is said that the liberator has become the oppressor, whilst black on black oppression and repression is evident. There is evidence also of neo-colonial influence and effects in the socio-economic and socio-political outlook. Those that digress in opinions of the government, are in constant fear of being labelled anti-government, economic saboteurs and political enemies amongst a host of other titles, thus demonstrating the unevenness of the political landscape.

The interest in this study has also been aroused by the socio-economic conditions in contemporary Zimbabwe. The historical status of Zimbabwe being ‘*the bread basket of Africa*’ has since turned to ‘*the begging basket of Africa*’. To put it scantily; Zimbabwe used to be a

*burger* of Africa but it is now the *beggar* of Africa (Bakare, 2013: 7; Hill, 2005: 2). Unemployment is high, poverty is rocking the society and HIV and AIDS are prevalent. A great brain drain has been necessitated by a decade of intensive emigration and marriages are disintegrating due to the socio-economic and socio-political crisis. Brian Raftopoulos (2009: 202) summarises the dire condition in Zimbabwe thus;

A key aspect of the crisis was the rapid decline of the economy, characterised by, among other things: steep declines in industrial and agricultural productivity; historic levels of hyperinflation, the formalisation of labour; the dollarization of the economic transactions; displacements; and a critical erosion of livelihoods.

A theology of reconstruction is necessary under these and other conditions to renew, to transform and to reconstruct Africa (Mugambi, 1995). The church as an institution that appeals influentially to a great audience in Zimbabwe is challenged to revisit its mission in light of transformation and reconstruction.

Christianity has become the dominant religion in Africa, with the majority of the African population professing the faith indirectly or directly. This realisation of growth in Christianity and also the growing breakdown in social fibre of society stimulates questions of reconstruction. Is Christianity able to influence social cohesion, ensuring wellness of African citizens or is Christianity the religion perpetuating the continent's struggle?

The entry point of this research is the mission mandate of the church, which must necessarily change from time to time to reflect the state of social, political and economic affairs. The missiological task of the church in reconstruction and national renewal is critically to proclaim the reign of God's Kingdom characterised by love and justice. In an interview on 16 August 2015, Bishop Sebastian Bakare, attested that "the mission of the church is to give the good news of Christ to society". The good news yearned for in Zimbabwe is that of peace and justice, transformation and dignity and reconciliation and healing. Charles Villa-Vicencio (1992: 2) points out that, "the task of the church, whose theological responsibility is to restore justice and affirm human dignity is to join with others to ensure that renewal is inclusively and communally shared." The Zimbabwean environment requires the church to rise above the desire of personal-individualistic transformation and proclaim the national transformation and reconstruction. The church is not called to "preach peace but to speak truth to power and to proclaim the Good News of the Lord; condemnation of structures of sin, made-made poverty,

the privatisation of God by the elites, the formalisation of religion and monopolisation of religious practices” (Gunda, 2017: 3).

### **1.3. Problem Statement**

This thesis seeks to make a contribution to the missiological perspective of reconstruction theology in Africa. For this to be achieved the thesis will use the Zimbabwean context which reflects the status of post-colonial Africa in light of socio-political stability to socio-political instability, community progression to community disintegration, and socio-economic growth to socio-economic suffocation. The situation has left many African nations in struggles of sustenance, with high rates of unemployment, brain drain, poverty and high levels of community sufferance.

The situation of Africa is challenging since the continent can be described as highly spiritual, where religion permeates the wellbeing of Africans. Christian theologians and Christian historians assert that the centre of Christianity has shifted since the twentieth century from Europe and North America to the global South; Africa, Asia and South America (Chitando, 2012: 274). This explosive growth in the Christian faith in Africa, should be translated into human wellness defined in the *Missio Dei* principles of transforming society. Isaac Mwase (2012: 171) asserts that “this phenomenal shift of the church’s numerical centre of gravity from north and west of our globe to countries of the south and east has to be projected and accompanied by a transformative self-conscious reflections to the reality of African existence”.

The church as the carrier of the gospel message has to effectively influence the landscape of existence in Africa. The church has to uphold the double mandate of being visionary and prophetic in post-colonial Africa. As for Ka Mana (1994: 38; 2004), this double responsibility is at the heart of the Church’s mission for renewal and reconstruction of Africa. Mana (1994:37-39) alludes that the visionary and prophetic responsibility must be completed by a double accountability of mission. Firstly the “re-evangelisation” of the institutions and structures that determine the existence of post-colonial African societies and secondly the “re-orientation” of the global *imaginaire* of African identity according to the fundamental vision of humankind embodied in the image of God lived out by Jesus Christ (Mana, 1994: 38; Dedji, 2003: 95).

Since the 1960s<sup>1</sup>, the African church and African theologians became strongly concerned with shaking off the colonial hegemony in interpretation of theological discourses. However, the expectation that the political independence was to usher a new dispensation of economic, political and social wellness was shattered by the events that unfold in Africa. Hence, Villavicencio (1992: 36) states that “at a continental level, it is not an exaggeration to speak of the “failure of Africa”. For example, millions of Africans are still constantly hungry, millions still live in entirely inadequate conditions and have grossly insufficient access to education and health care and many survive without basic necessities”. Oduyoye (1997: 67) adds on saying Africans are exposed to; poverty, suffering, wars, political instability and social inferiority. Looking at this situation, some “prophets of doom” declare that Africa is a lost continent, destined to disappear (Coula, 1997: 213). There is undeniable social brokenness, communal fragmentation and relational suspicion which bring violence and open enmity among the people, but Africa is not going to extinction. It is with this realisation that this thesis seeks to reflect on the applicability of the theology of reconstruction in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe gained its political independence from minority rule in April 1980, after a protracted armed struggle that began in 1965. History records that the British Pioneer Column landed in the landlocked Zimbabwe in 1890 (Beach, 1984; Ranger, 1979; Parpart, 2001). Since the coming of the colonial settlers, lives of the local natives were characterised by challenges and sufferings, due to structural exclusion from mainstream economic activities of the black majority by the colonial minority. The colonial settlers dominated and quickly effected superiority and jurisdiction over the locals and their possessions. This then led to civil unrest in society and to this day, the pain and effects are still experienced when others look at the scars of history (Kaulem, 2004; 2006). Reconstruction should build the reconstructive memory of the people affected with colonialism. The effects of colonialism should not be used to discriminate or manipulate the nationalities but this historical epoch should bring determination and commitment of a better transformed nation. This thesis brings the critical question of who is responsible for reconstruction of community post-colonial Zimbabwe.

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<sup>1</sup> When the euphoria of African independence was sweeping across the continent, the theologians developed a theology of resistance and sung songs of liberation, black consciousness and Africanised theological thought forms (see Mugambi 1995, Dedji 2003).

Questions have been raised and they continue to be raised on whether Zimbabwe became a better nation or not after 1980. In this light, some argue that politically, economically and socially, Zimbabweans are not enjoying the pain of the liberation struggles and the expected fruits of independence. On this note, Sachikonye (2011: xiv) argues that, at independence, little was done to rehabilitate the society from some habits that were prevalent during colonialism and they were being, strategically used against the citizens of Zimbabwe<sup>2</sup>. One can be justified to question if, at independence, the black majority rule brought newly transformed policies different from those of the coloniser or the black rule only adopted a ‘copy and paste’, of white imperialist socio-political and socio-economic hegemony.

During the 37 years of independence from colonial rule, Zimbabwe has experienced some ugly episodes of economic, political and social violence. Violence and corruption have remained the cancer corroding the country’s socio-economic and socio-political cultures. This has prevented democratic advances and economic sustainability (Sachikonye, 2011: xvii). Violence and corruption in Zimbabwe can be directly attributed to lack of a people-centred model (PCM) of administration and some individualistic gain orientations among the post independent administrators. According to Sachikonye (2011: xviii), violence in Zimbabwe has been “institutionalised to build an authoritarian state that is contemptuous of citizen rights, including expression of their preferences through the vote”.

What could be missing in Zimbabwe in order to have a better society and nation? How long should the hurts of colonialism continue to haunt the Zimbabwean society? Should there be continuous talk of liberation theology using tunes of revolutionary patriotic narratives, after three and a half decades of post-colonial rule? It can be argued that what is missing in Zimbabwe are national discipline efficiency models (NDEM), which uphold a people-centred model (PCM) in resource management and policy enactment.

It is on this account that a theology of reconstruction as a paradigm shift in doing mission in a post-colonial Zimbabwe is to be considered. The term reconstruction in post-colonial Zimbabwe draws the determinant values of liberation in dialogue with post-colonial missiological concerns. This brings the contrast between the Exodus motif and other biblical images from the post-exilic period of rebuilding and reconstruction (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 7)

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<sup>2</sup> Habits such as, brutal beating of opposition members, imprisonment of people who question government actions or inactions, suppression of independent media, due to strict public and postal communication policies

(Fischer, 2013). On this basis, theology of reconstruction placed in dialogue with the missiological perspectives aims at exploring and developing some alternative models of reconstruction and mission. The theology of reconstruction seeks for new transformative models of '*conceiving the biblical message*' (Gunda, 2013: 11) in light of the challenges facing post-colonial Zimbabwe. It also aims to shape a justice-conscious culture amongst the people and thus to be a theology born out of struggles since the nation is bruised with suffering and hurt (Chitando, 2013: x). A justice-conscious culture is that pedal which equips communities in crisis to transcend the atrocities of the past (colonial), cope transformatively with the centrifugal powers of the present and move forward as accountable citizens into the future (Dedji, 2003: 6). The Afro-consciousness rebranding is possible, since Africa is rich in religio-cultural heritage which can stand as the focal point of developmental transformation. The theology offers the basis of critique of colonial, post-colonial and neo-colonial socio-economic and socio-political systems that affect and influence transformation in which Zimbabweans become the objects and subjects of their own destiny.

Reconstruction theology appeals to the African realities. As for Jesse Mugambi (1991: 35), the African agenda is the priority of reconstruction theology. Thus, while Mugambi is prolific in maintaining that African concerns are relatively unique to member states, nevertheless, he keeps the entire continent in one perspective, claiming therefore that reconstruction theology is uniformly applicable from Cape to Cairo in outlook and appeal. During an interview on 4 August 2017, Jesse Mugambi identified the paradigm of reconstruction theology in insinuations, meaning Mugambi concedes that his reconstructionist theology will not in fact be particularly contextual to one African state; rather it will be a general and abstract approach to address the Africans – the African continent and diaspora (see also Gathogo, 2012:74).

This thesis argues that it is now the opportune time for reconstruction theology be engaged in the particularity of the given post-colonial African state, addressing the literalness of realities at hand. This thesis takes Zimbabwe not so much as a "case study", but as a context of engaging reconstruction theology in a missiological perspective. This argument fulfils Mugambi's expectation that, he only paints the mural of reconstruction in broad outline, hoping that others can supply the details with finer brushes and in more varied colours (interview on 4 August 2017) (see also Heaney (2015: 149). The entry point of this thesis is the applicability or inapplicability of reconstruction theology in light of the role of the church and involvement of the church in doing mission in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

Following the interest of the research and the problem statement, there is a lot to be desired for the community of post-colonial Zimbabwe. The following research questions are raised as questions of relevance in this study.

- Is reconstruction a possible and relevant motif in Zimbabwe currently?
- Is it an applicable narrative and theology now?
- Whose concern is it for Zimbabwe to be reconstructed?
- What is the role of churches in reconstruction?

These questions will be complemented with other questions such as how long should the hurts of colonialism continue to haunt the Zimbabwean society? Should there be continuous talk of and emphasis upon liberation theology three and a half decades into the post-colonial era? What is missing in creating the justice conscious community?

#### **1.5. Scope and Perspectives of the Research**

The research is a missiological-theological investigation on the strand of applicability or inapplicability of reconstruction debate in post-colonial Zimbabwe. It endeavours to show the centrality of the church in undertaking God's mission, over and above the church's mission in the whole enterprise of reconstruction in a politically divided, economically and socially struggling society. The research grapples with the concerns of reading and living the biblical message transformatively, concerns of collaborative justice, the missiological role of the Christian church and aspects of collective determination. The thesis further analyses the Zimbabwe context, its selected post-colonial experiences and how the Christian church can actively participate in reconstruction, democratisation, development and reconciliation, in order to formulate an inclusively reconstructed society. Jesse Mugambi articulates that for Africa to achieve reconstruction the responsibility to achieve such a transfiguration relies upon "the church as an institution, which is the most available medium of communication and the available light and salt of the world" (Mugambi 1995:50,227). Thereby, the church has to redefine her model of action in mission given the existential realities evidenced in Africa. As Ka Mana (1994: 8) suggests, "there is a need to develop models which will help in setting alternative patterns of human destiny outside the determinism of crisis". These models should ensure a new sense of a hopeful Africa, overtly superseding the Africa of crisis and despair. It is the project of reconstruction theology that these hope-full models are revived as landmarks of new interpretation of African challenges. The church must establish its mission

responsibility in new Biblical exegetic discourses that have power to generate spiritual renewal, social transformation and political reconstruction in post-colonial Africa (Mana, 1991: 58; Dedji, 2003).

There is recognition that liberation models were relevant in the period of political de-colonisation of Africa. These models are however, not able to fully address post-colonial challenges nascent in African society (Dedji 2003:57). It is on this basis that reconstruction formulated models are to take shape. This thesis analyses the applicability of the Ezra-Nehemiah model of reconstruction as it is presented by Jesse Mugambi<sup>3</sup>. This research admits that other biblical models can be applicable in the discourse of reconstruction<sup>4</sup>. However, the Ezra-Nehemiah model appealed more relevantly to the context of Zimbabwe and the desire of a new trajectory in missiology. The church in Zimbabwe has to be inspired by the model, as the church could be epitomised in the person of Nehemiah, who defies all odds in taking the responsibility to champion reconstruction. The church is mandated with responsibility to the extent of losing its life in its service to the improvement of the community (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 12). The church as it lives out the gospel message is challenged to act out that message through involvement, participation and championing reconstruction. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, addressing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Pan African Christian Leadership Assembly 1994 in Nairobi, Kenya and quoted by Mugambi, reminded Christians that “the Bible challenges Christians to action, not to passivity. It is through praying that invokes God’s guidance and blessing for appropriate action” (Mugambi, 1995: viii). Therefore, the action necessary for post-colonial Zimbabwe is of participation in God’s transforming love for the improvement of the community.

The church, not politicians, is viewed as a significant player in the process of reconstruction. It is not only a significant player but it has the ingredients, entry points and opportunities for social transformation and reconstruction (Mugambi, 1995: xiv). Canaan Banana (1982: 15)

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<sup>3</sup> Jesse Mugambi is an African theologian based in Kenya and a professor of philosophy and religious studies at the University of Nairobi. He has spoken out and written a lot on reconstruction as a paradigm shift in doing theology in Africa. Jesse Mugambi addresses issues pertaining to economics and politics, education and health, Christianity and African well-being, African concerns and global challenges. His publications have influenced many to admire and do research on reconstruction.

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 61 with the Coming Messiah Model. Especially Isaiah 61:4 is a reconstruction biblical verse. So the Coming Messiah is an expectant reconstruction model which could be applicable to the context of Zimbabwe. It stimulates hope in citizens during the challenging times of their existence. Ezekiel 37 can be read reconstructive in Zimbabwe. Charles Villa-Vicencio (1992) also talks of post-exilic reconstruction prophets; Micah 6 becomes a model of reconstruction. Ragies Gunda (2009) has argued for the use of Amos as the relevant motif for reconstruction post-colonial Africa.

notes that, “in post-independent Zimbabwe, the state and the church need to come together as partners and participants in the process of social transformation and reconstruction”. Here, the church is challenged not to be enemies with the state, or to be in a patriarchal marriage with the state, but to be in a cordial relationship, which aims at reconstructing society. Consequently, the church should acknowledge the creative tension between crisis and opportunity in fulfilling God’s mission.

The research is motivated by the realisation that the church ought to have the capacity to adequately formulate and to deliver a public-social theology that meets the demands of society. The church requires a radical departure from pious evangelical pronouncements in pulpits to identify with society in its cry for justice and its search for peaceful existence. John De Gruchy (2002: 88), commenting on the principle of reconciliation argues that “the church should not be theoretical but rather a living entity with society and alive with societal concerns”. In so doing the church will be ready to do theology and to do missions rather than only study. Furthermore, the church in formulating the public-social theology should competently make theological reflections accessible to all people. The elitism associated with theological education and discourse does not serve churches in Zimbabwe well in this era of reconstruction (Kinsler, 2006: 6; Chitando, 2007: 58). The church is then “recognised as a key partner to transformation and reconstruction in its endeavour to participate in God’s mission” (Chimhanda, 2009: 40). Chimhanda (2009: 40) further articulates that, “the church has a triple mission mandated role of being the conscience of the nation, the prophetic advocacy and pacesetter in upholding the moral fabric, providing a voice to the voiceless masses”. This therefore, turns the quest for reconstruction of society into the mission mandate of the Christian community.

#### **1.6. Rationale (justification) of the Study**

Zimbabwean society yearns for a time of reconstruction when human destiny is not determined by crisis, violence, corruption, intolerance and dehumanisation. When society yearns for change, progress and wellness and when the winds of change are inevitable, the church has to apply itself ‘missionally’ to the demands of transformation. The church is being challenged to map a relevant theology that addresses the needs and concerns of Zimbabwe, today, in the face of a suffering and decrepit social status. To this reflection, Gunda (2009: 86) argues that, “it is time the church revisits her theology. For a long time, the church was stuck on the ‘Exodus Theology of Liberation’ from colonialism, while the black political powers have become oppressors and dictators”. While Gunda (2009:86) agrees in principle that the “Exodus

Theology of Liberation” requires an alternative model, his ideal model is the 8<sup>th</sup> century prophet, Amos. Amos is critical in his prophecies and is labelled a social prophet. This research does not seek to dispute or to agree on the relevance of Amos’ social prophecy and its applicability to Zimbabwe. There are some records of social injustices and brutality on the masses in Zimbabwe, but acknowledging that without acting on that miserable state of affairs is insufficient. Therefore, the theology of reconstruction with the Ezra-Nehemiah Model (Mugambi, 1995: 13) can be appreciated as a praxis and deed-oriented model of reconstructing Zimbabwe.

This prompted Mugambi (1995:24) to ask, why liberation and the Exodus continues to dominate African theological thinking, when Africa is longing for other relevant paradigms and metaphors. For Michael Prior (1997: 283), the *Exodus-Eisodus* motif have a plundering and alienation agenda as literally read in Exodus 3:7-8. Prior (1997) argues along the obsolescence of metaphor, as Mugambi (1995:24; 2003:165) would argue that liberation has served its purpose and cannot be allowed to continue since it is founded on “combative” or “antagonistic” stances. Mugambi suggests that liberation theme has to be reviewed and replaced with reconstruction themes; he proposed the need to shift paradigms from the post-exodus to post-exilic imagery (Mugambi, 1995:5). However, there is need to understand Mugambi’s perspectives then, to which he has revisited the relationship between reconstruction and liberation as evidenced in his later publications (Mugambi 2003:i). Actually, Mugambi (2012) states that “it is fallacious to discredit the theologies of liberation, for they deserve to be appreciated as a prerequisite for the more challenging task of reconstruction” (Mugambi, 2012: 25). It suffices to argue that theological perspectives are not fixed; they evolve with context and situation. Therefore, reconstruction theology using liberative principles as the springboard is transformative and liberative. This is in agreement with Robert Schreiter’s (1999: 110) contention that reconstruction is a “different kind of liberating theology, because the opportunity for it is so contextual and relevant to the demands of the century in any given geographical space”.

It is clear that in Zimbabwe, the “Exodus Theology of Liberation” has been held sacrosanct while some celebrated nationalists have actually transformed from the “Moses” character they claim to be into “Pharaohs” they do not accept (Mugambi 1995:2; 2012:24; Gunda, 2009:90). Mugambi (2003:146) further observes the challenge of applying the “Moses” figure on post-independence African leaders, saying;

It is interesting that the likening of the post-colonial generation of African leaders with Moses produces a style of leadership which could not be questioned, and whose public profile was more quasi-religious than socio-political

This is evident as one critically analyses the social, economic and political power and unquestionability of the African post-colonial leaders. The leaders seem to treat people and the nations they lead as private entities. It is prudent, therefore, to argue that the “Exodus Theology of Liberation” as a stand-alone theology has long outlived its meaning and essence in Zimbabwe. Therefore, the quest to advance reconstruction theology which is also “Liberative” in outlook is of necessity. Francisca Chimhanda clearly captured the demands of the times, when she argues,

The time for transition from colonial legacy, colonial appeasement, colonial rule after independence and colonial blame to reconstruction in Zimbabwe is symbolic, an opportune time. There is need to seize the opportunity and its burden of responsibility to redefine the task of the church in working towards Liberative reconstruction in our society (Chimhanda, 2009: 44).

Given this, transformation in Zimbabwe requires an alternative model of theology which can set the tone of renewal. In this light, the “Reconstruction Theology”, with the Ezra-Nehemiah Motif (Mugambi, 1995; 2003) should be deconstructed in light of the reconstruction discourse in Zimbabwe. Mugambi (1995: 12) articulates that this theology is one of embrace; it utilises the method of reciprocity, inviting all parties to participate in the agenda of reconstruction. This Ezra-Nehemiah Model of experience is applicable in reconstructing Zimbabwe. The current experience in Zimbabwe is analogous to the Biblical Jerusalem ruins which was once magnificent but is now in bad state. However, the walls of Jerusalem were reconstructed through significant cooperation and coordination from the Israelites themselves.

The Ezra-Nehemiah Model is one of determination and cooperation to rebuild from the debris of destruction, utilising local thought forms, strategies and resources. This aspect of inclusion becomes the hallmark of reconstruction in any given context. Zimbabwe needs to move forward and constitute its own building blocks that can promote socio-economic and socio-political transformation, renewal, reconstruction and development (Mandaza and Nabudere, 2001: 10). The onus remains with the local people’s (*am haaretz*)<sup>5</sup> determination to see the

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<sup>5</sup> The *am haaretz* were the Jewish locals or community which remained in Judah when the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar conquered Judah in 586 BCE (cf Farisani 2002). These could have been considered insignificant to the requirements of captivity by king Nebuchadnezzar, hence they remained.

structures of corruption, suppression, violence, hatred and dehumanisation being transformed and replaced with truth, peace and justice.

Ka Mana (1994: 39), commenting on the mission of the Church in Africa, says, “it is to re-evangelise societies in order to promote “anti-Pharaoh” and “anti-Baal” principles and grow seeds of life founded on human values and the Christian church being the generator of active and creative hope”. In this bid, the theology of reconstruction is futuristic and hopeful for a better society.

Whilst the historical facts of colonialism might be raging afresh in the hearts of many, especially those who led the national liberation struggle in various capacities, it is time to accept a reconstruction discourse. This is a crucial aspect in Zimbabwe’s politics and economic emancipation that will transform the fortunes of the nation.

Reconstruction has to be holistic and address the multiple reconstruction issues confronting Zimbabwe including racial-ethnic political domination. If racial and ethnic barriers are destroyed, then Zimbabwe will be in a position to meet its economic objectives with little difficulty. Currently, Zimbabwe has been banned from accessing loans from the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Trade Unions and exposed to trade sanctions whose effects are exhibited in the high levels of unemployment, the economic recession and political instability. Reconstruction in this case, should take a perspective in which the historical past gives life to the present and hope for a better future. Valentine Dedji (2003: 6) argues that “reconstruction in Africa should seek to give life to the future rather than dwelling on the undeniable hurts of history”. It is a missiological enterprise to help people celebrate their hurtful past, without hurting but with energy to develop a better society, free from the antagonistic structures of colonialism.

Reconstruction entails rebuilding, in a transformative manner, the historical and current status to have a justice conscious society. This kind of theology is founded on “post-exilic genre, involving the important task of breaking down prejudices and aiming at creating an all-inclusive (unsuspicious) society” (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 7). Reconstruction theology becomes an encounter between societal experiences of enmity and the gospel essence of a peaceful kingdom, which acknowledges the presence of God as the centre of human existence and well-being (Villa-Vicencio, 1992:7). Reconstruction theology implies the need to understand human existence missiologically in light of the symbols of the gospel message and the reign of God. In the Zimbabwean situation, reconstruction theology can be said to be a theology born out of

struggles (Kaulem, 2004; 2008; Chitando, 2013). These struggles include rural and urban poverty, racial and ethnic discrimination, the manipulation of women and violence, HIV and AIDS, high unemployment, demands for participatory democracy and the role of the Church in influencing justice and peace. The society's attitude and action should be redirected towards reconstruction (Chitando, 2013).

This research is unique in its conceptual and theological exposition of the Zimbabwean context. It proposes practical options as a beacon of hope against a backdrop of painful history and realities for the oppressed and marginalised masses (Gunda, 2009). Zimbabweans are hopeful for a prosperous future (Bakare, 2013: 34) and this thesis underscores the need to re-read the Nehemiah biblical story as the bedrock in reconstructing a society. Hence, a theology of reconstruction is one which undertakes that when united in conscience and being, transformation of a nation can be achieved.

The theology of reconstruction is not bound by space and time. On this note, Mugambi (1995:15) is right in asserting that, "reconstruction theology is made attractive as it highlights the necessity of creating a new society within geographical space but across different historical moments". For this reason, the reconstruction paradigm can be tried and tested in particular nations in the African regional appeal of the discourse. In this thesis, Zimbabwe becomes a rich context of the paradigm of reconstruction theology.

What makes reconstruction theology attractive is that it is not only anthropocentric, but contextual across different historical moments. Renewal and transformative environmental discussion is also the concern of reconstruction. In Africa, when one talks of the land, the earth, it is femininely distinguished and defined. This understanding is culturally engrained and it has to be revisited in the twenty-first century in terms of preservation and responsible stewardship. This African understanding should encourage human accountability when it comes to the questions of climate variability and change. The earth is providential and therefore, deserves care and love so as to produce fruits of joy and happiness. The concerns of the sustainable and transformative conservation of creation are a reconstruction missional mandate which the church should uphold.

Visiting most of Zimbabwe's rural areas, there is despair at the sight of a wounded earth with ecological biodiversity deteriorating (Taringa, 2014: 13). This brings the issues of endangered species that are threatened with extinction in Africa. This ecological crisis, invites reconstruction theological paradigms; for the ecological crisis is a moral and Christian problem

affecting the wellbeing of African (Zimbabwean) people. Therefore, the biblical understanding of redemption should manifest in the harmony between and within communities and also with creation (Villa-Vicencio 1992:177).

### **1.7. Presuppositions of the Study**

Charles Villa-Vicencio (1992: 40), observing the change in South Africa's apartheid situation was prompted to argue for transforming liberation theology into a theology of nation building. Change of the political landscape invited shifting the paradigms of doing theology in South Africa. Although Villa-Vicencio appraised the shift before the crumbling of the empire, his assumption was that a new dawn and a new era was here. Villa-Vicencio (1992:1) writes "winds of change are blowing across large sections of the globe, with the political crises in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and South Africa presenting a new challenge for theology". Reconstruction theology presupposes the change in contexts of existence, this change becomes the context of doing theology and mission (Gunda, 2017:5). Most African nations have witnessed the winds of change in a full cycle; hope and despair, optimism and disillusion, peaceful existence and civil strife. In the wake of these, African theological discourses shifted from one trend to another.

Jesse Mugambi argues that the theme of reconstruction is motivated by changes that have taken place on the African continent during 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. These changes have been complemented by the 'New World Order' ushered in during the 1990s from the end of the cold war, colonialism and apartheid (Mugambi, 1995: x). The theology of reconstruction presupposes embracing the new world order, while critiquing the historical past and affirming the cultural variables. Mugambi uses the analogy of the "big bull dozer" that is used as a trailblazer of blocks and paving ways. He likened reconstruction theology to the chain wheels that enable stability and determination regardless of the blocks to be moved and the soil to be penetrated (Interview on 4 August 2017). The new world order brings along new ideologies and these new ideologies demand new paradigms in theological thinking and action. Africa is not ignorant of the historical past experiences (of colonialisms) and how the new world order with its challenges, opportunity and hopes becomes the terrain of theological enquiry.

Mugambi (1995:39) asserts that the twenty-first century has its own challenges which demand new biblical motifs that are in tandem with the theology of transformation and reconstruction. These changes taking place bring their own challenges and therefore, the theological thought form has to engage on the levels of the new dispensation of the century. The *raison d'être* of

African theologies today is the search for new patterns of thought and new theological approaches that enables African Christians to understand African realities and seek to transcend the crises (Dedji, 2003: 1).

Furthermore, this thesis presupposes that the fibres that hold the society together have been destroyed, and thus there is need for renewal. The walls and the gates of sustainable existence that are defined by love, peace, value and integrity of God's image in humans and all creation have been destroyed. There was no invasion from somewhere that destroyed the walls and gates, but it is human self-invasion and self-destruction. It further presupposes that there is a "best way" of social existence that requires reconstruction. For Zimbabweans, belonging and citizenship is now politically defined. The sense of community accountability has been negated or lost. The revival of some cultural values can shape the well-being of Zimbabwe. The negation of some of these African values such as *hunhu* or *ubuntu*<sup>6</sup> or the selective application of these values has promoted damaging individualistic tendencies that have fuelled hatred, enmity, corruption and disharmony in society. In Africa there is need to re-interpret old cultural myths which promote the revitalisation of the African sense of belonging and community (Mugambi, 2003; Dedji, 2012: 120).

Reconstruction theology resonates with political, economic and ideological programmes that have been proposed in the effort to lift Africa out of its crises (Chitando, 2009: 130). It presupposes that whilst political figures and economical gurus are proposing programmes, religion remains the crucial player in achieving reconstruction. Former President of South Africa, His Excellency Thabo Mbeki (1997)<sup>7</sup> is renowned for promoting the idea of Africa's development and reconstruction from a political and economic blueprint New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and African Renaissance (Mbeki, 1999: xiii-xxi). Sociologists such as Vera Schattan Coelho have tried to define and reinforce African

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<sup>6</sup> The principle of "I am because you are". A person is a person through others, for some reasons I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. You can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This was well pronounced in South Africa during the fight against apartheid. But it is a principle that is inherent in African – Zimbabwean cultural and traditional perspectives. This principle can be traced to the image of God (imago Dei) in other person. That image has to be respected for peaceful existence to be nurtured if one sees God in the other. This can be viewed as the kinship concept, which is interwoven and runs deep in African thought forms. See also Jesse Mugambi and Nicodemus Kirima, *The African Religious Heritage*, (Nairobi, Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1982)p 13

<sup>7</sup> Thabo Mbeki introduced the term African renaissance in an address to the Corporate Council on Africa in Chantilly, VA, USA in April 1997. Then he picked up the concept in Johannesburg in 1998 September 28-29 meeting of academia, business and politics. See Mbeki T (1998), Statement at the African Renaissance Conference, Johannesburg (28-29 September).

democracy in a bid to lift Africa from its problems (Coelho and Von Lieres, 2010). Religion in general and Christianity, in particular, have great influence on reconstruction. For Mugambi (2003:45), the Christian church is the crucial social institution established for reconstruction.

### **1.8. Aim and Objectives of the research**

This research seeks to analyse the deteriorating Zimbabwean socio-economic and socio-political fibres that require renewal and reconstruction. The research explores the applicability or inapplicability of reconstruction theology in Zimbabwe as a missiological exertion utilising the premise as founded in the research questions and set objectives. This thesis explores and reflects upon the tried and tested theological models of reconstruction that can be considered in post-colonial Zimbabwe. In particular the thesis takes the biblical Nehemiah model as decorated and promoted by Jesse Mugambi (1995; 1998; 2012), assesses it and positions its relevance in light of the Zimbabwean post-colonial context. The thesis evokes alternative cultural variables which helps to achieve national reconstruction, thereby establishing peace and justice in the community. The research is developed upon the following objectives:

- i. To examine the biblical and theological views upon the concept of reconstruction, in view of the proposed biblical motif, in search of paradigm shifts in doing mission in Zimbabwe.
- ii. To assess and position the relevance and applicability of Nehemiah as model of reconstruction in the Zimbabwean context.
- iii. To critically analyse the reconstruction discourse from a missiological perspective in line with the African Renaissance as a theoretical framework to reconstruction in Zimbabwe.
- iv. To discuss the role of the Church in participating in God's mission and reconstruction
- v. To examine the history of socio-economic and political decadence in Zimbabwe, and to produce the relevance and applicability of the reconstruction discourse.
- vi. To examine the concept of whose community is Zimbabwe, when it comes to reconstruction discourse.

### **1.9. Theoretical Framework informing the research**

The notion of reconstruction developed out of the African theological discourse and African liberational thought forms (Fischer, 2013: 12; Villa-Vicencio, 1992). The theology offers a critique of colonial, neo-colonial and post-colonial economic theories and political ideologies

(formulations) in a bid to assert the processes of social reconstruction relevant for African wellbeing. It is within the context of reconstruction theology that a wide range of issues and existential realities affecting Africa are problematised, critiqued and innovative proposals for the better of the community are offered.

A layman, in the streets of Zimbabwe, will underscore that there are socio-economic decadence, socio-political crisis, societal polarisation and existential realities affecting people. To deny that Zimbabwe is in the age of struggle is tantamount to the highest level of academic and social fraud. The “signs of the times” (Mugambi, 1998: 68) of existence of Zimbabwe appropriates the demands of reconstruction, restoration and rehabilitation reflective thinking. Jesse Mugambi, emphasises the need to read the signs of the times, which challenge the community to be creative, innovative and shift gears so as to succeed in the endeavour of wholeness of existence (Mugambi, 1995: 18; Mugambi, 1998: 68). In Zimbabwe the times are challenging, hard and demanding. This is exhibited in the responses one would receive in the streets when greeting Zimbabweans in the vernacular such as “*zvapakpresa*” (it is hard, too much pressure for survival), “*tirikushinga*” (we are holding on), “*tirikukiya kiya*” (any gun is shooting in this struggle), “*inhamo yoga yoga*” (it’s a problem after another), “*tirikutambudzika*” (we are suffering)<sup>8</sup>. These responses are pointing to a struggling, weeping, sorrowful and yearning community. The nation is struggling, the people are suffering. There is economic stagnation, political polarisation and confusion, a ravaging HIV and AIDS pandemic and lack of accountability. Zimbabwe is going through a crisis period (Moore, 2003: 45). It seems most likely that some people might allow themselves to think that, “re-colonisation” might avert the pathos of the situation (Prah, 2001: 19). However, before this thinking takes much root, there is every need to allow the discourse of reconstruction, renewal, transformation and rebuilding to take shape in Zimbabwe. This time the call for reconstruction and reconstruction theology is more relevant and requires a serious consideration than ever before. The remarks of John Mbiti recorded in his personal memoir after visiting Zimbabwe in 1981 are critically, relevant when he observes “Zimbabwe – a land reborn, yearning to be rebuilt beyond colonialism and its hegemonies, beyond the war of liberation and the church is

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<sup>8</sup> These responses have replaced the traditional ones; (*tinosisimba*) we are fine, (*tinerunyararo/rugare*) we are peaceful, (*zvose zvakanaka*) it is well, (*tinofara*) there is joy, (*tinetariro*) there is hope. Ezra Chitando has also noted that some would respond you saying; *zvirikufiya* (referring to black market money selling or corrupt dealing of one nature). See Chitando (2013)

challenged to be actively involved in the reconstruction, remaking and rebuilding of the nation”<sup>9</sup> (Mbiti, 1981: 1-10).

This research is fully aware of different concepts or sociological ideologies that have been propounded and used in the quest for reconstruction of Africa. The research appreciates tried and tested tenets such as, African Cultural Renewal (Diop, 1956), Africa Socialism (Senghor, 1958, 1961), Africanism (Sankara, 1970), Pan-Africanism (Nkrumah, 1962-1965), African Renaissance (Mbeki, 1997-1998), African Modernity and African Integration, among others. African nationalists and politicians such as; Nyerere, Mandela, Nkrumah, Kenyatta, Kaunda, Khama, Mugabe and many others have also underscored unreservedly the need for renewal, reconstruction and transformation of Africa. A research on reconstruction cannot be achieved if divorced from these ideologies as stated above and the efforts of the said nationalists and politicians.

The notion of reconstruction theology cannot be divorced from the political and economic dispensations of the time. Mugambi states that Africa ought not to take a passive posture in response to the political, economic and cultural challenges ushered in by the end of the cold war (Mugambi, 1995: 18). In this perspective Mugambi underscores that “the end of the cold war serves as an entry point for Africa’s social transformation as a region and bloc capable of making impact on other regions” (Mugambi, 1998: 68). In this way, re-awakening is envisioned. Re-awakening is not achieved without inclusion of all players and all disciplines.

In the context of the political and economic dispensation, theologians formulate the thought forms and road maps. Any considerable review of African Christian theological discourses will show a pattern of movement in line with the political or economic dispensation of the times. It becomes customary to distinguish between the different models and different schools of thought in relationship to the shifts in the African context and configurations. These trends, models and shifts are necessary since theology is about reading the signs of the times (Mugambi, 1995). The *Africana theologica* (Parratt, 1995), aims at reinventing the richness of the African thought forms; inculturation theology (Magesa, 1997; Magesa, 2004); contributions that focus on translating the gospel into an indigenous African idiom (Mbiti,

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<sup>9</sup> Professor John Mbiti, visited Zimbabwe soon after independence in 1981 and made the remarks of rebuilding. He then recorded the remarks in his personal memoir (see also Heaney 2015: 173).

1980), Mugambi 1998, (Daneel, 2001)); the African liberation theologies that explore the legacy of colonialism (Boesak (1976), Banana 1996, Maimela 1992); the quest for African forms of democracy and sustainability in resource distribution and accessibility (De Gruchy 1995, Mugambi 1998, Villa-Vicencio 1992); African women's theologies (Dube 2000, Oduyoye (1986); Pentecostal theologies (Anderson (2007); Environmental theologies (Knitter, 1995), Daneel 2001, Taringa 2014) and HIV and AIDS theologies (Chitando 2009). All these theologies are coming out due to the dispensation of the times and the challenges of the contexts. They remain applicable in Africa as elsewhere yet it remains logical to try them in particular nations since African is a plural continent.

This thesis upholds the concept of African Renaissance as the backdrop theoretical framework where this reconstruction discourse rests. As the renaissance and the reformation helped European people to wake up from their cultural and ethical slumbers, Africa's cultural and religious re-awakening should help the Africans to reassess and reassert themselves to the best of their existence (Mugambi, 1995: 41; Villa-Vicencio, 1992). African Renaissance became a catchword in Africa, due to the deepening preponderance by the Former President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, well after the independence of South Africa in 1994. Putting it squarely within the African Renaissance ideology, reconstruction or transformation comes as the emancipation of citizens after the struggle for political independence. For Mbeki "African Renaissance addresses, rebirth or renewal which seeks the improvement of the conditions of life of the people of Africa" (Mbeki, 1998: 8). With independence cutting across the whole of Africa in the early 1990s, with South Africa and Namibia coming on board to join the other African Independent States, there were high hopes that the continent would build from the debris of colonialism. Building from the horrors of denial, manipulation, war, plunder, the selective definition of citizens and creation of inclusive nations, where human value determines policy making. African Renaissance captures all the values Africanism, rebirth, development, cultural renewal, integration and self-reliance. To achieve the objectives of African re-awakening, Mbeki posits that Africa is well resourced;

I am convinced that a great burden rests on the shoulders of Africa's intelligentsia to help us to achieve these objectives... we have arrived at the point where the enormous brain power which our continent possesses must become a vital instrument in helping us to secure our equitable space within a world affected by a rapid process of globalisation and liberalisation from which we cannot escape (Mbeki, 1999: xxi).

This call is no different from the reconstruction agenda and call for a multifaceted, all-inclusive, multi-dimensional, cooperative and holistic approach of action (Mugambi, 1995:40

(Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 7; Mana, 1994: 86). Based on this, Farisani (2004: 56) and Villumstad (2005: 6) contend that African reconstruction theology and African Renaissance are two sides of the same coin and that these terms are both renewal concepts with the latter being invented by African politicians and economists and the former being the invention of theologians and missiologists.

Zimbabwe is littered with grandiose economic blueprints and desired political reforms. Zimbabwean visionaries have continued to imagine a new Zimbabwe; hence, the Christian Churches proposed 'The Zimbabwe We Want' in 2006, as evidence that Zimbabweans are looking for a time of reawakening and hence, African Renaissance becomes a hopeful theory to reignite lost hope.

The Christian church is that institution with strong roots to mobilise community to the demands of reconstruction (Heaney, 2015:164). The struggle for Zimbabwe in particular and Africa at large is to reawaken from the shagginess of selfishness and then recover from all forms of profligacy (Gunda, 2009: 87-88).

### **1.10. Delineating the Conceptual Framework of Research**

This thesis upholds the social (contextual) constructivism perspective in doing reconstruction theology in Zimbabwe. Social constructivism, is linked to the contextual social constructivism, as a system of thought used to explain social problems and reality construction (Teater, 2010: 75; Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Social contextual constructionism as a framework draws its influence from a number disciplines, including philosophy, sociology, social science, political science, education, linguistics and theology, thus making it a multidisciplinary theory (Sremac, 2010: 9). Therefore, the social contextual constructivism paradigm is primarily concerned with explicating and explaining individual, communal and society's realities based on the social context and experiential perceptions (Mead, 1934; Cobern, 1993). This contextual social constructivism inquiry share the goal of understanding the complex existence realities from the point of view of those who live in it (Schwandt, 1998: 221). On this view it is argued in this thesis that African experience are not homogenous in outlook although the African continent might share similarity of realities but these realities are explicitly explainable in context of a given region. African nation-states were carved out on a drawing boards in Europe with no regard for ethnic, linguistic, demographic, or cultural realities on the ground. African

nation states constitute collections of diverse ethnic groups forced together into countries for the benefit of the desired colonial control. Emmanuel Lartey argues that,

As a consequence of these colonial commercial unit-forming activities, these post-colonial nations within themselves are full of diversity and difference –linguistic, cultural, social, and political differences within which multiple positions and perspectives are continually expressed (Lartey, 2016: 24)

Plurality is thus a common feature of post-colonial Africa. Reconstruction theology or any theological reflection adopting the post-colonial perspective has to pay attention to the multiple positions, and divergent perspectives (Lartey, 2016: 24). This thesis further argues that, the colonial and post-colonial realities of Southern Africa, Central Africa, and Northern Africa are generally the same, but have particularly different experiences in their states of existence. In doing reconstruction theology focusing on Zimbabwe needs to be explicit to the realities of the people of Zimbabwe post-colonial while drawing relevance from the whole of Africa, since theology of reconstruction has an African appeal.

A survey and analysis of lived reality and situation-specific meanings that constitute the general object of investigation is thought to be constructed by some social actors (Sremac, 2010; Schwandt, 1998). That is, particular actors, in particular places, at particular times fashion meaning out of events, and phenomena through prolonged, complex processes of social interaction involving history, language and action (Schwandt, 1998: 222). Although these paradigms might resemble world views to some extent, they are not so all encompassing. Rather, they are essentially matrices of deeply held assumptions that undergird a theological discourse. This conceptual framework helps in maintaining a commitment to deal with a biblical text against the contextual content provided by the realities of experience (Bujo, 1992: 16). In other words it is the common experience among the community in post-colonial Zimbabwe that reconstruction theology elevates as the supreme test of truth.

James Cone, in reference to black theology, would attest that “no authority is more binding than the experience of oppression itself. This becomes the ultimate authority in theological inquiry” (Cone, 1997: 13). Cone therefore placed praxis theology in the realm of social context. He redefined black theology as the “rational study of the being of God in the world in light of the existential situation of an oppressed community, relating the forces of liberation to the essence of the Gospel, which is Jesus Christ” (Cone, 1997: 15). This understanding becomes relevant in theology of reconstruction in Zimbabwe as it is envisioned. The primary question

that is being asked by this thesis is; what does the Hebrew-Christian text of Ezra-Nehemiah have to say to the people of Zimbabwe whose existence is threatened daily by the insidious tentacles of post-colonial crisis?

In analysing Ka Mana's (1994) reconstruction theology, Valentine Dedji (2001: 258) asserts that reconstruction theology is impressive, not only for its global approach or philosophical and theological rootedness, but also in its association with social realities in Africa. In this perspective theology deals with realities in the interaction of their political, economic, social, cultural, ethical and spiritual dimension. This makes reconstruction theology a multi-discipline discourse which is influenced by other social scientific, social anthropological and social environmental disciplines. In taking the construction metaphor to its logical conclusion, Cobern (1993: 51) states that "construction implies a foundation in addition to the studs and beams of prior knowledge. The construction of new knowledge takes place at a construction site consisting of existing structures standing on a foundation". Affirming therefore, that this thesis is building on the studs and beams of knowledge already there, but bringing to the structure the missiological outlook of reconstruction theology from the post-colonial Zimbabwean existence realities.

Jesse Mugambi (1995:19) has defined theology as "the systematic articulation of human response to revelation within a particular context and situation". This systematic articulation should redirect survival, liberation and reconstruction so as to assure a better life in Zimbabwe. This is the moment for the church and theologians to ask questions of and make explanations about creation, evangelism, church planting and growth, transformation, reconstruction, redemption and the kingdom of God rooted in social issues such as economic justice, political stability, community consciousness and community wholeness (Cone, 1997: 43; Wimbush, 1991: 85-88). Thus, theology and missiology begin to make sense. James Cone further recognises that "the language of such a theology challenges societal structures because it is inseparable from the suffering community" (Cone, 1997: 45). Thus, theology's critical and prophetic engagement with the systems that perpetuate injustices, corruption, cultural erosion and social decay becomes necessary. This type of social-constructive framework stands in contrast to the descriptive-positivism concept of analysis. It is through the social-constructive inquiry that the church as an institution of influence in Zimbabwe, equipped in mission should bring the Ezra-Nehemiah model to effect in renewal of conscience and inspired transformative living. The church in its mission activity is positioned to interact with individuals, communal

structures and its interpretation of the biblical text to formulate a reconstruction hermeneutic of realities. Mission in this perspective, becomes the hermeneutic of reality as it involves a multi-discipline spectrum of real life issues affecting humanity (Heaney, 2015:170).

Understandably, Linda Thomas (2012: 44) argues that, “theological inquiry has to incorporate and address issues related to social sciences, and apply some social scientific concepts”. Theology has evolved from just being a rational and systematic inquiry about the ideas of God to be primarily the critical, rational and systematic discourse of God’s activity with humanity and all creation. It is on this basis that theology has become critical to issues of politics, economics, race, gender, sexuality, poverty, ecology, culture and social transformation. Most of these issues have been held to be of social anthropology or social political speciality. Theology of reconstruction is familiar and popular as it is concerned with issues affecting daily life of any given community.

The theoretical concept of African Renaissance in this thesis is connected to the social contextual constructivism paradigm in achieving renewal and cultural regeneration for a better community. The social contextual constructionist paradigm stresses as much the historical, present, and envisioned developments and the influence of cultural variables that influence the discourse to be relevant (Sremac, 2010: 8).

### **1.11. Delineating the Missiological Perspective of Research**

The African continent has become the home of Christianity. John Mbiti and Jesse Mugambi maintain that Africans live out their faith and therefore, they do not verbalise their theology (Mugambi, 1989: 9). African theological narratives are shared experiences, common practices, heartaches, conflicts and potential co-existence (Savage and Presnell, 2008: 17). The church in Africa is an incarnation of the African people’s narratives. It is this institution that lives out the notion of God’s love and God’s concern in the affairs of nations and of individuals. Therefore, the church should formulate ideals of social order based on the principles of the kingdom of God which include justice, charity and wellness among others. The church has to actively transform in form and mission to meet the demands of the changing and challenging context. In so doing it has to formulate a realistic, practical and applicable mission. The mission of the church in the African context has to remain transformative, prophetic and visionary (Bosch, 1991). The Church’s mission of transformation is to permeate and elevate society from the myriad of crisis. Mission as the activity of the church permeates all faculties of existence

of the human being. This mission “has to go hand in hand with reconstruction of African society as a whole, with a focus on the reconstruction of an African sense of community and self-esteem” (Dedji, 2003: 2).

The echoes of the words of the late nationalist and first black president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela during an African National Congress (ANC) Conference on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1953 cease to be only echoes of a historical period. In post-colonial Zimbabwe, they are words written on the faces of many citizens. Nelson Mandela then stated “we are prisoners in our own countries because we dared to raise our voices against these horrible atrocities. There is no easy walk to freedom anywhere and many have to pass through the valleys of the shadow of death again and again before the desired destiny is reached” (Mandela, 1994: 42; Gathogo, 2012: 68). In 1953, these words were directed at the colonial brutality dispensation and now the words are relevant and lively in post-colonial Africa. Citizens yearn for a time they are treated as relevant human beings with rights to be protected. Accordingly, the call is to reconstruct and revive accountability, responsibility, just sense of community, transformative belonging and just culture. The theology of reconstruction comes in with relevance as it not only advocates for the end of colonial brutality and end of neo-colonial onslaughts, but it looks forward to the coming of a just-conscious post-colonial African worldview, devoid of all the problems of pessimism and defeatism (Gathogo, 2008: 27).

Social reconstruction is possible when the church in its mission become seriously involved in the process. But currently in Africa and particularly in Zimbabwe, politicians seem not to realise the potential of the church in effecting social reconstruction. Mugambi (1995:49) observes that “the pulpit remains the most powerful and most respected accessible model of communicating transformation”. Mission as the activity of the church is critical in achieving reconstruction. Therefore, the missiological perspective of reconstruction needs interrogation in light of the context of Zimbabwe.

### **1.12. Methodology in African Reconstruction theology**

The researcher acknowledges Mugambi’s (2003:1) concern over the lack of an established methodology in African theological discourses. This section digresses into this concern in trying to discern the methodology of African reconstruction theology before narrowing into the thesis’s research methodology and approaches. Mugambi stipulates that “African theology is in a methodological crisis, owing to the lack of methodological consciousness among

theologians” (Mugambi, 2003: 1). By stipulating this Mugambi was judgemental and also dismissing the theological innovativeness of other African theologians before him. Was he not sinking into the same trap of Euro-centric thinking he seems to be rebutting? That is, the Euro-centric rhetoric that Africans are not innovative and original. Robert Heaney (2015:175) correctly observes that, “it appears that Mugambi underestimates the contributions of other African theologians and theologies”. This is evidenced by Mugambi’s (2003:1) strong claim of a “methodological crisis” against the back drop of great African theologians and deep African theological reflections.

The lack of consensus on one methodology, gives testimony to the innovation and creativity in theological reflection in Africa. Indeed, the appeal to originality also contributes to lack of consensus on single particular methodology. Furthermore, the context of theological reflection is vast and different; it therefore, demands various reflective tools and methods.

African theologians acknowledge that the religio-cultural, socio-political and socio-economic context of doing theology in Africa is different from that of the Western European contexts (Nyamiti, 1971; Bediako, 1992). The shift of the context has continued to the twenty first century with new challenges and new times being discerned (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 40-42; Mugambi, 1995). In that, African theologians put energy in producing a theology that incarnates the gospel message in the African context and using theological methodologies that are attuned to the present contextual heritage (Nyamiti, 2001: 3; Dedji, 2003: 45). The emphasis is to reflect theologically on the experiential context of the African people (Dickson, 1984: 15; Parratt, 1998: 147). The African context is not homogenous due to the plurality of realities and this has brought about the plurality of methodologies in theologizing.

In articulating the outlook of the entry point of reconstruction theological discourse; Mugambi (1995) produced in a sense, the definition as well as task of reconstruction theology. The New world order stimulates the church to question its missiological mandate. In so doing formulating a new theology;

This theology should be reconstructive rather than descriptive; inclusive rather than exclusive; proactive rather than reactive; complementary rather than competitive; integrative rather than disintegrative; program driven rather than project driven; people centred rather than autocratic; regenerative rather than degenerative; future sensitive rather than past-sensitive; cooperative rather than confrontational; consultative rather than impositional (Mugambi, 1995: xv).

This points out the key tasks of reconstruction theology. It is the purpose of theological inquiry to address the contextual realities based on questions such as, what is happening, why is it so, what ought to be and how is the community responding? The theological inquiry which is reconstructive, inclusive, complementary, integrative, people centred, futuristic, cooperative and consultative, will draw determination from the community it seeks to serve. To this effect Mugambi (2003:1-31) dedicated a chapter on critique of method with reference to Africa. In this chapter Mugambi lamented the method employed by the Western European writers that has been also adopted by some earlier African theologians. Mugambi highlights seven historical errors of theological methodology; he proffers the biblical Jerusalem council resolution (Acts 15) as the starting point of misguided undertaking in doing theology (2003:9-16). The submerging or demonisation of other cultures and people's experiential existence is a theological crisis that Africans are trying to emerge out of.

Julius Gathogo (2008: 30-46), is critical in articulating some methodologies that can be considered in doing African reconstruction theology. He outlines seven of them which are; 1) *Historical inquiry* (which is relevant as it helps in analysing the historical configurations of a given context). In the case of Zimbabwe, the colonial history and marginalisation of people becomes critical when seeking reconstruction, transformation and renewal. 2) *Inclusivity approach*, as in Mugambi's (1995: xv) view, theology is to be all-encompassing. While effective mission is to be ecumenical. African societies look up to a theology which transcend Christian ethnicity and denominational identification, but which is inclusive and reconstructive. Inclusivity of reconstruction theology many imply inclusion of the plural nature of Africa and African concerns. Implying therefore that a collaborative nature of analysis is relevant that involves all disciplines of existence. Excluding some members of society in rebuilding the community, under various pretexts, will go against Nehemiah's reconstruction principles (Gathogo, 2008: 33). This approach is closely related to; 3) *Multi-disciplinary approach*; the dialogical nature of theology of reconstruction with other disciplines makes it a relevant theology in post-colonial Africa. In this view, Dedji (2003:5) sees theology of reconstruction as "an inter-faith, multi-faith and inter-denominational enterprise that enables theologians and Christians in places of public responsibility to contribute to the urgent reconstruction task, from perspectives informed by Christian faith and critique". 4) *Cultural-anthropological and Philosophical Enquiry*; admitting that reconstruction theology is aiming at tackling some complex aspects of the present African realities, the enquiry cannot be divorced from the cultural-anthropological and philosophical approach. The authentic self-

actualisation that drives the person to confidence and determination to move out of pits of despair are engrained in the cultural and philosophical heritage. Ka Mana (1987: 65) observes that in contemporary Africa, human beings are dehumanised by being conditioned to see themselves, their products, their activities and other persons in economic, political, religious and other categories; in terms which deny their human capacity and possibility. Theology has recognised that most traditional societies and communities have established modalities that guarantee the rebuilding and enhance social congruence and social solidity. 5) *Critical Re-evaluation*; in doing theology of reconstruction, critical re-evaluation of biblical themes, contextual settings, contemporary and historical dispensation are of importance. Critical re-evaluation comes in line with Mugambi's (2003) argument of theology formulated on critical introspection and Villa-Vicencio's (1992:40) argument of critical analysis. 6) *Story-telling approach*; this has become a critically essential method. Story-telling is one indispensable means of illustration, communication, conceiving and preserving African heritage. Every community has a story to tell. The experiential stories of the community revive memory, revive value and emphasise hope of a better tomorrow. The "lack of memory and a story to tell signals that the society is not real and therefore it is not living up to the expected norms of existence" (Gathogo, 2008: 37). 7) *Contextualisation methodology*; it emphasises that there is no neutral or absolute meaning in a text or for that matter of any human communication (Draper, 2001: 153). This call for contextualisation is a call and search for relevance and applicability of biblical text or a particular theology. Mugambi (2012: 23) outlines at least three possible approaches in applying the contextual approach; i) From text to the contexts ii) From the context to the particular texts iii) Two-way movement between texts and the contexts. Out of these, he states that "the third approach is more unrestrictive and it allows the context to provide the operational framework while the text provides the analytical stimulus for creative reflection" (Mugambi, 2012: 23).

It is important to assert that Julius Gathogo's categories sum up many of the proposed methodologies in doing reconstruction theology. These seven methods of doing reconstruction theology, are relevant in shaping this thesis. However, as Mugambi (2003:1) notes there is a methodological crisis owing to lack of conscious consensus, but there are no contradictions in presuppositions underpinning the theological enquiry. This thesis adds to the pool of methodologies in search of the applicability of the Ezra-Nehemiah Model of reconstruction in Zimbabwe.

### **1.13. Delineating the Research Methodology**

Bernard Lonergan in *Method in Theology* (1971: 3) states that, “method is not a set of rules to be followed meticulously by a dolt. It is a framework for collaborative creativity. It outlines the various clusters of operations to be performed by theologians as they do their reflections” (see also Mugambi 2003:17). A method becomes that intelligible, interlocking set of terms and relations, a model; more like a proverb that is worthy of keeping in mind as a theologian reflects on a situation or context (Doran and Dadosky, 1990: 4). These methodological creativity frameworks make research an art or craft, that when analysed or read critically an expositional meaning is decoded. The method in any enquiry is based on assumptions. Russel Bernard (2011: 4) notes three relative assumptions which are; 1) that reality is out there to be discovered 2) that direct observation is the way to discover it 3) that material explanations for observable phenomena are always sufficient in the context of research. The insider critique is important in discovering the reality, observing the current movement of the reality and contextually interpreting the reality (Chitando, 2001).

According to Mika Vahakangas (1999: 8), “methodology is meant to be not only the techniques of scrutinising data but also the fundamental principles steering the intellectual enterprise, as in the one’s understanding of reality and theory of knowledge. The choice of these fundamental principles is not only a result of philosophical reasoning but also an outcome of ideological convictions”. It can be added that cultural and contextual experiential realities shape the nature of the fundamental principles. Therefore, methodology in reconstruction theological enquiry is a proactive technique seeking not only to understand the contextual experiential realities; but rather seeks to transform the missiological reality. Methodology therefore, becomes the approach underpinning the area of research (Cameron et al., 2000). Method can be understood to relate to the tools of data collection and analysis techniques in a research, which includes interviews, library literature review and questionnaires.

Charles Nyamiti (1971: 1) would contest that in constructing African Christian theology, theologians should take into account the pastoral, apologetic, pedagogical and comparative factors (Vahakangas, 1999: 14). It is in this pastoral-public theological concern that reconstruction theology considers the missiological Christian fundamentals as relevant for renewal or transformation.

Mugambi (2003:23) advocates for theological introspection which utilises the inductive method. The inductive method involves the search for pattern from observation and the development of explanations - models through series of hypotheses. Theological hypotheses can be tested against new cases of realities, modified and realigned in light of the contextual realities. Mugambi (2003: 23) asserts that “a shift from theological anthropology to theological introspection and self-criticism is necessary in theology of reconstruction”. This shift makes theological discourses all-encompassing and not limited to human concerns but recognising the environmental crises. Furthermore, the shift will help African theologians to trace and build theological thinking from cultural foundations. At the same time, appropriating the knowledge acquired in rebranding the African identity. Thus, reconstruction is collaborative in that it seeks to build from and on the old foundations in producing the brand of self-assertive Africa.

This thesis seeks to analyse the social realities in Zimbabwe and assert the demands of reconstruction. The research systematically gathers data from faith stories and communal experiences of struggle so as to produce the alternative narratives which help transform society. The research is founded on missiological and theological critical applied inquiry. Such an inquiry does not merely seek to “understand but challenge and suggest alternatives” (Blaxter, Christina and Tight, 2006: 61). The critical applied inquiry aims at analysing the state of affairs as it exists now and then to provide actionable recommendations (Kothari, 2004). This methodology was applied in analysing the socio-political and socio-economic environment in Zimbabwe that has impacted on the livelihoods of the generality of the population.

The phenomenon of reconstruction in post-colonial Zimbabwe is so complex that it cannot be adequately addressed using one method and single approach. There are several approaches that can be applied in this nature of research which demand a significant amount of data collection and interpretation.

This research utilises both quantitative and qualitative research methods. As (Okuni and Tembe, 1997: 23) point out, “qualitative and quantitative research paradigms are complementary and may be used in the same study”. The quantitative method will involve primary data collection through key informant and in-depth interviews and questionnaires. In this method, data features will be classified and analysed in constructive statistical models so as to explain the observation or the outcome of research. The qualitative method will make use of secondary data collection which includes library, internet sites and the briefcase documents.

Commenting on the research techniques, Lindlof and Taylor state that these research tools seek to preserve and to analyse the situated form of narrative and experiences so as to put on surface the phenomena under investigation (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002: 18). David Altheide notes that document analysis refers to an integrated and conceptually informed method, procedure and technique for locating, identifying, retrieving and analysing literature for its relevance, significance and meaning (Altheide, 1996: 2).

The research aims to make meaning of the literature, by putting it into context with the socio-political and socio-economic behaviours in Zimbabwe in relationship to transformation, renewal and reconstruction through the use of the approaches discussed in the following subsections.

### **1.13.1. The Theological Approach**

Stephen Bevans posits that human experience and Christian traditions are to be read together dialectically as there is an inevitable relationship between human existence in a particular context and the conceptualisation of God working in their lives (Bevans, 2008: 16). Theology in this respect becomes the endeavour of a community to inquire about its faith in God with a given experience. Daniel Migliore upholds St Anselm's coinage, that theology is "faith seeking understanding" (Migliore, 2004: 2). Theology therefore, becomes a discipline that emanates from the search for understanding. Millard Erickson (1985:21) presents that "theology is a that, discipline which strives to give a coherent statement of the life style and doctrines of the Christian faith, based primarily upon Scriptures (written or oral texts), placed in a context of culture, worded in contemporary idioms and related to life experiences". The theological approach presupposes a reflective and interrogative task, a reflection on God's activity and God's transforming grace. It also encompasses the renewal mercy of God among those communities that are disintegrated and/or suffering and the interrogation of the existence of communities and their setups in relation to faith in God.

The theological approach allows this thesis to reflect on the acts of God and the situation of post-independent Zimbabwe. Undeniably, the thesis accepts the relevance of major theological motifs such as Liberation Theology, Black Theology, African Theology, Inculturation Theology and many others on the community of Zimbabwe. However, it upholds that the Reconstruction Theology is currently a more relevant discourse, given Zimbabwe's socio-political and socio-economic circumstances. Out of the many theological models propounded

by others; (Graham, Walton and Ward, 2005: 18; Bevans, 2008)<sup>10</sup>, this research will limit itself to the praxis model. This model will be in line with the outlook of reconstruction theology as advanced by Jesse Mugambi when he says,

This theology should be reconstructive, rather than destructive, inclusive rather than exclusive; proactive rather than reactive; complementary rather than competitive; integrative rather than disintegrative; programme-driven rather than project-driven; people centred rather than institution-centred; deed-oriented rather than word-oriented; participatory rather than autocratic; regenerative rather than degenerative; future-sensitive rather than past-sensitive; co-operative rather than confrontational; consultative rather than impositional (Mugambi, 1995: xv).

### **1.13.2. The Praxis Model of Theological Reflection**

The focus in this research is not so much on the exploration and exposition of the state of the situation in Zimbabwe. Rather, it is to respond reflectively to the agenda of rebuilding and renewal. The Praxis model emphasis is on the transformative agenda of a lived action which in this case is to articulate reconstruction in Zimbabwe. It utilises the ortho-praxis theological reflections which, are right-action, right-participation, right-thinking and right-involvement into the reconstruction theological discourse. The theology of reconstruction should emphasise love and presence of God within the society. This presence is one of beckoning and inviting, calling people of faith to locate God and to cooperate with God in God's work of renewal, recreating, rebuilding and reconstruction (Bevans, 2008: 72). The Christian church is to be prophetic, missionary and visionary in protesting against injustices in society. The Gospel message has to be the centre of the church's activities, while the experience of the context remain relevantly the reflective springboard of theology. Elaine Graham, *et al* (2005: 171) attest that "the truth of the Gospel message lies in the level of history, not in the realms of ideas,

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<sup>10</sup> Stephen Bevans produced six models of contextual theology, which are; Translation, Anthropological, Praxis, Synthetic, Transcendental and Countercultural. See Stephen Bevans, (2008), *Models of Contextual Theology: Faith and Culture*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books. While Elaine Graham et al produced some models of doing theology which are; Theology by Heart, Constructive Theology 'speaking in parables', Canonical Theology 'telling God's story', Corporate theology 'theology of community', Public theology, Praxis 'theology in action', and theology in the Vernacular. See Elaine Graham, Heather Walton and Frances Ward, (2005), *Theological Reflection: Methods*, London: SCM Press.

least to say that the Christians' call is one of empowerment and liberation, and reinstating and reinserting the "non-person".

### **1.13.3. The Post-colonial Approach**

At face value, the post-colonial approach signifies events after colonialism. However, postcolonial discourse transcends linear time and deals with a constant time marked by events that could be technically understood in light of the past (Pui-lan, 2005: 2). It is a critical approach that questions the colonial characteristics. The post-colonial approach is also historical and futuristic in critique as it "pursues the 'historico-political' legacy of the colonial era in order to shed light on the aftermath of the period" (Keller, Nausner and Rivera, 2004: 6). The history of the colonial era in Zimbabwe becomes important as it allows a deconstruction of meaning to some events happening in the post-colonial era. The approach will not be concerned as much about the chronological history rather it will be concerned with other circumstances, policies and events of history so as to inform the research.

Post-colonialism approach is also a process of praxis confrontation with the dominant systems, thought forms and institutions. Sugirtharajah then writes, "post-colonial is a critical enterprise and discursive resistance to the imperialism and neo-colonialism incarnations" (Sugirtharajah, 2003: 15). Sugirtharajah's insight is useful when he defines post-colonialism not as theory but as critical inquiry. It is not so much about applying theoretical principles to a context, rather it is the adoption of a critical stance for those suppressed in colonial and post-colonial circumstances and situations (Sugirtharajah, 2003: 16). This approach becomes a desire, a determination and a genre of inquiry, seeking to disarm all forms and syndromes of ego-centrism on the community of Zimbabwe. Furthermore, Sugirtharajah points out that the post-colonial genre "interrogates and criticises the hegemonic thought forms, textual codes and symbolic practices that in history after independence may be read to represent the dominant ideologies of the imperialists" (Sugirtharajah, 2003: 21). This may be true when one looks at the promises mostly made during the electoral processes in Zimbabwe and what then happens after the politicians are in power. Hence, Ka Mana sounds angry when he says, "despite the pseudo-revolutionary rantings, the African nationalists have the semblance of power but they have lost touch with the real power, which is the ability to build a great destiny with the people they rule" (Mana, 2004: 11).

The post-colonial approach would imply, therefore, a process of decolonisation and challenging the parties: former colonisers, formerly colonised and the new industrialists and economy holders. According to Musa Dube (2010: 97) the post-colonial approach has a gesture of going beyond history but it seeks the transformation, renewal and reconstruction of the present going forward. Dube asserts that post-colonialism “is not about dwelling on the crimes of the past and their continuation but about seeking reconstruction, transformation, liberation, renewal and reawakening” (Dube, 2000: 16). The post-colonial approach if considered, should be the central notion from which the sense of rebuilding the future can be derived. The quest here is to have a new theology which seeks to address the new challenges. Charles Villa-Vicencio would argue that reconstruction informed by the post-colonial becomes a new kind of liberating theology, aiming to respond to new demanding challenges (Villa-Vicencio, 1992). Robert Heaney (2015) provides that, the post-colonial theological approach refers not simply to theology emerging from post-independence contexts. It refers to a critical way of doing theology. He argues;

Such theologising at its best begins with experiences of colonial or proto-colonial subjugation, identifies how such subjugation impacts theological disciples and doctrines and seeks to move toward a more just (decolonised) practice of theology (Heaney 2015:2).

Post-colonial approach becomes a praxis undertaking which seeks to be critical of the colonial, post-independent experiences in light of the hoped future existence of a community under inquiry. Theology of reconstruction comes in with relevance as it not only advocates the end of colonial brutality and end of neo-colonial onslaughts, but it looks forward to the coming of a just-conscious post-colonial African worldview, devoid of all the problems of pessimism and defeatism (Gathogo, 2008: 27).

#### **1.13.4. The Sociological Approach**

The sociological approach seeks to focus on the interaction between religion and society. Michael Northcott (1999: 195) posits that the basic presupposition of the sociological perspective concerns the social structuring and construction of human experience and culture. This approach informs the study as it seeks to unravel the experience of Zimbabwe, post-colonial. Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, Max Weber and Henri Saint-Simon are generally considered as the founders of sociology. For them, society is organised or can be organised so as to achieve the result so desired (Ritzer and Ryan, 1974). If this assertion is

considered true, then it should be possible to reconstruct Zimbabwe through the organisation and mobilisation of society to the effect of rebuilding the nation.

The sociological approach helps this research in explaining some forces and tendencies which either hinder or promote human flourishing. Emile Durkheim, arguing from a sociological perspective, asserts that religion has an influential function in mediating tensions, in generating social solidarity, in sustaining society and the construction of society (Northcott, 1999). The Zimbabwean society is ready for reorganisation and reconstruction. The Christian religion and faith have potential and instruments to influence society reconstruction and reorganisation for a transformed outlook.

#### **1.13.5. The Missiological Approach**

This study employs the missiological approach as a relevant methodology and perspective to be considered for reconstruction in Zimbabwe. David Bosch, commenting on the title of his *Magna Carta* book, “Transforming Mission”, argues that mission can be understood as an enterprise that transforms reality (Bosch, 1991). A missiological approach is that systematic critical review of God’s transforming love as preached and lived by the church. It reflects the mission of the church from an inter-disciplinary approach. This empowers the church with legitimate mandate to seek the transformation of society. Salvation through Jesus Christ is made relevant when it is not compartmentalised as the aspect of the individual soul but the wholeness of the community. Mission as the activity of the church is critical in achieving reconstruction. Therefore the missiological perspective of reconstruction needs to be interrogated in light of the context of Zimbabwe.

#### **1.14. Literature Review**

This study acknowledges that there is a plethora of published and unpublished pieces of literature on reconstruction, nation building and transformation of societies. The literature includes material on Zimbabwe’s state of affairs, post-independence. Ezra Chitando (2013: vi) comments that Zimbabwe attracted and captured global media, academic scholarship and critics’ attention from early the 1990s and beyond, due to the economic, political and social drama that was under way, both positive and negative. This era added to the cradle of literature of Zimbabwe generated during the colonial period.

This research seeks to analyse and to critique works of other scholars who have researched the reconstruction subject in Africa and around the globe. According to Lawrence Locke, the process of listening carefully to the on-going discourse about a topic of inquiry is called review (Locke, 2000:63). Arlene Fink defines literature review as “a systematic, explicit, and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating and interpreting the existing body of work produced by researchers, scholars and practitioners” (Fink, 1998: 3). Accordingly, the purpose of literature review is three-fold which is; 1) to survey the current state of knowledge in the area of inquiry 2) to identify key authors, articles, models available in the inquiry 3) to identify gaps in knowledge in that area. Therefore, the literature available on the subject should inform, educate and enhance this discourse. It becomes true that one’s knowledge does not exist in a vacuum but one’s research has value in relationship to other people’s views. This thesis, therefore, aims to distinguish the efforts already made, to discover the alternative variables, to seek and to locate the gap in the studies to date. Reconstruction theology is a well-articulated discourse since its inception in the 1990s.

The relationship between the Church and the State in Africa can be traced back to the colonial period and beyond. The politicians have in history castigated the church’s involvement in the business and affairs of the state. However, the Church and theologians clearly articulate issues of national importance. Charles Villa-Vicencio produced profound thesis in *A Theology of Reconstruction; Nation Building and Human Rights*, which is essential, as it discusses issues of reconstruction from the perspective of nation-building and human rights dignity (Villa-Vicencio, 1992). Villa-Vicencio’s experience with the appalling attributes of the apartheid regime in South Africa shaped his theology of transformation and reconstruction. He articulates that reconstruction discourse should uphold the post-exilic motifs of rebuilding and retransforming (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 7). For him, this theology is characterised by working with a passion, and from within the ruined cities, structures and deplorable circumstances, towards a reawakening, reliving and rebuilding for the better.

Villa-Vicencio articulates that liberation theology has not fully contributed to the process of nation building. Rather, it has focused so much on decolonisation that was modelled around resistance and revolution (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 23). For him, liberation theology is a necessary theology but reconstruction theology is a relevant theology in the agenda of nation-building and political reconstruction which is targeted to promoting the “common good” (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 23). A new theology is necessary, for a theology useful in resistance does not easily become a useful instrument in the period of renewal and transformation.

Liberation theology has focused on the Exodus biblical themes and imagery. This was necessary but currently the church is theologically capable of translating its mission responsibilities into a home mission of reconstruction and community building (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 23,32).

A new era has dawned for the church in Africa to impact on its mission in society. For in this dispensation of socio-political and socio-economic crisis the most important mission task for the church is to tell the truth of the gospel. The church has to go behind and above what rulers and others profess to be, making known the actual effects of their policies (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 41). This view puts the church's mission square with all aspects that affect the wholeness of human existence. Politically motivated policies in Zimbabwe as elsewhere in Africa have left many scars of suffering and a neglect of the poor. Therefore, government functionality in reconstruction times should not be left to the civil political institutions while the church concentrates on personal salvation.

This reawakening discourse requires the church to be visionary and prophetic. For this reason, Villa-Vicencio contends that, "the Church should interpret critically, the political realities of the day while consciously living at the nexus of the powerless and powerful, the victims and the perpetrators according to the Biblical traditions" (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 30). Therefore, the church should be the conscience of the society, a catalyst reminding the community of the need for reconstruction, encouraging the community to reconstruct and pointing to the areas requiring reconstruction. The church could as well go further, becoming the agent of resource mobilisation, and in this light, mobilising the locals through the locally-celebrated thought forms.

Villa-Vicencio's outline of the South African reconstruction outlook is all-encompassing and focuses on critical post-colonial rebuilding of society. He made mention of human rights as a Christian mission responsibility to ensure and promote them. He attributed the church's solidarity mission to be revived in light of the many victims of democratic challenges befalling Africa (Villa-Vicencio 1992:190).

His writings will influence this thesis in drawing the location of the church in doing mission towards the creation of wholeness communities. This thesis will further outline in detail Villa-Vicencio's theology of reconstruction in Chapter 3.

Another scholar who contributed significantly to the area is Valentin Dedji who in his study on *Reconstruction and Renewal in African Christian Theology 2003*, focused on tropical Africa. He traced the reconstruction articulations of Jesse Mugambi, Ka Mana, Jean-Marc Ela and Kwame Bediako, who are critical African theologians and thinkers. He affirms that reconstruction theology is appealing to the whole of Africa yet a concentrated particularity of Francophone Africa, Anglophone Africa and South Africa, make the theology attractive. This particular mention of South Africa implies that this thesis is critically relevant, for Zimbabwe is a context worthy to witness the shift in theological discourses.

Dedji (2003:2) underscores that transformation of political and economic structures is an emerging imperative task for reconstruction of African society. In this outlook, the reconstruction theology should focus on rebranding the African sense of community and revive the African sense of self-esteem.

For Dedji (2003:6), there is need to revisit the relationship of the gospel and culture in Africa from a justice perspective. He states that, “a justice-conscious culture is the one which can equip Africans to transcend the atrocities of the past and enable them to cope with the centrifugal powers of the present” (2003:6). The justice-conscious culture will then instil the fundamental principles of accountability, responsibility, truth-telling, repentance and forgiveness. These principles might be known but they are not upheld sacrosanct in post-colonial Africa. Dedji asserts the need to interrogate the cultural valuables and symbols that influence a harmonious existence in society. To this end, he directs his argument in light of “the fundamental African concept of Ubuntu” (2003:6).

Valentin Dedji presents a range of thoughts from some reputable African scholars on the reconstruction theological discourse. Of interest in his writings is an appraisal of the father of reconstruction theology Jesse Mugambi. This was displayed when he dedicated Chapter 3 entitled “*the reconstruction paradigm in Mugambi’s theology*” (Dedji, 2003:45-92). He traced the development in Mugambi’s theological articulations, whose formulations are due to attractions in the works of Paul Tillich, Martin Buber, and Karl Jasper. Dedji (2003:46) stipulates that “in direct criticism of Bultmann’s theory of demythologisation in which Bultmann was denouncing myth, Mugambi coined a re-mythologisation methodology. Accordingly, for Mugambi (1997: 75) “myth is indispensable in cultural constructions of reality” (Dedji 2003:46). This is critical, as theology cannot be distanced from the contextual realities of the community of faith. Reconstruction theology can then be stated to be open to

the internal dynamism of African realities as much as it critiques the external historical and neo-dynamism that impact the daily lives of the African people (Dedji 2003).

Valentin Dedji traces Mugambi's theological views from liberation theology; its achievement and its irrelevance which necessitated the proposal of a new theology of reconstruction as a paradigm shift. This project was revised in 2012; Valentin Dedji contributed a chapter entitled "The Reconstruction Paradigm in Mugambi's Theology" in the book to honour Professor J.N.K. Mugambi edited by Isaac M.T. Mwase and Eunice K. Kamaara entitled *Theologies of Liberation and Reconstruction*.

Dedji's perspectives provide the shared concepts of African Christianity and traditions. This then formulates a reconstruction theological tradition that does not only aim at dealing with the legacies of colonialism and post-colonialism, but a theological tradition that also critiques the implications and the effects of such episodes in the history of Africa (Mwaura, 2010). It is through reading Valentin Dedji that one builds confidence in the understanding that reconstruction in the African perspective is oriented to the affirmation of human value and dignity and this enterprise is religiously defined in most instances. Dedji articulates that "reconstruction in Africa calls for re-mythologisation, in which the church engages and discerns new symbols and new metaphors in which to recast the central Gospel Message" (Dedji, 2003: 45).

In taking reconstruction as a mission paradigm in today's society, Selly Oak Centre for Mission Studies (SOCMS) produced a significant work of study, edited by Joshva Raja, Val Ogden, George Wauchope and Sumithra N Fernando; *Towards a Reconstruction of Mission Stories: Building Communities of Hope and Peace*. Raja et al (2010) undertook the social concerns of the society as an important mission field. For them, reconstruction can be a mission model, aimed at creating common space where people struggling with conflict, social decadence and social erosion of human values may meet and dialogue basing their critiques on the love of Christ. This reconstruction ideology will help the local people to see themselves as the Messiahs of their deplorable situations that their communities are in at any given time. They then start looking at "what can be done together" so as to reconstruct the community rather than to ask "who can help us out". This aspect becomes a mission perspective of reconstruction, which transcends mere critique of structures as it aims at developing alternative paradigms (Raja, 2010).

Significantly, reconstruction discourse in Africa cannot be started and completed without mention of Jesse Mugambi and his writings. In 1995 he produced a *Magna Carta* of reconstruction *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology after the Cold War*. Mugambi merits to be the “father of reconstruction theology” as he argues that reconstruction themes are evoked partly by the changes that have taken place during the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and by the emergence of the “new world order” after the end of colonialism, apartheid and the cold war (Mugambi, 1995:x) (see also Farisani, 2004). Jesse Mugambi gives the analysis of the coinage of the theological discourse as having been ushered in by the ending of the three vicious systems of oppression – institutionalised racism, formal colonialism and cold-war tutelage (Mugambi, 1995). For him, the release from life imprisonment of Nelson Mandela of South Africa on 11 February 1990, triggered the Church to reflect on the way Africa should be. This perspective of the demand of the times to revisit theology and mission is pointing out that theological reflections are context-sensitive and context driven.

Mugambi upholds the Afro-centric hermeneutic in contradistinction to Western theology and ideologies. Mugambi illustrates this distinction in how Africans express their spirituality in relationship to their social realities. Africans emphasise living rather than verbalising their theology (Mugambi, 1989: 9) (Fischer, 2013: 14). In his writings Mugambi maintained that Afro-centrality is critical in reviving the African identity. Mugambi urges African thinkers to affirm both the relevance of the gospel and the validity of the cultural and religious heritage of the African people (Fischer, 2013: 15).

The political, economic, cultural and ecclesial legacy of colonialism is given considerable attention in Mugambi’s writings (Mugambi, 2003: 36-37). In his publication *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction* (2003), he explores the impact of civil responsibility in transformation. He articulates that social reconstruction championed and based on Christian principles is a precondition for effective and efficient management of all aspects of governance (Mugambi, 2003: 36). He further highlights more details on areas requiring reconstruction<sup>11</sup> and on the top of the list is political reconstruction (Mugambi 2003:39). This implies that politics in Africa has some social implications to the status of society.

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<sup>11</sup> Political reconstruction, economic reconstruction, aesthetic, moral and theological reconstruction. Adding to the earlier levels of reconstruction he proposed in (Mugambi 1995) which are personal, cultural, and ecclesial reconstruction.

Furthermore, Mugambi (2003:56; 1989:75-85) pays considerable attention to the relationship between the church and the state. His basis of argument is that churches in Africa have a crucial mission mandate and responsibility in social transformation and reconstruction of society. He dedicated a chapter of “African Churches in Social Transformation” (Mugambi 2003:78), indicating the church’s significant role in politics and social transformation. The political parties and the states in Africa should recognise the influence of the church. Mugambi (2003:78, 81) argues “hardly anywhere in Africa has multi-party politics brought peace and stability. Christianity has perhaps been the most influential social phenomenon in all continents”. In saying this, Mugambi, does not provide the best alternative model for politics in Africa. It is relevant to note that multi-party system has been high jacked by the corrupt politicians who are power hungry and are leaving a trail of corrupt and selfish mentality and attitude in society. Reconstruction theology should expose such political weakness that has some lasting consequences in Africa.

Mugambi emphasises the value of unity in reconstruction. For him, this unity is to be displayed in the churches coming together, ecumenically for social transformation discourses. For him, social transformation in Africa will demand churches that are effective and efficient in responding to the aspirations of African individuals and communities of every generation (Mugambi 2003:107). He then poses a critical question “should we be concerned with the future of the church in Africa or with the church of the future?” (*ibid*: 106). This question resonates with the interrogation of the church’s mission to ensure a hopeful post-colonial future. The church is now to respond to the expectations of the community authentically and with integrity. The church through its activities of mission should be the salt and light of the world.

Mugambi affirms that the figure of Moses and the Exodus motif had its impact in Africa during the 1970s. The liberation motif was so overwhelming that even non-Christians and the un-religious had no difficulty in identifying with the motif. Mugambi steps up to say Africa is now ready for a new motif that critiques and evaluate the post-colonial context. The reconstruction motif is to re-build, re-transform and realign Africa economically, socially, politically and religiously. He argues that Africa should re-built from its own ruins, from the rubble of crumbled walls and broken societies, which institutionalised difference, racial, ethical and tribal, colonialism and the cold war legacy which was bequeathed to Africans (Mugambi, 1999). The burden of reconstructing Africa lies in the hands of the local Africans.

For Mugambi, reconstruction logically follows the process of liberation. If Zimbabwe remains perpetually on the stance of liberation, then there is no engagement in reconstruction. Mugambi (2003:74) argues that “reconstruction presupposes that the struggle is already won and the effort has to be directed towards rebuilding a new society”. The reconstruction pedagogy seeks to encourage and involve all members of the community to direct energy on rebuilding rather than blaming each other.

It is important that this section affirms that this thesis is informed by materials already published and accessible. The gap is the missiological emphasis and the particularity of reconstruction theology in post-colonial Zimbabwe. What is relevant in this thesis is the missiological entry point in reconstruction theology in Zimbabwe. The church has to stand on the mission responsibility for the betterment of the community. It is the responsibility of the church to initiate new hermeneutical approaches that are in sync with the realities befalling Zimbabwe. The church is to search for relevant contextual biblical texts that focus on potential and capacity of the people to re-define their own social situation and rebuild their own societies (Mugambi 2003:128).

### **1.15. Classification of Terms**

It is important to clarify the meanings of some key words and terms that are central to this research, from the beginning although they might be further defined. This is useful since these terms are critical to the context of research.

#### **1.15.1. Reconstruction: African Theology of Reconstruction**

The term “reconstruction” is central to this research. It gained prominence in theological discourse in Africa in the early 1990s in the context of the All African Conference of Churches’ theological consultations. It was a notion inspired by *Perestroika* (reconstruction) which inadvertently led to the demise of the Soviet Union and the Cold War (Mwaura, 2010: 6). In the 1990s, there emerged the social principle of Christianity to focus on reconstruction, thereby shaping a theology of reconstruction. This is a recent trend of African theological development, claiming that energy and focus have to incorporate reconstruction and rebuilding. Jesse Mugambi (1997: 1) asserts that, “the theme of reconstruction covers a quite a new concept in contemporary African social thought”.

The term reconstruction is borrowed from the engineering discipline. Jesse Mugambi (1995:12) affirms:

The terms construction and reconstruction belong to engineering vocabulary. An engineer constructs a complex according to specifications in the available designs. Sometimes modification are made to the designs in order to ensure that the complex will perform the function for which it is intended.

He (Mugambi 1995:12) further asserts that;

Social reconstruction belongs to the social sciences and involves re-organisation of some aspects of a society in order to make it more responsive to changed circumstances.

Reconstruction theology challenges theologians, churches and communities in Africa to work towards rebuilding and reconstructing communities from the ruins of African post-colonialism (Chitando, 2009: 130).

Jesse Mugambi (1995), Charles Villa-Vicencio (1992), Andrea Karamaga (1997) and Ka Mana (2004) are the leading exponents in deepening and expropriating reconstruction theology. However, the theology has since received some discerning voices, some critical and some affirming. These include Valentin Dedji (2003), Ezra Chitando (2009), Julius Gathogo (2012), Ragies Gunda (2009), Tinyiko Maluleke (1994), Eliweni Farisani (2002) and many others. The subject of reconstruction has attracted many areas of interests, producing a vast body of literature. It is necessary for this thesis to maintain the missiological perspective of reconstruction theology in the Zimbabwean context.

There is a pre-requisite soul-searching question to any attempt to define a theology of reconstruction in Africa and in Zimbabwe in particular. Can Africans recover their human dignity and their sense of community after the brokenness that is evident? Valentin Dedji, through an email interview (7 September 2017) states,

The reconstruction theology, not only encompasses the foundational tools of rebuilding the existential structures and the human condition of Africans, and the hermeneutical principles thereof, but it decisively aims at facilitating, promoting and supporting all-inclusive actions and views that make and sustain human life in the best possible manner.

Theology of reconstruction is concerned with human wellness as much as the environmental restoration. For the environment should offer humanity the goodness of sustainability. Jesse Mugambi (1997:1) stipulates that “for a long time the notion of reconstruction has not been emphasised, even in those countries (Zimbabwe) where wars of national liberation have been waged”. The time is ripe to popularise reconstruction from the hermeneutical perspective of missiology in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, Jesse Mugambi (1997:3) contends that “reconstruction

of social structures will help Africans to re-affirm their identity (cultural, traditionally and communally) and consciousness. This will provide a springboard for the revitalisation of Africa's economy, politics and social life". There is need to develop theological programmes that concern reconstruction of all that influences the wellness of people.

Hannah Kinoti (1997: 115) explains that the idea of reconstruction assumes a pre-existing framework that is re-constructible. In this "a cluster of words associated with the verb reconstruct should quicken the vision that challenges the church in Africa to rise up and do more purposeful and decisive mission" The concept of reconstruction implies a process of review, realignment and an inclusive commitment to create something more suitable to the prevailing environment. Charles Villa-Vicencio (1992) states that;

A theology of reconstruction is about facilitating, promoting and supporting actions that make and sustain human life in wholeness. It is essentially remedial. It has a responsibility to put right past wrongs and old abuses. It makes affirmative action central and taking the present day challenges as the topics to deal with (1992: 274).

African theology has all this time wrestled with making Christianity relevant to the African context. In different times, phases and paradigms, the effort was achieved in the coming of African thought forms, idioms and the African culture being the vehicle of expression. African theology has evolved, taking lived realities to be the core of theologising and church focus. The development of the theology of reconstruction or reconstruction theology (used interchangeably in this study) takes the challenge of African churches to respond to the realities of post-colonial Africa. Mugambi emphasises that the basis of theology is "to respond to the joys, hopes, fears, struggles and crises of a given community of faith" (1995: 11).

Mugambi (1995) challenges the paradigms of liberation and inculturation in which the African Theologies were engrained as no longer relevant to the emerging context and circumstance of Africa. These paradigms for Jesse Mugambi (1995) were meant to respond to the ecclesiastical and colonial hegemonies, which have since been replaced with some postcolonial challenges. Further, the emergence of the so-called New World Order and the coming of age of political independence of African nations are historical moments that cannot be ignored by the church and the theologians. They present opportunities to develop a new vision, a new theology with new paradigms and new strategies for action (Mwaura, 2010). The new face of the church has to seek the creation of a new society founded on the principles of human wholeness, rather than abuse and manipulation.

Reconstruction theology has been labelled a “paradigm” in doing theology. Jesse Mugambi (1995) was influenced by Thomas Kuhn (1962: 43-48) who popularised the term “paradigm”. A phenomenon is made sensible as it is shaped by mental models or frames of reference known as paradigms. Recognising paradigms is critical in making sense of and reconciling differences in people’s perception of the same social phenomenon. The reconstruction paradigm challenges African communities to realign, reconstruct, rebuild and renew their self-identity, conscience and life’s wellbeing from the debris of traditional-cultural values, norms and attitudes while at the same time encouraging innovation, inventiveness and creativity (Mugambi, 2007: 89).

### **1.15.2. Church**

Christianity in Africa is diverse, characterised by denominational and sectarian fragmentation. This has brought a variety of churches and ministries. The term “church” is highly contested as this attracts many ambiguities and explanations (Manyonganise and Chirimuuta, 2011: 288). The term “church” may be used in multiple ways and with different intentions. The church can mean the building, a place of worship, the structural institution, the people and/or the Christian mission agency.

Dirkie Smit (1996: 119-129) identifies six social manifestations of the church: 1) a community of worship, 2) a local congregation (structured), 3) a particular denomination, 4) as an ecumenical fellowship of different churches at various levels, 5) as Christian organisations at work in society, 6) the lives of individual Christians as they exhibit their faith. These sociological classifications exist for a different reconstruction purpose, for they arise out of different needs and impulses. Theologically they are legitimate and important, as they help in understanding the role of the church in society (Conradie, 2007).

The postcolonial missiological value of the church has been displayed through its engagement with the existential realities that society faces and standing together with people in their struggles. Jesse Mugambi (1995: 17) takes the church as “the organisational framework where a people’s worldview is portrayed and celebrated”. Then it becomes the embodiment of the presence of Christ in action. Mugambi (2003:107) further asserts that “the church is a utopian community which has a divine mandate, belonging to God not for the world and a social reality the church is in the world for the benefit of the goodness of the world”. Therefore, Christians as citizens cannot avoid involvement in the political, economic and moral challenges facing their communities (Mugambi 2003).

The church in Zimbabwe, as in other parts of Africa has a socio-moral authority and is a historical institution that appeal to the majority of people. Avery Dulles came up with models of the church, in which he argues that, “the true church should protect the poor and proclaim justice instead of ignoring the struggles of the community it is founded” (Dulles, 1988: 6).

The term ‘church’ in this thesis will be used in its broader sense, when referring to Christian denominations. In cases where a specific denomination is meant it will be referred to by specific name such as the Anglican Church or Roman Catholic Church. Chapter four (4) of this thesis will provide more detail on the understanding of the Christian Church in Zimbabwe and the missiological perspective of reconstruction.

### **1.15.3. Mission and Missiology**

Etymologically, the word “missiology” simply taken means the study of mission, which invites a further question; what is mission? The term “mission” is derived from the Latin word *mittire* which refers to the act of sending (Hirsch, 2016: 137). David Bosch (1991: 1) presents that “mission” had a remarkable usage since the 1950s, yet it was attached with some circumscribed set of meanings. Various scholars have articulated the problem of defining the word “mission” which covers a broad spectrum of issues and has undergone tremendous paradigm shifts in history (Mwaura, 2006). Thus, it is difficult to explicitly express what mission is, for everything about God and church is missional. In common understanding, the term mission refers the evangelistic preaching of the gospel and church planting efforts. Understandably, there have been some paradigm shifts in understanding mission as God’s mission, *Missio Dei* and this implies that God’s turning to the world (Bosch, 1991: 376).

Ultimately, what the church is called to do depends on what God is already initiating to transform in the world. This led David Bosch (1991: xv) to argue that “mission is an enterprise that transforms reality into the wholeness restoration of humanity”. Mission is that indispensable activity of the church and its participation in the progressive, comprehensive and redemptive transforming love of God in the world. For the Christian mission comes from a God of deep and everlasting love and compassion, not only for Christians but for the whole world (Raja et al., 2010). Christian mission is to be a channel of wholeness and liberation in a world confronted with issues never ever imagined.

Missiology, in this case, becomes the intentional theological reflection of God’s activity in the world. This reflection is sustained due to the participation of the church in God’s mission. Ivan

Illich defines missiology as the “scientific study of the activities of the Church as the embodiment of the Word of God and activities of God beyond her social boundaries, beyond the linguistic barriers with which she feels at home. Missiology therefore is the study of the Church, activities and surprises” (Illich, 1974: 5-6). Missiology is the study of the Church as she is both called out of the world and sent forth into the world. It permeates and empowers the church in doing God’s mission.

It is undeniable that the Zimbabwean economy has deteriorated at the same inverse proportion as new Christian churches emerge. This context challenges how churches can do mission with the integrity of the Gospel. Chapter four of this research will highlight the missiological perspective of reconstruction.

#### **1.15.4. Zimbabwe**

The Republic of Zimbabwe<sup>12</sup> is a landlocked country in Southern Africa. It borders South Africa to the south, Zambia to the north, Mozambique to the east, and Botswana on the west. Its size is 390 757 square kilometres with approximately 1% of its surface being water. Formerly known as Rhodesia, a former colony of Britain, Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980.

Zimbabwe was born after a protracted liberation struggle in which the strategies of guerrilla warfare, community mobilisation and decolonisation consciousness were employed. This was a momentous historical dispensation that captured the imagination of many people, particularly in the global South. Accordingly, Chitando, Taringa & Mapuranga (2014: 174), argue that for many “Zimbabwe’s independence, represented the triumph of black people against racism and settler colonialism”. This achievement happened through the determination of every Zimbabwean, young and old, women and men, religious and non-religious. However, for Chitando et al (2014), churches and the Christian community contributed significantly to the attainment of political independence. For, “during the colonial period, some church leaders bravely challenged the imperial Rhodesian state that sought to continue marginalising the black majority” (Chitando, Taringa and Mapuranga, 2014: 174). It was hoped that the church-state

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<sup>12</sup> Zimbabwe went through several name changes in the general period under the scope of this research. It was known as Rhodesia, then Southern Rhodesia and then Zimbabwe-Rhodesia before it adopted Zimbabwe as the name in 1980.

relations would be developed and deepened in the post-independent Zimbabwe. However, some developments in the post-independent period created tension.

The history of Zimbabwe is not only characterised by a series of challenges, tension and suffering. President Robert Mugabe with his eloquence and his determinant political muscle had been a darling of many if not all Zimbabweans at one point in history. Songs of his Nationalist political party ZANU PF, were sung in the streets, and in the market place, as a sure sign of appreciation. Historically, the first two decades of independence were relatively stable in terms of economic development, social service delivery and accessibility and with mild political polarisation.

Significant levels of economic and political upheavals irrupted around the 1990s due to many factors and chief among them is the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). From here the Zimbabwean socio-economic, socio-political and socio-religious began to be defined differently and using different tunes of narratives (Banana, 1996; Bakare, 1993). Ezra Chitando (2013) and Chitando *et al* (2014) note that from 2000, the country experienced massive socio-economic and socio-political challenges at a historical levels. These include the suppression of rule of law, fast-track land reformation, suppression of the labour outcry, political violence targeted at suppressing oppositional multi-party voices, poor governance and revival of Rhodesian imperial strategies of alienating and denying freedom and justice. This captured the attention of the global world, for the notable historical transition had taken the wrong turn; actually it derailed<sup>13</sup>. Zimbabwe was exposed to economic target sanction by the European Union and Northern American bloc. These have left post-colonial Zimbabwe with contradictions of narratives of the crisis (one narrative assert that the neo-colonial agenda is causing the economic crisis, while the other school is focusing on Zimbabwean government failures to sustain a viable economy). From the insider perspective, struggle and suffering for the majority Zimbabweans became evident. Christianity became the faith of hope; this has been witnessed in the growth in the Christian population. Church became the centre of comfort and consolation. But the same question of reconstruction remain a critical theological challenge. Hence this thesis brings out that Zimbabwe's post-colonial experience resonates with that of post-exilic Israelite as portrayed in the Ezra-Nehemiah biblical corps. It is only

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<sup>13</sup> The call for reconciliation, Gukurahundi, one (1) party state contestation, economic meltdown, political challenges, and Fast Track Land Redistribution, Murambatsvina and post-election violence. All these became the defining historical transitions in Zimbabwe.

through the appropriation of the dictums of reconstruction theology that Zimbabwe will be put back on the rails.

In chapter six (6) the thesis gives a detailed survey and outline of the Zimbabwean context.

### **1.15.5. Post-colonial, Post-colonialism**

It is necessary to set the outline, the understanding and usage of post-colonial (postcolonial), and post-colonialism (postcolonialism) in this thesis. The words, ‘post-colonial’ and ‘post-colonialism’ shall be used interchangeably with postcolonial and postcolonialism. Post-colonial theory is taken as an approach in doing reconstruction theology<sup>14</sup> and also a hermeneutic approach of appropriating the Zimbabwean experience with the Ezra-Nehemiah motif<sup>15</sup>. In such application, this thesis affirms the critical post-colonial theological reflections as relevant in reconstruction discourse in Africa.

It is admitted (Slemon, 1996: 178; Young, 1998: 5; Heaney, 2015: 11), that a distinctive definition of postcolonialism and or postcolonial is problematic. The difficulty of an absolute definition lies in the fact that “this field of inquiry is not monolithic but rather a field which provides and caters to a variety of concerns, oppositional stances and even contradictory positions” (Sugirtharajah, 2006: 7). While this limitation is affirmed, many have laboured in providing an outline and understanding of postcolonialism as theory, criticism, hermeneutical approach, methodological approach and a theological reflection. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (2000: 192) provide that postcolonialism is

A way of reading and rereading texts of both metropolitan and colonial cultures to draw deliberate attention to the profound and inescapable effects of colonisation on literary production; anthropological accounts, historical records, administrative and scientific narratives.

In this view, postcolonial discourse seeks to problematise the colonial and post-colonial forces, analysing the political, cultural, and economic relationships between centre and periphery (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002). It becomes a critical attempt to interpret, to read interrogatively the tragedies of history, to scrutinise the tragic experiences of those dispossessed of their human value, voice and dignity. This exercise aims to formulate critical,

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<sup>14</sup> See the Methodology section of this thesis – Postcolonial Approach

<sup>15</sup> See chapter 2 on hermeneutic section of this thesis – Postcolonial hermeneutic approach.

reconstructable options of worthiness and empowering strategies of emancipation. Robert Heaney (2015:2) argues;

Post-colonial theology refers not simply to theology emerging from post-independence contexts. It refers to a critical ways of doing theology. Such theologising at its best, begins with experiences of colonial or proto-colonial subjugation, identifies how such subjugation impacts theological disciples and doctrines and seeks to move toward a more just practice of theology.

Post-colonial theological reflections take into serious consideration; context, experience, existential realities, conversations, and the biblical engagement of the community of faith. This makes post-colonial a critical and praxis theological reflection (Heaney, 2015). Accordingly, Heaney (2015:12-22) identifies the tasks, functions or priorities for post-colonial criticism as; 1. *Responding to coloniality*; opposing to imperialism or neo-imperialism cultural hegemonies with the colonial or neo-colonialism patronages. Lazare Rukundwa (2008: 343) points out, “postcolonial critical theory interrogates colonial interpretation, while pointing out the inescapable effects of colonisation and colonial ideals”.

2. *An agency for the marginalised*; it is giving voice to the marginalised and the oppressed. With God and the Bible being interpreted in relationship to transformational love and preferential option to the marginalised and oppressed.

3. *Postcolonialism is hybridisation*; for colonialism created a hybrid contexts that affect societies and identification narrowly defined in terms of same/other, religious/political, sacred/pagan, white/black, superior/inferior (Burns, 2016: 3; Heaney, 2015: 28). On this realisation, post-colonialism, however, “recognises that these oppositional identities and categorises are secure, in fact they have a subjugation agenda” (Heaney 2015:28). Thus there is need to review and revive more constructive postcolonial perspectives of identity. Therefore, postcolonial theory brings the in-between category. This in-between position and its ambivalence serves as a fertile ground for the emergence of new significant value in reading the content of socio-historical, social-cultural, social-political and social-economic contexts of people (Bhabha, 1994: 127-131).

4. *Resistance to hegemony and tyranny*. This brings the transformative perspective of postcolonial engagement. Resistance is not only combat but reconstructive for the betterment of the community. The biblical themes are read not only to understand how the colonial powers construct the colonised but also to understand how the subaltern subverts the same power used to dominate them. R S. Sugirtharajah (2001: 257) underscores that postcolonial reading

“attempts to highlight how the invaded, often caricatured as abused victims or grateful beneficiaries, transcended these images and wrested interpretation from the invaders, starting processes of self-discovery, appropriation and subversion”.

5. *Practice decolonisation.* To decolonise is to unveil coloniality. Post-colonial criticism identifies practices of coloniality and seek to decolonise. Post-colonial theology is Christian thought and practice toward decolonisation via marginalised agency and resistance through hybridisation. Therefore, post-colonial seeks to “examine the interdependence of the cultural terrain transverse by both the colonizers and the colonised, as well as how the colonial systems of knowledge cast their impact, long after the colonisers are gone” (Pui-Ian, 2005: 3).

According to Stuart Hall (1996: 243), the postcolonial, (post-colonial) era is the time “after” colonialism. In this same level colonialism is understood in the binary division between the colonisers and colonised. Whilst this is so, Gregory Castle (2001: 508) states that post-colonialism refers both to an era after colonialism and to a set of critical attitudes taken toward colonialism. Others resist the term as meaning being definitely after something; for example, Mark Taylor (2004: 44) argues “there is no simple epoch after colonialism”. However, postcolonial theory critically questions the thought forms and practices of the complex colonial epoch, and interrogates all other complex hegemonic systems in any given context. Broadly based, post-colonial theology seeks to respond to coloniality, promote the theological agency of marginalised communities, developing hybridisation in theology and resisting theological hegemony culminating in some form of decolonisation (Young, 1995; Heaney, 2015: 1; Sugirtharajah, 2006). Valentin Dedji on 7 September 2017, responding to an email interview request to “Comment on reconstruction theology as or as not a post-colonial discourse” states, reconstruction theology, as a matter of fact, far from being merely a “discourse”, “is to be perceived as a post-independence theological enterprise in Africa”. This makes postcolonial a continual process of decolonisation and a continual re-evaluation of the present, in relationship to the experiences that shape human co-existence.

In postcolonial theory, practice and criticism, the prefix “post” indicates a critical process “that goes beyond the colonial in all its forms but always as a strategy of resistance” (Keller, Nausner and Rivera, 2004: 7). In other words, the prefix “post” is not simply anti-imperialistic; it does not attack or resist per se the discursive domination (powerful, globalised empires) but in any given context of human existence it questions wellbeingness, wholeness and wellness in light of inequality, enslavement, injustice and dehumanisation.

In missiological and theological reflections, postcolonial discourse, produces the reconstruction effects when the biblical texts, historical contexts, and contemporary experiences are scrutinised from the perspective of transformation. Postcolonial perspectives of missiological and theological reflections urges for a historical self-invention, existential self-introspection and the need to make a new start from the conceived outlook of being. This perspective becomes reconstructive, inculturational, indigene, liberative and transformative centred.

### **1.16. Structure of Research (Chapters Outline)**

This thesis comprises nine chapters, structured as follows:

**Chapter One:** This chapter introduces the thesis, providing the background of the study, problem statement, justification, aim and objectives, the interest of study, presupposition, conceptual and theoretical frameworks, reconstruction theology and research methodologies and approaches applicable to the research and a bird's eye-view of the literature review.

**Chapter Two:** This chapter critically analyses the Christian Bible as a manual for the reconstruction discourse. The chapter analyses the Bible interface with issues of concern in the public space which includes reconstruction concerns. The section brings to task the value of the Bible, whether closed or opened in Africa. This understanding of the value and authority of the Bible in Africa leads to the selection of the Ezra-Nehemiah model of reconstruction, as a way of mobilising the reconstruction discourse in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the chapter provides the schools of thought in reading Ezra-Nehemiah before proposing the hermeneutical and exegetical interpretation methods. These methods aim to produce the meaning of the text into practice for the reconstruction theology in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

**Chapter Three:** This chapter critically analyses the history of Reconstruction Theology. It is through this analysis that the relationship between Reconstruction Theology and other selected contextual theologies such as African Theology, Black Theology, Feminist Theology and Liberation Theology is established. The section underscores that Reconstruction Theology is a complementary discourse to the already existing theologies, seeking the emancipation of the people at the margins of history. The chapter further critically engages with the proponent voices to the Reconstruction Theology led by Jesse Mugambi and Charles Villa-Vicencio. While their brevity to start the discourse of reconstruction is celebrated there are some areas which require continuous dialogue and these areas have invited some criticism from critics

such as Gunda and Farisani. This chapter also brings in these voices in dialogue with the proposal of reconstruction theology in Zimbabwe as a relevant post-colonial discourse.

**Chapter Four:** This chapter addresses the concept of reconstruction from a missiological perspective. It is through this section that the question of the role of the church is addressed. The church's call for mission is produced in line with the *Missio Dei* concept for transformation and reconstruction. The chapter identifies that the church can still be a vehicle for reconstruction since, in history, it has effectively stood for the advancement of human justice. The church is not to be excluded from the reconstruction of society because it has the mandate to be involved with the community at every level.

**Chapter Five:** This chapter takes the theoretical framework as stated in Chapter 1 "African Renaissance" into critical engagement with the concerns of reconstruction. This chapter furthers the thinking that, historically, the concern for reconstruction had been on the agenda of many nationalist legends in Africa. It is through the Afro-nationalism thought basis of Africanism, Pan-Africanism and Negritude that African Renaissance is born. The section produces the issues or agenda of African Renaissance, which will show clearly the desire of reconstruction discourse. This discourse is a desire to see a transformed society.

**Chapter Six:** This chapter provides a historical narrative trajectory of the context of research - Zimbabwe. The focus is on the issues of politics and economy, which affect the social status of the Zimbabwean people. The chapter produces the errors of history and the hand played by the neo-colonialism agenda on Zimbabwe. It further highlights the critical efforts to reclaim political and economic control with the formulations of some economic strategic mechanisms and the need of rebirth given the situation at hand.

Further, the state of politics in post-independence Zimbabwe is critical to the call for reconstruction three and a half decades after independence. Can reconstruction be an option in the search for a just, non – violent society? The chapter helps answer some questions about justice, violence, and the reasons for armed liberation struggles and whether the post-colonial government ignores the suffering of the masses or pay lip service to the suffering.

**Chapter Seven:** This chapter deals with the question of whose community Zimbabwe is, in relationship to reconstruction. It seeks to demonstrate the relevance of ownership, cooperation, national discipline, efficiency and community mobilisation as mission imperatives.

**Chapter Eight:** This chapter produces the voice of the primary literature of research. This voice is then analysed using charts, tables and diagrams as to show the relevance of reconstruction theology in Zimbabwe. It also provides some of the tools and resources the church possesses for reconstruction.

**Chapter Nine:** This chapter concludes the research and presents recommendations while proposing mission paradigms for the reawakening of Zimbabwe.

### **1.17. Conclusion**

The reconstruction debate in Africa has arrived and it is necessary for its applicability to be considered in Zimbabwe, from a missiological perspective. This chapter sets the scene for this research, highlighting that reconstruction theology is a praxis discourse that transcends mere critique. The chapter outlines the problem statement which aroused the interest of the researcher to embark on this study. The research articulates the research framework of social critical construction and the missiological emphasis of the thesis. Furthermore, the chapter delineates the methodological outline in doing reconstruction theology before narrowing down to provide some methodologies and approaches which help in shaping the thesis. The affirmation of the African Renaissance, as the theoretic framework of the research, states that reconstruction theology in Africa and Zimbabwe, in particular, is a worthy post-colonial discourse. The reconstruction theology and renewal discussions are not discovering virgin lands, this has been seen in the plethora of literature available.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE BIBLE AND RECONSTRUCTION: - A QUEST FOR RECONSTRUCTION THEOLOGY**

#### **2. Introduction**

Religion shapes the strongest foundation of existence in Africa, and exerts more significantly, the strongest influence on the way of thinking and social order (Erickson 1985:18). This being so, religious texts have a lasting impression on the religious worldview in Africa. These texts might be verbal or written yet they influence the wellbeing of the people, suggesting that religious texts or sacred texts such as the Bible can play a significant role in the quest for establishing a just society with a just conscious capacity (Gunda, 2015: 13). Historically, the reception of Christianity, its acceptance and its value can be pedagogically separated from the reception of Bible, its relevance and its interpretation. Gerald West (1997:126) attests that the “reception of the Bible in Africa, does not amount to the same as the reception of Christianity even though these two are inseparable.

This chapter analyses the Bible’s (Christian religion sacred text) interface with reconstruction and its position as the source for reconstruction theology and its objectives of transforming, reconstructing, liberating and renewing. Analysing and seeking to understand the contours of the interface will determine whether or not the Bible can be a manual of reconstruction. This chapter shows the other side of biblical manipulations in history and the current Zimbabwean context. Admittedly, questions may be asked whether the Bible was and is still used manipulatively for the benefit of a few among the many. It can in turn, be flipped to produce a reconstructive and liberative usage.

As Gunda (2013: 9-10), emphasises in post-colonial Africa there is great “need to revive the biblical message into transformed practice”. This chapter engages critically with the question of how reconstruction theology can be the means to turn the teachings of the Bible into practice. Are the biblical principles of Ezra-Nehemiah necessary in redefining the African meaning of life which is not defined by individualism but the collective effort and collective determination? The realisation that, “even though the books of the Bible were written a long time ago... carefully analysing the words of these ancient texts reveals a message about how people ought to arrange their affairs now and in the future” (Gunda, 2013: 9). This realisation triggers people in a given community to seek a rearrangement or reconstruction of their affairs making the

“Bible, a means of accomplishing something; a measure or action” (Gunda and Mtetwa, 2013: 160). This makes the Bible a centre of reconstruction ideology in Zimbabwe, for it inspires, directs and guides the existence and history of people of faith.

This chapter seeks to highlight the usage of the Bible in Africa, in an effort to argue why reconstruction in the perspective of this research should use the Ezra-Nehemiah Biblical motif as the anchor of reconstruction in Zimbabwe. The value of Christian scriptures by the Zimbabwean spiritual worldview will then assert the potential of the religion in steering reconstruction. Furthermore, in this section, the hermeneutical explanation and tools applied in this research to the biblical text of Ezra-Nehemiah will be discussed. It is this hermeneutical understanding that enables one to apply the Ezra-Nehemiah Motif in reconstruction discourse in the context of Zimbabwe.

### **2.1. The encounter with Christianity and Bible: - The case of Zimbabwe**

It remains indisputable that Christianity in Zimbabwe, and anywhere in Africa, is historically, related and associated with colonialism (Shorter, 1975: 5). Christianity has been treated with suspicion and sometimes rejected since it was rated as the opium of oppression, alienation and subjugation. Clare Robertson (1995: 314) observes how agents of Christianity often preceded and encouraged colonial advance;

If they found their progress in making converts impeded on occasion, they sometimes promoted political control to put them in a better position to succeed. Thus the missionary played a critical role in perpetuating the idea of “the white man’s burden” as a justification for European conquest (1995:316).

Therefore the acceptance of Christianity by a significant proportion of Africans in colonial Zimbabwe was not achieved without a struggle, and enticement strategies (Zvobgo, 1986: 43). The struggle was essentially the clash of cultures. Although several factors contributed to Africa’s relative resistance and in some cases opposition to Christianity the factors of cultural clash and colonialism agenda remain relative. The interaction and transaction between colonialism and Christianity in Zimbabwe is unique hence, Jean and John Comaroff (1991: 8) have stressed the correspondence between Christian mission and secular colonialism, arguing that conversion and conscious colonisation were two sides of the same coin, (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1991: xi). Christianity and missionaries did not understand the African value of life and religiosity; depicted in the connectedness of family, communicative communal livelihood

and traditio-cultural values. Zvobgo (1986: 45) observes this misinterpretation that led the missionaries to find it hard to break through the African conviction without force.

During the colonial enterprise, missionaries supported the policies of segregation and dispossession (Moyana, 2002: 34). Missionary activities during this period were defined by the forces that enabled them to be in Zimbabwe. So the interaction of Christianity with the Zimbabwean people was informed by prejudices of culture, way of life and spirituality.

Christianity, as the religion in response to reconstruction in this research, cannot be separated from colonialism in Zimbabwe, since effective evangelisation of the nation is regarded in the same vein as colonisation. In Africa, when Christianity is professed there is a relentless dialectic arising from its relationship with the cultural presuppositions and practices of the cultures where it is located (Isichei, 1995: 4). There has been much theological energy invested in the inculturation, Africanisation and many other dimensions of contextualised praxis. For some time the dominant theme in African has been liberation, inculturation and adaptation (Shorter, 1975: 3; Mugambi, 1995: 23).

While this is so, there is need to analyse how the colonised and the colonisers transacted and interpreted the Bible. African Zimbabweans were comfortable with the orality of their traditional belief system. However Christianity came with the book. This book brought some fears in the community, since the “white man’s world view tended to explain its power and authority by appealing to the Bible” (West, 1997:132). But at the same time many wanted to hear of its fascinating stories as story-telling was part of their existence and communication. So they slowly embraced the Bible as they mastered interpretation. Africans were attracted primarily to the narratives of the Hebrew Bible dealing with the adventures of the Hebrews in bondage and escaping from bondage. They saw hope and life in these texts. This led Gerald West (1997) to assert that;

Although European missionaries and colonialists brought the Bible with them to Africa. There is need to examine the encounters of Bible separately from the encounter of Christianity as a new faith (West, 1997:126).

Once Africans had the Bible at their disposal in their own vernacular languages they made several discoveries. They were many things in the Bible that made sense to them but were not communicated to them by the missionaries. John Mbiti (1977: 35-36) captures this point clearly saying;

The Bible is the valuable book to the African people because there are many life commonalities; between their cultural life and the cultural life of the Jewish people. The Bible recommends itself so readily for objective use by Africans. This gives Africans an opportunity to use the Bible and to judge objectively in matters of faith, just as the individual conscience is the subjective judge.

The Bible was accepted more relatively in Zimbabwe since they were able to recognise some important elements that related to their religious, cultural and social world view<sup>16</sup>. Fran Verstraelen (1993: 219) observes that, “due to scriptural translation the Bible became understandable, since the translation process adopted some indigenous terms and concepts. In this way, the Gospel message was made transparent to the religio-cultural climate of a given people in the idioms known to them”. This made the encounter of the Bible with the Zimbabwean audience relatively different from the encounter of Christianity and the Zimbabwean audience. Due to this effective value of the Bible, it has remained that inspirational book, resource book and an all-life answer book to many post-colonial Zimbabweans.

## **2.2. The Bible in African Perspective: - Usage**

In the African context, it is indisputable that the Bible remains “the book” (Togarasei, 2008: 73). It is a manual for daily living, attested in almost all Christian fraternities and denominations. Machingura also observes that ‘the book’ has occupied an uncontested place in the hearts and minds of many Africans, making Africa a *de facto* Christian continent (Machingura, 2012: 220). The impact of the Bible have not spared or respected the will of non-Christians in Africa. It is read or referred to in all spheres of one’s life, at every passage of time (private or public), at national events (political, economic or social). The Bible is the point of reference for almost every circumstance of life for understanding or for criticism. It is to this effect that Gunda asserts the Bible as “the first and the last court of appeal”, to any circumstance of life (Gunda, 2010: 21). This points out that the Bible is a source of hope to many in Zimbabwe, for when one reads the Bible, he/she does not read it as simply a historical book about the Israelites. John Mbiti says, “this divine word is not an abstract proposition but an event in our lives, empowering us to continue in the fight for our full humanity” (Mbiti, 1986:

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<sup>16</sup> In the Zimbabwean perspective, the Bible confirms the traditional acceptance of the role of dreams, the reality of spirits (good and evil), the value of traditional healers, sorceries, diviners and the importance of respect of life, and life after death (ancestors and veneration of them thereof). Furthermore the value of community, healing, kingship, royal setup, and the value and responsibility of a boy child. See also (Verstraelen, 1993: 223-225)

26). This entails that the Bible has value; it provides solace to the mourning and it is not an ordinary text; it is a repository of sacred truth (Chitando, Gunda and Kugler, 2013: 10). This makes the Bible an extraordinary text. When it is read, the Zimbabwean Christians listen intently, for the Bible speaks.

Therefore, the Bible, when presented to the people in Zimbabwe and interpreted in light of their crisis and struggles ‘the book’, gives them a sense of hope and the sense of a future that is certain. When the Bible is interpreted, Africans forge for themselves a destiny that is in keeping with their hopeful dreams, regardless of the abject poverty and grinding misery which confronts them daily (Mana, 2004). It is so because the Bible is fundamental to the well-being of African Christians.

Despite the fact that the Bible and Christianity as a religion are foreign in Africa, “they have been entrenched so deep in the African soil to the extent that they continue to shape the majority of lives and to transform the mindset of many in Africa. For many, Christianity has become a way of life” (Gathaka, 2012: 145). This assertion comes in line with John Mbiti’s argument that religion permeates the African life of an individual, for Africans are immensely religious. He puts this across radically as, “Africans are notoriously religious; it is not possible to separate religion from an African life” (Mbiti, 1969: 1). The Bible and Christianity continue to influence and to shape the socio-economic, socio-political and the socio-religious well-being of many African countries, Zimbabwe included. The Bible is at the heart of African Christianity and all faculties of human existence revolve around the religious text.

It is therefore, important to understand that even the undertaking of a theology of reconstruction, with a missiological paradigm shift in Zimbabwe, will require a clear critique and/or reference to the Bible. The Zimbabwean context and people can easily identify with the experiences in the Bible. It has to be acknowledged that there is no theology without the Christian religious scripture; the Bible. J S Mbiti (2012: 2) argues that without the Bible, it is difficult to do genuine Christian Theology whether in Africa or elsewhere. Hence, theology is defined as an attempt to understand human experience and existence as interpreted through the symbols, dimensions and terms of the Christian traditions (Gilkey, 1988: 91,93). The Judeo-Christian Scripture is of relevance in seeking human wholeness in the Africa-reconstruction debate. In fact, Gerald West, in analysing the role of the Bible, in Africa states, “the Bible in African religious worldview is meaningful and powerful whether opened or closed. For many

ordinary readers, the Bible is both a sacred object ‘of strange powers’ and a ‘significant sacred text’ (West, 2003: vii).

Whilst the Bible has a widespread influence among Africans, it can be manipulated and abused by the users or interpreters. Gerald West (1999: 131) underscores the dilemma that confronts black Africans, in particular, Zimbabwe and South Africa and most Sub-Saharan African states, in their relationship with the Bible as stipulated in a well-said anecdote:

When the white man came to our territory of birth he had the Bible in hand and we had the land in possession. The white man said to us “Let us pray.” We closed our eyes in reverence of God. By the time we opened our eyes after the prayer the white man had the land in possession and we had the Bible in our hands (1999: 131).

This shows the position the Bible occupies in relationship to the African historical view of Christianity and colonialization. The Bible has been manipulated in light of the reader-response and context of Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe.

### **2.3. The Bible Interface: - Colonial and Post-Colonial Zimbabwe**

The politics of biblical manipulation are not only locked in the colonial epoch, but they are evident in post-colonial Zimbabwe. Therefore, the Christian religion and the sacred text are viewed as culprits of human-on-human exploitation and suffering in Zimbabwe (Gunda, 2015).

#### **2.3.1. The Colonial Period and Bible Interface**

In the history of the colonialism of Zimbabwe and Africa, the Bible was used as one of the tools to manipulate the black African. It became the suspected document to be resisted and as such Christianity was considered an enemy religion by the traditionalists. Paul Gifford (2008: 205) puts it across that “the Bible has been a controversial document in Africa. For Africa’s traumatic encounter with the West led not only to a loss of political control, but also to a damaged self-understanding”. Africans were best labelled as slaves, people destined for second class citizenry and those to serve the imperialists, Romans 13:1-7 is one text used to force loyalty and allegiance. In it, Paul says the state is an institution appointed by God and that he recommends unqualified Christian subservience to it (Togarasei, 2012: 134). This research is aware that in South Africa, the Apartheid policy for decades was justified as “Christian and morally” correct, by some Christian missionaries (Daneel, 1971: 208). This undertaking of the colonial regime as the essence of the biblical Gospel shows that the Bible was “ab”-used to justify racial segregation, plunder, and exploitation (Gunda and Mtetwa, 2013: 163). It is melancholy that the Bible was manipulated to suit the colonial regime, coupled with the

missionaries' participation in the interpretation of the text to facilitate acceptance of the status quo of suffering of Zimbabweans. Gunda (2015: 14) states that this "experience as a sordid one for the indigenous people as it is evident that the Bible was strongly co-opted into the colonial system of exploitation and plunder".

Musa Dube (2012:2) looks at the usage of the Bible as far back as the coming of the traders and explorers cum missionaries such as David Livingstone (1813-73). Dube goes further to say that the scramble for Africa was through the Bible and this was through interpretation (Dube, 2012: 4). Biblical interpretation becomes crucial in reading the Bible. For Dube, the scramble has not ended. Therefore, new and critical Biblical interpretations are to be engaged so as to produce a reconstructed society. Dube (2012:4) asserts that "Africans should scramble to get Africa back from its colonisers in a history known as the struggle for independence". It continues today in the post-independence era as new challenges are coming up and require postcolonial Biblical interpretations (Dube, 2012).

Musa Dube should be applauded for arguing that even in postcolonial Africa, there is a need to continue with critical Biblical thinking. Still, the Bible has not been spared as a culprit of the continual suffering of people. In observing the unquestionable authority of the Bible, the nationalists of today continue with the legacy of manipulation of the Bible and (religion – Christianity) for personal gains (Gunda and Mtetwa, 2013: 164).

### **2.3.2. The Post-colonial Period and Bible Interface**

While some missionaries were complicit when it came to the reading of the Bible for the benefit and continual plunder in Africa, most of the nationalist legends living and past are and were by-products of missionary enablement. This facilitated even the adoption and selective application of the strategies of the postcolonial imperialists by the nationalists. During the fight against colonialism, the nationalists initially opted to undermine Christianity and the Bible. Understandably, the war against colonialism was a war against Christianity, hence the traditional spiritualism was favoured. While Christianity was regarded as a missionary, colonial religion, many people appreciated its teachings, such that they were influenced and empowered to define their future with hope.

However, the nationalist governments have since realised that there are great benefits to be derived in using the Bible as a tool for the political agenda. Not only the use of Bible but also the selective support, use and promotion of some Christian meetings to advance their political

agenda. In Zimbabwe, all those who question the selective use of the Bible by politicians are regarded as unconverted. Those who shout “Amen” to the usage are rated the converted and true believers (Gunda and Mtetwa, 2013: 163).

With the advent of the Zimbabwean struggles (2000-2016), there is a clear deployment of the Bible as a political resource at a hysterical rate (Chitando, 2013) (Gunda and Mtetwa, 2013: 164). In the arena of the Zimbabwean politics, the Bible remains abused, to meet the interests of the politicians and some dictatorial policies are justified on the basis of Biblical foundations. A clear case is presented by Machingura about the reading of the Biblical Judas Iscariot “sell-outs”, branding each other in the politics of the day in Zimbabwe (Machingura, 2012: 212). Sometimes, it is applied out of context while others would prefer a literal application and interpretation of the biblical texts.

Sadly, in Zimbabwe, the Bible is not manipulated by politicians alone but also by some religious leaders. Gunda and Mtetwa (2013) denounce the confusion which results from religious leaders reading of the Bible to justify morally unjust behaviours. From 2009 to 2016, Zimbabwe has been under the grip of a prophetic craze (Chitando, Gunda and Kugler, 2013: 9). Prophets deploy the Bible as a defence, maintaining that their ‘miracle’ exploits and prosperity decrees are “biblical”. Central to their preaching and actions is the conviction that faith in God results in material prosperity. What is evidently sad in the ‘prosperity gospel’ is that the prophet reaps profits while the followers are pitted with poverty. This display by Christian leaders, “prophets or apostles” has given politicians mileage in ridiculing the church in the public arena. This study acknowledges these and many other instances of sorrow in the application and interpretation of the Bible in Africa.

#### **2.4. The Historical Inspiration of the Bible and Christianity**

Obvious Vengeyi (2013: 24) notes that associating any religion, “especially Christianity and the Bible only with oppression, manipulation and exploitation of the masses is one truth but not all the truth”. Throughout the history of the Church, the Bible has been used, read and interpreted to address the existential struggles and needs of the community. It is, therefore, correct to argue that religion and Christian text - the Bible can be referred to as inspiring emancipation. It is also a historical fact that Christianity journeyed in solidarity with those on the margins of history. There is evidence that the struggle for liberation against colonial exploitation in Africa was interpreted metaphorically using the Exodus narrative, with the nationalist movement leaders typified as the proto-Moses figures. Vengeyi (2013: 24) asserts,

“rather than interpreting the Bible from the perspective of the colonialists, the masses learnt to read the Bible from their cultural, racial and socio-economic standpoint of exploitation.” The Bible is, therefore, a weapon of liberation and an inspirational source for a better future, regardless of the context of pain and crisis.

The Bible is open to reconstructively inspire the postcolonial Zimbabwean community. Historically, the Bible has been used to justify the liberation struggle, and it should be opened to find solutions during crisis periods.

Gerald West and Musa Dube (2000: 117) have looked at the continued inspiring influence of the Bible in African Christianity. African biblical scholarship emphasises the “inclusiveness” of the interpretative communities, be they ordinary or trained readers. Through this encouraging interpretations are achieved that relate to life (West and Dube, 2000: 86), for the purpose of spiritual upliftment and social transformation (West and Dube, 2000: 117, 496). From this understanding Africans (Zimbabweans) approach the Bible as a book of spiritual response, a book for guidance and direction of life (West and Dube, 2000: 253, 385). The Bible is revered as being authoritative by both Christians and non-Christians.

The Bible remains the tool used for swearing in oaths of office or in courts of law. This shows that the Bible in Zimbabwe is regarded as a source of morality.

## **2.5. The Church: The Bible Community**

The missiological perspective of reconstruction argues that the church should be influential in its reading of the Bible. It is through reading and preaching that reconstruction interpretation and understanding is reached by the community of the Bible. Africa has a living oral tradition, a tradition of receiving the message as it is being read and preached. Jesse Mugambi (1995:133) challenges the church to help its members to live more abundantly as members of the society to which that church renders service. In the bible community (church) there are people of all persuasions in society and therefore, reconstruction should be possible.

Considering the position which the Bible holds in Africa and how whether closed or opened the book is alive, the question, is whether every potential reader is competent, and capable of understanding and interpreting the biblical message. Church history teaches that not every reader is a competent reader. In Africa the case of understanding becomes subjective since it is a plural and multi-cultural continent. The Bible in this case is subjected to selective reading and selective application. Ragies Gunda (2013: 11) notes the deployment of violence as a

political weapon by politicians who are also Christians, as an attestation to how the Bible is applied. This understanding makes the Bible open to interpretative extra-legality (Gunda 2013:12).

The Bible has survived with its influence and relevance up to this age for many reasons; chief among them is the availability of the African church- the Bible community that has vowed to live according to the biblical teachings. The sacredness of the Bible has been held highly in the church regardless of the level of the reader<sup>17</sup>. The Bible is considered a religious church book containing the word of God to be believed. Gerald West (2006: 164) argues that “there are “ordinary readers” who read the Bible as the book of society with answers to community’s struggles”. The conversations of these ordinary readers with the Bible is encouraging since they are encouraged, strengthened and their hope is made real (West, 2000). These “ordinary readers” can be the grass root church community that is concerned with belief and confession of faith. These “ordinary-Christian” readers are dedicated to live out the teachings of the Bible. This is critical in reconstruction discourse, since this commitment assures the action for the better of the whole community.

The Church in Africa is highly a respected institution and is considered as the embodiment or custodian of morality (Kinoti, 1997: 119). This is so because the Bible is viewed by the Christian community as a moral book. As Togarasei (2009: 53) rightly observes, in the church community, “the Bible is read to inculcate morality in their existence” The moral sense of Bible has meant that the church becomes a moral institution. Morality here emphasises actions and conduct derived from biblical revelation. Kugel (2007: 23) gives a fourfold sense of scripture (Bible) “The literal sense teaches the facts (deeds), the allegorical, what you should believe, the moral sense what you should do and the analogical, where you are heading” (see also Gunda 2013:12).

The church in Africa is challenged to rebuild the moral value in ways that promote the wellbeing of the community. Mugambi (1995:135) urges that, “the community should be careful to avoid judging the degree of religiousness through moral norms. For the human actions are numerous”. Reconstruction theology challenges the church and theologians to formulate sound interpretations of the Bible that assure the community of necessary hope in

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<sup>17</sup> In Africa, there are categories of Bible reading and readers, ranging from ordinary community readers to theologically trained scholars. The ordinary readers, read the Bible for faith using the literally interpretation.

light of the crisis of the times. The Bible, is a narrative from which the church continues to dynamically derive its theological narrative informed by the community's experience.

When the Bible is opened in Africa it should speak to the context regardless of social setting or educational background of the listeners. It is this reading and interpretation which the church in Africa should attend to regardless of the many passages of terror, violence, war, domination that are enshrined in the book. John Mbiti (1986:26) asserts that "when Africans read the Bible through the community of the book (church) they hear and see a conformity and continuity of their own stories and cultural, social and religious life". As such, the church should influence theologians in cooperation with lower level Bible readers to engage in holistic evangelisation that addresses the realities of the day. The church in Africa should aim to make the people's setting a mirror of the biblical text they read and preach.

Bishop Kevin Dowling (2016) identifies the church as a Bible community called and sent on a mission to listen, discern and dialogue within its context. He argues "the church, through its leaders, should work with the sheep and smell like them. The church which is missional should not be self-absorbing and self-referential; rather it should go to the periphery and mess of life as it really is and experience the realities with the whole community" (Dowling 2016:4). Ultimately, the church's reflections and sense of biblical revelation will come from and be understood through the situations and experiences of the community. The Bible community is challenged "to read the word of God in light of a living revelation, understood in the profound sense of the situations and events of experiences of today" (Ela, 2005: 29).

## **2.6. The Bible: Cultural and Contextual Relevance**

There is no doubt that the Bible remains the most extensively used book for every generation. The hermeneutical influence in reading the Bible takes into consideration the cultural background and the contextual existence of a particular people. The Bible has to make meaning of mission when culturally and contextually appropriate interpretations are applied which values cultural identities.

The contents and context of the Bible are captured through the medium of the Jewish people. The Hebrew religion preserved in the Bible had its cultural roots in the Ancient Near East (Ntrel, 2016: x). The Old Testament is captured in the Hebrew-Jewish cultural setting while the New Testament is a replica of the Greco-Roman civilisation and written in the Greek language. The central question will be, how can the Bible with its ancient cultural setting relate

to and influence African daily lives? It is in the reading of the Bible that we encounter a dialogue of cultures and contexts. Ka Mana (2004:7), alludes that “reconstruction theology helps integrating the great human dynamics, civilisations and cultures in the Bible in search of African self- esteem”. The stories of the Bible connect with a variety of cultures and contexts. The Bible’s variety of cultural references offers not only an opportunity for mission in contexts that are similar to the biblical cultures; it also presents a challenge to mission when cultural distances clearly exist.

Liberation as a theme for Christian theological reflections has been derived from the Exodus narratives in the Old Testament (Mugambi 1995:2). The contextual narrative of Exodus greatly appeals with the contextual realities of the struggle against colonial dominance in Africa and in other parts of the world such as Latin America. This has justified the popularisation of the dictum that the Bible is “an African book” (Gunda, 2013: 13). Several claims have been made to the effect that the “African worldview is the same as the “biblical worldview(s)”, so much that the story of the Israelites, Jews and early Christians is continued on the African continent” (Gunda 2013:13). Then theology becomes that craft fashioned reflection of the worldview, context and life experiences of the people of God. It is through Bible reading that God continues to challenge theological reflection on critical issues that affect the quality of life of humankind, the planet and its resources. Jean-Marc Ela (2005:28) argues that theology is at labour of “deciphering the sense of Biblical revelations in the historical context in which people become aware of their situations and their settings in relationship to God’s transforming presence”.

The intrinsic relation between Bible, Church and mission is not static, but dynamic and evolving (Kvarme, 2013: 5). In mission, the Bible is the manifesto of God’s mission in any context. It contains the mandate to go into the world and influence life. Furthermore, the Bible is treated as the manual for conduct and practice in the effort to inform a better world. Mission, simply taken, means sending and it is the central biblical theme describing the purpose of God’s action in human society. Thereby Bible translations and distribution positively impact the realisation of the *Missio Dei*. Lamin Sanneh (2003: 97) contends that vernacular translation of the scriptures into native African languages changed the course of African history. The newly translated scriptures became a “shelter for indigenous ideals, ideas and values, enabling the receptor cultures to embrace the Bible as their own and not as a Western import or a Jewish book” (Sanneh, 2003: 109). Indeed, the reception of the Bible in the vernacular strongly stimulated the cultural and contextual awareness of African people. Technological

advancement it allows the church to ensure the accessibility of the Bible, and biblical text interpretations at a click.

Jesse Mugambi (1995:22) stipulates that “Christian theology starts from the Bible; which is a library of books”. This book has been appropriated in the fight for a relevant life. The theological task is to interpret the biblical text in the context of its literary category and literary genre. It is this understanding that makes it possible to develop a theology which is relevant and meaningful in the given context (Mugambi 1995:22). This theological actualisation of the biblical text using the thought forms of the context and cultural identities brings about the necessary integration between the Bible, the receptor and the contextual realities in a dialogue. Ukpong (2000:24) asserts that this dialogue will “engender commitment to personal, ecclesiastical, and societal transformation”.

The argument that Africa has a strong cultural heritage and high religious consciousness should make it easy to develop a justice-oriented community. It is this culture of community and being that requires interrogation in light of the Ezra-Nehemiah motif in reconstruction discourse. It is the missiological aspect of church which should emphasise the holistic approach to transformation. This holistic approach is not foreign to the Afro-cultural heritage. Ukpong (2000:24) argues that “when culture becomes the interpretive framework, the unitive view of reality is re-engaged on the level of understanding. The African worldview perceives reality not only as composed of matter and spirit, sacred and profane but as a unity with visible and invisible aspects of divine origin”. This interconnectedness between human reality, God, the cosmological effects and the sense of communal consequences becomes a critical component when reading the Bible and seeking relevance to reconstruction.

## **2.7. The Bible and Reconstruction**

Reconstruction invokes the hope for a future that is better than the present shame and the past historical limitations. The interpretation of Ezra-Nehemiah for post-colonial reconstruction, in the continued scramble for Africa’s reconstruction, in Zimbabwe, should produce that hope of a fortified nation. The Bible itself endows the church with means to conceive the message of hope and transformation.

At independence, it was hoped Zimbabwe would be a just, democratic nation that values human rights, equal distribution of wealth, good governance, respect of the rule of law, poverty eradication and political pluralism. The situation, three and a half decades after political

independence, is showing very little progress towards the dream<sup>18</sup>. The biblical and theological hermeneutics of the Ezra-Nehemiah Motif, as presented in the Ezra-Nehemiah biblical corpus should make sense to the deplorable Zimbabwean state of affairs. Zimbabwe, a country that fully embodies the hopes and disappointments of post-independence can be transformed by the undertaking of reconstruction (Chitando, 2009; Dube, 2012).

As scant and diverse as the biblical narrative materials in Ezra-Nehemiah are, it presents a fair story of the heroic attributes of a Jewish community that defied great odds to transform its status and to restore its dignity. Valentin Dedji (2003:16) asserts that the “books should be read critically, taking into consideration all the hermeneutical, exegetical, theological and ethical limitations”. The narrative in Nehemiah also should be read metaphorically to alert and inspire the Zimbabwean community that decay, destruction and crisis is not the end, but only a means to the determination in reconstruction. As it is, Ezra-Nehemiah’s commitment and strategies in seeking a communal preservation remains a remarkable paradigm of political, religious and economic powers and a decisive commitment to national reconstruction. This Biblical category presents a concept of the moral life of the community as a determinative resource for a successful reconstruction process (Nehemiah 2:17-18) (Farisani, 2002). Ka Mana then echoes that “these Biblical narratives especially of the person, message and ideals of Jesus Christ represent a universal solution to African’s crisis, the seed of a new passion for living and a new spirit of resourcefulness for building the future” (Mana, 2004: 3). The Bible, here, is taken to be a tool for reconstruction. While this research acknowledges many other biblical texts that are relevant for reconstruction, Ezra-Nehemiah becomes the grand narrative for post-colonial Zimbabwe’s reconstruction discourse.

## **2.8. Ezra-Nehemiah in the Old Testament**

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah are regarded as one book in the Hebrew Bible although the Christian Bible tends to separate them into two individual books. There are two schools of thought regarding the composition and dating of Ezra-Nehemiah. One is the “traditional school” which maintains that the Chronicler Historian authored Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicle

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<sup>18</sup> The assertion that Zimbabwe is politically independent from the Rhodesian Colonial Masters, is historical. However, the situation in post-colonial Zimbabwe leaves many to question what freedom is and independence, when there is subjugation, alienation, denial and silencing and selective application of law. Many common Zimbabweans are suffering, failing to access social services, failing to go to school. There is one political party in rule and control of the government since 1980.

belong to one corpus (2 Chronicles 36:22-23 and Ezra 1:1-3) (Childs, 1979; Wafawanaka, 2012: 351). This traditional view affirms that Ezra-Nehemiah, historically, is one book. The proponents of this school consider the narrative form (Hayden, 1985: 490), and the historical account of Israel and Judah, being different from that of the Deuteronomistic Historian (Throntveit, 1992: 9). The identical parallels (Eskenazi, 1986: 42) (Fensham, 1982), and similarity in the literary style (Clines, 1984) points to one corpus and this includes the similarity in ordering of the sacrifices and sacrificial materials (2 Chronicles 2:3; 8:13; 2 Chronicles 5:1 and Ezra 1:7; 6:9; 7:17-19) (Ryle, 1917: 10; Cave, 1993). Of interest then, is the ideological and theological distinctiveness in Ezra-Nehemiah, for the Chronicler Historian is fond of renewal, reform and reconstruction symbolised by a return to religious purity (Blenkinsopp, 1988: 47; Cave, 1993).

The other school of thought separates Chronicles from Ezra-Nehemiah and goes on to argue that the primary authors of Ezra-Nehemiah are Ezra (Ezra Memoir), Nehemiah (Nehemiah Memoir), respectively, and a final redactor being an unknown Jew (Williamson, 1987; Farisani, 2002). This school upholds its arguments based on the factor that the books of Ezra-Nehemiah were originally one unit (Wright, 1946: 5). It is upheld that this was so until Origen (AD 185-254) divided Ezra-Nehemiah into two books (Farisani, 2002: 153; Cave, 1993). There is a commonality in Ezra-Nehemiah which suggests that they used one source of reference (Ezra 10:18 and Nehemiah 7:6) (Cave, 1993). This school of thought also affirms that Ezra-Nehemiah, historically, is one book and separate from the Chronicles.

This research appreciates the two schools of thought as they stand without detailing them further since it not in the scope of this study to critically produce the composition or dating of Ezra-Nehemiah. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this thesis, there can never be a conscious, scholarly consensus on the composition and dating. This shows that to every given text there are different contextual interpretations, methods and tools. That being the case, in this study, the traditional historical view of Ezra-Nehemiah being considered one book, shall be upheld while using “books” as they appear today.

The books of Ezra-Nehemiah describe how God used Nehemiah to understand the specific task of building the broken walls of Jerusalem. Ezra-Nehemiah accomplished the task in 52 days with commitment and determination, bringing healing, restoration, reassurance and reconstruction (Poggo, 2013). The God of the Ezra-Nehemiah, was the God of support to those

suffering and in servitude. God shows human beings a future of hope, which enables them to rally behind the vision of “let us reconstruct”.

## **2.9. Liberating the Bible for Reconstruction: The Case of Biblical Hermeneutics**

It can be said that the Bible is read from different points of view and different meanings are produced. For this reason, ideological stances; either partial or prejudicial, are evident from the reading of the Bible (Farisani, 2002). However, the Bible itself is not ideologically neutral nor do all of its parts form a harmonious ideological unity. From the above sections, one is inclined to conclude that the Bible is naked as it has been used as a tool for manipulation and oppression. The Bible is also naked because interpretations is achieved using various methods and tools. Nevertheless, there is a side of the Bible that makes it such an authoritative resource, a manipulated text and still valid for reconstruction. Gerald West (1999: 134) observes that regardless of its abuse and manipulation the Bible remains a symbol of the presence of God in the life of the poor, marginalised, oppressed and the suffering. As the text is granted contextual and social construction significance, it becomes powerful, meaningful and relevant irrespective of the historical claims. Hence, “liberating the Bible is to set it free from being presented as either a reactionary document or a condemned text” (Lochhead, 1983: 74). It also involves much liberation from the reader’s perspective and ideological captivity.

In 1991 Canaan Banana made a call for “Rewriting the Bible” (Banana, 1993: 17). For him, rewriting the Bible is necessary, so that God can be liberated from dogmas that make God the property of manipulative syndicates. Also, it is a project to liberate the Bible from being used as a tool to perpetuate selfish status quos. Canaan Banana is categorical in saying that “the re-interpretation of the Bible remains inadequate, as oppression and exploitation would certainly be perpetuated by the selfish syndicates (Banana, 1993:18). Re-writing would include revision and editing, including the voices which are not reflected in the Bible (Reed, 1996: 283; Gunda, 2015: 69-71). Interestingly, the same call was made by Kanzira a columnist in Uganda Daily News Paper on May 24 1991, who argued “if the Bible is to make sense, then it must be re-written or infused with world history into which humanity will not be divided into chosen and foreign” (Kanzira, 1991). This call for re-writing the Bible was necessitated by the persistent oppression, manipulation, exploitation, injustices and inequalities evident in the world. For Banana and Kanzira, the re-writing proposal was a liberation-reconstructive project. Then Ragies Gunda (2015: 71) rightly argues that “this liberation would not only free those who are enslaved today but it would also free up those who are enslaved to the enslavement of others”.

In this case, liberation would seek to eliminate those things that divide humanity. Therefore, the call for rewriting the Bible should be applauded as it seeks to make the Bible meaningful to every human being, regardless of colour and race. A Bible or biblical text should reflect the realities of the world, at any given period and time, requiring even the complex to become the ordinary in the given context. This enterprise of re-writing of the Bible, was by then aimed at reconstructing the image of the text in relationship to the questions and experience of the community of faith.

It is important, to revisit the hermeneutical enterprise to re-read the Bible in the face of its continued manipulation, and “the widespread existence of injustice, inequality, inequity, and unfair treatment of God’s people” (Gunda, 2015: 15). Through re-reading the Bible transformatively that it can be liberated from the hands of the manipulators, for there is a transformative meaning embedded in the text. Jesse Mugambi (1995; 2003:128) argues that “there should be a movement from contemporary context, experience and culture into the biblical text”. It is through this undertaking that the meaning of a text becomes relative to the readers.

## **2.10. The Case of Biblical Interpretation: Hermeneutics and Biblical Criticism**

It is generally accepted and acknowledged that there are several legitimate and plausible meanings a given text (Patte, 2012: 44). The case of Biblical interpretation will penetrate the territory of scrutinising the scriptural texts so as to produce a relevant and legitimate meaning of a given context. At the same time, Biblical interpretation acknowledges the plausible fluidity of any given text as analysed from different contexts.

### **2.10.1. The meaning of Hermeneutics**

There are various views on the definition of the term hermeneutics. However, it is generally about techniques to interpret, understand and translate a written or spoken script.

Hermeneutics is a word derived from the Greek word *hermeneuo*, meaning translation, interpretation and explanation (Verstraelen, 1993: 272; Nthamburi and Waruta, 1997: 40). Hermeneutics is broadly defined as the “science of interpretation” or “the attempt” to understand something that someone else has written or said (Verstraelen, 1993: 272). Therefore, biblical hermeneutics is the art or technique of interpreting the biblical text in order to understand its original context and then find its contemporary meaning. Hermeneutics defines the rules one uses when seeking out the meaning of the scriptures (Benson, 1995: 88).

It raises questions about the nature of knowledge, the use of language and the scientific and ontological presuppositions operative in the mind of the exegete. Thiselton (2009:1) opines that “hermeneutics explores how we read, understand and handle texts, especially those written in another time frame or in another context of life from the one it is being interrogated into for meaning and relevance”. Therefore, hermeneutics is employed to make the biblical text relevant to a given context in light of the prevailing situation and circumstances. It stands as the bridge that closes the gap and makes meaning of biblical times, context and the contemporary circumstances. Further to this understanding, hermeneutics is said to be a science or an art of interpretation, especially of the Scriptures (Encyclopedic, 2003), for it scientifically interrogates biblical traditions and puts them dialogically to the particular needs and aspirations of the people or of a community.

Grobel (1996: 7) underscores that interpretation represents either of two technical words: “exegesis” or and “hermeneutics” which were originally synonymous but now are arbitrarily distinguished. Exegesis is the detailed specific explication of a text while hermeneutics is the model underlying such explication (Grobel, 1996: 7). Hermeneutics is fairly narrowed to mean contextual reading of the Scripture as the community of faith seeks to make the biblical text relevant to its settings. It can be held that hermeneutics is the articulate model of reading the Bible alongside the community’s circumstances, context and needs. Certainly, scriptures can only be understood in relation to the total life; - lived, experienced, and read of a given community. Interpretation is made real when there is a fusion of horizons; that is the horizon of the text; its author, culture, and context and the level of the reader, culture, experience and context. It is through Biblical hermeneutics that caution is cautiously discerned, so as to produce the meaning intended by the text and the context. In this case, the context provides the “operational platform on which a particular theology and conclusion can be drawn, while the text in question provides the analytical stimulus for creative reflection” (Mugambi, 2012: 23). Nthamburi and Waruta (1997:40), note that unless an “African is enabled to understand scripture in his/her own cultural patterns, his/her contextual existence, his/her own life’s experiences, the scripture will not only lose its validity but its authoritative relevance”. African hermeneutic scholarship must demonstrate that African religious experience and heritage are not illusory in reconstruction discourse.

### 2.10.2. The meaning of Exegesis

Exegesis is an English term derived from the Greek word *exegeomai*, which means to lead out or to read out of the meaning, interpretation or explanation (Hayes and Holladay, 1987). However, interpretation and explanation become subjective to the reader. Douglas Stuart comments on exegesis in relationship with hermeneutics as a scientific, thorough systematic and analytical study of a Biblical passage, so as to arrive at a useful interpretation, meaning and explanation of any given passage (Stuart, 1984). Michael Gorman (2009: 10) explains exegesis as “the careful historical, literary and theological analysis of a text”. Therefore, exegesis seeks to categorise and to analyse the text historically, literarily and theologically for the benefit of the community of faith. The task of hermeneutics and biblical interpretation (exegesis) is to bring the Bible to life in a given community. This can be achieved by bringing the text into an existential relationship with the circumstances of the community.

Gerald West (1995) brings an interesting dimension to biblical interpretation. For West (1995: 44) “there is no innocent interpretation, no innocent interpreter and no innocent text”. This observation by West makes it possible to read a text in context and from within a context, taking cognisance of circumstance and situations of the people of faith. The South African theologian Manas Buthelezi clarifies this point with regard to the African context of the church as a community of the Bible saying;

The Bible remains a silent book as long as we content ourselves with almost repeating the Bible phrases and imagining that our hearers have all of a sudden been transposed into the situation of the church of the first century. The reverse should take place. Through the medium of homiletical exegesis, the content of the biblical message is transposed from the first century situation to that of the hearer in such a way that the biblical-situational-indigenous elements are replaced with those of the 20<sup>th</sup> century hearer of (South) Africa. For to preach is to unfold the message of the Bible to the situation of the hearer rather than to unfold and transpose the hearer to the situation of the Bible (Buthelezi, 1977: 56).

Here the main aim is to make the Bible message relevant to the context of the audience. It is through the mission of the church that the Good News is communicated with the intention of making the love of God real in today’s crisis. Zimbabwe is in a crisis (Moore, 2003). Crisis, has been defined as “a situation in which the old framework that guaranteed a certain balance has collapsed and no new one has been found to replace it as yet” (Ilunga, 1984: 12) . While Collins English Dictionary online renders crisis also as an unstable period, especially one of

extreme trouble and or suffering with danger in politics, economic, social and cultural<sup>19</sup>. In the period under research the Zimbabwean situation is characterised by surprises which threaten the importance of existential values and systems of wellbeing. The people of faith have to read the Bible from and for the meaning of reconstruction and transformation.

Therefore, when one reads the biblical text of Ezra-Nehemiah through the hermeneutical lenses of reconstruction, this text will become alive in the Zimbabwean desire. The experiences and concerns of the people of Zimbabwe three and a half decades after colonisation, become the reconstruction hermeneutical focus.

### **2.11. Biblical Criticism focusing on Reconstruction: The Ezra-Nehemiah Motif**

The hermeneutical and exegetical exercise of interpreting the Biblical text within any given context leads to biblical criticism. The Bible will be in the spotlight of different perspectives as readers search to establish the meaning of the text and to try to close the gap between past and present. It is arguable that the scientific analysis of biblical forms should not only provide insight into the character of the community that shapes the text but also produce meaning relevant to the reading community (Powell, 1990). This is all to do with judgemental perspectives that bring biblical criticism to the surface.

Biblical criticism has been defined as the umbrella term which refers to different ways of reading and interpreting the Bible. Like Joseph's coat of many colours, so are the interpretive tools and models ranging from pragmatic to abstract (Tate, 2006). Lovemore Togarasei attests that "throughout the history of biblical interpretation, specific and different methods and models have been propounded and applied" (Togarasei, 2008: 78). The justification for a specific biblical interpretation method has been that the Bible has power to generate new values in given communities and to be put under scrutiny and judgement. Further, the Bible can be used as a tool to oppress and to liberate, to bless and to curse, to destroy and to reconstruct. Proper interpretive tools become a necessity in this light (Togarasei, 2008: 78). Some of the models and methods of biblical criticism include; sources criticism, redaction criticism, feminist criticism, theological criticism, reader-response criticism, historical criticism, post-colonial criticism and narrative criticism (Green, 1995).

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/crisis> accessed [19/09/2015]

It has been noted that most biblical criticism methods have a particular bias. Togarasei states that it is difficult to be precisely objective as one's interpretation is influenced by one's cultural background and one's circumstance of address (Togarasei, 2008: 80; Oladunjoye, 2005: 1-9). Rigorous objectivity is to be determined by the community and the critic, as the critic is there to bring the meaning of the text according to the circumstances of the community (Keegan, 1985). This is why Mosala (1989: 26) contends that "a theology that has the capacity to liberate the suffering people needs to rediscover the context and the culture of the poor peasants in order to find the hermeneutical starting point". The reconstruction theology identifies with the poor suffering citizens in Zimbabwe.

## **2:12. Demarcating African Reconstruction hermeneutics in African Biblical Interpretation**

African biblical interpretation has become a thriving enterprise in and out of the academy, from the ancient past to contemporary times. In the political and economic sectors, the enterprise is being African renaissance. In other words, understanding of Africa reawakening has cut across every sector of existence.

Justin Ukpong (2000: 12) has realised and traced the development of biblical interpretation in Africa into three phases; 1) Phase 1930-1970; reactive and apologetic focused on legitimising African religion and culture, dominated by the comparative method. This phase is characterised by wide spread "missing – understanding" and condemnation of African religion and culture, triggering some reactive comparative responses (Ukpong 2000:12). Western political ideologies were defining the terrain of interpretation, hence the aspects of comparative similarities and notion of apologetic justification surfaced more. 2) Phase 1970-1990s; reactive and proactive, uses African context as a resource for biblical interpretation, dominated by inculturation-evaluative method and liberation hermeneutics. The reactive approach gave birth to the proactive approach in which the African context became the resource of hermeneutics. This phase identified more with inculturation and liberation. It has to be noted that Christianity was still treated as the foreign religion and the efforts were to bring the Bible alive in the African religio-cultural context (Ukpong 2000:14). Liberation hermeneutics uses the Bible as a resource for struggle against oppression of any kind based on the understanding that God does not sanction oppression but rather stands on the side of the oppressed to liberate them. Throughout the Bible the message is that while the poor are to be loved, there should be commitment to action aimed at eradicating poverty and oppression. 3) Phase 3 of the 1990s

and beyond; proactive and reconstructive, recognising the reader and African culture as a subject of biblical interpretation with Afro-centric hermeneutics and method. The African context is seen as both, providing the critical resources for biblical interpretation and the subject of interpretation, with the reader becoming the orientation of biblical hermeneutics (Ukpong 2000:23). In this way the Bible is read against a specific concrete human situation, the situation of suffering, poverty, unemployment, brain draining, ethnic wars, political violence, and economic instability. These begin to be interrogated in the context of mission, Bible and church. It is through this that a missional perspective on social transformation and social commitment to liberation and reconstruction is achieved.

Commenting on the African biblical interpretation, Gerald West (1995: 131) conveniently came up with three categories or phases; 1) Historical Critical approach, which focuses on the history of the text, its authorship and original audience. 2) Literary phase, focuses on the text and its underlying structure and sees meaning of the text as attained by decoding the text. 3) Contextual approach/phase, focuses on the context and realities of the community of readers. This led Gerald West (2004: 56) to identify that biblical interpretation in Africa typically consists of three poles; the pole of the biblical text, the pole of the African context and the pole of appropriation. Jonathan Draper (2001: 149) has referred to this as a “tri-polar approach”.

Jesse Mugambi (2003) dedicated considerable time to entangling the aspect of hermeneutics. He used the analogy of colour stating “the Gospel (biblical message) is like a colour. One cannot perceive the colour except through the substance of which it is an attribute” (2003:154). Reading Mugambi and having further conversations with him clearly produced out his Afro-centrality hermeneutics, he questions why Christian doctrine and the Bible continue to be appropriated according to Graeco-Roman thought forms (Mugambi & Smit 2004:8). African interpretation should affirm the relevance of the Gospel and the validity of the cultural and religious heritage of African people (Mugambi and Smit, 2004: 9). The contextualisation of the biblical message has to take into account the African people and experiences as constant factors. Mugambi challenges the literalist reading of the biblical message that puts the text as subject and object of doing theology. He asserts that there is fraught in asserting the text as the constant and assuming the context to be the variable in interpretation (Mugambi 2003:166). For him, contextualisation is reconstructive when there is energy in seeking relevance and applicability. He argues that, “reconstruction hermeneutics is allowing a fluid two-way approach between text and context in which the context should be the foundation and the platform from which theology is articulated” (Mugambi 2003:168). In this line of thought,

Zimbabwean realities of existence become necessary in developing a theology of reconstruction. The realities in post-colonial Zimbabwe cannot be generally addressed but particularly engaged in doing theology of reconstruction.

In addition to the above hermeneutical articulation, this thesis also utilised the following; post-colonial hermeneutics, hermeneutics of suspicion and hermeneutics of transformation, in light of the text of Ezra- Nehemiah and the context of Zimbabwe. The thesis seeks to assert the applicability and relevance of the reading Ezra-Nehemiah. It is at this point that Jesse Mugambi during an interview on 4 August 2017 alludes that, “hermeneutics, focuses on the themes that the text produces while exegesis is more on particularity of the text. For themes can be interpreted using the Afro-philosophies, myths and Afro-cultural heritages”<sup>20</sup>.

### **2.13. Post-Colonial Criticism: Ezra-Nehemiah Reconstruction Model**

As biblical criticism methods develop, the context and circumstance shape the interpretation and judgement perspective on any given text. African postcolonial hermeneutics has been mostly situated and sustained within the African feminist engagement of biblical interpretation (Dube, 1997; Dube, 2000; Dube, 2012). Postcolonial hermeneutics takes into account the Africanness of the African people and their struggles in light of the text to be appropriated. Musa Dube asserts that “postcolonial hermeneutics is deeply suspicious of the Bible’s own imperial charter. In other words the imperial attitudes and practices performed by missionaries and colonial forces are explicitly related to the imperial tendencies of the biblical texts themselves” (Dube 2000:10, 15). While this is so, postcolonial hermeneutics helps in disentangling the Bible from the model in which it was presented to the African reader. It gives relevance to see within colonial legacy the neglected voice, demonised culture and identity. The African postcolonial “reading of the text decolonises all the unitary resources such as language and literature (oral, traditional and written) for the sake of transformed postcolonial critique and theological consciousness” (Dube 2000:49)

Postcolonial biblical criticism arose in light of the role and place the Bible played and upheld during the process of colonisation. It is concerned with the socio-political context in which the voice of the other is being regarded as not important Sugirtharajah (1995; 2001). Punt (2003:

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<sup>20</sup> During a Skype conversation/interview on Thursday 4 August 2017. This conversation produced more insights into this thesis. Prof Jesse Mugambi dreams reconstruction, talks reconstruction, walks reconstruction and drinks reconstruction. Reconstruction permeates his blood stream.

60), states that postcolonial criticism as a biblical hermeneutics, can help to “revalue the colonial ideologies, stigmatisation and negative portrayal embedded in the content, the plot and characterisation, which helps in ‘reconstructive’ reading”. This enables the reader to appreciate the concerns of liberation struggles. It interrogates colonial interpretation so as to draw attention to the inescapable effects of colonisation and colonial ideals. This way post-colonial criticism will review colonial intentions; political, cultural or economic, which then will inform and influence the post-independent context of any given community (Rukundwa, 2008: 341).

This review and influence should aim at producing a better future from the hurts of the colonial past. Furthermore, it should ensure and safeguard the values of transformation. The post-independent context should be better in outlook in the sense of service delivery, ensuring human dignity and integrity. It is through post-colonial criticism that accountability and communal responsibility has to be nurtured.

#### **2.14. Hermeneutics of Suspicion: Reading of Ezra-Nehemiah for Reconstruction**

This approach is attributed to the French philosopher, Paul Ricoeur (1970). Hermeneutics of suspicion essentially operates from the reader oriented perspective. It encapsulates the call for objectivity grounded in some way in the text and yet, at the same time seek to remain “open” to what the text may have to say (Robinson, 1995: 12). Beneath or behind the surface there are causal forces that explain the conscious phenomena that precisely lay bare the true meaning behind all hermeneutics. Hermeneutics of suspicion attempts to decode meaning that is disguised within the text. This approach takes that the meaning may not be completely explicit and therefore, symbols are viewed as layers of meaning. Accordingly, Ruthellen Josselson (2004: 3) asserts that “suspicion carries pejorative connotations. Therefore, this interpretive tool is best referred to as hermeneutics of demystification”.

All hermeneutics involve suspicion that the text presents us with a challenge to believe that the true meaning of the text emerges only through interpretation (Stewart, 1989: 285). Interpretation is developed in a gap between the real meaning of the text and its apparent meaning. In the course of interpretation, suspicion plays a pivotal role. Hermeneutics of suspicion involves saying, explaining, and translating the text for the benefit of transforming the context (Stewart, 1989: 297).

From Ricoeur’s point of view, language itself is from the outset, and for the most part, distorted, it means something other than what it says. It has a double meaning and equivocal

(Robinson, 1995: 24). In this approach, the hermeneutics of demystification asserts that experience is assumed not to be transparent in itself; surface appearance masks depth realities. A told story conceals an untold reality (Josselson, 2004: 12). Therefore, in this case, the approach applied to Ezra-Nehemiah produces the restorative meaning which is collaborative and liberative, in essence. Hermeneutics of suspicion recognises the relativity of all accounts; it takes as axiomatic that the context, experience and circumstances are relevant to the meaning underpinning the reality being told. Further, the hermeneutics of suspicion is “cognisant of the multi-determination of life and the multi-vocality of an account. It therefore, seeks to explicate the interrelationship of various “voices” or “persons” or “selves” depicted in a narrative” (Josselson, 2004: 13).

Therefore, approaching Ezra-Nehemiah from the hermeneutics of demystification/suspicion in the context and experience in Zimbabwe, it is self-evident and relevant to decode meaning from the Biblical narrative. The person of Nehemiah and the character displayed by his fellow Jews is a spirit of determination relevant for reconstruction. Further to that, Ezra-Nehemiah is resonant with the desire to transform, indigenise and for sustainable development, which are catch phrases in Zimbabwe.

### **2.15. Hermeneutics of Transformation: Ezra-Nehemiah Transformation Model**

The Ezra-Nehemiah biblical text can be approached from a transformative standpoint since the society was in a state of shame and required transformation. There is need to call attention to the reading of Ezra-Nehemiah that then could inform transformed practice and behaviour. The question which should be asked is how the reading of the Ezra-Nehemiah narratives might reform the peoples’ dispositions and influence, their practices and attitudes. There are certain elements that incline people to act and to react in a certain way. Hence the reading of Ezra-Nehemiah transformative should steer and stimulate transformative attitudes and perceptions (Acemonglu and Robinson, 2012: 67).

Hermeneutics of transformation is not seeking so much for the meaning of the text as it is concerned with the benefit the readers or community of faith draw from the text. It has been stated by Thiselton (1992: 23), that historical hermeneutical theory up to 1970 gave so little attention to the capacity of biblical texts to produce transforming effects; rather, they concentrated much on transmitting certain disclosures of getting the meaning right. It is now, through the transformative reading of biblical narratives that effective meaning that shapes and realigns people’s attitude towards their environment and neighbours is produced. Therefore,

the Ezra-Nehemiah text in the context of reconstruction discourse in Zimbabwe, produces meaning of transformation that is possible, that has the right attitudes and the proper *uhunhu* or *ubuntu* behaviours.

## **2.16. Biblical Nehemiah: Paradigm Shifts for Reconstruction Theology Post-colonial Zimbabwe**

The theme of reconstruction exhibited in the biblical Nehemiah resonates with the demands of the community of postcolonial Zimbabwe. Utilising the selected hermeneutics, the biblical story of Nehemiah inspires reconstruction. The following section will outline how the reading of Nehemiah can be employed in relationship to Zimbabwe's postcolonial context. The section will not be exhaustive; it will highlight few areas of critical reading of Ezra-Nehemiah in reconstruction. The paradigm of reconstruction is to be revitalised as a movement of the moment in Zimbabwe, which have seen much emphasis given on democratisation, indigenisation, and nationalisation. These are to be incorporated into the movement of reconstruction paradigm.

### **2.16.1. Exile: Zimbabwe's Case**

The reference to Susa (Nehemiah 1) shows that Nehemiah was part of the exilic community in Persia. The events of the exile are described in 2 Chronicles 36. The Israelite exiles were taken to Babylonia where they suffered. The exile was not simply the consequence of power struggles between nations and empires. There was a blessing and cursing warning in Deuteronomy 28. Despite repeated warnings and opportunities to repent, (Nehemiah 9:29) the Israelites continually disobeyed God and they were sent into exile. Whilst there are many theories for explaining exile, Jeremiah 7:5-9 seems to suggest that exile was a result of Judah's neglect of the covenant principles and God's given principles of existence. Hence, Nehemiah implies the same theory (Nehemiah 1:6; 9:26-30).

Zimbabwe identifies with Israel's situation as many of its nationalities are experiencing exile in foreign lands while there is "celebrated peace", at home. Exile brings suffering, family disintegration, denial to belonging, manipulation, and denial to freedom of worth. Therefore, the populace in Zimbabwe is denied freedom and a manipulative monopoly is evident. The economic struggle in Zimbabwe pushed many people into economic exile. In addition, the political instability from 1996 to 2016, caused many to seek political asylum (political exile). Historically, where there is civil unrest in the form of war, people flee into exile. While exile

implies physical relocation, this thesis argues that exile can be experienced in the homeland. This is the case of Zimbabwe, where the remnants are also in exile, characterised by bad governance, unequitable distribution of resources and denial of human dignity.

In 2004, Zimbabweans witnessed the closure of independent newspapers and the imprisonment or expelling of journalists on a systematic and organised scale. The private media<sup>21</sup> was classified as an enemy of the post-colonial state. Jonathan Moyo<sup>22</sup> was quoted saying, “the main enemy of Zimbabwean ZANU PF government is not the financial sector but the media” (Melber, 2004: 42; Muchena, 2013: 23). Journalists were labelled terrorists in their country. During this time, some notorious media reforms and restrictions were legalised; for instance, Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA)<sup>23</sup> (Matsilele, 2013). This has been applied to stifle the freedom of journalism and independent (from ZANU PF) news reporting. Closely related to AIPPA law is the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), which was passed in 2002 to replace a colonial legislation known as the Law of Order and Maintenance Act (LOMA) (Chuma, 2004). The state police in Zimbabwe uses this POSA to approve or to disapprove of public gatherings including Christian related ones during the period of 2002-2013. In Zimbabwe, many flee due to economic unrest, and political polarisation, as in the case of Mutumwa Mawere<sup>24</sup>. This led the research to attribute that some Zimbabweans

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<sup>21</sup> From 1980 -1992 Zimbabwe’s daily newspaper market had been dominated by two state-controlled papers, The Herald, published from Harare and the sister paper, The Chronicle published from Bulawayo (Zimpapers). It was in 1992 that the Daily Gazette was launched. This shows that monopoly was the order of the day from 1980-1992. In 2004 suppression of the private media was applied to maintain as certain peculiar type of journalism and news circulation. See also Dumisani Moyo (2005)

<sup>22</sup> A Zimbabwean ZANU PF Politician, former Minister of Information (2000-2005) and currently Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education. He is a member of the ZANU PF Politburo and Central Committee. He was the one who spearheaded the media reforms of 2002. He is the brain behind the 75% local content on broadcast media and he created many of “Patriotic” ZANU PF and Liberation Jingles played from 2000 to 2014 on the Zimbabwean airwaves.

<sup>23</sup> Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and Public Order and Security Act (POSA) were enacted to stifle dissenting voices. Journalists were to be prosecuted if the news was screened under the draconian ministry of Information policies to be false or critical of ZANU Pf. These laws were rated undemocratic and repressive as through their application newspapers were closed, and journalists were forced into exile.

<sup>24</sup> Mutumwa Mawere, one of the technocratic brains of Zimbabwe, is now in exile South Africa. He is a businessman with interests in mining, financial services, agro industries, international trade among others. He is the former owner of the Shabanie Mines which solely produced asbestos in Mashava and Zvishawane. Mawere’s empire crumbled following a fallout with government in the late 1990s. He joins in exile the likes of Strive Masiyiwa (Econet Wireless owner and founder) and James Makamba (Telecel Zimbabwe mobile services major shareholder).

were in exile while on the land and some were forced to leave the Zimbabwean land to go into other parts of the world.

Adele Berlin (2005: 65) provides a critical dimension of exile saying, “exile does not necessarily mean living outside of the former kingdom of Judah. People living in the land of Israel after 538 BCE also felt that they were in exile as long as the temple was not rebuilt and even afterwards, as long as they were under the alienating rule”. This assertion provides that people experience exile when their dignity, identity and value is trampled upon. Exile therefore, is not necessarily geographically defined, but it can be defined in light of denial, subjugation and suppression of human value. It is evident in Nehemiah 5:1 that there was a great outcry among men and their wives against their brothers, who were inflicting pain and suffering. So they were experiencing exile in their home land.

The Zimbabwean exile case is exposed, especially when analysing values of good governance. Jallow H. B in 2004 at an International Conference of The African Commission on Human and People’s Rights held in Uppsala, critically presented the principles of good governance when he said,

Good governance is not only about majorities, it involves protection of all, including minorities such as those in opposition. The right to free speech and dissent rests on the existence of an independent private media – both in print and on the radio, given literacy levels in Africa. The establishment of independent civil society organisations, the creation of the democratic space for them to operate effectively must be nurtured to diffuse the over-centralisation of power and authority, to empower the ordinary citizen and thereby reduce the risks of abuse by centralised authority. Governments should relentlessly strive to ensure the realisation of all categories of rights and freedoms for all without distinction (Jallow, 2004).

Exile in your homeland is painful and Zimbabwe is the home of suffering of the populace. The civil society voice is denied and even the Christians are put into “hibernation”, as the pulpit pronouncements become individualistic, not national prophecies (Gunda, 2017: 5). The reconstruction paradigm challenges theologians and other like-minded players in transformation to demand good governance and to make African leadership more accountable to the ordinary people (Mugambi, 2003: 30).

### **2.16.2. Patriotism Signifies Responsibility**

Nehemiah 1 (one) introduces Nehemiah as a desperate patriot, in exile who is eager to hear news of the situation in the homeland. The report and influence of patriotism is displayed by Hanani (Nehemiah 1:2) who took with concern the situation in Judah and the status of Jerusalem. Hanani points to the value of being a Jew which triggered in Nehemiah the national transformative eagerness to join the remnants in Jerusalem. Here, a patriot is one who sacrifices for the sake of transformation. Hanani is a true patriot who stimulates value of belonging in others such as Nehemiah (Poggo, 2013). Therefore, Hanani and Nehemiah are true patriots. Hanani identifies like minds concerning the situation in Judah.

The responsibility of a patriot is to display a good example in circumstances of survival of the fittest. Thus, Jephthah Gathaka (2007:269) argues that “such a responsibility goes hand in hand with moral probity... guided by the moral code, for the good of the community”. This patriotic responsibility takes the desire of justice as the locus par excellence for action. Nehemiah is convinced that the walls and the gates can be reconstructed regardless of the forces arrayed against it.

### **2.16.3. Post-Exilic Inclusive Strategy**

Reconstruction in Zimbabwe “demands in every sense a post-exilic theology” (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 7). The concept displayed in Nehemiah 2:11-18, followed by Nehemiah 3, depicts the inclusiveness of nationalities. In this interpretation, the attitude of belonging measures the demands of reconstruction. Jesse Mugambi (1998: 128) argues that, “for social transformation and reconstruction, Ezra-Nehemiah are possible post-exilic narratives which are appropriate to be read in Africa”.

Zerubbabel, the governor and Jeshua the Zadokite high priest are mentioned in 1Esdras (Ezra4:1-5) and Nehemiah 10:9 as the new David and new Zadok, the “sons of oil”, (anointed) and they were influential in promulgating and re-establishing Israel’s legitimate institutions (Cross, 1975). Nehemiah 8 depicts a national assembly at the Water Gate for a national spiritual/religious reconstruction. Nehemiah, being the servant leader, is allowing the experts of religious order to read the laws of God to the public. There is a willingness to listen on the part of the public. This relationship of governors and high priests was mutual to the benefit of reconstruction. It is such reading which suggests the possibility of reconstruction in a highly spiritual Zimbabwe. The Nehemiah narrative, approached from the socio-anthropological

standpoint, contains excellent data for community revitalisation. The material provides a description of the effective organisation of people to aid transformation.

The community in Nehemiah 9 is following the Water Gate assembly as they reassemble to mourn, to fast and to confess their sins and the errors of their ancestors. This type of confession and prayer becomes national and there is no blaming each other. In Zimbabwe, there is need to accept the errors of history in the postcolonial era. The leadership is challenged to confess failure to the public and to protect Zimbabwean dignity. There is labelling of those who are forced into economic exile in neighbouring countries or other nations as cowards who run away from their struggles in Zimbabwe. Anthony Poggo (2013: 19) puts it rightly when he argues;

There is a need for mutual understanding of the challenges/crises in a community requiring reconstruction. Those who are in the nation during the crisis period should not insult diaspora nationals or assume they escaped or ran away therefore their contribution in reconstruction is not worthy. Those diaspora nationals should not assume a superior knowledge to the local knowledge possessed by the people who have endured the crisis.

The experience of living and suffering in or outside Zimbabwe, awakens the sense of belonging and endurance. The experience of living in the diaspora influences the concept of being Zimbabwean, and the eagerness of being part of the transformation as envisioned. Zimbabweans are experienced in collaborative communal integration strategies; during the Liberation war, those in the battlefield valued those in the land. The ‘othering’ and exclusion of the others destroys the reconstruction spirit. Reconstruction theology encourages a shared reconstruction purpose, which resonates in the reading of the Ezra-Nehemiah narrative. “Let us start rebuilding” Nehemiah 2:1, should be the slogan of reconstruction.

The criticism presented by Farisani (2002; 2012) of the underpinning ideological conflict of supremacy and dominance of the returning exiles and the remaining exiles during reconstruction and after, must be appreciated. The inclusive ideological strategy of community mobilisation cannot be overlooked during reconstruction. As in the liberation motif and any other biblical model, ideological contestation surfaces, yet the text remains useful for the community in crisis. The social transformation and reconstruction of the identity of Ezra – Nehemiah is relevant to the context of postcolonial Zimbabwe. The return from exile can be both; physical and also allegorical in evoking the attitude of belonging in Zimbabweans and a part to reconstruction. The method of reconstruction paradigm is multi-disciplinary, ecumenical and inclusive (Mugambi, 2003: 30).

#### **2.16.4. Transformative Leadership: Nehemiah Model**

Nehemiah 3 portrays a Nehemiah who displayed an open style of leadership and who made use of available resources (Tollefson and Williamson, 1997: 51). While the historicity of the chapter has attracted criticism (Farisani 2002), its existence in the corps has theological and transformative purposes (Poggo, 2013). One significant theological purpose is the roll call of honour. Crisis and suffering bring shame, but the undertaking of responsibility by Nehemiah regardless of the deplorable situation in Jerusalem brings honour. Responsibility and responsiveness are directly related in transformative leadership. In the book *Responsible Leadership: Global and Contextual Ethical Perspectives*, the editors Christoph Stuckelberger and Jesse N.K. Mugambi assert that;

A leader is responsible when he or she is responsive to the needs, concerns and interest of those whom one aspires to lead. Responsible leadership also has the components of; stewardship, respectability and respectfulness (Stuckelberger and Mugambi, 2007: 1).

It is on this basis that Nehemiah qualifies to be a transformative, responsible, responsive, and respectful leader. Nehemiah took the burdens, concern and mess of the people on his shoulders even if he was comfortable in the Susa (Nehemiah 1:1-2).

Ka Mana (2004) observes that Africa is in the crisis of having insignificant people who usurp power and occupy leadership positions without the vision of building the nation and without a vision worth celebrating. Ka Mana (2004:10) has no kind words; “these leaders are totally ineffective, mentally bankrupt and lack any political will, deficiencies camouflaged by pompous and verbose speeches”. It can be noted that leaders in post-colonial Zimbabwe have a share in the suffering of the citizens. Norman Gottwald (1985: 375) explains that the leaders of the Judean society were responsible for the deterioration of the old tribal order of communal equity. Political, economic and social leaders seek their enrichment and while strengthening their socio-political or socio-economic power. The scenario corrupts leadership, as leaders become ego-centric and uncaring. Accordingly, Ezra Chitando (2008: 27) asserts;

The Zimbabwean crisis, is largely one of leadership. That the gladiators of the nationalist awakening of the 1960s could still be playing and dominating the political game calls for national introspection. Charisma, sociologists assert, gets routinized somewhere on the way to the land of promise.

This entails that the horses that managed to pull through are weak and some tired. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the church to actively bring to the fore the shortcomings of the rulers. This is a mission responsibility, as when the leadership is unwilling or incapable of affording

the people wellness the church has to be prophetically-critical in demanding transformed leadership on behalf of the citizens.

This leadership has to ensure a hopeful future whilst not forgetting the stories of the journey travelled in history. The biblical story of Nehemiah is a story of people who were inspired by the determination displayed through the leadership of Nehemiah. Transformative leaders do not remain stuck in history (bad or good) but appreciate history as the foundation of the future. Zimbabwe has relied upon and remained on the history of British colonial hegemony and Cecil Rhodes and Ian Smith's rule more than moving to reconstruction. The theology of reconstruction does not condemn the reclaiming of memory but the manipulative application of history and memory is destructive to the sustenance of community.

Jesse Mugambi, (1998) looking at the Nehemiah account, says that Nehemiah was not perfect through and through, but "Africa can learn more from Nehemiah about the demands and challenges of leadership" (Mugambi, 2003: 173). Nehemiah is depicted as a participatory leader, a planner, a listener, a delegator, a mentor, a facilitator and an accommodative leader (Mugambi, 2003: 173; Poggo, 2013). When challenges struck, he utilised the skills of a transformative leader who was there to build a community regardless of the political and ideological differences that hold. Participatory leadership involves others, accepts opinions, affirms different perspectives, and accommodates transformative contributions in charting the terrain of development and reconstruction. It allows additional leaders to emerge and to be nurtured through mentorship techniques. In Zimbabwe, the ZANU PF government leadership cannot trust even their children to have the qualities to lead. This is evident when the nationalist leaders strongly condemn anyone who has no liberation war credentials as capable to lead Zimbabwe.

One can read the landscape in Zimbabwe within the borderlines of the situation in Judah, in the days of Nehemiah's leadership. Zimbabwe has many Sanballats and Tobias in politics, in churches, in the media, in diplomatic circles and in business. Nevertheless, there are many embodiments of Nehemiahs who are well trained and who can motivate the community for better living (Mugambi, 2003: 173).

## **2.17. Conclusion**

In the scope of this chapter, it was noted that Christianity as a religion and its sacred text occupy an uncontested space in the life of Africans. In Zimbabwe, the Bible remains "the book" and

is authoritative whether closed or opened. The Bible's usage in Africa inspires the interpretation of the text to address the circumstance of the African community. Africans are religious and notoriously spiritual; therefore, the application of religious texts to inspire action is affirmative to the expectant hope in the people.

This chapter attempted to further understand the manipulations associated with the Bible, tracing it from the colonial era through to how the postcolonial Zimbabwe. The Bible have been deployed as a resource for political gains, squarely making it a culprit in the suffering and the struggle many Zimbabweans.

The chapter concludes that the Bible can be a resource to inspire change and determination in communities in suffering. In this instance, the chapter proposes that the reading of Ezra-Nehemiah reconstructively using postcolonial biblical hermeneutics, hermeneutics of suspicion and hermeneutics of transformation helps in facilitating the desired reconstruction in Zimbabwe.

It has been proposed that the choice of the Ezra-Nehemiah motif is contextual and relevant since the story is about devastated community that pulled itself out of shame. With collective determination the biblical narrative exhibited a possibility of turning vice into virtue, crisis into goodness using the available capacity (human and materials). The narrative is inspiring to postcolonial Zimbabwe. The chapter highlighted the reading of Ezra-Nehemiah narrative in relationship to the context of Zimbabwe through the selected applications of interpreting the narrative.

Since this section has highlighted the biblical and hermeneutical approaches which are being applied to understand the Ezra-Nehemiah motif, it is important at this moment to analyse the theological undertaking of reconstruction theology in Zimbabwe.

The next chapter scrutinises the history of reconstruction and some of the descending theological voices in the discourse of reconstruction. The chapter further explores the applicability of the Ezra-Nehemiah paradigm of reconstruction. In this case, the reading of the biblical narrative is analysed from the viewpoint of the two reconstruction theology proponents Villa-Vicencio and Jesse Mugambi. Their critical perspective and application of Ezra-Nehemiah is appreciated in light of the context of this thesis.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

# **RECONSTRUCTION DISCOURSE: CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF RECONSTRUCTION THEOLOGY**

### **3. Introduction**

This chapter traces the development and history of reconstruction theology. This allows for the brief overview of theologies such as African theology, Black theology and Liberation theology to set the foundation and establish the relevance of Reconstruction theology. It is from here that it can be concluded that theology is in transition, as it seeks to address the demands of the changing environment.

It is within the same premises of this chapter that theological scholars, who have extensively spoken for or against reconstruction theology will be put together and their views critically analysed to determine whether the Zimbabwean environment is fertile for the envisioned theology. This section also discusses the applicability of Ezra-Nehemiah biblical motif in the Zimbabwean context.

#### **3.1. The Development of Theology: The Transition**

Christian theology has evolved from one state of being to another. As generations changed, issues of address changed; hence Christian theology shifted to meet the demands of the context. Theology is not static but is on the move and knows no one level or boundary. Christianity is a way of life, a living style and it cannot remain behind when the people of faith are faced with realities of the changing world. Gustavo Gutierrez, celebrated as “the God Father” of Liberation theology, articulates that “theology is intrinsic to a life of faith, seeking to be authentic” (Gutierrez, 1973: 3). Theological reflection derives its strength and deepens its roots in the context of the day. It is from this basis that theological reflections and work have gone through many transformations. One can justify this factor in light of the transformation in the world in which theological reflections are rooted. Gustavo Gutierrez identifies three phases of theological development: theology as spiritual wisdom, theology as rational knowledge and theology as praxis reflections (Gutierrez, 1973).

### **3.1.1. Theology as Spiritual wisdom**

This can be understood in light of the early Christian development as people of faith were classified according to spiritual growth. Emphasis was on the spiritual enrichment. Biblical meditation was fundamental and the search for perfection was essential (Gutierrez, 1973: 4). Theology was related to monastic lifestyle context. Monasticism encourage individual holiness and separatism from the world and its affairs. Monasticism remained the base foundation of the new reflections. However, as circumstances changed, reflections shifted. Approximately in the eleventh century, the monastic life was no longer the major emphasis of Christian theology.

### **3.1.2. Theology as Rational Knowledge**

During the twelfth century, theology and theological reflections began to be established as a science. The figures of St Thomas Aquinas, Aristotle and Albert the Great were the leading scholars in arguing theology as a science and rational knowledge. Immanuel Kant, was a philosopher, in his writings *The Critique of Pure Reason* 1781, *The Critique of Practical Reason* 1788 and *The Critique of Judgement* 1790, he argues that “it is impossible to have theological knowledge of transcendent objects without rational skill (Kant, 1788: xv; Kant, 2002). Hence, theology was explained as a science of a transcendent God in terms of God’s relationship with and works in creation (Erickson, 1985: 20). It was during this era that the Bible was subjected to rational criticism. It was also this period that witnessed the scholastic and patristic theological reflection (Gutierrez, 1973: 6). Various biblical narratives and church doctrines were put under scrutiny.

### **3.1.3. The Praxis Era: Critical Reflections**

Millard Erickson (1985:20) states that, “Christianity is a style of living defined in terms of experiences of the people. It is not merely isolated individual experience rather it is collective reflection of living style of communities”. Experience and action became the imperatives of doing theology. At the same time, “the life of the church became more clearly a *locus theologicus* and the involvement of the church in social movements and activities became more pronounced” (Gutierrez, 1973: 8). The Second Vatican Council defined the church’s role in relationship to service of the community in which she is found. The church should not be centred upon itself and have pride in itself; rather, it should be geared to lose itself when it lives upon the joys and the hopes, the grief and the anxieties of the community of the day (Gutierrez, 1973: 8).

While the church was understood as such, theology, on the other hand, transformed from scholastic jargon to a relative subject related to the context of community. Theology began to be understood as the discourse of discerning the signs of the times. This calls for a great deal of commitment and responsibility from every Christian, especially pastors and theologians, to hear, to distinguish, and to interpret the many voices of the age and to be able to judge them in light of the divine Word of God in relationship with the contextual experience of the community of faith (Gutierrez, 1973: 9).

It is from this fundamental factoring of praxis and contextual reflections that African “theologies of liberation” are born. These includes African theology, African Black theology, African Liberation theology, Feminist theology and Reconstruction theology, among others. On a critical approach, these are labelled as contextual theologies; for they are not a caboose of the present, nor do they limp after reality. Rather, they illuminate and penetrate reality, and re-channel the present to a future abounding with hope (Gutierrez, 1973: 15; Chitando, 2009).

There are many antecedents to the wave of interest that crystallised the development of the African theological movement. The changes in the contextual landscape demands the contextualisation of the gospel, indigenisation of the church and enculturation of the modes of communicating the gospel (Mwase, 2012).

The following section highlights selected theologies, leading to the coming and relevance of Reconstruction theology in postcolonial Zimbabwe. It is not in the scope of this research to thoroughly scrutinise the definitions and terminologies of phrases and usages of phrases such as “African theology (s) against African Christian theology (s)” or Liberation theology against African Liberation theology, as an example. However, it suits this research to discuss, briefly, the relevance of these theologies so as to position and locate Reconstruction theology.

### **3.2. African ‘Christian’ Theology**

It is undisputable that Christianity as a religion was imported to Africa by the coming of the traders and hunters and fully made a way of life by the coming of the missionaries and the advent of colonialism. However, this is not to say that missionaries brought God to Africa, for African people are notoriously religious, spiritual and staunch believers in God, the Creator (*Musikavanhu*), God who resides in heaven (*Nyadenga*) beyond the missionaries (Mbiti, 1969). Desmond Tutu (1998: 37) put it scantly that “mother Africa has taught Africans long before

the missionaries that life without belief in a supreme divine being was just too absurd to contemplate”.

The redefining of Africanness and African Christianity was a reconstruction of the new face of theology. African Christians were no longer comfortable with the European Christianity and European theology, hence the birth of African theology (Parratt, 1998: 3; Mwase, 2012: 179). The Church in Africa in the late 1950s and early 1960s was seeking to shed the shackles of Eurocentric Christianity and theology. Fashole-Luke (1975: 74) argues that “African theology is by no means a definition but a label that is necessary to signify a discourse arising out of a deep dissatisfaction with and even a protest against the westernised theology as holding a universal claim on all contexts”. Hence, African theology emerged with a contextual relevance. African realities and the utilisation of African concepts and categories were the emphasis and the agenda. African culture, African tradition and African way of life that uphold and value human dignity and human wholeness were to be considered as relevant sources of theology. Suffice it to say that, “the impetus for constructing biblically based and relevant theology emanating from the African philosophy of the meaning of life and addressing the needs of African people, came as a paradigm shift from the imported theologies” (Mwase, 2012: 178-179).

Early African theologians questioned the role of African religious traditions, African cultural heritage, African experience and life style in relationship with the biblical texts. Accordingly, there was a deliberate endeavour to have an epistemological break with Western theological traditions and perspectives which were not in line with African way of life. Kwame Bediako (1992: 251) affirms that this was necessary since “the missionary Christianity, and theology seems, to all intents and purposes, bound to uproot the African from his “heathen past”... in order to give him a new identity, constructed on the basis of the new, total package of Christianity and European civilisation”. The implications of the western theologies and their application to the African context were illegitimate; hence the quest for a relevant African theology.

The Church in Africa was faced with a clamant demand to interpret the Christian faith with a sanguine hope which, would bring home the truth of the Christian gospel to Africans in idioms related to their situation (Sawyer, 1998: 10; Chitando, 2009: 11). Discerning the signs of the times scholars such as Harry Sawyer and John Pobee become convinced that the time is ripe for a *Theologia Africana*. This should be that theology which encapsulates African thought

forms and values in line, with the African situations and context, (Sawyer, 1998: 17; Dickson, 1984: 15). African Christian theology, in this light, should be situationally located and contextually based for it to be relevant in addressing the African predicament. Manas Buthelezi (1986) contends that theology, to be relevant, “should analyse the contemporary situation in which people find themselves with a view to expose the central human dignity and value questions” (Buthelezi, 1986: 211; Parratt, 1995: 164).

### **3.3. Black Theology**

Black theology, in general, has its roots in North America in the context of the civil rights movements the black power movement, and the Black Nationalism movement. These were resistant revolutions seeking meaning and the essence of black people’s dignity (Cone, 1969; Cone, 1975: 8). This theology reflected an understanding of God’s involvement with the oppressed, by the oppressed, for the liberation of the oppressed (Young, 1986: 88). Black theology is undertaken as a revolution for the reconstruction of identity of black humanity in particular, in light of the *imago dei* – (the image of God) in a person. Further to this, black theology identifies with the struggles of black people against slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism, white supremacy and white domination (Tutu, 1998; Young, 1986).

Black African theology is celebrated as it emerged in South Africa with strong, loud voices in the 1970s, with the compliments coming from the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). The BCM focused on liberation of the black person in South Africa, focusing on defining what it means to be black in light of God’s liberation plan. Black African theology is essentially a situational theology, determined by the situation of blackness vis-a-vis black suffering, struggles for liberation, the fullness of humanity and the Gospel of Christ (Boesak, 1978: 142). Black theology is a decisive affirmation that black is human. This emerged out of the conviction that black people feature prominently in God’s plan of salvation (Chitando, 2009: 27) and how the oppressed black Christian and non-Christian communities could access the liberating activity of God in Christ as the anchor of liberation (Luke 4:18-20) (Goba, 1980: 24).

The definitive outcry of Black theology is the struggle of black people against racism, white domination and white superiority of which were aimed at denying the black person access to God-given rights. African Black theology should not be read as a racial subject, but rather as a socio-political, socio-economic discourse with a primary synonym for oppression and exploitation. This is relative since “blackness in Black theology in Africa should be taken as a synonym for subjection and a symbol of those who are deprived of their rights, of the wretched

of the earth” (Pityana, 1983: 29; Parratt, 1995: 158). African Black theology is a justice theology, not a black exclusivism or a political undertaking. Blackness becomes the multiple manifestations of black people’s socially constructed worldview and their demands of a correct black identity in light of their community’s privileges and rights.

In Black theology the white person has been at the centre of suffering, alienation and dehumanisation in Africa, through the slave trade, colonialism and neo-colonialism. As such the white person can be criminalised for dehumanisation. Bluntly, Desmond Tutu (1998:37) argues “the worst crime that can be laid on the white person is not the black’s economic, social and political exploitation, however reprehensible that might be; no, it is that his policies succeeded in filling a self-disgust and self-hatred in the black African person”.

The Bible was once a victim of manipulation, used to violate and to deny the black person valuable dignity. It is perplexing that in the history of dehumanisation, human subjugation, and conspicuous suffering that Christian believers and the Bible would be at the centre of contention. This can be viewed in light of the apartheid system in South Africa in which “black people were subjugated to immense suffering not at the hands of pagans or other unbelievers but at the hands of fellow Christians who claim allegiance to the same Lord and Master” (Tutu, 1982: 35).

### **3.4. Liberation Theologies: Reconstruction from the underside of History**

Liberation theology begins with struggle, oppression and exploitation of the poor as the standing basis. This liberation theological reflection can be read as the reconstruction mission. Tracing the history of Liberation theology in Latin America, Rosino Gibellin (1987: 1), argues that “this is a theology with roots in the prophetic theology of the Latin American Church found in the expressions of resistance and the undertaking of mission as bravery against the colonialist exploiters”.

Much credit is accorded to Gustavo Gutierrez, who, in 1968, outlined the essence of Liberation theology in Chimbote Peru, yet the drive had long been launched by missionaries as Bartolome de las Casas, Jose de Acosta and Bernardino de Sahagun (Ellis and Maduro, 1989: 9; Gibellin, 1987). The point that Gustavo is the “father of Liberation theology is also affirmed by Leonard Boff (1989: 38) who states “the importance of Gustavo Gutierrez transcends the borders and history of the struggle of the Latin Americans, for it has a universal claim which cannot be deleted”. Gustavo Gutierrez outlined the essence of liberation theology as praxis theology,

based on reflection, seeking the transformation of the history of the humankind and as part of the process of transforming the world (Boff, 1989). This essence is reconstructive in nature. Therefore, it is from its inception that liberation is reconstructive in principle.

Particular Liberation theologies emanating from particular contexts, such that we can talk about Asian Liberation theology, African Liberation theology and North or South American Liberation theology. In the following section, attention has been given to the African Liberation theology enterprise as it is relevant to the research context.

### **3.5. African Liberation Theology**

There is a celebration of the African worldview of life that is, “indispensably an inseparable unit, for African culture and tradition life is viewed as a complete unit; religious, political, social and economic. Hence, the African traditional cultural perspective of community celebrates the wholeness balance” (Bujo, 1992: 15). Therefore, liberation ideals are inherent in the concept of life as understood in African terms (Parratt, 1995). The emergence of liberation theology in Africa was a direct response to the cry for a complete life. Mugambi (1989:12; 14) argued that “in the African context and in the Bible, salvation as a theological concept cannot be complete without liberation as a socio-political concept”. Therefore, Mugambi (1989) proposes that the objective and concern of African Christian theology has to have freedom and liberation so as to ensure complete life to Africans.

Due to the colonial regimes denying Africans access to full life, African Liberation theology was born. African Liberation theology was influenced by Latin American Liberation theology with its point of departure being the African struggles – colonialism, domination, denial of God-given rights, poverty, and socio-political emancipation.

Desmond Tutu (1989: 25) commenting on the development of liberation theology and its effect on the African thinking states that “God has an extraordinary penchant to side with the suffering, the marginalised, with those who have no one else to speak up for them. Liberation theology in us brings the magnificent hope of a better future”. This hope set itself ablaze in the African whose dignity is trodden on even today that ultimately suffering, injustices, oppression, evil and exploitation of any nature cannot prevail forever. Hence, African dignity remains the object of reconstruction theology. African Liberation theology is therefore, situated in the concrete issues affecting concrete people and this requires a concrete determination.

As much as it is a historical fact that all African countries are politically independent from the historical colonial powers it remains perplexing that the majority of the Africans' quality of life has not improved. It becomes evident that the "lowering of the colonial flag did not result in the dramatic transformation of the socio-economic and socio-political situation for the majority citizenry" (Chitando, 2009: 28). As in African Black theology, African Liberation theology takes liberation as a synonym for claims of freedom, upholding of just living, restoration of human dignity and value, emancipation from poverty and eradication of any form of oppression or manipulation of the other (Bujo, 1992; Parratt, 1995; Chitando, 2009).

It is from this particular view that African Liberation theology challenges the church in Africa to remain prophetic in her preaching, challenging the oppressive structures in the here and now. In Zimbabwe, as elsewhere in Africa, political power of the few has been wielded to the detriment of the majority, while political denial and violence have been used as tools of suppression (Chitando, 2009; Sachikonye, 2011). African Liberation theology continues to pay due attention to issues of governance, democracy and economy, the position of women and resource distribution in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

This section, highlighted that theology has been in transition and is an on-going reflection based on the context and situations of the embodying community. This transition stimulates scholarly arguments and critique on the value or relevance of the best theology applicable in post-colonial Zimbabwe and the relationship of these theologies. Zimbabwe benefited from the African liberation theology, African theology and Black theology during the decolonisation process, yet "the concerns of Black theology differ from those of African theology" (Young, 1986: 86; Parratt, 1998: 38). It is prudent to argue that Reconstruction theology flows out of the development African theology.

### **3.6. Come Let Us Reconstruct - Reconstruction Theology**

In Africa, the theme of reconstruction and renewal took centre stage in the early 1990s with Jesse Mugambi (1995) as one celebrated proponent of the maxim of reconstruction. Mugambi addressing the General Committee of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) in Nairobi on the topic "*The Future of the Church and the Church of the Future in Africa*". He articulated that "African Christianity must shift theological gears from liberation which emphasises the Exodus motif, to the paradigm of reconstruction which is Post-Exilic in nature- with Ezra-Nehemiah as the anchor" (Mugambi, 1995: 5; Gathongo, 2012: 59). The era of decolonisation and development gave birth to the critical reflection of reawakened

reconstruction. For Mugambi (1995:5), the resultant theological axiom was reconstruction, since the context was relevant. He concentrated on the Ezra-Nehemiah model as the applicable motif that resonates with the African demands of communal mobilisation towards life. Charles Villa-Vicencio (1992: 23) agrees on the aspect of reconstruction and he emphasises the use of the post-exilic metaphor, he associates Ezra-Nehemiah with other post-exilic metaphors. Villa-Vicencio argues that reconstruction theology must be based on a post-exilic metaphor, as opposed to the liberation theology's metaphor of the Exodus Moses Motif (Villa-Vicencio, 1992). The Liberation theology in Africa was biblically centred on Exodus Moses narrative, for it was fitting to the circumstances of the African people during the struggle for political emancipation then. It is on this that Mugambi argues:

An African Christian theology of (in the New World Order), must deal more with the practical task of interpreting and understanding the relevance of God's revelation for the total liberation of mankind in the African economic, political and social situation. In this sense it should not be an academic concern, rather it issues out of practical involvement in the meeting of human need and the building of a more humane social order in the African setting (Mugambi 1989:14).

Henceforth, there is need to redefine the circumstances facing Zimbabwe in light of the Ezra-Nehemiah reconstruction narrative.

The following sections will concentrate on the voices of Charles Villa-Vicencio and Jesse Mugambi on reconstruction and the criticisms they received from Farisani and Gunda.

### **3.7. Charles Villa-Vicencio's Reconstruction Theology**

Prompted by the changing landscape of the 1990s, Villa-Vicencio advocated for a paradigm shift in theologising the upcoming events in the history of South Africa. Villa-Vicencio (1992: 7) saw winds of change which required, according to him, new theological reflections. For him, "the old is dying even though the new is not yet born and there is no clear indication what form the new society might even take" (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 2). Lovemore Togarasei<sup>25</sup>, during an

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<sup>25</sup> Professor Lovemore Togarasei, is a New Testament Scholar and a senior lecturer at University of Botswana in the department of Theology and Religious Studies. Before joining University of Botswana in 2005, he lectured at University of Zimbabwe. The interview was conducted when he was the guest facilitator and speaker on the Anglican Diocese of Harare Clergy Academy 2014 August (Sunday 3 – Friday 8), Continuing Theological Education of Clergy, themed: - Reconstruction of Zimbabwe: Mission and Preparedness of the Anglican Church.

interview on 6 August 2014, alludes that “reconstruction can be the option only when some changes take place in society and in context, rebuilding of the structures that are no longer useful and refurbishing the structures for a new purpose” (Togarasei, 2014). Villa-Vicencio (1992) says that reconstruction discourse has a contextual demand, meaning it remains situationally contextual. Reconstruction theology then becomes a response to new challenges that the community is facing. For Villa-Vicencio, it is the theological wisdom of the times that allows creative discernment of visions and incentives that assure life to the community. Hence, “theology of reconstruction is about facilitating, promoting and supporting actions that make and sustain human life in the best possible manner” (Villa-Vicencio 1992:274). This theology is relevant, positive and necessary as it is concerned with social, economic and political set-ups of the given context and time.

Villa-Vicencio, became concerned with the many South Africa nationals who had been political exiles. For the political wind after the release of Nelson Mandela from prison awoke the possibilities of hope. Therefore this period invited the church to welcome, listen and rehabilitate the nationals coming out of a long history of exile and war. Villa-Vicencio argues:

The church and the theological thought forms should bridge the gap between the ideals of a people who have been in their long exile (without and within the country) dreamed utopian dreams of a new South Africa... the realities of a land torn apart by generations of race, gender, and class divisions (Villa-Vicencio 1992:8).

For him, the task is collective, involving sectors such as politicians, engineers, doctors, rural chiefs and the common South African in the streets. However, the vision and the compass directions of prophets, priests, preachers and social poets including musicians are important ingredient in the process of reconstruction (Villa-Vicencio 1992).

Villa-Vicencio’s (1992:276) reconstruction theology is interdisciplinary in nature. It encompasses legal, political, economic, religious, and all social concerns. Therefore, it became a theology of nation-building, where hope and expectations had to be anchored by responsibility to put right past wrongs and old abuses without being antagonistic. The theology is informed by the question of learning from past experience in order to have a better nation now and in the future. Villa-Vicencio (1992:30) argues that there is no desire to remain victims of the past for that is a viral disease that distorts reconstruction. While to play a conqueror after a victim is moral suicide; instead lessons of the struggle and how community mobilisation strategies produced determination and communal responsibility should anchor the nation building process. For Villa-Vicencio, the church is critical in nation building; the church should

be post-exilic in its mission actions. He reminds the church of the authority and power it possesses in its vision and prophetic obligation which are founded in the biblical revelations.

The liberative theology of reconstruction cannot be fully achieved if the church is the shadow of the state, or the church refuse to participate. For this reason, Villa-Vicencio asserts that political concerns are theological concerns as much as socio-economic matters affect the community. So the church is obliged to be part of the solution. Indeed, the reconstruction agenda calls for the church to raise high the prophetic, pastoral and ethical agenda of mission (Villa- Vicencio 1992: 41).

The South African context for Villa-Vicencio demanded a post-exilic reconstruction theological outline. The immediate task was to revive and draw lines in the ethical values and structures which had been mixed up or lost. It is in this light that Villa- Vicencio (1992) argues for the applicability of post-exilic metaphor of Ezra-Nehemiah motif in relationship to other biblical texts. He states “there are resources within the biblical literature which give credence to the use of the post-exilic metaphor as a basis for a theology of prophetic reconstruction, economic stability, religious stamina, and political stability rather than revolution” (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 28). It is from this basis that Villa-Vicencio (1992: 29,48) builds the post-exilic metaphor with an appreciation for other Biblical texts such as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and even selected verse of the New Testament (Luke 4:18-19). He says that “biblically the renewing poems of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah constitute a reorientation of prophetic reconstruction literature within which God’s promises are not found in looking back, but anticipating for a better future with hope (Isaiah 43:18-19)” (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 29).

Villa-Vicencio does not only end there; he looks at the reconstruction from the priestly call of Haggai and Zechariah as critical when it comes to reconstruction theology. He borrows the moral codes enshrined in Deuteronomistic corps as valuables worth considering in reconstruction theology.

Having affirmed the post-exilic metaphor, Villa-Vicencio acknowledges some contradictions and shortcomings of applying this post-exilic theology when he states,

Post-exilic theology at the same time incorporates the contradictions and conflicts inherent to most theologies. It includes the moralisms of Deuteronomy, the passionate rebellion of Job against these impositions, the prophetic judgement and suffering of Jeremiah, Ezekiel... After the return, these contradictions continued in the ideological conflicts inherent to Nehemiah, Ezra and other reconstructionists counter-balanced against the apocalyptic dreams of Zechariah and Joel (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 28).

Saying this, Villa-Vicencio is affirming that there is no consistency in the applicable metaphor to the theology of reconstruction, but he affirms and upholds Ezra-Nehemiah Motif with esteem. This affirmation and the application of Ezra-Nehemiah to reconstruction theology is criticised by scholars such as Tinyiko S. Maluleke, Ragies Gunda and Elelwani B. Farisani. This research contests some of the views of these critics and their criticisms especially that presented by Farisani on the use of Ezra-Nehemiah metaphor.

### **3.8. Ezra-Nehemiah in Villa-Vicencio's Reconstruction**

Villa-Vicencio uses Ezra-Nehemiah as the anchor for reconstruction theology. Taking from the Ezra-Nehemiah metaphor, he articulates some critical components that emerge from the biblical narrative. For example Nehemiah was made aware of the situation and affairs of Jerusalem through a patriotic-nationalist enquiry. Then upon his arrival in Judah, Nehemiah inspected the broken walls (Nehemiah 1:2).

This in Villa-Vicencio's terms, is the "*social analysis concern of theology of reconstruction*" geared at discovering, engaging, uncovering, clarifying and explaining the state of affairs (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 40). Theology of reconstruction becomes contextual in that it emerges and engages with the prevailing circumstances in Africa. Villa-Vicencio (1992:275) contends that reconstruction theology has;

To discover, clarify and explain what is going on in a given context. It should not end there but then, engage in critical, non-ideological analysis, given to uncover the power relations, socio-economic, socio-political and socio-religious structures and cultural values which are responsible for suffering, exploitation and social disintegration.

The aim is to transform, not just to uncover the structures and values that fragment society and breaks the walls of human dignity. Reconstruction theology will then propose an ethic of renewal intended to set the community on the track of reconstruction and transformation. It further proposes actions, which are to be championed and defined according to the prophetic and visionary divine mission mandated to the church. For theologically, "truth telling and renewal are measured in terms of praxis (right action) not in ivory-tower perceptions of what suffering and renewal are perceived to be" (Villa-Vicencio 1992:276).

Social analysis brings about the concept of the relevance of reconstruction theology as it read the times and the consequential effects to the populace of the state of affairs. It is here that the theology of reconstruction can be referred to as prophetic and "functional theology" (Gunda,

2009: 83-84; Akinwale, 2011), for it is set on rebuilding which is preceded by diagnosis. Diagnosis here involves analysing the root problem and the damage to humanity then propose sustainable social solution which is informed by the available resources (Akinwale, 2011).

The functional theology which is reconstructive has to “emerge posing tough and uncomfortable but essential questions about the economy, international relations, national development programmes and other issues that affect people every day”(Villa-Vicencio 1992:41). For Gunda, “this functional reconstruction theology focuses on the analysis of the internally driven evils that are committed by Africans against themselves” (Gunda, 2009: 84). It then makes theology of reconstruction a contextual and proactive endeavour as it seeks to address the present needs as much as it seeks to correct and to make sure that the causes of the previous and present sufferings do not recur (Villa-Vicencio, 1992). This is in line with one of the tasks of reconstruction theology of “telling the truth” (Villa-Vicencio, 1992:41; Farisani, 2002). It is argued that one can only tell the truth after undertaking a critical social analysis of the situation at hand.

The Ezra-Nehemiah metaphor and motif further affirm the importance of social-cultural values in reconstruction. Nehemiah is conscious of the need to involve the local cultural variables. It is to this point that he gathered some men and surveyed the extent of the broken walls. It is here that Villa-Vicencio would state that there is a need for a *cultural value-regenerating community commitment*; these cultural values facilitate human wholeness (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 42). Africa has to penetrate deeper into the Afro-cultural establishments of existence which are founded on principles of respect, responsibility, accountability and affirming the dignity of its citizens. These Afro-cultural establishments will then complement the biblical Christian principles as displayed in Ezra-Nehemiah motif and Jesus Christ ministry and life. In Mugambi’s view, the life and ministry of Jesus was liberating and transforming the whole individual and the whole society. Jesus’s mission and time was directed “at alleviating the physical suffering of people and restoring the eroded dignity of people” (Mugambi 1989:109).

The post-exilic church is to engage in the mission of value generation that enables the people to live together in mutual respect (Villa-Vicencio 1992:42). Reconstruction theology, therefore, challenges social prejudices of the past, empowers the marginalised and enables the inclusion of the other –even the involvement of women, the terminally ill (HIV and AIDS infected and affected) and the disabled in the reconstruction process.

The post-exilic church has a reconstruction mandate, with tasks and roles aimed at shaping a justice-conscious community. Villa-Vicencio is emphatic on the reconstructive mission of the church. The church should help to set in “action reconstructive culture which motivates and enables people to raise their highest moral ideals and a sense of communal duty” (Villa-Vicencio 1992:45). This sense of communal good will remind common people to respect each other and love each other, while reminding those in positions of influence of their obligation and public accountability. The mission of the church in Zimbabwe is to cultivate a sense of communal good. This authentic mission can produce a culture which is not individual-spiritually centred but authentically communal centred. This mission undertaking also anticipates the celebration of the jubilee season of God as proclaimed in Luke 4:18-19 (Villa-Vicencio, 1992).

The value of contextual social-cultural symbols as an attribute of the reconstruction is in line with the whole enterprise of African theology. African traditional cultural symbols retain respect and honour among the Africans and theologians. African theology is set up based on the social-cultural values of the African people and context as stated in the Pan African Conference of Third-World Theologians, December 17-23 1977, Accra, Ghana, as;

We believe that African Theology must be, understood in the context of African life, social-cultural values and symbols and the creative attempt of African people to shape a new future that is different from the colonial past and neo-colonial present. The African situation requires a new theological methodology that is different from the approaches of the dominant theologies of the West. African theology must reject therefore the prefabricated ideas of North Atlantic theology by defining itself according to the struggles of the people in their resistance against structures of domination, structures of suppression, structures of human manipulation and all forms of dehumanisation. Our task as theologians is to create a theology that arises from and is accountable to African people. (Appiah-Kubi and Torres, 1979).

With such assertions from the Accra Ghana Conference of 1977, it is evident that reconstruction theology is a step in the right direction in African theologisation. Reconstruction theology in this light upholds cultural values and symbols as paramount to the process of shaping a new future. It is not only about upholding the values but also about taking responsibility and accountability to shape the future with hope.

Villa-Vicencio further upholds the position of the church as critical in nation-building and reconstruction. He states that, “the task of the church in political transition and the emerging new society is to promote the destruction of all forms of oppression, exploitation and manipulation of the other” (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 46). Reconstruction theology exponents have

been criticised for their bold stance in arguing that liberation theology with the Exodus- Moses motif is to be replaced. The strong contention is made that the liberation theme itself is not tied to the Moses motif and it should not be replaced but reconstructed and complemented with the Ezra-Nehemiah motif so as to confront the new challenges facing Africa. Therefore, what should be transformed is the Moses-heroism or nationalism attitude that in most African countries is echoed in the phrases and mantra “we are the liberators”; “we fought for this country”; “we are the nationalist” and “we are ready to die for this nation again”.

In the Ezra-Nehemiah motif, the theme of liberation cannot be ignored. In Zimbabwe, there is a need to move from the rhetorical utterances of liberation from the European colonisers to the more practical desire for liberation from the black rulers, the black elites who have dominion over almost every sector of the livelihood of Zimbabweans. There is a crippling situation in which political leaders see government as being for their personal gain, not representing people. There is a clear, visible split between the national leaders and the people. Ironically, the nationalists who vehemently criticised former colonial privileges, have inherited them and are protecting them using the same oppressive colonial policies (Verstraelen, 1998: 46). In such a case, the call for liberation and reconstruction is necessary using the Ezra-Nehemiah motif which presupposes a sense of community responsibility and accountability in the leaders.

Villa-Vicencio (1992: 46-48) brings to the surface also an element of *democratisation* inherent in the Ezra-Nehemiah motif. This component is found in the desire to empower and to involve everyone in the process of reconstruction. Democratisation should target areas of life which help someone to be empowered and be able to participate fully in the aspects and welfare of society. The church’s role is to reconstruct the life enhancing sectors of the society. In Zimbabwe, there is need to critically think of our education system. Given the population growth rate will the children of Zimbabwe be adequately educated? The case of schools and teachers in Zimbabwe is almost similar to the state of affairs in other African countries for example Namibia, Swaziland, and South Sudan. Anthony Poggo (2013: 17) proffers that “the elite who are the captains of industry, who are influential in policy making and many of whom hold high posts in government tend to send their children to better schools elsewhere in the region or abroad, while disposing the poor with dilapidated local schools and demotivated teachers”. Anthony Poggo (2013: 17) argues that, “the conditions and role of the school teacher is undervalued”. This scenario could be strategically drawn from the colonial mentality in which the majority was left uneducated. They were then exposed to abuse and to manipulation at the discretion and interests of the elite and those with political power. It is also true to some

extent as one can witness that uneducated or unemployed youths in Zimbabwe are the ones mostly used in violent political campaigns during elections.

Villa-Vicencio in his reading of the Ezra-Nehemiah motif, realises the role of theology and law in nation building. Theologically understood, the law-making process can and must be an instrument of justice. A nation's constitution is a social vision of what the nation defines and understands itself to be. Therefore, the church should contribute towards the definitions of the nation its ideals, its beliefs and what it ought to be (Villa-Vicencio 1992). This becomes critical when constitutional consultations are taking place, the church has to champion the understanding and the explanations for the benefit of community sustenance.

In Zimbabwe there is outcry of the rule of law as people search for value and living in harmony. The task of law-making in the Bible has always been a “creative act of putting together the necessary ingredients in fulfilment of the covenant promise of God to God's people” (1992:115). After that he emphasised the concern of human rights, politics and economy. These issues are biblical and the church cannot afford to ignore them or leave them to the politicians, activists and economists.

The conclusion may be drawn that Villa-Vicencio strongly understands that nation-building is possible when the church upholds the vision and prophetic mission to influence transformation. He upholds the post-exilic perspective which influenced his theological outlook on reconstruction theology. It is in this context he arrives at the liberative theology of reconstruction.

### **3.9. Jesse Mugambi's Reconstruction Theology: In Search of Essence and Meaning**

Jesse Mugambi introduced reconstruction theology as a new paradigm for Christian theology in Africa and explores the role of Christian theology in the social transformation of Africa. This is why Jesse Mugambi is respected for his reflection on the issues affecting Africans in the twenty-first century. Mugambi first produced a paper in 1973 entitled, “*Liberation and Theology*”<sup>26</sup> in which he critically asked questions of relevance among which is; where does liberation with the Exodus motif begin and end in the African context? Mugambi provided the answer during an interview with the researcher on 4 August 2017 saying, “the Exodus narrative does not end with invasion, siege, conquest and eventual occupation of Canaan. The narrative

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<sup>26</sup> The paper was later published. See (Mugambi, 1974)

continues with settlement and redefining their identity in the new space”. It is from this reflective thinking that Jesse Mugambi proposes a theology of reconstruction with the post-exilic outlook of Ezra-Nehemiah.

Reconstruction assumes that there was a former, a previous framework, a current unwanted circumstance, a change in history and a hopeful future. As for Mugambi, the reconstruction theme is necessitated by the changes that have taken place in history and changes in circumstances during the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and the emergence of the “New World Order” after the end of colonialism, apartheid and the cold war (Mugambi, 1995: x). From here, Mugambi argues that “the end of the cold war and the ushering of the New World Order serve as an entry point for Africa’s social transformation, discerning and promoting new insights that can help galvanise Africans to regain their integrity” (Mugambi, 1998: 64). Mugambi affirms that this reconstruction discourse is quite a new phenomenon in Africa and is destined to give wholeness to African people, re-mythologizing and re-interpreting people’s anxieties and community concerns. Here Mugambi states,

African Christian theology in the twenty-first century should be characterised by the themes of social transformation. The shift from liberation to social transformation, involves discerning alternative structures, symbols, rituals, myths, and interpretations of African social reality by Africans themselves... The resources for this re-interpretation are multi-disciplinary analyses involving social scientists, philosophers, creative writers and artists, politicians, and economists (Mugambi, 1995: 40)

Accepting that the times and the circumstances have changed calls for a new theological endeavour. When times and circumstances in history take a new turn, the church is called to interpret, in context, the content of the changing times. In Mugambi’s words, “African theologians must constantly read the signs of times in order to be ready for new paradigms which cope with new theological realities” (Mugambi, 1992: iv).

In terms of the time for reconstruction, Jesse Mugambi is saying it “is now” and Mugambi must be applauded for starting the reflective theology looking at the changes in the early 1990s. The timing for reconstruction discourse is situational and circumstantial and it transcends the linear understanding. A further argument is made in this thesis that “the now” should be read in present continuous understanding, where it is now “yesterday, today, and tomorrow” depending solely on the context of a particular society. In Zimbabwe, the time for reconstruction is now three and a half decades after colonial independence, as it was time two years after taking down of the Union Jack Flag (United Kingdom Flag) and the raising of the Zimbabwean Flag.

Jesse Mugambi then summarised the outlook of reconstruction theology, when he was stipulating the essences of theology. For him, reconstruction theology should be,

Reconstructive rather than destructive, inclusive rather than exclusive, proactive rather than reactive, complementary rather than competitive, integrative rather than disintegrative, program-driven rather than project-driven, people centred rather than institution-centred, deed-oriented rather than word-oriented, participatory rather than autocratic, regenerative rather than degenerative, future-sensitive rather than past-sensitive, co-operative rather than confrontational, and consultative rather than impositional (Mugambi, 1995: xv).

This reveals the essence of reconstruction theology as a paradigm shift aimed at building and refurbishing “new” communities from the ruins of collapsed postcolonial communities.

There should emerge a robust and confident Africa through reconstruction theology (Chitando, 2009). Further to that, the reconstruction theme should embrace the contemporary concerns, desires and struggles of Africa. This is mostly found in the acceptance of critical policies such as NEPAD, ZIMASSET and a call for African Renaissance. Hence, reconstruction can be argued to be better situated to meet Africa’s contemporary challenges, calling Africa to self-introspect on its crisis and then to self-criticism (Mugambi, 2003: 23; Chitando, 2009: 141).

The theme of reconstruction becomes very appealing, given the context of a Zimbabwe which is seeking to emerge from the decadence of social responsibility by political leaders, the non-existent social accountability by the entrusted trustees, and the lack of economic accountability by economic players. This situation has led to the economic meltdown, political instability and collapse of social rudiments that sustain the livelihood of the community (Chimuka and Togarasei, 2014: 4). The quest for reconstruction in Zimbabwe and in Africa is the desire for a hopeful future well springing from the socio-political, socio-economic and socio-religious decay and existential despair (Mana, 2004). Furthermore, one would witness the existence of some confrontational, institutional and suppressive policies which deny the people of Zimbabwe the freedom they struggled for during the fight for freedom from 1965-1980. The reconstruction theology upholds the Ezra-Nehemiah biblical books as illuminating the challenges and gearing the prospects of re-awakening, reconstruction and transformation.

In Mugambi’s perspective, the church is a significant player in reconstruction theology. He reminds the church of its rightful position for social transformation saying;

A church ought to help its members live more abundantly, as members of the society to which that church renders service. Christian witness (mission) ought to be conducted

in such a way that the local community identifies the local church as a source of love, encouragement, guidance, counsel, hope and reconstruction (Mugambi 1995:133)

In this case, Mugambi pointed to Matthew 5:13-16 as directed to the church. The church is to be the salt of social cohesion and light of social transformation. He then set out a chapter entitled *Light of the world and salt of the Earth* (Mugambi 1995:226ff) to demonstrate the role of the church in transformation. This transformation is both anthropologically-centred and ecologically-concerned.

Mugambi (1995:134) is clear to remind the church of its prophetic responsibility. The church has to identify prophetically with the needs and aspirations of the local community. The church as a social institution is also a political body that has ideals of maintaining divine authority and sanction that are always above human achievement. For Mugambi, the church should not “be swallowed or get entangled in the frustrations from which it should lift its members and/or be carried away by the forces and lobbies of secular political activists”<sup>27</sup> (Mugambi 1995:134; 135). The church should remain prophetic, visionary and influential for the betterment of society.

Jesse Mugambi (1995: 5; 2003:70) addresses the issue of salvation from the social emancipation perspective when it comes to Africa. Ka Mana commenting on the case of salvation states that;

The problem of salvation has always been for humankind, a problem of an essential spiritual quest for meaning of existence and the fundamental search for the ultimate orientation of life (Mana 2004:1).

The church must preach the kingdom of God, which is liberative and reconstructive in Zimbabwe. It is the missiological mandate of the church to mobilise the nation, as Nehemiah did in national commitment and discipline to help transform the social identity of post-colonial Zimbabwean. Jesse Mugambi (2003:69) alludes that “Nehemiah reconstructs the collective consciousness of a disenfranchised people and gives them hope to rebuild their society”.

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<sup>27</sup> During the conversation with Jesse Mugambi (Skype Interview 4/8/2017), he emphasised that even the theological academia should remember to remain theologically relevant in all times and contexts. Mugambi strongly and clearly warns that church should not be carried off with the winds or the tide in the context it is serving.

This thesis is influenced by the post-colonial missional activities of the church. Indeed, the contemporary church of post-colonial Africa should rise to the demands of the time and remain prophetic and visionary. The church's significant growth should translate into the social stability of society. Mugambi (1995) stipulates that churches should redefine their activities be they denominational or ecumenical, such as communion (Anglican), evangelism, and preaching. The influence of the pulpit has to be transformative.

The pulpit can become a central oral medium for transmission of new ideas, reconstructive ideals, and change of attitude. Parishes (local assemblies of any denomination) should become a viable reference point for social transformation, with parish priests, (local pastors) as facilitators of social reconstruction and development (Mugambi 1995:225)

Mugambi understands that real transformation is possible when the mobilisation begins at the grassroots level. The local communities can flourish and achieve reconstructive consciousness when they are involved in the process. For him, reconstruction is not an event to be achieved over a day, it is a process and a long walk that requires the church and the state to be partners. The state has the citizens, while the citizens have a church and a community of faith to respect and to uphold (Mugambi 1989:113; 1995:134; 2003:125).

Mugambi's reconstruction theology is inspired in the reading of the Old Testament and the cultural values of African communities. It is important to briefly highlight the value of the Old Testament in the reconstruction theological reflection

### **3.10. The Old Testament and Reconstruction Theology**

Villa-Vicencio (1992) and Jesse Mugambi (1995) affirm the close affinity of Africa and the Old Testament and this reading shapes their reconstruction perspective. These two scholars then address critical issues affecting the African people basing their theological strength on the Old Testament. This does not mean that they ignore the value of the New Testament they affirm that Jesus Christ's life and ministry was reconstruction based.

There is an "exciting affinity between the African religious heritage and the way of life which the Old Testament presupposes. This affinity is evident throughout the African continent" (Mugambi 2003:134; 1995:2). Therefore when Africans read the Old Testament, which mirrors their cultural, religious and traditional lifestyle, they are motivated and begin to wait with the hope of a better future. The God of the Old Testament is a God who is near, active and relates well to the African understanding of the *deity*. However, when missionaries came to Africa

they presented a God who is drastic, dangerous and intolerantly violent. This perspective was challenged when the Bible was translated in the vernacular and the locals begin to read and decode the God of the Old Testament and their circumstances.

Kwesi Dickson recognises the affinities of the Hebrews as reflected in the Old Testament and the African cultural heritage and life setup, thereby coming up with three points of reference which are;

The political appeal of the Old Testament, which has given Africans a frame of reference for their struggle against imperial domination. Secondly, the legalistic moralism of the Old Testament which African converts have contrasted with missionary moralism. Thirdly the similarity between the Hebrew and the African cultural and religious heritage, both of which are permeated with religion without separation between sacred and secular domains (Dickson, 1984:148ff; Mugambi, 2003:143).

This inspires the Christian theological reflection to weigh and critique contemporary African history, situations and circumstances against the biblical texts, where there is evidence of God who liberates and redeems. Therefore, the Old Testament has shaped so much theological perspectives using the many texts and narratives which are significant to the time of African engagement. Villa-Vicencio (1992:26) cautions rightly;

Not all in the Bible, Christian and African cultural heritage and tradition is of God in the sense of liberation and life ensuring. Therefore, given this complexity there is need to weigh, measure and criticise the Biblical texts, Christian and Cultural traditions.

This is where the position of the theologian in biblical hermeneutical reading is necessary in achieving the theological intention of the text and the context.

Liberation as a theme for Christian theological reflection has been derived from the Exodus narrative in the Old Testament. This has been made clearly captured by Mugambi (1995:2, 23) when he says;

The people of Israel are portrayed as having been delivered from bondage in Egypt through the divinely inspired leadership of Moses. This narrative greatly appeals to people who have suffered colonial and other forms of domination. Africans having a historic memory of slave trade, colonialism and neo-colonialism they are victims as Israelites in the Exodus under Pharaoh. They also identify with the Moses leader, the inspired hero who confronted the oppressor and victorious urges; “let my people go” (Exodus 10).

This Moses motif (Exodus) has been the dominant theme for a long time. Mugambi stipulates its relevance to “the past twenty years with inculturation and adaptation as variation themes”

(Mugambi 1995:22). This asserts that the motif was favoured for theological reflections because the circumstances were fertile for the genre to be engaged theologically. The Old Testament contains so many of these historical or literary texts that can be engaged in any African context. The tribes of Yahweh learned who Yahweh was in response to the events of encounter and liberation which characterises their history (Villa-Vicencio 1992:26).

The theology of reconstruction is emerging as a better model situated for Africa, while rooted in the Old Testament. The concept is rooted in the post-exilic Old Testament narratives of Haggai, Jeremiah, Nehemiah (Villa-Vicencio, 1992; Mugambi, 1995). The Old Testament was considered as the starting reference, with textual motifs such as; the Exilic model (Jeremiah), the Deuteronomic motif (Josiah), the Restorative motif (Isaiah) and the Reconstructive motif (Haggai and Nehemiah) (Mugambi, 1995:39; Fischer, 2013:68). Reconstruction theology, brings to the surface the concerns of restoration, renewal, realignment, transformation and survival, which resonate well with the Nehemiah narrative of the Old Testament.

The rebuilding of Jerusalem has been taken as a model for reconstruction of African societies that have been devastated by colonial rule and imperial supremacy (Mugambi 1995). This thesis affirms that the exploitation and denial of human dignity has continued in the post-colonial era. Therefore, reconstruction in the post-colonial African society is an agenda of relevancy in which Ezra-Nehemiah biblical text inspires the reconstruction. Mugambi argues that;

After Babylonian exile, a new nation was constructed under the direction of Ezra and Nehemiah. The role of Nehemiah and his leadership in reconstruction merits the characteristics required for transformation in Africa. Nehemiah becomes the central text of the new theological paradigm –reconstruction (Mugambi 1995:13) (see also Mugambi 2003:146)

Nehemiah's leadership is characterised by diligent analysis, active listening, excellent social standing (people could listen to him), visioning, mobilisation techniques, social advocacy that motivated people and religious respect (Ela, 2005). The Nehemiah narrative inspires and encourages the communities (Zimbabwe) for a reconstruction.

It is upon the reading and application of the Ezra-Nehemiah biblical narrative that invited the critical voice of Elelwani Bethuel Farisani (2002).

### **3.11. Ezra-Nehemiah Applicable Metaphor for Reconstruction: Farisani's Criticism**

In 2002, Elelwani Bethuel Farisani produced a criticism on the use of Ezra-Nehemiah motif in reconstruction discourse. Farisani argues that applying Ezra-Nehemiah requires a critical examination of the ideological conflicts inherent in the text. There is an ideological bias which seeks to promote the importance of the returning exiles and suppressing the *am haaretz* (remaining Jews) in the text (Farisani, 2002: 2). Farisani further states that the text suppresses the marginalised, the women, the poor, other tribes and the voiceless. He states that using the reconstruction theme of Ezra-Nehemiah, without isolating the ideological agenda of the text and identifying the group which is dominant in the text is problematic. This inadvertently identifies reconstruction as driven by the returning exiles at the exclusion of other tribes, people, the poor and the *am haaretz* (Farisani, 2012: 332).

Farisani's critical reading of Ezra-Nehemiah is commendable, for he uses some historical critical hermeneutical approaches in scrutinising the text. This reading, brings to the surface that the text is not neutral and is biased towards one tribe, the returning exiles. One is left wondering then of the best metaphor to use or to apply in the reconstruction theology if Ezra-Nehemiah is not used. Farisani did not propose any alternative metaphor, meaning he is aware that there is no biblical text which has no discrepancies, editorial, ideological bias and reductionist influence.

For example, the most celebrated metaphor of liberation, Exodus Moses motif has its ideological weaknesses if read critically today as done by Michael Prior, who contested the bias-free application of the Exodus Moses motif (Exodus 3:7-8a). He questions why the second half of Exodus 3:8 has always been omitted in the liberation theology, for it appears that the liberated Israelite slaves were encouraged to plunder, to dispossess and to suppress (Prior, 1997: 18; Sugirtharajah, 2012: 62-64). One is then left to ask whether this ideological discrepancy in Exodus Liberation motif has permeated in the mind-sets of most celebrated African Moses who have become the Pharaohs they deny to be (Gunda, 2009: 89). In most postcolonial states plundering and suppression have become the fashion displayed by the liberation nationalist governments. There is no surprise that pedant politicians in Zimbabwe are the richest personalities, dominating in almost every sector of the economy. Ka Mana argues that the political heavyweights in Africa have failed to uphold human dignity and defining a destiny, which is peaceful. Instead, they display dishonourable behaviours such as torturing of the people they deem to be leading, assassinating all those who question their

competence, destroying the economies and embezzling funds meant for development of their people (Mana, 2004: 16,20).

It is not common for African leaders to admit any wrong decision or policy and openly apologise for wrongs done. The general character of leaders in Africa is that they have the unchallengeable vision of society and anything outside it is labelled as anti-government or pro-imperialist ideology. They have set themselves as “the learned” and “the sacrosanct thinkers” for national reconstruction or social development. These elements are common in the nationalist government leaders who are mostly drawn from the war liberators. The question which must be asked is why war liberators see themselves as able governors and not warriors? All this shows that even the celebrated Exodus motif have some textual ideological bias as displayed in the unquestionable power of Moses.

A further contestation is made that the Ezra-Nehemiah narrative does not in any way encourage suppression or oppression of the poor or the marginalisation of the remaining citizens. Instead, it takes seriously the plight and scuffles of the poor and the marginalised. It has to be acknowledged that while the Jerusalem walls are broken, there might be others who are benefiting or profiteering because of the broken walls. These benefactors of the status quo might be remaining Jews the *am haaretz* or other nations surrounding Judah. When the walls are broken and livelihood is exposed to mercy, some will benefit. A very gruelling example is the land repossession and redistribution in Zimbabwe of 2000, where mostly the politically aligned had the chance to choose the best farms and acreages. They ended acquiring more than one farm, while the ordinary people were pushed to unproductive zones with very small acreage. As anywhere else in contemporary Africa while the poor or underprivileged suffer, there are some who benefit through the passage of the struggling times. The theology of reconstruction rejects such discrepancies of postcolonial Africa and paves the way for introspection and transformative reconstruction of attitude towards fair distribution of means of production. The reconstruction focus in Ezra-Nehemiah motif is on people-centred patriotic cadres and it is inclusive rather than exclusive. Both the returning exiles and the “remaining exiles”<sup>28</sup> are all important to the reconstruction process.

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<sup>28</sup> “Remaining Exiles”, here, has been used in light of exile being a place of survival not living happily. In the case of Zimbabwe, people are suffering in their homeland and country. The walls of livelihood have been broken and therefore people are in exile. They remain in the country and yet under draconian rule.

This thesis argues that in society there are people of influence whom can be “cupbearer” (Nehemiah 1), they should learn from the person of Nehemiah. These are people who have influence and yet are not concerned with the plight of the poor. These powerful and influential people should seek transformation of the society rather than their self-benefit. The attitude of depicted in Nehemiah of a leader who is concerned and committed to seeing transformation should be the same attitude of the people in power in Zimbabwe.

This thesis proposes that returning, in this instance, should be considered symbolically to mean a return to courage, concern, commitment, responsibility and to human dignity. In addition, Zimbabwe needs these “returnees” to sacrifice their comfort and to seek the reconstruction of the infrastructure that transform human life and set anew the tune of human dignity. This is the attitude required in most African societies for reconstruction to take place. Ezra Chitando argues;

The continent continues to languish under the label of underdeveloped countries that are euphemistically being reclassified as emerging economies. Instead of emerging, most African economies are submerging under the deluge of globalisation, mismanagement, corruption and a litany of other problems. Poverty, extreme human rights violations and civil unrest appear to have attained permanent resident status in Africa (Chitando, 2009: 42).

Given this, what is required is the returning attitude and concern as displayed by the Ezra-Nehemiah Motif in reconstruction. This attitude is liberative, inclusive, constructive and affirmative.

Farisani is not in any way disputing the relevance of reconstruction theology in Africa as a paradigm shift in doing theology. But he is critical of the usage of the biblical Nehemiah, because he favoured the returnees and ignored the remaining Jews and their tribes. Jesse Mugambi during an interview on 4 August 2017, affirms that Ezra-Nehemiah, and especially the person of Nehemiah as the leader is not above criticism. Yet his vision was to reconstruct regardless the critics and those who were comfortable in the status of broken walls.

The prevailing or emerging situation facing a community demands a theology. In Zimbabwe, the situation demands reconstruction of the structures of society.

### **3.12. From Liberation to Reconstruction<sup>29</sup>: - A Post-colonial Paradigm**

The liberation theme was force to be reckoned with during the struggle against colonialism, oppression and slavery in Africa and elsewhere. This liberation theme was a response to some unfortunate circumstances in the history of humanity. In the 1960s and 1970s in Latin America, some theologians and social scientists mobilised religious people for liberation and they applied the Exodus Motif as the maxim for liberation. Gustavo Gutierrez (1973), a Latin American, has been regarded as the “father” of liberation theology as he articulated the Exodus Motif as an approach to social change in Latin America. Jesse Mugambi (1995: 3) says that throughout Latin America in the 1970s, emphasis and campaigns were very much on social transformation from industrialism-developmentalism to liberation. This was a bid to reaffirm the person’s dignity against the backdrop of a rising ideologies of industrialism and developmentalism. Gustavo Gutierrez (1973: ix) argues that liberation theology came as reflection on the Gospel and human experiences of Latin Americans; “this theology is a reflection born of the experiences of shared efforts to abolish ‘the current’ unjust situation and to build a different society, much freer and more human”.

In North America, the liberation theme was evident in the Civil Rights activism in the 1950s and 1960s. The Afro-Americans successfully contested socio-economic inequality. They discerned theological-sociological motifs that were relevant to explain the need for social transformation. The Exodus motif was also used as an anchor for social mobilisation. It was useful as it stirred the social drive within the masses. Leaders, such as Martin Luther King Jr and Malcolm X were likened to the biblical Exodus Moses (Mugambi, 1995: 3; Farisani, 2002). These figures/leaders exhibited the character of Moses with determination and courage. They faced the Pharaohs of the day and challenged their dehumanising structures and policies. Jesse Mugambi states that “Moses is cited and portrayed as a charismatic leader who dared to oppose Pharaoh on the basis of divine authority” (Mugambi, 2012: 24).

Moving from Latin America and North America, the theme of liberation and Liberation theology is traced to Africa. Mugambi explains that during the 5<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Nairobi in 1975, the theme of Liberation had become commonplace in Africa (Mugambi, 1995). The emergence of Liberation theology in Africa

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<sup>29</sup> This is the title of Jesse Mugambi’s book “From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology after the Cold War (1995). I have used it in relation to its relevance to reconstruction theology.

saw also the emergence of the Black theology theme in the 1970s. Ezra Chitando (2009: 29) contends that the central goal of both African Liberation theology and African Black theology was to ensure that black people in Africa enjoyed abundant life. Both themes were inspired and motivated by a desire to reaffirm the dignity of black people and a commitment to dismantle the oppressive structures (Chitando, 2009: 29). Both theologies encourage that theological reflection must begin where the people are today and seek redemption in Christ from that point of oppression and struggle.

Liberation theology achieved great strides in Africa, as elsewhere, as it sought to address the social human concerns at the height of colonial struggle. The argument is that liberation theology insisted that “human beings should not be forced to live in conditions that are dehumanising and contradictory to the very foundations of life itself; life that is characteristically human” (Haight, 1985: 28). Liberation theology in Africa became central to the fight against colonial rule and its policies, which were dehumanising the black African. Therefore, it was found within the phenomenon of suffering, injustice and oppression.

The Liberation theme in Africa upholds the Moses leader type with great value. The African leadership was then likened to Moses; understandably because of its courage and determination to see the African people freed from the bondage of colonialism. With this understanding, the liberation theme remains contextual and a praxis model of theologising. Mugambi (2003: 29) argues that liberation challenges “academics and the masses” to confront and to challenge the social-economic injustices and to commit themselves to transform the socio-political hegemonies of the day.

Mugambi (1995: 165; 2003: 171) also bemoans this “Exodus-Moses leader character” created in some of the African leaders, for no one dares to question or to criticise them and fails to face the wrathful consequences. The metaphor has been applied too long and its efficiency has also lost relevance with social realities in Zimbabwe. Mugambi stipulates;

Thus, Moses is indispensable. This indispensability of the leader undermines the capacity of the people to take their own initiative. Without Moses and his voice, things are expected to go wrong and they actually do. His staff becomes the symbol of power. It has to be raised frequently (Mugambi 2003:171).

This has been the case in most African nations, the political leader becomes the indispensable being above all the citizens. In Zimbabwe, politicians are entitled ‘politicians’ and not human beings or fellow citizens. When it comes to symbols of power, the political party and its

political slogans that remind common citizens whom they are addressing and how to address them.

The Moses leader in most African states have “the semblance of power, but have lost touch with real power, which is the ability to build, reconstruct and reshape a great destiny with the people they rule” (Mana, 2004: 11). As can be seen in the book of Exodus, nobody dared to criticise Moses, save for his father-in-law Jethro, whose advice can be read as a challenge to Moses’ leadership and incompetence in Exodus 18:13-27 (Mugambi, 2012: 24).

This scenario is common when one looks at the unchallenged power the African leaders possess. In Africa, it is common knowledge that the most powerful and manipulative people are the politically positioned. Dictatorial leadership has become commonplace in Africa and civil unrest and coups characterise the state of affairs in some African states. Ka Mana does not have kind words when he analyses the African situation and the leaders. He hazes “at the dawn of independence, Africa underwent a crisis as a result of truly insignificant leaders who usurped power. These leaders were totally ineffective, mentally bankrupt, lacked any political will, exhibit deficiencies camouflaged by pompous and verbose speeches” (Mana, 2004: 10). In Zimbabwe, the politically powerful serve their personal interests more than the interests of the masses they claim to represent. This is clearly demonstrated in the continual claim of “democratic endorsement” of the president for thirty-six years with one person and one party ruling the nation. One cannot avoid but to say that the political landscape in Africa is dominated by pseudo-experts, pseudo-opportunists, who will resort to terror and violence to maintain their grip on power (Mana, 2004: 17). Even in the single political party ZANU PF or MDC, the question of presidential succession warrants dismissal from the party or labelling of the other as unpatriotic. All this demonstrates that the Moses leader type of liberation theme is authoritarian and dictatorial in nature. It also has a bias towards the ruling elite (Mugambi, 2012: 24).

Having said this, Mugambi<sup>30</sup> upholds that there is no Exodus without settlement and consolidation of the social structures. This desire to settle and to consolidate brings the shift from liberation to reconstruction theme (Gunda, 2009; Mugambi, 1995). Mugambi became convinced that liberation has outlived its relevance, while he calls for an appreciative attitude

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<sup>30</sup> He challenges the location of Africa in reading of the Exodus narrative. Where are we? Still in Egypt? Crossing the Red Sea? On the banks of the Jordan? Or we are in Canaan? (Mugambi: Skype interview 4/8/2017) see also (Mugambi 2003:169)

towards its impact in history. He emphasised that “when a social metaphor loses its cohesive value, it also loses its efficacy as an ideological tool for social mobilisation and transformation” (Mugambi, 2012: 25). The Reconstruction theology and theme is liberative and transformative as much as liberation was transformative and liberative.

Villa-Vicencio takes liberation and reconstruction as complementary.

Theology has the critical and permanent task of promoting liberation from every form of captivity in each new age. For this to happen theology’s urgent task is to probe and understand “the meaning of the time” (Villa-Vicencio 1992:40).

Upon its publication Mugambi’s *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology after the Cold War*, received some criticism and it continues to have more. He affirms that some of criticism and the continuous dialogue led him to also shift his positions to meet the demanding context of theological reflections (Mugambi, Interview on 4 August 2017). Therefore, this observation is made;

In spite of his earlier excursions into liberation theology there is a marked shift from liberation and the redistribution of resources to the understanding that society needs to be liberated and reconstructed. His later notion of reconstruction carries connotations derived from liberation (Conradie 2006:7).

However, Mugambi has since shifted his position on liberation theology yet the post-colonial context demands a shift to the new paradigm of reconstruction. Mugambi asserts that, “there is a relationship between liberation theology and reconstruction theology, since there is no reconstruction without liberation yet their presuppositions are different<sup>31</sup> (Mugambi 2003:165). That being the case Conradie notes the shift this way:

Mugambi reiterates that liberation and reconstruction are consecutive and complementary processes that may both be valid, depending on the specific context. Where liberation has been achieved, the task of reconstruction begins. Where liberation is only partially achieved, reconstruction is only possible in the liberated zone –which provide a basis to support the struggle for liberation on the frontline (Conradie, 2006: 8; Fischer, 2013).

Reconstruction is necessary if social transformation is to be achieved and this leads to the criticism levelled against the exponents of reconstruction theology by scholars such as Gunda.

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<sup>31</sup> Mugambi (during a skype interview 4 August 2017) made reference to his publication *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction* 2003, in which he has watered down his perspective, but still maintains that liberation has lost its efficacy and usefulness. (see also Mugambi 2003:165-169)

### **3.13. Ezra-Nehemiah Applicable Metaphor for Reconstruction: Gunda's Criticism**

In 2009 Masiiwa Ragies Gunda, produced a critique of reconstruction theology. Gunda began by applauding the exponents such as Mugambi and Villa-Vicencio for their critical thinking and brevity in developing the theology of reconstruction. Gunda's criticism is based upon three issues: the validity of blaming the external forces for Africa's total woes, the selection of the motif of Ezra-Nehemiah as the model of reconstruction and its relationship to liberation themes and the undertaking that the church may lead reconstruction in Africa. For him, these are "the teething problems of reconstruction theology" (Gunda, 2009: 86).

"As keen readers of the signs of times" (Dedji, 2003: 55) the reconstruction school of Mugambi took it that the "New World Order" and the "End of the Cold War" were important historical moments entailing the end of vicious systems of oppression and necessitating a shift of gears from liberation to social transformation and reconstruction. Ragies Gunda is right in questioning the relationship between liberation themes and reconstruction themes. Mugambi is clear that the times have changed. Liberation themes dominated the arena of theology when the situation was befitting but owing to the changes in history, new themes of reconstruction should dominate the arena so as to allow progressive movement (Mugambi, 1995: 15,165; 2003: 29). It is important to note that in proposing a shifting of gears from liberation to reconstruction, the Mugambi school of thought emphasizes the desire to re-interpret the biblical themes in line with the prevailing situation.

Gunda seems to be arguing against the notion of a change in times from colonialism to "African independence". In the case of Zimbabwe, there was a time when the nation was a British colony and the nation became independent after a protracted armed struggle. Gunda's argument is based on "independence or freedom" as he states that "independence is relative such that attempts to equate independence with the end of colonialism is highly debatable ... how do we reconcile this narrow understanding of independence with the many dictatorships that are making the life of the ordinary African hell on earth?" (Gunda, 2009: 85). The argument is made that colonialism was a historical event and independence was gained in Africa, ushering in a new historical event of sovereignty (Banana, 1996: 219). What lacked then was the process of reconstructing Africa with the base vision of the struggle for that independence. Mugambi positioned the process as "of self-introspection, self-criticism and remodelling of the Sovereign Africa's image" (Mugambi, 2003: 30; Dedji, 2003: 58). This was the process missed within

the transition era. Hence, the situation of “ordinary Africans” who are experiencing hell in their motherland today is that which requires reconstruction, not liberation.

The liberation themes presupposed fighting, struggling, opposing, blaming, scapegoating and blood-shedding (Mugambi, 2003: 29). The spirit of fighting in Africa continues to tear the people apart because of the spirit of liberation; fighting, struggle and scramble did not end. Hence, today, the politics of Africa are always antagonistic (Dube, 2012). The reconstruction theology is about listening, dialogue, altering and correcting; what is seen in contemporary Zimbabwe is the continual casting of blame on the outsiders and no acceptance of own faults and damages. The West European bloc (Britain and United States of America in particular) is blamed for everything, the poor infrastructure, poor rainfall pattern, power shortages and even the leaking of national Ordinary (O Level) and Advanced level (A Level) examination papers before they are written from the Zimbabwe National Schools Examination Centre (ZimSec). It becomes critical to question the relevance of liberation rhetoric and the nationalist ramblings such as “we fought for this country”, “we are the freedom fighters”, “we are the war veterans” and “we are patriotic nationalists”. People in Zimbabwe are asking relevant and necessary questions concerning food, teachers in schools, and specialist doctors in hospitals, jobs and unrationed electric power.

### **3.14. Applicability of Reconstruction Discourse**

From the above scholarly and theological analysis, it is convincing to state that the reconstruction debate in Zimbabwe is applicable. Theologically the time and the context is ripe for the reconstruction to take place. The current state of structures demands a missiological constructive critique. The Christian mission is reconstructive, heralding a new society that is built on the foundations of the old one (Mugambi 2003:176). Since reconstruction is inclusive, multi-disciplinary and open-ended (Villa-Vicencio 1992), Christian social influence should be driving factor in achieving a better society. It is necessary for Christian mission to give hope to the hopeless living in a broken and ruined nation to be redirect in reconstruction of all structures. In so doing the Christian church will formulate and articulate a public missiological theology that set to empower the people in their dialogue with the social realities of the day. When the people are empowered they are able to interpret their predicaments and suffering in light of the power to initiate transformation.

Furthermore, the church has the authority to mobilise commitment through the use of its grassroots structures of parishes or cell churches. Commitment to building from the debris of

destruction supersedes individualism and selfish tendencies that left society not united on ensuring wholeness of life. Nehemiah used the structure of the tribes to mobilise the commitment to reconstruction. Logically, what Nehemiah was doing invited ridicule from the elite of the day, since it was an unachievable task without them. Mugambi (2003) outlined the conflict that arose during the reconstruction of the Jerusalem wall. Those benefiting out of the corrupt structure, the weakness of the walls, the unchecked policies and the politically polarised setup will not give in to the envisioned reconstruction, renewal or transformation. Reconstruction is possible when the common people are empowered and mobilised for reconstruction mission. Mugambi (2003:173) asserts that in community mobilisation “not all the local-common people are poor and powerless”

The Ezra-Nehemiah motif is relevant for reconstruction to take place in Zimbabwean context. This motif brings the relationship between the church and state to test. Ezra was a religious priest leading in making the Torah reachable, understood and religiously lived out for the better of the community while Nehemiah became the reconstructive leader. Mugambi stipulates that;

According to the prophetic tradition, the test of righteousness was whether a leader empathised with and worked for the welfare of the poor and the powerless (Mugambi 2003:173).

Nehemiah’s transformative leadership was necessary for reconstruction to be possible. Africa, awaits in dire agony for the emergence of empathetic leaders, who hear and affirm hearing the cries of the poor and who see and affirm seeing the plight of the people they lead.

### **3.15. Conclusion**

This chapter analysed the theologies of the “third world”. These theologies are complementary since they are born out of context and circumstances of history. Theology has evolved and it continues to exist and to be defined by the transition of contexts. African theology or African theologies have been relevant to the African transition. The struggle for independence led to the application of biblical motifs that encouraged the communities to have unity of intention. The Moses type of leadership was relevant in Africa as the Africans considered themselves in light of the Israelites being liberated from Egypt. The Exodus Liberation theme motivated Africans during the decolonisation process. However, there are new realities within the context of Africa that are demanding new theological reflection. Therefore, like other African nations, Zimbabwe has to facilitate the settlement theologies to take shape in the nation. This is the time

for reconstruction theology to influence the reconstruction of the community three and a half decades post-colonial.

The Reconstruction theme has been traced in a bid to produce the basis for its relevance and applicability in Zimbabwe. Reconstruction is an inclusive call for the rebuilding and renewal of the community to be possible.

The chapter further produced the dominant theological voices of the reconstruction theology. The chapter acknowledges the theological innovativeness displayed by Villa-Vicencio, Mugambi, Mana, Dedji, in reconstruction theology. As with any theology produced in the African context, the discerning critical views of Farisani and Gunda became relevant to this research since it appeals to Ezra-Nehemiah motif as a relevant post-colonial motif for reconstruction in Zimbabwe. The usage and application of Ezra-Nehemiah took into account the presented theological or sociological ideological contestations.

Reconstruction theology is a relevant theological discourse for postcolonial Zimbabwe. Reverend Masango Walakura,<sup>32</sup> during an interview on 4 January 2016, laments the deplorable situation of the once promising country. He points out that Zimbabwe's capital city (Harare) reflects a Gothic city, not the sunshine it used to exhibit. Zimbabwe has been reduced to a vending economy, of things not produced in its industries or its fields. It is upon these deplorable reflections that reconstruction theology brings assurance of a hopeful future. The Judean situation resonates with Zimbabwean expectations of reconstructed society. The church is a recognised key player in reconstruction. This is one institution that has honour in Zimbabwe since it is rated as a moral institution, regardless of the faults of history and the faults of the time. The church's social responsibility has to be red in light of the crisis in the nation and the people of Zimbabwe.

In the upcoming chapter, the missiological perspective of reconstruction will be articulated. The paradigm shift of doing mission invites the church to redefine her mandate. The role of the church in transforming society goes beyond mere participation in the democratisation of Zimbabwe. The following chapter seeks to unravel the missiological perspective of

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<sup>32</sup> Rev Walakura is an Anglican priest in the Diocese of Harare and lecturer at the Anglican National theological college. He is concerned with the ecological theology, social transformation and social relevance of the Gospel.

reconstruction. Reconstruction theology challenges the church to realise that it is the embodiment of transformation and has to uphold God's mission, which is transformative.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE MISSIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF RECONSTRUCTION THEOLOGY: THE CHURCH'S ROLE AND THE CHRISTIAN IMPACT IN RECONSTRUCTION

#### 4. Setting the Scene

Missiologists such as (Raja et al., 2010: 5) argue that reconstruction; “is the rebuilding to a new better level society, in cooperation with God’s redemptive work and transformative love”. Thus, reconstruction theology becomes an expression of emancipation and transformation of people in any given community (Maposa, Sibanda and Makahamadze, 2011: 249). Reconstruction theology in this form, seeks to respond to the renewal and transformation of communities. Villa-Vicencio (1992: 14) states that “reconstruction theology is a prophetic theology dealing with and responding to contemporary challenges and issues. It is a Kairos theology in and for kairos moments”. In Zimbabwe, as in most post-colonial African countries, reconstruction is an ideal long walk to transformation. While the attainment of transformation seems a nightmare, as can be seen from the absence of and pretensions of it, the walk is worth taking. In Zimbabwe, the road to reconstruction since independence from colonial oppression, has been filled with blind alleys and impasses.

Throughout history, the church has been recognised as a key partner with the state in particular and society in general, in the discourses facilitating transformation and democratisation of any given level (Banana, 1991; De Gruchy, 2002: 5). It is in this view that the church shares in the mission of God and Christ as a pacesetter in offering prophetic advocacy, reconstruction confidence, transformation advocacy and rebuilding mobilisation spirit.

In this chapter, the missiological perspective to reconstruction is outlined, exploring the church’s role in reconstruction. The chapter also addresses whether theology of reconstruction can empower the church to be at the service of society in addressing reconstruction concerns. Put differently, this section seeks the role and effect of reconstruction theology on the church so that the church would uphold reconstruction as mission. Thereby, it addresses the role of the church in reconstruction. For despite different perspectives, the thrust of reconstruction theology has been to challenge the contemporary Christian churches to participate fully in the building of better and just societies.

Moreover, the thesis will further engage with the following questions: how can the Christian church in post-colonial Africa help Africans to grow out of the vicious cycles of poverty,

corruption, narrow democratic view, and cultural suppression? How can mission remain “business-as-usual” (Maluleke, 2003: 63) when millions in Zimbabwe are suffering, dying, their democratic rights denied and emperors and pharaohs are manifesting? What can the church (es) do to promote community commitment to national and social reconstruction? Are Christians and churches, agents of reconstruction and promoters of social transformation or are the ones who require reconstruction?

#### **4.1. The Perception of Mission: Missiological Reconstruction Outlook**

The meaning, context and dimension of mission have been the subject of investigation and debate amongst missiologists, mission practitioners and theologians. Orville Jenkins (1984: 4) notes, the concept of mission has undergone considerable paradigm shifts over the centuries. This has been attested also by (Verkuyl, 1978; Bosch, 1991: 2), saying that “the Christian mission at least as it has traditionally been interpreted and performed is under attack not only from without but also from within its own ranks”. The traditional concept of mission and missionary is enshrined in the sending of preachers to distant places. In Africa this was associated with receiving white missionaries, expatriate preacher, catechists and priests, who in most cases were sent by mission societies or denominations. Christian mission has evolved to be understood as the “activity of the church of which in its enterprise of faith seeks to transform reality. Mission can no longer only be descriptive of the business of the church rather it is an enterprise and participation in God’s transforming love” (Bosch, 1991: xv). David Bosch (1991: xv) further articulates that mission is that indispensable dimension of the Christian church that purposes to transform reality around society and it is continuous. Jesse Mugambi (1995:240) adds on saying “mission is part of the definition of the church”.

The church by its nature and task is unavoidably missionary. Accordingly Philemon Mwaura (2010: 4) describes mission as that “frontier of the Christian church based on belief, conviction and commitment to cooperate in God’s redemptive purpose and to promote the values of the Kingdom”. Evidently, mission is the divinely fundamental obligation of the Christian church to influence the wellness of community based on the principles of the gospel. David Bosch (1991: xv) emphasises that “mission, in this perspective, becomes that dimension of the Christian faith that refuses to accept a bad reality as it is and aims at transforming the bad state into a good state”. There is no mission without church and there is no church without mission. In this understanding, mission is the activities of the church premised and rooted in the transforming love of God. Christian mission furthermore, “denotes the total task God has set

the church for salvation of the world, but also related to specific contexts of evil, despair and lostness” (Bosch, 1999:411). The chief purpose of Christian mission is that God may be glorified, first among a people enjoying wholeness in a given community and then through them in every aspect of their life.

The harmony in missiology and mission perspective begins with God, who works primarily through the Church to reach and to transform the world. Hence, mission, which is also constantly referred to as “intentional priority evangelisation” (Engen, 2006: 80), is in a great way understood as an “encounter of people with the Good News of God’s transforming love” (Mwaura, 2010: 5) as proclaimed by and through Jesus Christ (Matt. 22:34-40; John 15: 9-17). David Bosch (1991) in a section entitled “*Mission as Evangelism*” (Bosch, 1991:409-420) traces the relationship of mission, evangelism and evangelisation. He admits to the existence of controversies in the understanding of mission as evangelism, for the scope of mission encompasses evangelism (Bosch, 1991:409, 418). He argues “mission and evangelism are not synonymous, but they are indissolubly linked together and inextricably interwoven in theology and praxis. Yet mission is wider than evangelism” (Bosch, 1991:411) Evangelism is that part of mission where conversion and church planting becomes the focus, whereas mission is the holistic activities and concerns of God. The context of evangelisation requires a proper understanding of the notion of salvation which implies liberation from all that oppresses and dehumanises people (Mwaura, 2010: 5). Evangelism and mission both attempt to enlist people to the transforming love of God, the reign of God and the liberating grace of God. Salvation is based on the notion of continuous and constant conversion of people of faith whereby they deepen their capacity to live out the gospel of Christ and relocate their relationship with God. “Intentional priority evangelism” (Engen, 2006: 80) draws the fraternity of the church and individual believers to the value of responsible living out of the gospel. Living out the gospel entails living with brothers (sic) all of them, not only with the holy and pure, faithful and healthy, but also with the lame and the crippled, the suffering and the poor. Then bearing “witness to God’s infinite patience, and love, inexhaustible forgiveness and constantly renewing grace” (Motte, 1992: 453).

Mission should involve a deep commitment to the truth of the Gospel for the sake of transformation and liberation. Jesse Mugambi (1995:6) demonstrates how the gospel challenges Christians to become involved in the process of liberation as “salt of the earth and light of the world” as stipulated in Matthew 5:13-16. He further argues that, “it is not possible for a person to separate spiritual conversion from actual witness in society” (Mugambi 1995:6),

which is mobilised witness for social transformation. This can be taken to mean that authentic Christian social action has to be accompanied with the proclamation of the gospel (intentional evangelism). Jurgen Moltmann (1977: 10) asserts “evangelisation is mission but mission is not merely evangelisation, mission is broader and embraces all activities that serve to liberate people from slavery in the presence of the coming God, slavery which extends from economic necessity to God forsakenness”. Mission and evangelism in this way will be rooted in the gospel of Christ of the Good News of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:15) and the declaration of the year of God’s favour (Luke 4:19). Jesse Mugambi argues;

It is quite clear that Jesus, in his public ministry was actively and simultaneously involved in both personal and social reconstruction. Jesus mobilised his followers to become involved in social change having convinced them of the necessity and urgency to change their attitudes towards themselves and the world (Mugambi 1995:6)

David Bosch also asserts that;

Still what God has provided for us in Jesus Christ and what the church proclaims and embodies in its mission and evangelism is not simply an affirmation of the best people can expect from what in this world but it’s God’s reign and active involvement in the world. Mission asserts God’s “yes” to the world as expression of the Christian solidarity with society and also God’s “no” as an expression of opposition to and engagement with the world (Bosch 1991:11)

Biblically the church is equipped to authoritatively address or point out social imbalances, decadences and socio-political messes that affect the wellbeing of people. From this biblical understanding, there is a clear demonstration that the Christian Church possesses a great obligation to proclaim liberty, peace, and justice for the good of God’s creation (Kirk, 1999: 19; Bosch, 1991: 412).

Mission takes shape through the exercise of dealing with real life questions that arise when people of faith seek to understand their circumstances in light of the purpose of God. Here, Andrew Kirk (1999: 21), proposes a theology of mission “whose task is to validate, to correct and to establish on better foundations, the motives and actions of those wanting to be part of the answer to the concerns of God and God’s kingdom”. Mission, in the post-colonial context seeks to make significant contributions to the renewed dignity of human beings in light of the Kingdom of God. John Pobee (1990: 55) understands mission as;

Enabling people to do the will of God, working for a community of communities, bringing wholeness and healing ... In eschatological tiptoe, in expectation of the full revelation of the sovereign rule of God. The key words are enabling not only by the word of mouth ‘in pulpits pronouncements’ but also in life style and in commitment;

seeking community out of a plurality of peoples, cultures, religions, gender and ages. Seeking wholeness and healing in a world that is ‘out of joint’ a world in which human inhumanity to one another is an everyday occurrence, a world in which people live in constant fear, no real truth, hopelessness, cynicism, and scepticism, violence, bad governance baptised as good, and poverty as the daily bread.

Zimbabwe requires healing and reconstruction for wholeness of life to be realised. Zimbabwe can be transformed when mission enables people to experience the love of God without fear, without self-enriching and selfishness. John Pobee’s understanding of mission requires critical engagement in post-colonial Zimbabwe. Mission theology emphasises that Christianity and Christians have responsibility to raise questions that are most relevant to human wellbeing and societal wholeness. This responsibility will be guided and premised on the principles of the Gospel of God.

David Bosch (1991: xv) argues that “mission is an enterprise that transforms reality into the wholeness restoration of humanity”. This definition recognises that *missio Dei* can find expression through human beings’ life experience, culture and traditional settings. Mission is that indispensable activity of the church and in its participation in the progressive, comprehensive and redemptive transforming love of God in the world. Christian mission comes from a God of deep and everlasting love and compassion, not only for Christians but for the whole world (Raja et al., 2010: 7). Christian mission is to be a channel of wholeness and liberation in a world confronted with issues never imagined.

In this case, missiology, becomes the intentional theological reflection of God’s activity in the world. This reflection is sustained due to the participation of the church in God’s mission. Ivan Illich (1974: 5) defines missiology as the “scientific study of the activities of the Church as the embodiment of the word of God and activities of God beyond her social boundaries, beyond the linguistic barriers with which she feels at home”. Mission has gone beyond the “mere activities of the church but the very being of the church. It spills on to the social continuous incarnation of Jesus Christ, the social dawning of the mystery of Christ” David Bosch (1991: 493). Missiology focuses on the church and its activities as the church is both called out of the world and also sent forth into the world. Missiology permeates and empowers the church in doing God’s mission.

#### **4.2. Foundations of Mission: Sources of Reconstruction Mission**

This section outlines some foundations of mission from which the Church draws inspiration in undertaking and participating in God’s transforming love. These foundations can also be

referred to as sources of doing God's reconstruction mission. These include experience, scripture, and theology.

Under the theme, "Witnessing to Christ Today" a World Mission Conference in Edinburg in 2010, confirmed that the Church's mission is to represent that of Christ's own mission (Balala and Kim, 2010: 11). Mission is the work of God (*missio Dei*) and accordingly, David Bosch (1991:391) defines *missio Dei* as "the participation of the Christian church in the liberating mission of Jesus, the good news of God's love, incarnated in the witness of a community, for the sake of the world". This has proven a paradigm shift in the foundation of mission since the 1950s (Bosch 1991:3-4). Ultimately, what the church is called to do depends on what God is already initiating and doing in transforming societies. This understanding of mission therefore defines the essential task of the church in terms of representing the Gospel "the ambassador of Christ" identity (Hirsch, 2006: 129). The Christian reconstruction mission is Christ's, not the Church's. Ultimately, the church is to depend on God's initiatives for reconstruction. These initiatives are historically outlined in the biblical narratives, such as the Gospels and Ezra-Nehemiah. The Church, is then capacitated to participate in God's mission by embracing transformation, loving service and prophetic witness (Bosch 1991:412).

#### **4.2.1. Experiential Foundation of Mission: - Reconstruction from Realities**

Christian mission is not only the project of expanding churches, but of the church embodying God's presence in the world. Mission does not exist or happen in and from a vacuum (Balala and Kim, 2010: 12) but it should be grounded in and derived from a particular context and addresses particular challenges and concerns. The reception of the Gospel of Christ is embedded in specific human history and experience (Banana, 1991: 1). It is then logical to categorise experience as a foundation of mission. The experiential background of the people in Africa is a solid foundation of the reconstruction theology quest. If this is affirmed, the experiences of Zimbabwe become an informative factor of doing reconstruction mission. Accepting experience as one of the foundations of mission entails that mission has the intertwined obligation of being informed by the experience of both past and present and of seeking to influence humans for a better future.

Mission founded on experience is polyvalent and it brings not only the methodological critique to mission, but also the integrity obligation of the church. It helps to interrogate the exclusionary nature of the former mission practices which neglect "experiences", in general, and affirm certain "experiences" in particular (Balala and Kim, 2010: 13). In some contexts

where the biblical interpretations and mission have borne bad fruits, it is due to the neglect of experiential values of the community. The African community's practices and traditional cultures were in most cases drawn and validated from life experience. Thereby, in disregarding some of these practices and cultural traditions, the historical mission failed in affirming experience as a theological resource.

Mission founded on experience with its "orthopathic" dimension will listen the oppressed, the suffering and the community in decay (Hiebert, 2006: 209). Mission involves the strength to rise above the debris of destruction, dehumanisation and decadence and to seek reconstruction and transformation of their condition (Samuel, 1998: 62). When this consciousness becomes a missiological hermeneutical premise, people are empowered to "risk questioning, to have the courage as displayed by Nehemiah, in facing the emperors or kings with reconstruction conscience. Then, the community will be able to reinterpret the Nehemiah scripture in light of their experience and insights of reconstruction" (Samuel, 1998: 145; Poggio, 2013: 30).

The experiential foundation of mission also enables a critical retrospection of mission from the perspective of those from the "other side" of history. God's mission leads to an ecclesiological approach "from below" history (Yonder, 2014: 278). In its discernment of mission, the Church has to acknowledge that the history of mission was at one time very much aligned with the European colonial expansionism agenda<sup>33</sup> (Pawlikova-Vilhanova, 2007: 252). This agenda was very much geared at supplanting others (culture and tradition). Jesse Mugambi rightly captured it when he argues;

The old frontier mission has on the agenda to replace "primitive cultures" with the "higher and civilised cultures" of the foreign missionaries. This view of mission reflects acculturation rather than conversion. The energies were miss directed to destroy people's culture, denied their traditional experience and heathenise and demonise the community's life rubrics. For this reason Christianity has been accepted with suspicion and viewed by many Africans as a source of despair, rather than a source of hope (Mugambi 1995:170).

Attentiveness to experiences of those who are affected in post-colonial Zimbabwe is relevant for reconstruction discourse to be transformative. The experiential foundation of mission enhances the church to explore the historical dynamics of power, politics and changing

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<sup>33</sup> David Bosch (1991:214-238; 302- 313) gave attention to the intertwinement of colonialism and mission. See also Jesse Mugambi 1995:169 has looked at the old frontiers that created the agenda of superiority and expansionism.

relationships at every stage and situation of history. Christian church in mission is no longer at liberty to talk about Jesus in any way and from nowhere. Missiologically, “the church is challenged to speak about Jesus from within the context of the community of believers, the whole people of God past and present” (Bosch, 1991: 22; Yonder, 2014: 19). The church is invited and send out; to listen, to wait, to serve and to be stewards of enhanced life through the pursuit of justice, peace, reconstruction and wellbeing of humanity (Bishau, 2013: 70; Ilo, 2016: 17).

Therefore, experience as a foundation of mission enables the practitioners of mission to learn from the past, while engaging with the present and envisioning the future with hope.

#### **4.2.2. The Biblical Foundation of Mission:- Re-reading the Ezra-Nehemiah Reconstruction**

The Bible inspires a given community to respond to God’s initiatives of transformation and to respond to their conditions in enhancing life (Bosch, 1980; 1991: 15; Gathogo, 2007). The reading of the Bible in different contexts has demonstrated the paradigms in biblical criticism, notwithstanding how the changing contexts affect witness, understanding and engagement in God’s mission. This has brought a realisation that the biblical texts are “polysemic” containing multiple layers of meaning (Togarasei, 2008: 72). If Christian mission is to be meaningful, then the undertaking of biblical assessment is necessary in the form of missional exegesis of biblical texts. Marc Spindler (1995: 124) provides that “mission today must be seen as arising from something fundamental, from the basic movement of God’s people toward the world. The activity of living out the good news of salvation as preached and lived by Jesus Christ”.

The Bible is the authority of doing theology and as such the authority of mission. Mission undertake that the Bible to be the source of doing mission (Balía and Kim, 2010: 23; Spindler, 1995: 125).

In the Old Testament, God is understood as a “God who reveals himself as the one who among other characteristics has compassion on the poor, the oppressed, the suffering, the weak and the outcast” (Bosch, 1980: 50). For Ka Mana (1991) the Old Testament has a keen interest in the founding crises of humanity. The stories in Genesis for example, the Eden narratives (Genesis 3), Cain and Abel narratives, the Abrahamic narrative and the Esau and Jacob narratives show crisis-ridden drama. Missiologically, in these narratives there are new horizons and renewed opportunities. God continually empowers individuals and societies with a new

sense of responsibility and creativity in order to construct better future (Dedji, 2001: 258). This understanding invites the community of the Bible (church) to participate in God's revelation through witnessing to communities in which it is located.

In Africa, the dynamic of the Exodus epitomises the activity of God who seeks liberation and justice. There, God makes himself missionary in drawing near to the enslaved Israelites to redeem them (Exodus 3:6-9). The essence of mission is firmly rooted in God, who responds to the Israelites' cry for deliverance and justice. Therefore the Israelites' dignity was restored by the intervention of God. This is the self-emptying of God for the liberation of people under oppression. David Bosch (1991:17) articulates that, "the Old Testament depicts a God who is present, God who acts, God of promise and God who is involved with human existence realities. God's presence is clear in the hierophanic experiences of revelations". In Zimbabwe, people are aware of God's presence in worship and prayer, healing and deliverance but above all in his historical acts of deliverance, restoration and reconstruction as recorded in the Old Testament.

The re-reading of Ezra-Nehemiah in the post-colonial Zimbabwean experience context will show that there is need for the church to return to its mandate of advocating reconstruction. To read the Bible as a missionary text and to see the Christian faith as a missionary faith in Africa, supposes a compulsion to objectively scrutinise the challenges affecting people and map the solution from inspirational biblical texts. Missiologically, transformation is realised when the people in suffering and poverty begin to read, pray and live out the active hope that is exhibited in the Nehemiah corps. Nehemiah's rallying cry "let's begin building, is a powerful symbol of hope amid full-scale human disaster" (Dedji 2001:258). Taking Nehemiah symbolically to represent a church in mission, it entails that the church in Zimbabwe is called and established to be a concerned church. The church's concern should trigger the desire to see transformation as possible regardless of the powers that be, the circumstance and the resources available. The church cannot afford to be indifferent to the situation of a post-colonial Zimbabwe.

The New Testament is associated with mission. David Bosch (1991:15) observes that a paradigm shift in mission was with the advent of Jesus of Nazareth and what defines his life and ministry. This shift set the missionary character of the New Testament clearly. This mission characteristic led New Testament scholars such as (Flemming, 2005: 14; Wright, 2006) to affirm that the New Testament depicts and provides the deep sense of mission and mission context-sensitive as different people are included in the salvation plan of God. As

(Rzepkowski, 1974: 80), puts it “the decisive difference between the Old Testament and New Testament is mission. The New Testament is essentially a book about mission”. It is the incarnation of Jesus that makes mission not just a possibility but an obligation of the Church. Incarnation establishes a paradigm in understanding God’s redeeming presence in the broken society. Jesus came to transform human institutions. Using common metaphors he made the Kingdom of God a reality of hope and better future. The Great Commission (Matthew 28) biblical text is one such significant motivating mission text, which has been used from both ends, including in oppressive misinterpretations (Wright, 2006: 40). The Bible remains the text which inspires mission enterprise.

#### **4.2.3. Theological Foundation of Mission: - The Relevance of Reconstruction Theology**

Christian theological formative factor of mission revolves around the understanding of theology, which is orthopraxis in outlook. John Macquarrie (1977) defines theology as;

Theology is the study which through participation in and reflection upon a religious faith, seeks to express the content of faith in the clearest and most coherent language available and put that faith in a context (Macquarrie, 1977: 6).

Theology involves participation in and critical reflection on the acts of faith. Participation entails being actively involved, or observatory participation; it can also mean reflective participation. In this instance, theology is a reflection upon the ways in which God deals ‘and reveals self to humanity. Participation can involve how the people of faith view and form a relationship with their God. Theology becomes the construction of God’s action in a context of the believing community. It is a reflection of the people of faith, their events and their stories. Furthermore, Macquarie (1977: 6), stipulates that theology is a practical discipline that seeks to make the content of faith meaningful and understandable in a given context and using the thought forms and language available to the community of faith. Theology aims at making faith intelligible and consistent with reality. David Bosch (1991:22) asserts that “a theological foundation of mission is only possible with reference to the point of departure of faith: God’s self-communication in Christ as the basis of mission reflection”. Christian mission is not mission without faith in God and faith in Jesus Christ. As such, a Christian is a person who has accepted the Christian faith and made his/her decision to become a follower of Jesus Christ. Thus, African Christian mission will be determined by those experiences of “the power of the gospel” in transforming of reality (Mugambi, 1989: 11).

Authentic mission is, therefore, founded on the *missio Dei*, and *missio en Deo* (mission in God). *Missio Dei* and *missio en Deo* will be effective when founded on an encounter with God that leads to practical participation (Heaney, 2015:153). In *Missio Dei*, mission is understood as participating in the activities of God, based on the Trinity Godhead (Raja and Benjamin, 2010). *Missio en Deo* expresses that mission is within us and within God – God in us and we are God, in the activities of transforming the world (Raja and Benjamin, 2010). Therefore, the church does not only participate with God in God’s mission rather, the church is in God’s mission. This is so because mission is ecclesiastical in that the inspired activities of Christians bring about the realisation of God’s work of redemption and transformation. These activities are inclusive, open ended and reconstructive. They include and go beyond charity, evangelism and planting churches.

In Zimbabwe, almost every household has a print Bible version (apart from the technologically provided Bibles, almost everyone with a smart phone has a Bible application) which gives hope and encouragement to people and families that one day their lives will be transformed. It is in this understanding that the Bible is in mission, touching people’s lives closed or opened and with or without the church’s active involvement. This led Canaan Banana to observe;

Theologically, the church has to re-assess the implications of the Christian message in a new social, political and economic climate. Theology in my view, while finding its base from the Biblical text, must of necessity find expression with the context of the human situation (Banana, 1980: 95)

The church is challenged to make the world a better place for all people to experience wholeness and the respect each other’s dignity. This challenge calls the church to mobilise and advocate for all people to participate in the creative process of making the world a better place. Charles Villa-Vicencio argues that;

Whether approached from a biblical covenantal perspective in pursuit of a common good or as a basis for loving one’s neighbour, a theological affirmation of the dignity and rights of people encourages the fullest possible participation from all people. Theologically the church is exposed to the challenges while obliged to empower those deprived of their most essential democratic and human rights, as well as to challenge those whose claims on the social resources of society often prevent others from acquiring the most essential needs that constitute the right to life (Villa-Vicencio 1992:161).

Therefore, reconstruction theology is relevant in Zimbabwe as elsewhere in the world, since it is influenced by human experience and a deep reflection on the scripture. These formative

factors of mission empower the Church in championing the reconstruction discourse in Zimbabwe.

#### **4.3. Missiology and Social Realities: Locating the Church in Reconstruction Theology**

The activities of and participation in *Missio Dei*, is not a single spiritualised orientation discipline. Mission is no longer classified as the peripheral life and being of the church faith. Thus, a church mission and church faith without efficacy, restricted to the level of private practices and detached from human experience is irrelevant (De Andrade, 2007: 281). According to Linda Thomas (2007)<sup>34</sup>, mission should not only be understood as the activity and participation in the *missio Dei*, rather mission has everything to do with understanding reality. This inquiry and interpretation of reality makes mission also a hermeneutical enterprise. This notion of reality makes missiology a science of religion, having a multi- and inter-disciplinary outlook. In post-colonial life, Ivan Illich's definition of missiology challenges the church to understand mission and to be able to operate outside the box. Ivan Illich defines missiology as;

The science about the word of God as the church in her becoming... into new peoples, beyond its social boundaries, beyond the linguistic barriers within which she feels at home; beyond the poetic images in which she taught her children... missiology is the study of the church surprises (Illich, 1974: 6).

These church surprises are defined by context. They are not in the rubrics of its doctrine or dogmatic outlines but they are real life situations. The church, the church ordained leaders and the church lay ministers should be prepared to encounter and engage with societal realities.

Missiology has a social concern. It is mediating the transformative love of God to humanity for the sake of a better existence. Mission of the church in African context involves making sense of the Jesus Christ's gospel while using the dynamics of local interpretations, images and symbols in relationship with the social realities of the people of Africa.

The church exists in mission because the restoration, of a damaged humanity to wholeness only can happen in the community (Hiebert, 2006: 212). Such mission orientation is varied since factors that distort and damage humanity are various and multi-dimensional. In this

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<sup>34</sup> Linda E Thomas presented a series of lectures at Yale Divinity School during the 2007 Convocation. On 11 October 2007 she presented "Anthropology, Mission and the African Woman: A Womanist Theological Approach" downloaded and watched from [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) on 21/8/2017

context, mission is no longer an option for the church rather it the heart of the church's existence. However, the church should refuse to be mistakenly understood as sectarian or political as it actively engages in the mission of restoration and healing of society.

African theology must seek meaning, interpret and understand social realities that affect people's existence. Mission is multi- and inter-dimensional in that "it is in free partnership with other disciplines, it permeates all disciplines and is not primarily one sector of the theological encyclopaedia" (Bosch 1991:494). The praxis component of mission makes it relative to social realities as they demand interpretation and theological critique. Missiology in this light becomes inter-acting. Bosch (1991:497) stipulates that "mission is an intersubjective reality in which missiologists, the church and the people among whom they labour are partners". The partnership is necessary, as the social realities are complex and communal connectedness and wellbeing is fragmented.

The major complexity facing post-colonial Africa is politics. Historically, societies have been built/arranged differently and by means of broad range of factors and actions. One such action is political factor and involvement. Andrew Kirk, argues that;

The reality of politics is complex, with many hazards to trap the inexperienced. The church finds itself in a wide variety of different situations. The church may have some influence in the political arena or almost none; it may be tolerated, restricted or actively persecuted (Kirk 1999:215).

Political ideologies and policies have great consequences for social stability and social service delivery. Accordingly, Max Weber (1994: 311) breaks down politics in terms of share of power, influence of direction and contribution to resource allocation. More so, politics has to do with interests in the distribution, preservation and transfer of power as the decisive role in decisions affecting the wellness of a community. Politics influence the whole sphere of existence of a community (Gathaka, 2007). In political and social grounds, the task of perceiving the correct Christian mission action in a given context can only be achieved when experience is hermeneutically engaged in light of the transforming liberating love of God. In undertaking its missional mandate, the church cannot ignore political realities. In Zimbabwe the political landscape challenges every social existential outlook. Therefore, there is need to affirm as legitimate the connection between, faith and politics, theology and politics and mission of church engagement with the socio-political and socio-economic realities. The notion of common good and social transformation becomes ambiguous when it is not encompassing the political and social issues of society (De Andrade, 2007: 281) .

David Bosch comments that:

The Christian church in general and the Christian mission in particular are today confronted with reality issues they have never even imagined and dreamt of... Social issues which are crying out for responses that are both relevant to the times and in harmony with the essence of the *missio Dei* (Bosch 1991:188).

In Zimbabwe, the social realities of the post-colonial era invite the church in mission to engage in the reconstruction mission. Therefore, the reconstruction theology should be missiological in character and perspective.

#### **4.4. Church the Answering Team**

Historically, the church and Christianity have been labelled badly, treated with suspicion and yet recognised as leading a great constituency of believers in society. Canaan Banana (1991) articulates that regardless of the historical demonisation levelled on the church, it remains the conscience of any community it is established within. This responsibility cannot be denied or politicised, if a community has to exist within the wellness of people at the heart of its existence. Therefore, by calling and by establishment, the church should be part of the answering team to the issues of the reconstruction mission.

The church is called to *participate in the integral mission* because of her position, power and location. Missiologically, church's participation in mission and social transformation is derived from the Trinitarian theology<sup>35</sup>. The church's power and treasures are not in the structures, or institutional privileges; rather the church's power is "through the announcement of the cross and death of the Lord and relying on the power of resurrection for strength and continuation in the *Missio Dei*" (Ilo, 2016: 22). In exercising this power the church will shape a transformed ecclesiological outlook which is centred on engagement and participation. The socio-political and socio-economic commitment of the church is displayed in participating, denouncing and offering a sustainable option for the sake of people's political and economic emancipation. Bienvenu Mayemba (2016) argues that

The church should exemplify the qualities of Nehemiah (the reconstructor), Jeremiah (the prophet) and the Good Samaritan. It has to share and proclaim the joy of the Gospel.

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<sup>35</sup> This participation can be seen in the history of salvation; the Triune God is the giver of life, creating and reconstructing the world. God incarnate in the body of Jesus Christ participates in the vulnerability and suffering of humanity and creation, but overcomes suffering in the resurrection. The Holy Spirit of God is present since creation and is active, participating in the experiences of the people (Walz, 2007).

It also has to challenge, question and denounce what it opposes. It should be involved socially by works of mercy and charity (Mayemba, 2016: 53)

In this sense, participation is defined by loving experience and compassionate solidarity with people. The church is there to influence development of a justice-conscious attitude in society.

Bishop Kevin Dowling states that;

Our reality in Africa points to the need to positively revive and ground a reflection on the meaning of collegiality and of subsidiarity a core principles of the church's social teaching. Subsidiarity should be understood in light of the common good of all citizens. To ensure that subsidiarity works requires the church to transform citizens into becoming and being active agents of transformation in their own communities by using their insights and experience to develop policies and practices that will make a real difference in their quality of life (Dowling 2016:7).

The common good should be defined contextually. In Zimbabwe; justice, distribution of resources and power, access to social services, eradication of man-made poverty, and the respect of creation are critical concerns. The church should promote a social compact in which all citizens experience growth in their human dignity as human beings created in the *imago Dei* (Dowling 2016). The quest for justice is what made St Augustine to states in, *St Augustine: Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*,

Remove justice, and what are kingdoms but gangs of criminals on a large scale? What are criminal gangs but petty kingdoms and petty bourgeoisie? A gang is a group of men and women under the command of a leader, bound by compact of association, in which the plunder is divided according to an agreed convention (Bettenson, 1984: 139).

This quotation sums up the situation in Zimbabwe. The just distribution of resources brings out economic justice and the just distribution of power begs political justice. In Zimbabwe those who are corrupt in civil service and communal resource distribution are the most powerful and boastful. Even church leaders who are morally corrupt are the most protected and applauded church leaders<sup>36</sup>. Ceaselessly, the prophets denounce the inequitable distribution of goods and the inequality of the society of their times. Judges are criminals, “oppressing the just, accepting bribes, repelling the needy at the gate” (Amos 5:12). Isaiah on the same note observes; “each one of (your princes) loves a bribe and looks for gifts. The fatherless they defend not, and widow's plea does not reach them” (Isaiah 1:23) (see Ela 2005). Therefore the church must

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<sup>36</sup> In Zimbabwe it is not only about politicians who have been criticised for showing lacking of moral integrity in recent times, but also religious institutions (leaders) and churches. Whilst trust in politicians, political organisations and those holding public offices is lacking and the credibility of institutions such as political parties, members of the judicial system, trade unions, educational institutions, public and private media and religious institutions is in dire crisis (see Chatando (2008) (2013), Gunda 2015 (2009) (Gunda and Mtetwa, 2013).

stand with the people in all forms of suffering, which implies speaking against all forms of injustice until justice is flowing in the community.

In Africa in general and Zimbabwe more specifically, where the aftermath of political independence is befouled with bitter disappointments. The church is invited to be the *conscience of society*. As a custodian of social conscience, the church has to point out and criticise the neglect of the common good. Accordingly, Colette Coula (1997: 220) states in “Africa many things are taken for granted, crimes go unnoticed because they have become commonplace”. The church should address the conscience and attitude of society through teaching and preaching the undiluted gospel of Christ. Canaan Banana (1991: 1) appreciates that the churches are to be the conscience of the community in all the state of affairs the community. Banana argues that, “churches are responsible for being conscious of the struggles of the oppressed and the marginalised in their communities and contexts” (Banana, 1991: 1). The church can be part of the answer in mitigating the deplorable socio-economic and socio-political quagmires which communities experience. In reconstruction discourse the task of the church is to “influence the emergence of individual sustainable creativity, to encourage communities to move out of paralysing fear and help them develop critical understanding of their situations” (Ela, 2005:52).

For the reconstruction church to uphold a true conscience of the nation responsibly it should be concerned with politics, policies and public responsibility of governments. This is so because anything that affects people in the positive or in the negative has political consequences (Kirk, 1999: 215). Accordingly, Woganman argues that “political philosophy remains incomplete unless it has a reference to a vision of what is ultimately true and ultimately good and that is where the Church and theologians are called to task” (Woganman, 1988: 110).

The new vision for the Church should aim at *confronting and tackling* the multi-layered concerns of the people in post-colonial African. For Banana “the church should adopt the militancy vision and be apolitical yet political” (Banana, 1991: 2). This militancy vision is missionary in that the church is biblically authorised to say “no” to the world, as an expression of opposition to the dehumanising status and at the same time say “yes” as an expression of solidarity with society without losing the principles of Jesus Christ of transformation (Bosch, 1991:11). Jesus Christ confronted the religious and political authorities of his time and he reshaped people’s understanding of power, law and authority (honourable). He transposed these concepts with responsibility, humility and accountability.

Banana's argument should be viewed in light of the African nationalist's current rambling that, "Churches should stay out of politics" or that "Clerics should concentrate on the preaching of the word of God and leave politics for politicians" (Chitando, Taringa and Mapuranga, 2014: 179). These statements only surface when the emperors and the pharaohs of the day realise that they are riding on the evil horses and they want no one to tell them, for it is an embarrassment they cannot tolerate. Emperors know the selfish evils they perpetuate upon the people whom they are supposed to protect and care for. The church in reconstruction should foster active resistance to injustice and oppression and instil Messianic hope (Ela, 2005:29). This in outlook is the militant missional mandate of the church.

The church is challenged to have a faith and mission that denounces all forms of human subjugation, human alienation. The church is called to uphold the *prophetic mission guided with a prophetic vision*. According to Elsa Tamez (2001: 59), a "prophetic vision and dream is a response to a state of affairs with which a community in crisis will be deeply dissatisfied with and which it seeks to change". The church, in its mission, will offer the prophetic vision and dream of a better world, if it upholds and exhibits the authority as given by Jesus. Jesus prophetically challenged his Palestinian-Jewish culture, sought to evangelise it from within and mandated the church to speak prophetically with love (Flemming, 2005:23). Through prophetic teaching, he subverted prevailing attitudes toward wealth and riches (Mark 10:22-25). He transformed the dominant social norms by touching the lepers, eating with the alienated, affirming the downtrodden, and assuring the unnamed and the women value of life. This is the prophetic reconstruction vision which encapsulates the life desired, not the life survived. It can be argued that from independence 1980 to date, Zimbabwe has been a country in transition to reconstruction (Chimhanda, 2009: 105). This is so because from its emergence from colonial rule, Zimbabwe has a chequered history of civil strife, economic scramble and political intolerance emanating from selfish ambitions and also bids to transform society.

The church can exercise this ethical task or prophetic vision in various ways. They ranges from influencing the ethos, cultural values and spirit of the times, through educating members on particular topics affecting people such as economic position and proposals, environmental concerns, political injustices and lobbying (Verstraelen, 1998: 48). It has to be stated that the church is not a political opposition party that strives to gain power and political influence. The church is an answering team player, ready to assist the government in a reconstructive and developmental way.

Ultimately the church has to develop a theology of meaning of transformation, based on the moral reality of the Christian faith. It is through the church's prophetic mission that it directs people to the Kingdom of God. However, with others, the church has to erect signs of that Kingdom by promoting truth, justice, love, and peace. The church with others; "has to seek the renewal, transformation and reconstruction of communities" (Verstraelen, 1998: 49).

It is crucial for the church to become attuned to the transitional times and to respond missiologically to circumstances. The missiological call of the church is to restore hope and dignity to the community of believers. In Zimbabwe, hope is being envisioned through reconstruction theology.

While participating in this way, the church is exposed to criticism from the politicians and other sectors that benefit from their unchecked operations. Further, the church is exposed to the high risk of accepting the mission regarding politics of human life and survival. According to Karl Rahner, (1974: 29-34), the church operates in an environment marked by exclusion and alienation. Christians in this environment must expect to be "a little flock" (Rahner, 1974:34) apart from the prevalent opinions and feelings of their social environment. While this is happening, the authority of the church - the *magisterium* remains, but it must be careful to show that its mission and teachings are rooted in the Gospel (Rahner, 1999: 95). In all this, the church must be ready and take the risk as an essential component of mission. Karl Rahner encourages the church, saying;

This risk is necessary; if the church is not to seem to be pedantic, to be living in a world of pure theory, remote from life, making pronouncements that do not touch the stubborn concreteness of real life. In the concrete set up of this complex world, with complicated politicians, the church should be able to discern when to say "No" to political proposals and when to play the wait and see or to be an indifferent player, for this is the compass piddle for the Church to remain in the ground of mission (Rahner, 1974: 98-100; Villa-Vicencio, 1992:186).

In risking itself and remaining resolute to the truth of the Gospel without the luxury of certainty is part of the mission the church is obliged and called to participate in.

#### **4.5. Church and Mission in the Context of Pharaohs and Emperors**

God's mission has always taken place in the midst of empire (McKenna 1994). God became incarnate through Jesus in an imperial world. From the time of Jesus' birth, an emperor threatened his life and we learn in the Gospel accounts that it was the empire and its allies who eventually executed Jesus. Mary McKenna (1994: 223) cautiously reminds the church of its

position as reflected in Jesus, when she says “to say Jesus died on the cross for our sins is often to ignore or forget that he died because he was dangerous to a society that wanted to hold onto its power...” The *Missio Dei* has often taken place in the contexts of pharaohs/ emperors. A fundamental challenge, therefore, facing the post-colonial church as it responds with God’s love in the world, is how best to exhibit Jesus and Nehemiah as useful models in addressing the emperor. In this view the church should confront today’s pharaohs and emperors and demand that they allow the people of God speech, decision and freedom. The missional church has to speak for the people and communities who are refused the dignity of being human and who are crying for justice (Ela 2005:38). For dignity, integrity and justice remain Christian ethical issues. In that light the church has to confront the structure and demand them if they are not given.

Having said that, the church exists in the realms of emperors and pharaohs. There is need to respond to the questions; who is the emperor in society today and how do these empires manifest themselves?

While the history of the Israelites in Egypt was characterised by captivity and hard labour, there was also an element of hope. African Liberation narratives is complete with the mention of the Exodus interpretations, with the inspiration Moses figure. In Zimbabwe, as elsewhere in Africa, no one will deny the influence of Exodus and the Moses motif in the fight for liberation. However, there is no liberation without settlement (Mugambi 2003). It is prudent, therefore, to argue that the “Exodus Theology of Liberation” as a stand-alone theology has long outlived its meaning and essence in Zimbabwe. Hence, the quest to advance Reconstruction Theology, which is also “Liberative” in outlook. Commenting on the mission of the church in Africa Ka Mana (1994: 121), says “it is to re-evangelise societies in order to promote ‘anti-pharaoh’ and ‘anti-baal’ principles and to grow seeds of life founded on human values and the Christian church being the generators of active and creative hope”. In this bid, the theology of the church is supposed to focus on a hope for a better society.

Another manifestation of the empire phenomenon in modern Africa could be a coming together of economic, cultural, political and military power in our society that constitutes a reality and a spirit of domination. The politically muscular are manifesting into the untouchables in Zimbabwe. They amass property and wealth at will, through all means possible.

Further to that, there is an all-encompassing global reality serving, protecting and defending the interests of the powerful while imperiously excluding and even sacrificing humanity and

human dignity and exploiting creation; a pervasive spirit of destructive self-interest. This is attested to in the neo-colonial inversions of the Look East (pro Chinese) policies (Matahwa, 2014: 1). The Chinese are as capitalistic as their European counterparts yet when China comes to Africa, she presents a desire to help Africa come out of the vicious cycle of economic crisis. Fortune Hogwe and Handson Banda (2017: 238) argue that the relationship between China and Africa has to be analysed in light of a new wave of scramble of post-colonial Africa, involving Europe, United States of America and China. The reality is that China's presence in Africa is for furthering its own interests, rather than those of Africa. In Zimbabwe, Chinese presence is felt in the mining, agro-economic, industrial and even educational sectors (Matahwa, 2014: 7). Africa needs to reconstruct, look inward and move forward rather than be wary about east or west for its social, political, and economic regeneration.

Furthermore, there is worship of money, goods and possessions, typified in the gospel of prosperity and consumerism. This is proclaimed through powerful and religiously justified, believed and followed propaganda. Some churches have lost the integrity of "being church" (Dreyer, 2016: 2) by allowing materialism to flourish in Zimbabwe. The "quick fix" gospel being preached has impoverished many and enriched the denominational leaders (Bishau, 2013: 68). This has led to sexual harassment, fraudulent healings, in-house leadership wrangles and disunity in churches. This shows that empire has encroached upon the life of the church in Zimbabwe. However, it is important for the church, in the current time, to be a church and carry its mission to reconstruct society with dignity and integrity.

Zimbabwean society yearns for a time when human destiny is not determined by crisis, violence, corruption, intolerance and dehumanisation. The church is being challenged to map a relevant theology that addresses the needs and concerns of Zimbabwe today in the face of suffering and decrepit social status. As said earlier in this paper, regardless of the range of challenges, the church should remain dynamic, relevant and alive in society. The church is a necessary institution that cannot be completely destroyed regardless of the Empire/Pharaoh's sword. The early church, as recorded in the book of Acts, epitomises the powerful position of the church. With the existence of the Tobiah, Geshem and Sanballat of the day (Nehemiah 4), Nehemiah and committed community continued with reconstruction. Hence, the Church is challenged to read and strengthen its spikes of mission in the face of the challenges of Emperors and Pharaohs. The whole church should remain resolute to reconstruction regardless of the risk.

#### **4.6. The Comparative Advantage of the Church**

Jesse Mugambi (1995:160) argues that “Africa today is portrayed as the most religious continent in the world. Christianity is growing numerically at such a rate that this will be the most Christian continent”. This significant growth has made Africa the home of Christianity and at every corner of the any community, there is a denominational church. Many of the neo-denominations in their neo-Pentecostal flavour have brought new dynamic to church and mission. The mainline churches have parishes, circuits and mission districts which are in every location and can reach out to the community in mission and evangelism. David Bosch (1991:378) attributes the power of the local church, parish or circuit saying; “the church in mission is primarily the local church everywhere in the world. The local church should stand in a position of authority in confronting the community’s life threatening challenges”. The structure of the church allows it to effectively influence reconstruction for a better existence.

God’s way of relating to the troubled world has been through a community of people who are dedicated and compassionate to fulfil God’s purpose and mission. Hence, God elected the church to transmit the Gospel of salvation. Accordingly, Andrew Kirk (1999: 21) asserts that God’s mission is at the heart of the elected church. The church should possess the qualities of responsibility and accountability. It is established for the long haul in any given context and community. The church must be able to stand the pressure when the going gets tough. The church is empowered by the Holy Spirit to support, empower, accompany, advocate for social justice, restore hope, and to be in solidarity with all those in need. The church is a living and loving community; it is a community elected and called by God to represent the Kingdom of God on earth (Bosch, 1991).

The church is considered to be positioned strategically for reconstruction mission, in a world frustrated with the unending debt, poverty, unlimited exploitation of the other and the other’s resources, misery caused by civil unrest, ethnic conflicts, inept and unaccountable leadership and mismanagement of national affairs (Kamugisha, 2012: 8, 34). These crises and frustrations afflict any African nation and hence, challenge the conventional theologies. It then remains a *kairos* moment for the church to be church to humanity and to bring transformation and reconstruction. This then implies that the church cannot afford to be indifferent and isolated in the face of Zimbabwe’s socio-political and socio-economic decay that has become both a disgrace and a scandal to the goodness of God’s beautiful creation (Mpofu, 2009: 20).

#### 4.7. Propaganda De Tat: A Mission Integrity Call

Great significance of the church, is its authority to participate in the *missio Dei* to see transformation of society. David Bosch (1991) affirms that mission is more important than ministry and the peripatetic pronouncements from pulpits. For him, the populace is not so much impressed by the miracles of itinerant evangelists. However, “when people look up to the church they are more concerned with the *propaganda de Tat* – propaganda of the deed” (Bosch, 1991: 191). In this context the church of deeds is a church that cares for the people’s welfare. Therefore, the church is challenged to stand up, to denounce and to be an exemplary player in reconstruction. The church has to apply herself to the issues on the ground, with prophetic voice and action. The propaganda of deed means that the church must accept the responsibility to be an advocate of reconstruction. The nature of this responsibility requires the church to “speak authoritatively and accountably to those who wield power and to those who have become mere observers to the decadence” (Phiri and Nadar, 2010: 92).

The authority confided in the church allows the church to speak, the undiluted message of reconstruction and never to be silent in times of struggle. The former Catholic Bishop of Umtali (Mutare), the Rt Rev Donal Raymond Lamont (1959) in a Pastoral Instruction (Letter) to the Christian believers entitled “*Purchased People*” categorically affirmed the mission call of the church in times of struggle as,

The church united under the leadership of the Jesus, must teach, govern in the things spiritual and administer the patrimony of sanctification committed to them by the Author of all sanctity Himself. It would constitute the most dreadful apostasy when the Church and its Bishops fail in teaching and leaving out the mission entrusted to them, seeking to come to terms with the spirit of worldliness, taking secularism and materialism for granted and attempting co-existence with a Godless world (Lamont, 1959)

This is serious mission, when anchored on the propaganda of deed and resist the worldliness policies which has no respect to human dignity. Bishop Lamont’s letter was written at the height of colonialism when the Rhodesian government was discriminating and plundering. Bishop Lamont (1959) went further to argue “the church must speak out the word that transforms, and affirms the dignity of the whole creation. No matter what the threats are, what the opposition and what the criticism the church has to remain prophetic.”

In upholding the “*propaganda de tat*” mission, the church is to speak the truth of the gospel since truth telling is critical for reconstruction to be possible. In Zimbabwe, truth has been

polarised leaving the community crippled. The church in this situation is challenged to create space for story-telling. Through story-telling the community is exposed to the truth of the gospel, truth to love and truth to seek justice and mercy. In this way the church will be able to prepare its members to be instruments of truth for the benefit of the community. Jose Chipenda (1997: 38) argues that “the church deeds are owned by God. The church that heals hurt lives, which comforts old people, which challenges youth and denounces all divisions and classifications. The church that interprets the truth in terms of truth and inspires courage for this life and hope for the life to come”.

#### **4. 8. The Eucharist and Reconstruction**

Christians all across the world engage in various practices in expressing their faith. There is at least one identity marker of the body of Christ that is still revered by many Christians with less theological debate – the Eucharist. Most churches in their variety still uphold the value of the Eucharist (Last Supper of Jesus Christ) as set out in Luke 22:14 and 1 Corinthians 11:23. The church should redefine the theology of the Eucharist in light of *propaganda de tat*. The proclamation (propaganda) of deed is re-enacted in the words “do this in remembrance (memory) of me” (1 Corinthians 11:24-25), usually recalls the sobering events of Jesus’ suffering and death. Furthermore, it directs audiences to the unselfish self-giving of Jesus Christ to reconcile and redeem people.

The Eucharist table should be at the centre of social reconstruction as it draws people to self-reflection and self-examination. If every time Christian people draw near the Eucharist table they were do a critical self-examination of their deeds toward others and towards creation, in relationship to Jesus’ self-emptying (Philippians 2:1-8). Post-colonial Zimbabwe could have be haven of love, sustainability and justice. Sharing the Eucharist cup, is a transformative experience. The partaking from the same plate and drinking from the same cup is reconstructive as it is upholding “the Ubuntu – I am because you are and you are so I am” (Tutu, 2004:25). In Zimbabwe solidarity precedes individual choices, activities and decisions; likewise, communion of persons is emphasised more than personal autonomy. Ubuntu can be described as the capacity in an African culture to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, humanity and mutuality in the interests of building and maintaining communities with justice and mutual care (Tutu, 1999: 34-35; 2004: 25; Luhabe, 2002: 103; Khoza, 2006: 6).

The Eucharist table encourages wholeness. It is also a safe space of truth-telling. Not only should the Eucharist table be a safe space, it should be the place of drawing the truth with hope. In this understanding, the Eucharist should build up the church and make it a sign of Christ. Actions of Christ in and through the church institution should produce results of reconstruction and transformation.

Reverend Paul Gwese<sup>37</sup>, during an interview on 7 January 2015 commented that the Eucharist table has become a solidarity table. For him, when suffering people come forward to kneel and receive from the same cup, there is hope of journeying together in their sufferings and struggles. The most important feature of the guests on the Eucharist table is sharing. The communion table is inclusive, meaning that it is open to all, the rich and the poor, the righteous and the unrighteous and the perpetrators and victims of injustice. They all are invited to reflect on their actions. The solidarity comes when Jesus Christ's death and resurrection becomes the focus of communion, to which Eucharist becomes liberative and a means of hope to the suffering (Bosch, 1991:98).

The Eucharist gives example of breaking norms and rules of a concrete economic and cultural system and allows people to shift into openness, compassion, generosity and welcome. The proposal is to surrender all; private places, closed by privilege and domination and to fill stomachs with the reality of the other. It is in the Eucharist that society is exposed to the effect of the yeast (Matthew 13:33). Embracing the spirit of the yeast of the Eucharist is to let the yeast of the gospel transform society from one of retaining, hoarding and alienating to one of giving, honouring the other person and journeying together. This is affirmed also in Philippians 2:1-8.

#### **4.9. The Church for Reconstruction: Church with Others, For Others**

The 98<sup>th</sup> Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temples (1942: 56), asserts that church in any community should exist for the sake of the community's pressing matters. The church is the only institution that has to exist for the benefit of those who are not its members. Similarly, Dietrich Bonhoeffer in 1944 argued "that the church is church only when it exists for others... not dominating, but helping and serving" (Bonhoeffer, 1967: 112; Bonhoeffer, 1971; Bosch, 1991: 375; Bethge, 1972: 75). The church in this outlook has to share in the secular problems

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<sup>37</sup> Reverend Paul Gwese is Rector of St Luke's Anglican Church in Greendale Harare, Zimbabwe. He is passionate of social justice and social transformation.

of ordinary people in society. The church as mandated by Christ should be there for others not itself, since the church is the body of Christ (Bonhoeffer, 1974: 127; Bethge, 1972: 75). In this perspective, to exist for others is to exist with content and in context with society's existential realities. This understanding provides the basis for a Zimbabwean twenty-first century ecclesiology, vision and location of the church. From time immemorial, the church has been involved in the community transformation, based on scriptural empowerment and authority (Tofa, 2012). The church for others should focus on reconstruction of the community.

Furthermore, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, inspired and challenged the church to reflect on its relevance in the public space and circumstances surfacing in communities, when he asked; "are we still of any use" (Bonhoeffer, 1971: 16-17; Gathogo, 2008: 177). The church has to look critically at its role and call to advocate for human dignity. This is a self-introspection question which demands the church to wake up from the sleep. During the interview with Bishop Ishmael Mukuwanda<sup>38</sup> 19/06/2014, he used the analogy of the hospital, doctors and sick patient to refer to the situation in Zimbabwe. He alluded that "the nation of Zimbabwe is in an intensive care unit, the nation is ill and the church should not only be like visitors on the sick bed, but doctors on the sick patient". This is a challenge to the church, for doctors on the patient seek solutions to save life while visitors only ask what the doctors would have said concerning the condition. The church for reconstruction has to do a diagnosis assessment and help the situation. The church for reconstruction has to actively be there with the struggling nation.

The church for others, has to seek restoration and wholeness of the community. This remains a challenge to the church in Zimbabwe, to be there for reconstruction. The church is being challenged to move away from theoretical pronouncements in pulpits to active involvement in the real concerns of the community (Bosch, 1991:416). It must not underestimate the importance of human example that has its origin in the humanity of Jesus. The church's argument for reconstruction and transformation should not be an abstract argument. The church, in this sense, is viewed to be equipped with power and authority to challenge the politicians, economists and all people, for a transformed attitude. Churches are encouraged to respond to the questions of relevance and circumstances that face community.

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<sup>38</sup> Bishop Ishmael Mukuwanda, is the bishop of the Diocese of Central Zimbabwe (Gweru). He is the current President of Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the Chairperson of Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denominations.

The church for reconstruction is a missional church, prepared and aware of the consequences of its prophetic voice. The church should take total responsibility to bring about action that transform society. This responsibility calls the church to move from indifference, to walk out of the rim of fear, to confront the challenges that face the society, with all the courage required. The church for reconstruction needs to be useful and relevant all the time.

#### **4.10. The Church for Reconstruction: Embodies the Spirit of the Bible**

The church for reconstruction would not only live on the axiom of the sayings of the Bible. Rather, she should possess the spirit of the Bible. It has been observed that the Bible is a manual for daily living appreciated by all Christians (Chitando, Gunda and Kugler, 2013: 10). What remains is to turn the text into practice in the “spirit of the text – Bible” (Gunda, 2013: 21). If the spirit of the Bible is awakened within communities and churches, then transformation of society is possible. The church for reconstruction embodies the Nehemiah biblical burning flames, the spirit of anger, the spirit of determination, the flame of commitment and the flame of hope. Reconstruction is possible when the church and believers possess the spirit of anger against suffering, then empowered with flames of determination to transform the status quo of injustice and burning with the flame of unending hope of a better nation.

Understanding the crisis, discerning of the situation at hand and the collective mobilisation of the community are essentials in transforming society. Nehemiah 3 displays the inclusive mobilisation model as valuable for reconstruction.

It remains uncontested that post-colonial Zimbabwe experiences exhilarating and yet challenging times (Tofa, 2012: 45), hovering between the wish for what should be, and the undeniable presence of the unbearable. Zimbabwe is experiencing crises of staggering proportions, ranging from political, economic, social, legal, and moral (Chitando, 2013: iv). In these times, the church is called to be the champion of reconstruction and to disregard the opposition, persecution and insults placed upon it. The opposition and persecution the church faces currently is different from the threat levelled against Nehemiah and the wall builders.

Today, the church can be attacked corporately, as in the case of the Anglican Church in Harare (2007-2012)<sup>39</sup>, or individual silencing, as in the case of the former Roman Catholic Archbishop Pius Ncube<sup>40</sup>. These persecutions are real and they require a real Church embodying the Spirit and flames of the Bible to be able to stand on the transformation agenda.

In upholding the spirit of the bible, the church has to be prepared to be alienated, discriminated and even persecuted (Barth, 1935; 1956 ; Webster, 2000: 8). In 1934 Barth's uncompromising criticism of developments in Germany and his refusal to take the oath of loyalty to Hitler, led to his dismissal from his teaching post in Bonn and he had to go to Switzerland (Bush, 2004: 38) This means that to be church in reconstruction times "the church has to be church" protecting the freedom and value of the gospel and at the same time standing for the integrity of the people (Dreyer, 2016: 2). In his Church Dogmatic, Barth (Barth, 1956 : 661) articulates his understanding of the church as "being both an invisible (spiritual) and visible (reality), an event of the Holy Spirit and a historical entity". Christ is never absent from the church, for the church exists because of the activities of God. Therefore, church has to be church regardless of the threats, persecution and alienation that it faces. The doors of the church should remain relevantly appealing regardless of the struggles, the crisis and the brokenness in the world. While this is so, the salt and light physical elements of the church should essentially be necessary in the demands of the times in Zimbabwe.

The church embodying the spirit of the Bible comes up to teach and to make disciples. The spirit of the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20 makes sense when looked at from the context of Zimbabwe and the reality issues of post-colonial times. As with Matthew, the church should teach its believing congregations, baptise them and make disciples as a mission paradigm in Zimbabwe. Paul Gwese, during an interview on 7 January 2015 explained that to the Christian members or parishioners, "the church should teach, and educate them the gospel which empowers them to live and exercise real discipleship. This discipleship has to embody

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<sup>39</sup> The Anglican Church Diocese of Harare and Manicaland in Zimbabwe, was exposed by the political polarisation landscape from 2007 -2012. The former Bishops Kunonga of Harare and Jakazi of Manicaland claimed individual ownership of the church. This forced the Province of Central Africa to call for disciplinary action against them. This action spilled in the civil courts with Kunonga and Jakazi receiving support from ZANU PF and the state security machineries police and army being used to barricade the legitimate church members from using the church buildings

<sup>40</sup> Archbishop Pius Ncube became a strong critic of President Robert Mugabe from 2000 due to the fast track land reform and he was forced to resign from the office in 2007 when the political heat in Zimbabwe became unbearable for him.

the elements of stewardship and accountability which is really problematic in post-colonial Zimbabwe”. This understanding affirms what David Bosch (1991:66) articulates,

In Matthew, preaching and proclaiming always refer to a message addressed to outsiders; they are frequently used together with the gospel of the kingdom. Jesus never preaches to his disciples. To them he teaches. Similarly, in the synagogues and in the temple (among believers), Jesus always teaches.

In teaching the Gospel, the church would make Jesus Christ real and relevant to the believing community, but also make Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God’s principles the content of the nation. The church embodying the spirit of the Bible would then proclaim and preach love of your neighbour, which is the litmus test for love of God. This preaching will challenge people to reflect on their active commitment and deeds towards the welfare of the neighbour.

#### **4.11. Who is the Church? A Relevant Question in Reconstruction**

The relevance of this question is embedded in the scope of reconstruction in Zimbabwe that is not sectorial but cross-sectional. Reconstruction in Zimbabwe must be aggregate and it is, therefore, relevant to ask who the church is and why the church in this discourse of reconstruction. The term “Church” is fluid and highly contested, owing to various ambiguities.

The church can be Christian individuals who are critically empowered by the spirit of the Bible to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world struggles of the communities where they operate. However, church can also mean the corporate institution of the body of Christ or para-church organisations such as the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Conference (ZCBC), the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) and or Union for Development of Apostolic Churches in Zimbabwe (UDACIZA). Furthermore the church can be the denomination, as in the Anglican Church, United Methodist, Roman Catholic, and many others.

Avery Dulles (1988; 1978; 1987: 27) has achieved notability in providing a helpful and easily comprehensible system of models to help understand the church’s purpose and mission. Models are useful approximations, focusing on certain aspects of a complicated system and its activities. Dulles (1987:48) has characterised models as “realities having a sufficient functional correspondence with the object under study so that they provide conceptual tools and vocabulary”. It is essential to notice the stress that Dulles places on models as having a functional correspondence with the subject under discussion. Dulles proposed the following models of the church; the church as an institution, as a mystical body of Christ, as a sacrament,

as a herald, as a servant and as the community of disciples. These types portray the relationship between the Church and mission (Dulles, 1988; 1987; 1978: 56; Bosch, 1991). In many instances, “the church” has been viewed as the institutional body, with a structure where people inside are believers and people outside are non-believers. This church is a structure, an impersonal institution that concerns itself with administration, where legal and theological standards are much emphasised (Parry, 2013: 16). This is the hierarchal model of the church, which many uphold. However, during an interview with Ezra Chitando on 07 August 2014 he stated that “any interpretation of the church which adopts the hierarchal model and remains or ends there, is deficient. The church has to be socially relevant while remaining theologically rooted”. This implies that the church should be inclusive, reconstructive and contextually defined in light of the community’s concerns and in its activities in mission.

David Bosch (1991) highlights the transition in understanding the church from the fourteenth century to the twentieth century. There has been a witnessing shift in the understanding of the church. Today, the church is viewed contextually and various models have been proposed. Each of these models implies a different interpretation of the relationship between the church and its mission in a given context and time. The church of mission today cannot afford to exist in the abstract. Taking the words of Sifiso Mpfu, (2009: 16) “the Christian church, therefore, cannot afford to be indifferent and self-preserving when the same people that she seeks to serve are in pain, under siege and perpetual suffering”. The church has to be mission-centred and be able to utilise its position, in society for reconstruction and transformation. A church theology that begins from participating in God’s mission cannot fail to point out that the mission-centred church was born in the context of Christ’s transformation mission (World Council of Churches 2012).

Bosch (1991:372) argues why it is important for the church to be involved in the transformation and reconstruction mission when he says “it is impossible to do missions without talking about the church. The church is essentially missionary and mission is essentially ecclesial. A church, without mission, or mission without church, are both contradictions” (Bosch, 1991: 372). The church should actually display the mission dimension and the mission intention. Hence, in reconstruction, the church should have an inward looking (dimension) of reconstruction of self and then an outward intention that is the church’s direct involvement in society. The church is mandated to “actually move beyond its walls and engage in missionary points of concentration, such as advocating reconstruction, transformation, development, peace and justice” (Newbigin, 1958; Bosch, 1991: 373).

The reconstruction church is a “kingdom community of people who reinforce one another in their commitment to the gospel and consciously seek to live out the qualities of the kingdom of God; equality, participation, fellowship and communion or in the words of Roman 14:17, justice, peace and joy” (Fuellenbach, 2002: 174-175). This church is spiritual and also physical in outlook. Thus the church is an inclusive mutual and moral community, never functioning as a fearful guard body of the divine message but always functioning as in bringing good tidings of hope to the hopeless. In this case, the church must be understood in relation to the world and has a concrete role to play in the socio-political and socio-economic liberation of society. Barney Pityana’s (1995) observation and conclusion of the model of the church in South Africa, is relevant to case of the church in Zimbabwe. Pityana (1995:99) says;

The church is the community whose existence we already anticipate and which could be the example of human living. A relevant community for South Africa today should be one without walls, which looks out to the world. It has to be inclusive community. The challenge of the church should be continuous experimenting and living these different expressions of community. The lesson that has been drawn therefore, is that the church should not be satisfied with its many admirable achievements from the past (colonial- and the victory of decolonisation), nor should it be passive and indifferent amidst the relatively stable society which supports the government of national unity. The church should be a sign of the kingdom of God.

This long quotation is relevant as it summarises the church for reconstruction. It then leads to the notion of inclusivism, of continuous transformation of the church’s outlook derived by the community’s challenges, and also the shifting of paradigms of mission due to the shifts in contextual contents and concept of the visible character of the church in reconstruction.

#### **4.12. The Church as Living Movement for Reconstruction**

The post-colonial church, must be a living organisation. This is in accordance to the cosmological understanding of living systems and organisms. The common life of a church should be structured around the rhythms and songs of the community’s experiences. This metaphor produces a profound perspective on church as it participates in the mission of God. As in biological systems, “there is a phenomenon known as the strange attractor, essentials that force, analogous to a compass or an animal deep instinct which provides organisms with the impetus to migrate out of their comfort zone” (Capra, 2002: 124; Pascale, Millemann and Gioja, 2000: 69). These strange attractors are critical for the church to carry out its mission in the struggle facing people in Zimbabwe. The church has to move out of its comfort zone and influence other social forces in transforming society.

There are four critical components of metaphor of a living moving organism that can aide the church in the challenges in Zimbabwe (Hirsch, 2006: 182). ;

- All living things are intelligent; this innate intelligence creates strategies to survive and remain alive for the sustenance of the complex whole. It is critical to realise that the church has many intelligent believers.
- Life of the organism is profoundly interconnected; the primary operative idea is that of relationships arranged in a dynamic network. Living systems theory recognises that belonging and being part of the large system is critical for survival.
- Information brings change; living systems thrives on responding to information
- Adapting to the demands of the challenges; living systems have to constantly interact with their surroundings.

It is alive as an organisation which reaches out to many people. In so doing there is communion aspect that is sustained by the presence of the Holy Spirit, expressed in a network of relationships of mutual concern and discernment.

Significantly the church can be defined as “a Jesus Movement the label that influenced the mission of the early believing community as narrated in the Book of Acts” (Ramachandra, 2006: 51). The movement in which, deeds of power of transformation are real, invitation to communal commitment is compelling and justice and compassion are the basic rules of conduct, which must be demanded from society at large as well from the church (Fuellenbach, 2002: 197; 1995: 250-251). The Jesus movement invites all to repentance and conversion, while announcing forgiveness of sin and encouraging all to becoming living members of Christ’s earthly community and exhibit a life of service to others. This makes a church a critical institution mandated to influence and participate in social reconstruction. For the Jesus movement is to perpetuate the Jesus Gospel which is transformatively directed as demonstrated by Jesus himself (Luke 4:18) (Ramachandra, 2006).

#### **4.13. Ecumenism and Reconstruction: ‘The Zimbabwe We Want’ Vision**

The word “ecumenical” is closely associated or used comparatively with words such as “interfaith” and “interreligious” and with the background of “catholicity”. These terms have become catch-words in transformation and reconstruction, since the paradigms of reconstruction and mission presuppose inclusivism and a holistic approach. Unity of purpose and community sustainability is important in moments and periods of crisis.

The noun “ecumenism” and the adjective “ecumenical” are derived from the Greek word *oikoumene*, which is used in the New Testament to mean the Roman Empire (Luke 2:1) or simply the whole inhabited world (Matthew 24:14). Ernst Conradie (2013: 18) argues that;

*oikoumene* is a Greek word derived from the verb *oikein* (to inhabit) and thus related to the words *oikia* (house or dwelling) and *oikos* (household). In the New Testament the term *oikoumene* was integrally linked with mission. The good news of the reign of God will be preached through all the world (Matthew 24:14). The seed of the gospel found some fertile soil in very different cultural and geographical contexts

Michael Kinnamon argues that;

The term ecumenism derived from the Greek word *oikoumene*, was originally used to in the Greco-Roman world. Has gradually come to refer to the whole church as opposed to that which is divisive, or to the whole faith of the church, as opposed to that which is partial (hence frequent reference to the Nicene Creed as the ecumenical confession of faith). It is fitting therefore that the word is now used to designate a modern Christian movement concerned with the unity and renewal of the church and its relationship to God’s reconciling and renewing mission throughout creation (Kinnamon, 2016: xiii).

This movement has its roots in the nineteenth century. Jesse Mugambi (1995:201) asserts that “since 1910 (at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland), the Modern Ecumenical Movement has extended the theological meaning of ecumenism to include all continents”. This development was critical for mission and social influence. The historical development of the notion of ecumenism can be traced to the World Council of Churches (WCC) Faith and Order Commission dialogues during the Lausanne Conference 1927 and Edinburgh 1937, and the Life and Work Commission reflections of Stockholm 1925 and Oxford 1937 (World Council of Churches, 1992; David Bosch 1991- Chapter 12, Ernst Conradie 2013:25-27). Paulus Pham (2010: 3) asserts that;

Ecumenism as, the sign and instrument of the church’s existence during the Second Vatican Council – (encyclical *Lumen Gentium*). The council emphasised that the church’s identity in the world is the sacrament of unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God desires to incorporate the church into this Trinitarian reality of communion “that they may be one as we are one” (John 17:22).

The doctrine of Trinity can be used to explain the communion *koinonia* notion of the church. Reflecting on the notion of *koinonia*, Susan Moore (1995: 4) says that the word is significant to ecumenism as it “denotes loving communion, the unity in diversity, of the persons of the trinity and it also depicts the church as a fellowship that is founded on God’s *koinonia*”. The unity of the church is part of the indispensable God’s divine economy for the purpose of transformation, giving hope and assuring human wholeness. David Bosch (1991:464) argues

that ecumenism, “which is a new paradigm is the mutual coordination of mission and unity in mission. It is a non-negotiable gift of God”.

Jesse Mugambi maintains that the foundation on which African social reconstruction can take place is the unity of the church. Ecclesial unity is critical as the church and Christians are to be the salt and the light in this broken world. His theological concept of the divine purpose of ecumenism is founded in Jesus’ prayer in John 17:6-11. It is critical for the church in Africa to participate fully in the modern ecumenical movement, not as a scattered and weakened entities (Dedji 2003:63). For Mugambi, “Christian denominationalism has often brought conflict, confusion and tension in families and communities in Africa” (Mugambi 1995:196).

In Africa, church is an integral institution in community; its shape and model should not therefore leave the community torn apart. Rather, the church should bring community members to appreciate each other. The church exists only as an organic and integral part of the human community (Bosch, 1991:388).

In Africa, the sacramental role of the church is to facilitate the coming together of the people so as to find solutions to their problem rather than blaming each other. The signs and instruments of coming together for reconstruction is missionally driven, as the church exhibits the Kingdom of God. This is perhaps best articulated in Barney Pityana’s analysis of the church of reconstruction saying;

The time has come for churches to draw common (ecumenical) spirituality expressed in the songs and dances of the struggle periods in order to avoid narrow denominationalism, the role of lay leadership in politics, economics and social entities, the need for a more assertive cultural expression in congregational and a recognition of the role of women (Pityana, 1995: 90).

Church has to be more realistic and responsive to the community’s needs and being the voice of concern. The voice must not only be critical but constructive aimed at reconstruction and development. Even if its voice falls on deaf ears, the church has ecumenical authority to mobilise and empower communities (people they serve) to take charge of the process of transformation and renewal (Pityana 1995).

In Zimbabwe, the ecumenical mission is represented by the groupings of Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), largely Protestant in nature and historically popular, Evangelical fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), largely Pentecostal in outlook, Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC), Roman Catholic representation (historically popular in Justice and

speaking out through many pastoral letters) and the Union of Development of Apostolic Churches in Zimbabwe (UDACIZA), which is the African-Initiated grouping. The heads of all Christian denominations formulate the association known as the Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denominations (ZHCD), for a joint ecumenical action. Under the ecumenical aphorism; unity in necessary things, freedom in doubtful things and charity in all things, the churches in Zimbabwe strive in their variations and differences to unite for development and transformation (Ruzivo, 2013: 16).

In September 2006, Zimbabwe's mainstream ecumenical church organisations published a seminal vision discussion document known as *The Zimbabwe We Want*. This was a defining moment in post-colonial Zimbabwe, at a time when the nation was experiencing socio-economic and socio-political struggles. The purpose of the document was to provide a platform for dialogue in a bid to define a national vision for the nation and to reach consensus on how it was to be achieved (*The Zimbabwe We Want: Towards a National Vision For Zimbabwe: A Discussion Document*, 2006: 6). This was a milestone achievement by the church to outline the Christian vision for the problems that Zimbabwe is experiencing and suggesting possible wayforward. The document unravelled the deepening political, economic and social crisis that was tearing the country apart since colonial independence. According to Molly Manyonganise (2013:148) the ecumenical voice outlined some critical concerns which were relevantly affecting the nation. Through the document the church stated ecumenically that;

Zimbabwe faces the problem of no clearly outlined national vision, which results in people failing to rally behind a common goal with honest and commitment for the common good. The political intolerance which seeks to deny the other access to resources became a concern as it triggers violence. Lack of a home grown constitution has become the church's concern and worrisome concern for all citizens, corruption and the land redistribution of 2000 demanded the church to be concerned (Manyonganise 2013:148)

The document outlined responsibility and the role of the church saying;

The God we have come to know in Jesus Christ is the God of love, justice, reconciliation and reconstruction. This God has made the church the ambassador of the divine values of human existence. The task of the church is to manifest God's presence and activity in all spheres of life. Politics and economics are serious activities which affect people's lives and can therefore not be left to secular (political) management alone... The church's concern with issues of good governance, justice and peace, is demonstration of God's concern for humanity (*The Zimbabwe We Want: Towards a National Vision For Zimbabwe: A Discussion Document*, 2006: 12)

This vision has been criticised for only being theoretical and avoiding to challenge the status quo vehemently. However, the ecumenical effort has to be applauded and the ecumenical value of mission for reconstruction and transformation is evident. Therefore, the church should not hibernate when challenged or criticised; rather the church should stand on the platform of Zimbabwe We Want vision and spring forward in collective mission.

#### **4.14. Christianity in Zimbabwe: - The Reconstruction Vision**

This section will not be able to provide an exhaustive account of the history of Christianity or comprehensively outline the dynamics of all Christian denominations in Zimbabwe. It will instead offer a brief outline of programs and reconstruction impact or capacity through a few selected denominations or their Christian ecumenical bodies. Starting from the aforesaid, the section hopes to draw attention to some of the areas that are important to the thesis. This section traces the presence of Christianity in Zimbabwe, with a bias towards the impact of Christianity on reconstruction, from pre-colonial to post-colonial period, both ecumenical and denominational.

##### **4.14.1. Pre- Colonial Mission: Reconstruction Landing-Marks**

History records that it was in the mid-sixteenth century when Christianity came into contact with the people of Zimbabwe. “The Portuguese Jesuit Da Silveira reached the courts of Mwene Mutapa in north-east Zimbabwe in 1560 where he became a friend of the king” (Verstraelen, 1998: 3). Thereafter, in the seventeenth century, some Jesuits and Dominicans missionaries trickled into the country, leaving some Christian symbols and marks. Paul Gundani (2011) is says that when Christianity came into contact with the people of Zimbabwe around 1560, there was a thriving Mwari Spirit Cult, combined with the powerful *mhondoro* (royal ancestor) cult constituting a robust spiritual bulwark interwoven with the politics, economy, social and moral well-being of the Shona people.

Missionary activities became significant by the nineteenth century. The most celebrated was the London Missionary Society (LMS), which opened a mission station in 1859 near present day Bulawayo. Following were Catholic missionaries reaching the courts of Lobengula the King of the Ndebele people in 1879. The Anglican mission led by Bishop George Knight-Bruce came into shonaland in 1888.

The Anglican mission was centred on reconstruction and transformation of the society and the people. The story of the black Anglican missionary-cum-martyr Bernard Mzeki, is emphasised. He trained in South Africa and was deployed to Zimbabwe in Mashonaland East. Bernard Mzeki emphasised the healing of people and to change of some antagonistic traditions which oppressed the poor and women. In Lobengula's territory and courts, the Christian missionaries were critical and they condemned the Ndebele raids on the Shona and Ngwato of Botswana (Gundani, 2011). This was no easy task for the missionaries to criticise the kings of the day; it was more like signing their death warrant. It remains open to debate whether the missionaries' criticisms of human torture, plunder and capture were anything certain or if it was a lip service since their masters did more plunder and torture during the colonial build up. However, taking it as genuine, one would see that they were standing on the principles of transformation and reconstruction, upholding human dignity.

#### **4.14.2 Colonial Christianity: Church as “a Player”**

The coming of the Colonial period in Zimbabwe and its subsequent renaming to Southern Rhodesia created an ambivalent position for the missionaries and their enterprises. Canaan Banana refers to this church's ambivalent position as “church with a double mandate” (1996: 19). There were two sides of the coin as some preached the white minority supremacy and western culture as civilisation. This cluster would not speak against the dehumanisation policies and they would not oppose the Rhodesian government of the day. Whilst this was the case, there was the other cluster of churches and mission institutions that would interact with government of the cause of justice. They would be the conscience of the government and the voice of the oppressed.

Colonialism has been identified as an aspect of imperialism, through which an imperial power imposes its control and takes the legal sovereignty of a territory within a process of widespread settlement (Moyo, 2015). In Zimbabwe, Christianity became a “player”. As Ali Mazrui (1967: 198) asserts, “just as Augustine had allied Christianity with the concept of *Pax Romana*, so did Christianity later come to be linked to the whole vision of *Pax Britannica*. In Africa, Christianity came to be particularly associated with colonisation.” Although not all mission agents held the same view, notably some welcomed and supported the extension of colonial rule and white rule supremacy in Africa and in Zimbabwe it was seen as part of God's established order.

Needless to say, all the mission churches benefited during the colonial subdivision of the nation, Zimbabwe, among the minority white comers. Churches were given tracts of land as incentives, and also a proper Christian partitioning of the country to avoid clashes of churches (Ruzivo, 2013: 5). The Anglican Church operated mainly from the East of Zimbabwe, Manicaland, while Roman Catholics are predominantly in Mashonaland East, and with the Salvation Army predominant in Mashonaland Central, only to mention a few.

#### **4.14.3. Colonial Christianity: Territorial Expansionism and Domination**

The major landmark of mission was opened by the arrival of the Pioneer Column of the British South African Company, which, in 1890, began effective occupation—colonialisation, taking the country by force. This marked the beginning of the long journey of colonial rule in Zimbabwe, master-minded by Cecil John Rhodes. At this stage, Paul Gundani categorically states that “the Christian religion became the *religio officionis* of colonial Zimbabwe” (Gundani, 2011: 312). No wonder Canon Balfour of the Anglican Mission and church blessed the Union Jack in the presence of Father Hartmann of the Catholic Mission and church with many other clerics in the grandstands. From the onset, churches were seen as partners in the development of the colony and for many years, churches were at the service of the settler regime’s agenda (Banana, 1996: 5; Ruzivo, 2013: 3).

It has to be mentioned that this relationship of the Christian mission and the colonial masters made the Christian Missionaries complacent to the struggle and suffering perpetrated by the colonisers. Gundani (2011: 312) argues that “the Christian missionaries become conservative and saw no contradiction between their express, sometimes tacit, support for the oppressive policies of the colonial state and the liberating gospel that they should propagate”. It became obvious that the church was blind to the fact that the Rhodesian colony was a fragmented and state in which race, colour and historic origin determined one’s access to resources and position in society (Muzondidya, 2005: 215).

This historical relationship between the Christian church and the colonial regime compromised the acceptance of face of the church and its mission. The relationship of the church and the colonial state from inception was cordial. It was tied together with the seemingly unbreakable umbilical cord of race and domination (Moyo, 2015: 39). The church was indifferent to the gruesome suffering of the “native” Zimbabweans at the hands of the colonisers. Further to the

suffering, the missionary marriage with colonisation policies disregarded African culture. Christian civilisation was defined in light of uprooting the African way of life and culture. Mutambirwa (1976: 74) contends that “the key issues which gave rise to African nationalism, were the need for the franchise, land allocation, racial and economic discrimination and African culture”. The missions, on the contrary, described their task in terms of militarised campaign – “the conquest of the heathen”, “the victory of the cross”, and “marching onward soldier in the fight” (Parratt, 1995: 166). The cross was not a symbol of love, in colonial terms, the meaning was that of power and might not love and not mutual accommodation (all are welcome and all are one).

#### **4.14.4. Colonial Church State: Reconstruction Theology and Brevity**

This section will turn to the other side of the interaction of the church and the colonial regime in light of the reconstruction and democratisation process. It is through the efforts of the churches and their para-institutions that one can see mission as reconstruction.

Some brave missionaries stood for the plight of the people they critically condemned the Rhodesian colonial hegemony. In this period, the Christian religion was applauded for the prophetic ascendance. Chengetai Zvobgo and Paul Gundani chronicle the reconstruction activism of the missionaries who stood for the value of the *missio Dei* so well;

As early as 1902, Francis Richarts (SJ) opposed the unfair hut tax that the British South African Company (BSAC) imposed on the Zimbabwean people. While Fr Arthur Shearly Cripps (Anglican) and Rev John White (Methodist), with the support of the Southern Rhodesia Missionary Council were vocal against the Land Apportionment Act 193. Among the missionaries, they were the strongest in advocating for African participation in government in 1921. From 1959 – 1977 Bishop Donal Lamont became a thorn in the flesh of the Rhodesian government. He was arrested in 1976, and this becomes the kairos moments in the Zimbabwean history. He shocked the Smith regime by labelling it “terrorist of the highest order” (Gundani, 2011: 314; Zvobgo, 1988: 30).

These defining moments led to the formation of the Rhodesia Christian Council (RCC) in 1964, which was renamed Zimbabwe Christian Council (ZCC) from 1979 and now Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) (Muchena, 2005: 259). This emerged as a largely African inspired movement to create a forum where Christian leaders from different denominations could tackle matters of mutual human concern in an increasingly tense political situation. (Hallencreutz, 1988: 52). The founding president of RCC was Bishop Skelton of the Anglican Church who was very vocal in matters of affording human dignity to all. He was also against the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) of 1965 by Ian Smith which for him was a deliberate act

of evil. Bishop Skelton later resigned from the office of the Bishop in protest against the racist Rhodesian policies (Ruzivo, 2012: 5). In many pieces of literature, the UDI era is recorded as the decisive and defining moment for the Churches transformed theology. Renewed strength against the inhuman and oppressive treatment of the black majority and support for the liberation struggle was mounted (Moyo, 1988).

These missionaries and many others took the responsibility of the great commission to proclaim the Gospel. They claimed that the Church must call the attention of all concerned to the claims of the large constituency for better education, a voice to be respected, open opportunities in industry, to have political representation and a fair share of the land. Bishop Kenneth Skelton of the Anglican Diocese of Matabeleland and his counterpart, Bishop Cecil Alderson of the Anglican Diocese of Mashonaland, were unequivocal in their position to violent policies and the manner in which the colonial government treated the black natives. They argued that the Church is set by God to be the conscience of the nation. When the state fails to uphold the moral dignity of humanity, it is the duty of the Church to denounce, and to rebuke (Lapsley, 1988: 117). Further to that, they denounced oppression, denial of rights to all forms of freedom and all forms of discrimination. For, Rev Hebert Carter (Methodist), discrimination was evil and it was an act of injustice and this injustice was the enemy to be destroyed among the Rhodesian Government (Zvobgo, 1988).

Further, in history is a witness of black Christian clerics championing the cause of the poor Zimbabweans, who were being castrated, detained and exiled. The era and context saw the rise of the likes of Bishop Abel Muzorewa (who became the Prime Minister/President) in the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia settlement of 1978 (Banana, 1996: 187), although many nationalists treated this internal settlement with suspicion. Despite his blamed weaknesses Bishop Muzorewa remained brave in representing the Christian mission church in a nationalist dress code. Banana admits that, “Muzorewa contributed significantly to the nationalist resistance movement and also mobilisation of the grass roots” (Banana, 1996: 195). This shows that the Church was missional. Patrick Mutume (Anglican), and Rev Canaan Banana (Methodist), were among those on the front of the drive for reconstruction.

The Missionary schools and institutions became the training ground for many nationalists who became champions of decolonisation in Africa. The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), which was founded in 1972, was renowned for its courageous and efficient social

services, detailed follow-ups, and records of all the atrocities of the colonial regime. (Hallencreutz, 1988: 73).

This section admits that the theme of transformation and reconstruction has roots in the work of the pre-colonial missionaries as they sought to convince the powers that be that justice and equal respect of individuals should be honoured. This mood was further advanced during the colonial period. The relationship between missions and colonial expansion was complex; for instance, sometimes mission preceded the flag and sometimes mission followed the flag. Nevertheless, it is prudent to say if mission was associated with the rise and expansion of imperialism (colonialism), it was equally associated with the factors which brought about the colonial demise (Banana, 1996).

Missionaries stood for the case of justice, fairness and equitable distribution of resources. The environment was not conducive to advocate for justice or to seek transformation in the way of life in society. This was witnessed with detention and even deportation of some clerics, who were speaking for the poor, the dehumanised and the colonised.

#### **4.15. Post-Colonial Church-State Relationship in Reconstruction Discourse**

The struggle for independence was every Zimbabwean's concern. The struggle for independence, by any standard, was a communal and collective struggle. This struggle was a painful journey which for fifteen (1965-1980) painful years, was characterised by bloodshed, intrigue and deceit. The church was in the middle of the struggle as a critical player (Banana, 1982: 217). The attainment of independence from colonial hegemony brought about a renewed hope and this promised a life of belonging for many Zimbabweans. The promise was undergirded by political reforms, the restructuring of education policy, and military integration among others. Zimbabwe, like other post-colonial states, was ready for a life-long reconstruction, which demanded that the church and the nation shift gears into the mood of reconstruction.

However, the post-colonial era has witnessed various changes in the manner in which the church has appeared in the Zimbabwean political arena. Brian Raftopoulos (2006: 216) states that "the church's involvement in post-colonial politics has been both complex and ambiguous". The state is comfortable when the church is silent about its evils or lacks the energy it should have in terms of nation building, transformation and/or injustices. However, the moment the church upholds its integrity for mission as the mandated mouthpiece and

sanctuary of the subaltern members of society, the state becomes defensive. At times the state restlessly sought to expose the weaknesses or flawed standard practices of the church or of the heads of denominations or clergy. This is the perception that the state has of the church. As long as the church sings praises of the ruling government, it is perceived as the proper prophetic church. However, as soon as it criticises the ruling government it is perceived as meddling in politics.

The case of the former Roman Catholic Archbishop of Matabeleland Pius Ncube, becomes a living testimony of the showdown that ensued as a result of the challenges the church is exposed to in Zimbabwe. The recent arrest and subsequent exile of Pastor Evans Mawarire (#ThisFlag campaign leader)<sup>41</sup> is a sure sign of the turbulent mission field the church operates in Zimbabwe.

The state will be comfortable with the church when it practices the Empire theology of praise and benefit. Hence, the recognition of Obadiah Musindo<sup>42</sup>, Andrew Wutawunashe<sup>43</sup>, Johannes Ndanga<sup>44</sup> and Nobert Kunonga<sup>45</sup> are clear cases where the state-church relationship is defined according to the rubrics of the political will to power.

Furthermore, the state is comfortable with the prophets of the day, who without touching the demands for healing in the physical of socio-political and socio-economic fibres continue to shout and announce the personal miraculous healing for individuals that is secondary. Independent states in Africa can tolerate the church as long as it does not threaten their hold on power (Kaulem 2010).

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<sup>41</sup> Pastor Evan Mawarire, is a leading protest pastor who staged peaceful social media protest against the government of Zimbabwe on 16 April 2016 entitled ThisFlag (hashtag ThisFlag). A challenge the government has not taken lightly. He was arrested and subsequently send into exile and with impending trial. Thousands of Zimbabweans in 2016 protested government repression, poor public services, high unemployment, widespread corruption and delays in civil servants receiving their salaries

<sup>42</sup> Reverend Obadiah Msindo is a celebrated ZANU PF praise singer clergy, who is also a founder of Destiny Africa Network

<sup>43</sup> Reverend Wutawunashe is a founder of the Family of God Church and a Chairman of the Faith for the Nation who in 2013, was the official Presiding Christian Head leading the swearing in of the President.

<sup>44</sup> Archbishop Johannes Ndanga is the leader of Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe

<sup>45</sup> Bishop Norbert Kunonga became Bishop of Harare in 2000-2007, at the same time of the political fast track land redistribution. He became vocal on issues of land, indigenisation and homosexuality, in line with President Mugabe's view of the issues. In 2007, he was disposed of as Bishop, for which there was a long court battle to remove him, which ended in 2012 (see also Joshua Musiyambiri, 2016).

The following section analyses the church's mission in post-colonial Zimbabwe from 1980–2016. The section will not analyse every issue that surfaced in Zimbabwe during the period of research but it outlines selected cases of interest to this thesis. The outline will be divided into two (2) sections; 1980 -1999 and 2000 - 2016.

At independence, the new ZANU PF government espoused the policy of “socialism”, which it hoped would help to address the economic injustices of the past. Having itself been, inspired throughout the liberation struggle by the Marxist-Leninist Communist ideology, socialism became its adopted policy (Banana, 1996: 218).

#### **4.15.1. Post-Colonial Church Mission: 1980-1999 Reconstruction and Democratisation**

The needs of the new country triggered also the mission of the Church to critically influence direction. This was articulated by the first President of Zimbabwe, Canaan Banana, who in 1981, as he was addressing the Annual General Meeting of the CCJP, encouraged the church to join other players in the development of the country. Canaan Banana (1981) argues that, “in the post-war era of reconstruction, the Justice and Peace Commission, together with the rest of the Church, can make a meaningful contribution towards the development of the country” (Banana, 1982: 23) (Auret, 1992: 134). The President, went further saying, “the watchdog role of the Church remains relevant in the changed context. The church has to carefully study the new Government policies for constructive criticism and advice” (Auret, 1992: 135). Such were the expectations of the State. Nevertheless, it was not clear whether the state understood what it was inviting. Allowing the church to criticise was the mood in the early years of independence.

The ZANU led government was critical about capitalist principles from its first manifesto chapters. The Rhodesian regime was against the communist-socialist ideologies; hence it justified their position in the armed struggle as a fight against Marxist-Leninist ideologies. At independence, the State co-opted the church to its socialist ideals as a reconstruction ideology where the participation of the whole society was championed. The first Prime Minister of independent Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe is quoted, inviting the church to journey with the new government in its social mandate. Mugabe knew the power and authority the church commands in society,

The church should, in these circumstances certainly find no objection to socialist philosophy. Indeed, the Church's Christian (social) teaching can hardly be reconciled to the avaricious nature of capitalism. Join us, therefore, in our socialism and

humanitarianism and you are perfectly free to bring God and all He stands for with you (Randolph, 1985: 81).

The tone for reconstruction was also on the level of reconciliation. Prime Minister, Robert Mugabe's independence eve message was a powerful commitment to reconciliation and a call for all parties and individuals to join in the development and renewal which the new context demanded. The message is encapsulated as,

“Our new mind must have a new vision and our new heart must have a new love that spurns hate and new spirit that must unite and not divide... We are called to be constructive, progressive and forever forward-looking. For we cannot afford to be men of yesterday, backward-looking, retrogressive and destructive... 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..... For an evil remains an evil whether practised by white against black; - by black against white: - ‘by black against black (Auret, 1992: 140; Banana, 1996: 221; De Waal, 1990: 48-49).

Such a powerful statement needs to be reflected upon a few years into independence when there was more bloodshed in what became known as the Gukurahundi<sup>46</sup> of 1982 – 1987. It saw many black cadres of the Liberation struggle perishing in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces of Zimbabwe. Diana Auret (1992: 147) labelled it “‘A crisis of nationhood’, barely two years after the implementation of the magnificent policy of reconciliation, Zimbabwe’s people were split along political and ethnic lines and thousands of rural people experienced once again ‘man’s inhumanity to man’”. Gukurahundi, could not measure the well-spiced rhetorical independent speech by Robert Mugabe, the Prime Minister as cited above.

The Gukurahundi was a set back to the reconstruction efforts of the new Zimbabwe. There was suspicion and blame culture was born. Regardless of the 1987 Unity Accord, between ZANU and ZAPU to form the ZANU PF but, suspicion and mistrust remains a boiling pot. The church became disfranchised by the brutality acts in post-independent Zimbabwe.

#### **4.15.2. Divided Church Voice: Post-Colonial Church 2000-2016**

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<sup>46</sup> Gukurahundi (early rain that sweeps away filth) atrocities took place 1982-1987 in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces of Zimbabwe. It was viewed as a fight against dissidents. Yet, it resulted in the massacre of thousands innocent civilians. The atrocities were unleashed by the government with the help of the North Korean trained Fifth Brigade. The Gukurahundi left many widows and orphans, who are suffering the effects up to this day. See also, (Togarasei and Chitando, 2011) and (Auret, 1992)

The church has not been without its divisive problems in the public arena, post-2000. Politicians, in particular, have not taken the church seriously. In Zimbabwe, the political leadership has not taken the advice of the church, often citing the division within the church as a sign that the church is not different from political parties. Often they have pointed out that if the church wants to be taken seriously, it has to speak with one voice. This, the church has failed to do as it has in some way been divided along political lines. It is possible in the case of the church in Zimbabwe to categorise Christian churches along either with the ruling party or opposition parties. There are churches which are known to patronise the ruling party, always speaking in its support and filling the different venues where the party holds its functions. Instead of the church playing a prophetic role in society by “checking and balancing” powers of those in authority in Zimbabwe, those in power have used the disunity of the church for their own good.

#### **4.15.3. Neutrality or Co-option: The Church in Zimbabwe**

In colonial times, the church with its white leadership came to a position known as “neutrality”. For the church, in times of war, this was the best position. Fabalous Moyo (2015: 17) asserts that this position was taken mainly around the 1960s when there was a growing nationalist frustration with the Smith regime. David Maxwell (1996: 63) argues that, “the doctrine of political neutrality, of non-partisanship in political conflict could be seen historically as truly prophetic”. The neutrality position of the church became visible when everyone else expected the church to be the voice in all issues and it opted for a selective prophetic post-colonial role.

It was evident from 2000, that the Christian landscape became more polarised due to the change in the political landscape. The neutrality and co-option principles became more pronounced in post-colonial Zimbabwe. This period saw the birth of contradictory theological interpretations for the crises in Zimbabwe. One good example was that of land redistribution and the leadership struggle. Francis Machingura (2012), analysing the leadership perspective of Mugabe during this period, noted how politicians in ZANU PF wing viewed Robert Mugabe’s leadership and the theology that was formulated by other church leaders. The Zimbabwean public space witnessed declarations that praised President Mugabe as a messiah, compared to Jesus and not ignoring the historical Moses proto-type. The praises came from loyal ZANU PF, vocalists and

then co-opted in Christian religious leaders for theological authentication. Oppah Muchinguri<sup>47</sup> is, quoted in the weekly Financial Gazette News Paper, saying;

President Robert Mugabe is our god given leader. Mugabe is our gift from God. We do not have any problems with him. If anyone tries to remove President Robert Mugabe from power we will march in the streets and we are prepared to remove our clothes in support of him (Gazette, 2007).

In many instances, President Mugabe was considered to be the spiritual leader given to Zimbabwe and hence, deserving absolute respect and loyalty from all citizens. These messianic declarations defined the public transcript in relation to the struggles befalling Zimbabwe. If Robert Mugabe was “perceived as a gift from God or God’s only other Son” (Machingura, 2012: 26), by the loyalists, what would become of the church? The former Anglican Bishop Norbert Kunonga<sup>48</sup> during a radio interview with Studio Seven Radio, claimed and emphasised that;

As the church, we see President Mugabe with different eyes. To us, he is both a prophet of God like Moses and a Messiah who was sent to deliver the people of Zimbabwe from the bondage of hunger. God raised him to acquire our land and distribute it to Zimbabwean. We call it democracy of the stomach (Guma, 2010)

Rev Wutawunashé<sup>49</sup> echoes a similar narrow theology, as he perceives President Mugabe as a Joshua. He says,

President Mugabe is a Joshua to the people of Israel as he led people to the Promised Land. The reason why God is not allowing you to rest is your work has not completed yet. You are to Zimbabwe and to some extent to Africa what Joshua was to the people of Israel (Machivenyika, 2013).

Therefore, if President Mugabe was a Joshua that meant the Moses type of liberation was replaced with the settlement motif of reconstruction. According to Rev Wutawunashé, reconstruction is possible in Zimbabwe. This makes President Mugabe a Moses, who liberated

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<sup>47</sup> Oppah Muchinguri is the current Minister of Environment. In 2007 she was the Leader of the ZANU PF Women’s League. She was the private Secretary to Mugabe from 1980-1981. The Minister of State in the President’s Office from 1997-2000, and the Governor of Manicaland 2000-2003.

<sup>48</sup> Bishop Norbert Kunonga became Bishop of Harare in 2000-2007, at the same time of the political fast track land redistribution. He became vocal on issues of land, indigenisation and homosexuality, in line with President Mugabe’s view of the issues. In 2007, he was disposed of as Bishop, for which there was a long court battle to remove him, which ended in 2012.

<sup>49</sup> Reverend Wutawunashé is a founder of the Family of God Church and a Chairman of the Faith for the Nation who in 2013, was the official Presiding Christian Head leading the swearing in of the President.

Israel from bondage and a Joshua who settled people. Archbishop Johannes Ndanga<sup>50</sup> then presented and declared, on behalf of Christians, a Certificate of Presidency to President Mugabe (Machivenyika, 2013).

There were other heads of Christian denominations who were critical about the case of Zimbabwe, post-2000. They perceived the crisis in broader perspectives. Former Catholic Archbishop of Matebeleland, Pius Ncube,<sup>51</sup> was one the critics of the time. For him, the issues of Zimbabwe post-2000 had nothing to do with pro-Mugabe or anti-Mugabe but were about the well-being of Zimbabweans;

Zimbabwe is a rich country, having all the minerals in the world, except maybe for oil, but to see our people suffering like they are, is wrong. President Mugabe is a fellow human being like anyone, prone to making mistakes. He should admit and accept to be criticised. However, it is unfortunate that he does not accept his humanness (Mazara, 2016).

Another critical voice of the political and social situation in Zimbabwe comes from Bishop Sebastian Bakare<sup>52</sup> (Retired Anglican Bishop of Mutare). For him, “the ZANU PF government has failed the citizens of Zimbabwe and it is time the party admit the failures. There is need for the church to remind them of their failures since they give a blind eye to the struggles in Zimbabwe” (Bakare, during an interview on 16 August 2015).

#### **4.15.4. Democratisation of Zimbabwe: Church’s Mission from 2000-2016**

The church’s prophetic role in the context of social disintegration and national polarisation demands a practical socio-political and economic engagement with the relevant agents of governance and other political players (Mpofu, 2009). These engagements would give birth to

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<sup>50</sup> Archbishop Johannes Ndanga is the leader of Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe

<sup>51</sup> Archbishop Pius Ncube became a strong critic of President Robert Mugabe from 2000 due to the fast track land reform and he was forced to resign from the office in 2007 when the political heat in Zimbabwe became unbearable for him

<sup>52</sup> Retired Bishop Bakare, confirms that he has seen and experienced both sides of ZANU PF. During the liberation struggle he was influential and directly connected with the nationalist war liberation grouping. At independence in 1980 he celebrated the victory and the coming of the black rule with many Zimbabweans. He became the Dean and Chaplain at the University of Zimbabwe where he produced books and articles. One popular book is “My Right to Land in the Bible and in Zimbabwe: A Theology of Land in Zimbabwe 1993”. He was part of the Ecumenical voice in the Vision Document “The Zimbabwe We Want 2006” and also the one who initiated the open dialogue between ZANU PF and MDC in 2006. He is the brains behind the National Convergence Platform (NCP).

peace and democratic space, not the democracy of stomachs. The church from 2000-2016 transformed its engagements, responding to the challenges facing the nation.

The notable face of the church changed to have the human mission as it sought to reach out to ensure hope to the people. The church created social and helping hand sections to meet the physical and psychological demands at the time of Fast Track Land redistribution and post-election violence. The humanitarian mission was contextual, given the many people who were suffering, physically and emotionally.

#### **4.16. Conclusion**

This chapter has explored the meaning of reconstruction from a missiological perspective and the rebuilding to a new and better status of society in cooperation with God's redemptive work of transformative love. The reconstruction theology can be read as the Kairos theology for the Kairos contexts.

Mission of God (*missio Dei*) is the core of the church's business in social ministry. The encounter of the Good News of God's transformative love with the people of God in their context defines the circumstances. The church possesses the obligation to proclaim liberty, to ensure peace and to promote justice value additions. The church was proposed as the answering team player in reconstruction discourses in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the church in Zimbabwe, has a missional advantage, has the mandate to reach out to the grassroots community. However, the church's participation in reconstruction is not without risk. The church in Zimbabwe is exposed to high risk since the environment is polarised to the extent that any comment from the church is rated and analysed from a political standpoint. This chapter interrogated the creative tension in doing mission in the contested space. It is from here that the propaganda of deed is to be emphasised for the church. The church has to remain equipped and authoritative in her prophetic voice and action.

The chapter discussed the foundations of missions, which included, experience, scripture and theology. Reconstruction theology is resourcefully empowered to take the stage in Zimbabwe. The experiences of sufferance, crisis and struggle are well documented and this thesis affirms that reconstruction theology considers the context it is founded upon. The reading of Ezra-Nehemiah produces the scriptural value in doing mission and reconstruction. The Zimbabwean context is no different from the Judean context in the time of Ezra-Nehemiah.

The Christian influence in Zimbabwe was traced from colonial times through to 2016. The influence of Christianity in democratisation is historical and therefore, reconstruction is possible with an institution with such a historical track record. The church that has survived colonialism and managed to influence independence is empowered for reconstruction.

Having discussed the missiological perspective of reconstruction, the research has to analyse the theoretical framework and call of African Renaissance. Reconstruction of Africa's social structures, helping Africans to re-affirm their cultural identity and consciousness, provides a springboard for the revitalisation of Africa's economy, politics and social life (Mugambi, 2003: 37). The following chapter analyses the African Renaissance movement in relation to reconstruction theology. "Africa for Africans" entails that African struggles are to be read in the African thought forms and the solutions spring from the African cultural and religious heritage. African Renaissance bemoans the neglect or the undermining of African cultural and religious heritage to the extent that African people have lost confidence in themselves as a people. This chapter calls the African people to the regeneration of African consciousness, which is necessary for the social reconstruction.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### RECONSTRUCTION CONCEPTS IN AFRICA: AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

#### 5. Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework of African Renaissance as the reconstruction discourse unfolds in Zimbabwe. Although Thabo Mbeki (Former President of the Republic of South Africa) seems to be the most vocal advocate of the African Renaissance, there are many others who have spoken for it. It is important to outline its contributions to the landscape of Africa. Thereafter, the research asks how African Renaissance can be a source of inspiration to the reconstruction theology in Zimbabwe.

This chapter highlights some policies and concepts propounded or adopted in Zimbabwe such as the ESAP (Economic Structural Adjustment Program), ZIMASSET (Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Social Economic Transformation) exploring whether they were efforts of reconstruction or not. It has to be mentioned that the socio-political and socio-economic environment of Africa in the twenty-first century is very captivating when talking about reconstruction. Therefore, this section that some of the interfaces of environment will be examined so as to produce the desire of reconstruction anchored by African Renaissance.

#### 5.1. Renaissance: Meaning

The term “African Renaissance”, like any catchphrase, would not enter the arena of scholarly literature without some ambivalences attached to it. The noun, “Renaissance” means rebirth or renewal, and the concept received meaning and relevance from those who looked at the Middle Age period as a “dark, trance-like period” (Kiguwa, 1999: 65). Renaissance was first used in Europe to describe the “revival/renewal of art, and letters under the influence of classical models in the fourteenth through to sixteenth century” (Magubane, 1999: 12). This is also echoed in Allen (2000) and Brown Dictionaries (1993) when presenting renaissance, Allen declares that;

The humanistic revival of classical influence in Europe from the 14<sup>th</sup> century to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, is expressed in the flowering of the arts, architecture, and literature and the beginnings of the modern science. Often renaissance is the movement or period of vigorous artistic and intellectual activity change. It is a rebirth or revival. The word is derived from the French, *renaistre*, meaning to be born again and from Latin, *renasci*, meaning to be born anew.

Brown defines it as:

Renaissance is the revival of art and literature under the influence of classical models between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, starting in Europe, Italy as the leading house. There was style in art, architecture and new developments in character of the activities. Renaissance can be any revival, or period of significant improvement, new life in culture, behaviour, science, economic or any other area of life and activity (Brown, 1993).

Renaissance entails a period of revival, rebirth and renewal and is historically traced to events that took place in Europe, which have a bearing upon European worldview, practices and systems. Jose Cossa (2009: 10) provides that “the European Renaissance was triggered by social and political conditions during Europe’s dark ages”. Peasants were subjected to the rule of aristocrats, high and random taxation, and economic depression. During its coinage, it implied the transformation and or revival of the European civilisation discarding or altering the ancient Greco-Roman way of life. It was that time also when the “Dark Ages” relative became to be the “Middle Ages” (Banda and Saayman, 2011: 132). This then allows one to conclude that Renaissance is the rebirth of a new modern era or modernity (Mana, 1994). The conditions in Europe around the 1315-1350 that made renaissance unavoidable, as there was need for new rationalisation, regenerated centralised commerce and development of more strategies in technology and industry to effect efficiency (Cornwell, 1998). The historical trend is now to discuss “Renaissance” in more particular than general terms such as “Italian Renaissance, English Renaissance, French Renaissance, or American Renaissance” (Banda and Saayman, 2011: 131). When it comes to Africa, there is a resounding African Renaissance with its own tenets which might be different from all the renaissances of history. African Renaissance calls for a “widespread co-operation in realising the aspirations of the peoples of Africa to rise from the ashes” (Mbeki, 2010: 2). Jesse Mugambi in his Afrocentrism perspective says “movements of reform, renewal, transformation are always potentially present in every culture and tradition” (Mugambi 1995:107). Thus, the African Renaissance is in its form and principle, drawing from the African concerns and seeking African cultural and religious heritage to be the foundation on which Africa is built.

## **5.2. African Renaissance: A Call for Reconstruction**

The Renaissance entered the African political thinking, philosophical debates, theological reflections, and sociological critique in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in response to the enslavement of Africans and to the continual colonisation of Africa. African scholars note that the concept came as, “Pan-Africanism (Henry S Williams and William DuBois 1900)” “Africa regeneration (Pixley Isaka Seme 1905)”, “African Personality (Kwame Nkrumah 1960)”,

“Negritude (Leopold Sedar Senghor)”, and “Renascent Africa” (Nnamdi Azikiwe 1937) (Maloka and LeRoux, 2000: 14). Africa, by this time, understood her anomalous position and situation of being classified as a second-class citizenry. Africa desired change. Africans are determined to rebrand their identity and integrity. Many African leaders and scholars use the term African Renaissance as to reclaim African validity, African identity and African heritage as critical means to real civilisation. President Nelson Mandela, on his visit to Zimbabwe in 1997, addressed and challenged the Zimbabwean Parliamentarians saying, “the time has come for Africa to take full responsibility for the woes and use the immense collective wisdom it possesses to make a reality of the ideal of the African Renaissance, whose time has come” (Mandela, 1997; Green, 2008: 108). The renaissance of African nature is to arise from and to consider the wealth of its wisdom, idioms and success stories, models of community, proverbs and the resilient attitude which makes Africans unique in face of challenging crisis. This led Pixley ka Isaka Seme (1906) to call for an African Regeneration that reflects African innate creativity (Seme, 1906). It is encouraging that the process is still going on with new energies being injected and with reconstruction paradigms proposed to compliment the renaissance vision.

The heightening of nationalist resistance to colonial rule in Africa was accompanied by the hopes of a new Africa. This momentous urgency of decolonisation brought about the idea of reawakening clear and loud, in all the movements across Africa. The theme was Africa for Africans, African self-discovery and African self-affirmation (Banda and Saayman, 2011: 141). The movements argued for a clear representative of Africa and Africans. They were advocating that Africa is the home of humanity a home of people, not a Safari (Ahluwalia, 2002: 267).

This notion was taken further in post-colonial Africa, focusing on reconstruction and development. It has been stated more significantly that “after political independence, the priorities should be to decolonise the mind, perspectives and views of Africans, for some would want to get rich on the cost of the majority, while others would want to substitute white hegemony with black hegemony” (Kiguwa, 1999: 66). African Renaissance should generate enthusiasm and hope among the people in the postcolonial era. President Nelson Mandela (1994) as quoted by Conwell (1998) invoked the vision of an African Renaissance at an OAU summit when he stated;

One epoch with its historical task has come, to an end. Surely, another must commence with own challenges. Africa cries out for a new birth, Carthage awaits the restoration of its glory ... We know it is a matter of fact that we have it in ourselves as Africans to change all this. We must, in action, assert our will to do so. We must in action, say that there is no obstacle big enough to stop us from bringing about a new African renaissance (Cornwell, 1998: 11).

This implies that the concept of African Renaissance is not an after 1997 coinage by Thabo Mbeki, or a South African brainchild, but credit has to be given to Thabo Mbeki for singing the chorus with more rigour. To claim and to argue that the concept of renewal and rebirth are a new vision for Africa, is an understatement. The circumstances in which postcolonial Africa finds herself in are conducive for revoking the transformational concept as enshrined in African Renaissance.

Renaissance implies positive transformation in all spheres of life; cultural, social, political and economic. This has been stated squarely by Reuel Khoza, who argues;

At the core of African Renaissance vision is the demand to accept and to challenge Africans to reconsider the richness of their resources. The realisation is that Africa's people and their institutions have a capacity and the responsibility to create, foster and maintain economic, political, social and moral processes and practices that define Africans as competent and proud citizens of the world. The demand of a new perspective of Africa as a continent and the African personality in light of whole other continents is the affirmation of wholeness (Khoza, 1999: 280).

This vision will stir within the African people the drive required for transformation, renewal, reconstruction, reawakening, self-reinvention, rededication and value reorientation. Part of the energy should be directed at what Africans have that makes them capable to rebuild a better society. African Renaissance encourages Africans to take control of their affairs with hope and dedication, in a clear bid to reverse the tonnage of struggles, pain, poverty and injustices. Kwesi Kwaa Prah argues that African Renaissance is anchored by hope for a better Africa and "it represents also a direct challenge to the ingenuity and determination of Africans to pull themselves up by the bootstraps" (Prah, 1999: 43). Africa is not yet insolvent, cursed or at the verge of collapse. Even the music by some African musicians allude to the fact that there is still hope. A good example is Zimbabwean musician Mrs Oliver Charamba<sup>53</sup> who sang, "Africa, you are blessed and you are not cursed". It would not be wrong then to make the

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<sup>53</sup> Mrs Oliviah Charamba, popularly known as Mai Charamba, is a top Zimbabwean Gospel Artist. She produced an Album "AMEN" in 2000 with a song titled "Africa Restore Identity" – In which she laments that the issues facing Africa, such as poverty, civil war, and corruption are not worth a rich blessed African continent. She challenged Africa to restore its identity.

underlying assumption that African Renaissance presupposes reconstruction, rebirth, reawakening, reinvention, rededication and revival. Characterised by the profundity of historical heritage and a surge of interest in transformative learning and revitalisation the tenets of African Renaissance are impactful (Makgoba, 1999: 12; Farisani, 2002: 40). The concern of African Renaissance is to build a better life for the ordinary people of Africa and the assertion of African pride as human beings with cultural values and African identity that defines the African personality (Mbeki, 2003). Africans have the capacity and responsibility to charter the destination of African Reconstruction.

### **5.3. Pillars of African Renaissance: Agenda**

It is important to analyse the context of African Renaissance so that we can draw conclusions as to why we should talk of African Renaissance in reconstruction discourse. This will help us to facilitate its relevance in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular. The issues which African Renaissance aims to address become the pillars of the concept. These pillars are contextual and timely in different nations in Africa, but they can also apply the continent. This research articulates selected pillars, which are related to the Zimbabwean context, although they may overlap into other African states and conditions. In so doing, it shows the agenda of the African Renaissance, which requires commitment and dedication to achieve social reconstruction in Africa and in Zimbabwe in particular.

African Renaissance seeks to address issues affecting the African people. The concern of this thesis is to underscore why the Renaissance in post-colonial Zimbabwe is a relevant discourse, as much as one can argue that the relevance of African Renaissance ended with the political independence of Africa. However, men and women everywhere in Africa are looking ahead to the future seeking to move creatively in the direction of cultural rebirth, with economic, political and spiritual reconstruction as a basis for the new society in post-colonial Africa post-colonial (Stremlau, 1999: 101).

Thabo Mbeki, looking critically at the deplorable socio-economic and socio-political situation of beloved African, calls for the African Renaissance (Mbeki, 2009; Mbeki, 1998). There is a need to admit that in post-colonial Zimbabwe, the socio-political and socio-economic conditions reached depressive levels. This calls for African Renaissance and this situation brings a myriad of other issues, which feed on the socio-political and socio-economic environment as it stands.

African Renaissance advocates mention war and strife in Africa (Mbeki, 1998; Farisani, 2002). This aspect of civil wars or ethnic wars or wars over control and dominance, depending on how one wants to argue, are tearing African nations and people apart. This is worrying in especially in South Sudan, Nigeria, Congo, Uganda and Somalia. Further to this, African Renaissance is calling for the end of poverty in Africa. Poverty in Africa is not a natural phenomenon; rather it also created by human selfish desires. A number of factors are presented to explain the poverty case of Africa among other historical scars such as the slave trade, colonialization and neo-colonialization. An introspection would display the African's failures of corruption, selfishness, and the misuse of natural resources put Africa in a dire position. Africa has an abundance of minerals, yet it has the highest levels of poverty.

African Renaissance also deals with the issue of representation and perspective. Chinua Achebe as quoted in (Ahluwalia 2002) argues that the part Africa must now play, depends in challenging stock images and fanciful symbols through which the continent tends to be seen (Ahluwalia, 2002: 265). This was further echoed by his contemporary, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, (cited in Ahluwalia 2002) who was concerned with the impoverishment in Africa. Ngugi states there is a tendency of seeing Africa as a beggar when in reality, in the economic relationship between the West and Africa; Africa has always been the giver (Ahluwalia, 2002: 265). In history and even now, Africa remains at the periphery zone in regards to other countries and continents. African Renaissance would question the economic stability of Africa. Thabo Mbeki does identify and criticise the weak economies which define Africa (Mbeki, 2003: 23; Prah, 1999).

Taking it further, African Renaissance is critical of issues of good governance and democracy, defined by Africans for the African people's benefit. This leads to discussions about the political stability and management of all available resources in Africa. Andre Mbata Mangu underscores that "after decades of corrupt post-colonial governance, Africans collectively acknowledge that good governance is a prerequisite for African renewal" (Mangu, 2012: 18). African Renaissance should rise to fight against corruption that corrodes the potential of goodness in African governments.

Adding to these teething issues African Renaissance must address are the historical discourses. To speak of a renaissance is to speak of something being reborn and reconstructed. African Renaissance implies that there is something in Africa's past that can be reborn today. It can be argued that although colonial independence is a historical epoch in Africa, Africa has not fully

claimed independence and freedom from the imperial grip. This is so because the former colonial masters still determine Africa's means of production and case of existence as sovereign nations.

Kiguwa (1999) identified what he termed as key themes, which are more about complementing Thabo Mbeki's agenda of African Renaissance. He notes;

Africa should reawaken out of the distortions of history, culture and civilisation. By intervening, creatively and telling the African story anew, for the benefit of the people of Africa. Further, African Renaissance should pay attention to the image and role present Africa must assume... What image or identity must we take on to reflect our true selves and win back the lost dignity...? The third aspect is being the call for a new and rigorous study of African mind and attitudes of life. Africans are not the only people to have come under foreign domination but they seem are the only ones to have been swallowed up by foreign cultures and ideas. The fourth theme is being to readdress the inability to invoke true nationalism and the purposeful existence of Africans. (Kiguwa, 1999: 66-69)

African Renaissance is a great agenda if truly applied and the action is genuinely regenerative or reconstructive in manner and spirit.

The advocates of African Renaissance note with deep concern that soon after gaining political independence many African nations embarked on a struggle for economic independence. This struggle seems to be ongoing and minimal efforts have achieved much because Africans believe in a master-servant relationship with the former imperial masters. Still shocking is that many Africans still live in dire poverty; many lives have been claimed by curable and pandemic outbreak diseases and many breadwinners have been maimed in civil wars or political- election campaign violence. The unemployment rate in Africa cannot go without notice also; many people are now deprived of basic education and access to primary healthcare. With all these and many other crises, one questions the cause of all these socio-economic ills.

#### **5.4. African Crisis Factors: Zimbabwean Context in African Renaissance**

It needs to be applauded that Africans are a vibrant and resilient people, regardless of the traumas of socio-political and socio-economic problems they find themselves in, they still are striving. This observation is not a dossier that should make Africans go to sleep and ignoring the myriad of challenges and crises which befall them.

This section asks what causes Africa to be in a vicious cycle of crises with particular reference on the Zimbabwean context. Ezra Chitando (2013: 5) says, "denying that Zimbabwe experienced crises of staggering proportions since political independence is tantamount to

dishonesty”. Zimbabwe today is categorised among the poorest of the countries, and the leader in unemployment (Acemonglu and Robinson, 2012). Hence, David Kaulem will suggest that post-colonial Zimbabwe is a country of struggles after a struggle (of Chimurega war of independence) (Kaulem, 2008: 9). What Kaulem drives at is that Zimbabwe is faced with more struggles after the struggle of decolonisation of 1980. Ka Mana refers to these struggles as the fundamental problems hampering the African destiny (Mana, 2004).

Walter Rodney as quoted by Vil-Nkomo and Myburg (1999) put it squarely that there are two factors or causes of the African crisis, struggles and or fundamental problems;

The question as to who, and what is responsible for African crisis, be it economic underdevelopment or political instability can be answered by two facts. Firstly, the answer is that the operation of the imperialist institutions and systems bears major responsibility for African retardation by draining African wealth and making it impossible to develop more rapidly the continent. Secondly, Africa is faced with those who manipulated the system and those who are agents or unwilling accomplices of the said system (Vil-Nkomo and Myburgh, 1999: 269; Farisani, 2002).

This perspective of imperial grip and influence, is also shared by Obvious Vengeyi, who, in his analysis of the Zimbabwean Pan-African perspective of the struggles of Zimbabwe, states that, “from a Pan-African perspective, one most noticeable feature in Zimbabwean struggles socio-political and socio-economic is the interference of the Western world” (Vengeyi, 2012: 87). Adding to this, Eddy Maloka (2000: 4) states that, “African Renaissance recognises in the first instance the difficulties wrought on the continent by years of colonialism and unjust international relations, including debt crisis, underdevelopment, and social dislocation and in some instances untenable political relations underpinned by forms of government that imperialism encouraged for its own selfish interests”. The African aspirations for sovereignty, political democracy and socio-economic stability have been shattered against the wall of dependence and authoritarianism, incompetence and corruption, thus creating a need for a second liberation of Africa (Diop, 1999: 5). In this case, African Renaissance is part of the broad anti-imperialist movement, which calls for revisiting African traditional values that reinforces the stability of a community.

While this is true and accepted, it should not be taken as to mean exonerating Africans from their crisis, for the ultimate responsibility depends squarely on the Africans to pull themselves out of the crisis (Chabal, 1996; Farisani, 2002).

The continent's plight is attributable to Africans themselves. Elly Twineyo Kamugisha (2012:12), argues that "despite the effects of the western hegemony, colonial project, Africa should accept that its present malaise is largely due to its own mistakes: greed, poor policies and bad leadership. African countries must soul-search and finds solutions to its problems". It is historical fact that Africans would blame others outside their circles, while inside their circles, there will be a lot of betrayals and counter-betrayals. This can be typified in the case of the slave trade historical epoch where some African chiefs and kings would facilitate the trade in light of seeing the other as a possession. In such cases, African Renaissance calls for reconstruction of such betrayal tendencies. Attributing all the crises in Africa to the historical imbalances and the continual grip of the former imperialists would be subjective while some of the crises are African born and bred.

Many can attribute the current circumstances in Africa to the selfish political ambitions that are a betrayal to the expectations of the well-being of community. It has been stated that "political power has been narrowly concentrated and has been used to create wealth for those who possess it" (Acemonglu and Robinson, 2012: 3). Most postcolonial political possessors of power are theoretically patriotic and yet practically selfish. For this reason, Wandile Langa (2013: 96) argues that, "African nationalist elites are a replacement of the former white colonial elites". Hence, the proliferation of the view that independence in African did not bring about economic improvements. Therefore, the current African elite could be a creation of the colonial and capitalistic system that views self-interest as being entrenched by the system. The political interest will in no turn be read along tribal lines or divisions. African Renaissance seeks to reverberate the spirit of self-realignment and rededication on the part of politicians and African politics. As Thabo Mbeki argues, it is the African perspective and determination which takes Africa in a new direction at an African pace, trading upon what is good and necessary so as to achieve the new birth for Africa (Mbeki, 1999: xvi).

Mbeki admits that Africa is faced with a myriad of challenges and unbearable socio-economic, cultural and political crises and underscores that this is not the end of Africa (Mbeki, 1998: 17). Africa was once a birthplace for humanity and a great contributor to civilisation in form of Egyptian hieroglyphics or the stone building without mortar of the Great Zimbabwe – Masvingo ruins; hence, African Renaissance will come as a factor and a concept of rediscovering and reconstruction (Kiguwa, 1999: 67; Mulemfo, 2000: 47). This view is also shared by Dialo Diop (1999: 3) who states that, "Africa's development crisis is presented as an infernal vicious circle, through some fatal curse would condemn the continent to poverty and

war, to natural or social disasters to chaos. Africa is the crucible of the earth's history... everything of note or consequence started in Africa". For this reason, Ka Mana raises critical questions for Africa to reflect upon, such as;

Why as Africans can we not respond adequately to the challenges of our destiny? Why are we paralysed when confronted with problems that only we can resolve? Why can we not create conditions for a destiny worthy of our true possibilities, organise ourselves according to the objectives of dignity and prosperity and contribute decisively to the emergence of a new global civilisation? Why does the moral, spiritual, medical, scientific, political, economic and social legacy of Africa fail to live a lasting impression to the challenges of Africa and the globe? (Mana, 2004: 9)

In turn, confronted with these questions, Ka Mana asserts that the major problem lies within Africans and their perspective. "The problem is rather that of our present existence and actions, and our own perceptions of our culture and civilisation in the current context. The lack of significance tends to characterise our existence; the inconsistencies and loss of a proper sense of our self-worth which show up in all areas of our lives" (Mana, 2004: 9).

With these factors, advocates of the African Renaissance would insist that there is a possibility to renew perceptions and to redirect existence and actions. It is on this basis that Reconstruction Theology would come to complement from a theological perspective efforts of the African Renaissance.

## **5.5. The Components of African Renaissance in relationship to Zimbabwe**

Having discussed the two factors contributing to the African crisis, it is important to consider an analysis of the dominant aspects that are central in the discourse of African Renaissance. The vision of renaissance is anchored by objectives, which are shaped to be the components of the concept. These dominant themes will be briefly discussed in light of the Zimbabwean environment and the call of reconstruction theology.

### **5.5.1. African History and Culture: Rediscovery**

African Renaissance can be explained in light of reconstruction theology for it consist of reconstructing, renewing and reviving. To speak of an African Renaissance implies that there is something in Africa's past that can be revisited or revived today. A rediscovered past becomes the point of departure of African Renaissance as a just and prosperous future is envisioned. The history of African civilisation before the coming of the imperialist was rich in spirituality and wholeness of life (Banda and Saayman, 2011: 138). The richness that lies in the inner space of existence. It nudges and inspires people to different kinds of actions and

reactions. Such a history should define Africa, as a continent and Africans as a people and how Africans should interpret themselves and the world around them. As argued by Thaninga Shope, “the renaissance of Africa is not about rediscovering Africa –Africans, but about reiterating who we are and what we, as Africans, are all about” (Makgoba, Shope and Mazwai, 1999: xii). This is not to undermine the rediscovering and the reviving of the historical cultural essence of Africa which is also crucial in the renaissance. A reinterpretation of Africa’s rich history and life enhancing culture is required so that “the colonial construction of African history and culture can be rejected and the wealth of the African history and culture becomes the axiom of existence” (Vale and Masko, 1998: 280). World-views are the product of history, culture and self-definitions.

Bernard Magubane (1999: 11) critically argues that “African Renaissance is about the ancient pride of the African history and culture to which the people and the continent through the struggle against impossible odds, should reassert and reaffirm itself and usher a future with hope”. Then Frantz Fanon encapsulates that the colonised man who writes for his people ought to use the past with the intention of opening the future, as an invitation to action and as a basis of hope (Fanon, 1963). Africa’s rich and proud cultural history takes the wholeness of life as the departure point. This history is strong in that it can be used to overcome obstacles that stand in the way of African development.

African culture is centred upon values and legality which are enshrined in traditional law that help to hold the community together with respect and honour. Africans had been civilised in their value of human dignity, and community’s integrity as evidenced by the traditional legal perspectives and justice system. Further to that, its artistic creativity shows more of civilisation since art and culture were complementary. The cultural policies in Africa reflect that the negritude schemata is fully aware of the Africans’ potential power to create and define their own images (Vailant, 1972: 158; Campbell, 2006: 33). Negritude could be viewed as largely a neo-African cultural regeneration in which cultural by-products such as art become markers of civility. In saying so renaissance is a continuous process seeking African renewal and rebranding.

Kwaa Prah (1999: 60) draws attention to the importance of African culture, contesting that “African Renaissance cannot be built on cultural borrowings from outside, but must be based on a rediscovery of Africa’s own culture and history”. This is encapsulated in the concept of Africanness, which is a factor of continuous enrichment. The western and imperialist

discourses, describing Africa as a continent of people without culture and civilisation should be condemned as fallacious, heretical and a crime of the highest order. There is a need for decolonising Africa's mind from the intercalated western ideologies.

Africa has a rich historical cultural inheritance to draw inspiration for development and peaceful co-existence. This cultural heritage indicates the spiritual and cosmological link between African values and African identity. Leopold Senghor (1995: 46) calls this African interconnectedness the constructive art of being and spiritual existence parallel to meaning of being. "This interconnectedness made Africans more artistic and creative. Therefore this artistic vision should propel Africans from being mere consumers/recipients to creators /producers of a civilised world" Senghor (1995: 46). This tallies well with Mugambi's interpretation of Africa's values and Africans' capacity to redirect their destiny. Mugambi states;

As the 20<sup>th</sup> century nears its end, Africa must begin to make new myths, and re-interpret old ones, for the survival of its own peoples. The myth of a vanishing people, must be replaced by the myth of a resurgent or resilient people. The myth of desperate people must be replaced by the myth of a people capable of feeding itself and so on (Mugambi, 1995: 37-38).

Africa's culture is magnificent and well articulate. Pitika Ntuli argues that;

African culture like art is an expression of civilisation. A civilisation embodies all the struggles, successes and failures a people have engaged in order to make a living, shape material and spiritual tools necessary for peaceful existence. It is the primary factor of collective consciousness. It provides the basis for commitment, priority and choice, thereby imparting on societal development and behaviour. It builds a shared historical experience and creating a sense of collective cultural identity (Ntuli, 1999: 190-191).

The argument for rediscovering and restoring African historical and cultural values is not about a search for an original pristine, and authentic past to be venerated, but a search for guidelines for development, commitment, priority and choices (Ntuli, 1999: 191). The wells of cultural inheritance are renewing and revitalising.

One such cultural inheritance is the "*hunhuism*" (*hunhu* in Shona) concept in Zimbabwe which can be best understood in relation to the South African "*ubuntu*" principle of being a human being. This is a rich resource for existence. "*Ubuntu* underscores that a person is a person because of the other person" (Ntuli, 1999: 193). The principle makes one appreciate the value of a communal basis of existence. Therefore, one's humanity is not individualised, but rather it is reciprocal of the other. Mukanda Mulemfo (2000: 57) argues that "*Ubuntu* – "humanity,

humanness is the essential divine capacity that enables people to act according to their socio-cultural norms and values”. *Ubuntu/hunhu* enriches African inheritance, philosophy and principle of existence since it expresses the concise thinking and actions of the ideal African person (*munhu*). Complementing this principle of *ubuntu/hunhu* in Zimbabwe, there is a concept of *nhimbe/muonera pamwe* – one’s heavy burden is communally shared, be it productively or otherwise. In African cultural, historical pride, selfishness was not celebrated. Here, Zimbabweans are challenged to revive the culture of communal solidarity which is the foundation of African society.

This reinterpretation of the past is not a call for a return to the pre-colonial way of life, but an attempt to restore the dignity of Africans and to urge Africans to address their circumstances with confidence. A better future is possible when it is envisioned from a backdrop of the rich cultural premises. Semou Pathe Gueye (1999: 245) puts it across more comprehensively;

There is need to look at our past and appropriate its greatest cultural achievements for it is vital to know exactly who we are, where we come from and what we were able to do. That can help us to reach a better understanding of what we are today and what we can do and become tomorrow. When tracing our history and our original cultures, the efforts should be to communicate that which the common, ordinary women and men did in their daily struggles to exist and assert themselves as human beings.

As such, Africans, if they desire to implement African renaissance with success, are challenged to look critically at the cultural aspects that shaped their historical lives and societies, which when integrated, will enhance the process of development and reconstruction. Africa has to be viewed from the perspective of its total history. Ka Mana strongly emphasises that Africa has “deep historical principles, myths of origins, cultural values to solve its essential problems, to define ways of living and surviving. Africans have imagined ways of being creative and developed lifestyles full of potential for future generations” (Mana, 2004: 8). It is imperative to note that there is no better future, no reconstruction, and no renaissance that can be envisaged with people who are “psychologically defeated, who have lost confidence in themselves and their potential and who are historically and culturally disillusioned” (Teffo, 1999: 149). As such a detour into African historical culture should yield the wealth of such an inheritance.

### **5.5.2. Economic and Sustainable Development Renaissance**

At its core, African Renaissance is about economic and social development. Economic indicators suggest Africa’s need for development abounds. There are few who deny that there is a need for some kind of economic revival or renewal on the African continent. Thabo Mbeki

argues that “the lowest rates of growth are in African countries. African countries have the highest rates of poverty, highest rates of unemployment, and they are the least developed. Internationally, Africa is at the bottom of capital flows” (Mbeki, 1998: 1).

Therefore, one of the fundamental tasks of the African Renaissance is the achievement of sustainable economic development which should result in the improvement of the standards of living and quality of life of the people. However it is also argued that “any form of development which is not accompanied by the transformation of the fabric of life would only entrench and widen distortions and disparities created by imperialism” (Mbeki, 1998: 48).

The proponents of African Renaissance identify several elements that are related to economic renewal which are issues of concern; “economic accountability, economic regeneration, economic reforms, liberalisation of trade, regional economic integration, debt cancellation and poverty eradication” (Botha, 2000: 17). While these are key elements to economic renewal, one has to add the component of the political framework. There is an undisputed marriage between mainstream regional or international economics stability and trade relationship and the political outline of any country.

Thabo Mbeki argues that the vision of an African Renaissance must include a better life for the masses of people, who must also be able to exercise the right to determine their future. He states that, “African Renaissance must, therefore, address the critical question of sustainable development which impacts positively on the standard of living and the quality of life for the masses” (Mbeki, 1999: xvi). Whilst the notion of sustainable development has become the catch-word in economic forums, symposiums and political gatherings. There is a need to question the standard of sustainability, for whose measurement, and for whose benefit. Further to this are the power struggles between the former colonies and their former colonisers.

This is why Gueye is critical of the notion of sustainable development, when he critiques:

When dealing with the problem of development, the following questions seem to require special attention. What is the real chance for a genuine sustainable development, can small and poor countries like ours (Zimbabwe) have, in the current economic global system of exchange and trade, without a radical challenge and change of the inequitable laws and rules which govern the systems. A lot is said about ‘human economical sustainable’ development. But for countries like ours whose peoples, due to their misery and poverty, are generally forced by their day to day struggles to neglect the future and to take from nature all she can give them today. (Gueye, 1999: 251; Farisani, 2002).

There is need for capitalisation for an economic reawakening to take place. However, Africa remain challenged as it looks for foreign investment. These foreign investors milk Africa's natural resources at the expense of Africans. Africa remains marginalised in the world economic order.

It is a reality as noted by Wendy Luhabe, that;

Capital has unprecedented mobility which is characterised and governed by the unipolar theory (having one power bloc) in which there is no serious alternative to the power wielded by the Group of Seven (G7) countries and their international financial and trade institutions. Now the economy is defined and organised into powerful trade blocs. Where; countries as ours are told on a daily basis either play by the rules of the powerful and the game or be marginalised or sidelined (Luhabe, 1999: 290).

The above presents a challenge to Africa however, hope and opportunity still exist for the continent to perform its own "social and economic miracle" (Luhabe, 1999: 290). Indeed, Africa is faced with a myriad of struggles and problems after colonialism such as; poverty, unemployment, corruption, massive profiteering, and abuse of public authority. It has a deformed public sector, lawlessness and political violence, among others. Luhabe further argues that reconstruction is possible. She argues;

It is a myth to claim that this epoch is unique and that no other society has had to face problems on the scale we are confronting or that they did not have to fight to push back the barriers of the possible. For the problems are not overwhelmingly larger than those faced by societies that managed major reconstruction efforts on scales even larger than Africa (Luhabe, 1999: 290).

For this to happen, there is a need to develop new alternatives that require ownership of a shared patriotic vision, integrity, commitment, accountability and people-oriented leaders who are not selfish. Furthermore, for reconstruction to be possible, there is need for genuine, courage and compassion from all citizens for the turnaround economic outlook and developmental drives.

### **5.5.3. Political and Good Governance Renaissance**

Discussions of an African Renaissance and African Reconstruction Theology are filled with references to democracy, political set up and outlook and good governance. In his vision. Thabo Mbeki, proposes that "African Renaissance seeks to build democracy, peace and political stability on the continent, as well as to eliminate elements of dominance, subjugation and denial of human rights" (Mbeki, 1999: xvii; Matheba, 1999: 127).

Underscoring the present state of Africa, in light of the former colonial status, Lesiba Teffo notes the contradictions. Africa is a rich continent but its people are the poorest. This can be attributed to a number of factors, but the heavy one is “Africa seems to be failing in her march towards total political democracy” (Teffo, 1999: 149).

The proponents of African Renaissance appreciate that a stable political democracy will usher a new dispensation to the continent’s plight. It is questioned that without the stable political democracies, Africa will continue to struggle for economic and social development. Elly Twineyo Kamugisha articulates that;

The relationship between democracy and growth is inevitable. Thus, the discussion is relevant to the African context. Further to that, Africa should take a step further in ensuring that African grown democracy becomes a reality. However, what is important is not theoretical democracy but having in place the rule of law and policies that improve economic freedom (Kamugisha, 2012: 46).

Kamugisha is arguing that while Africa has held periodic post-colonial elections, these cannot count for democracy. What is needed is to redefine the political system or the democratic system in light of the rule of law, free markets, small government consumption and high human capital (Kamugisha, 2012: 46-47). The same inference was made by Thabo Mbeki when he says;

It is not regular elections in Africa that define democracy, but it is the ability to accept to hand over power, form governments and support the government of the day. African countries should set an agenda for itself against the repetition of military/police rule, against corruption, abuse of power, for a system of governance that successfully addresses sustainably the challenges of multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society and an equitable distribution of resources, formulating the paths for economic growth and development (Mbeki, 1999: xx; Farisani, 2002: 52).

Thabo Mbeki says that by emphasising genuine democratic systems, African Renaissance upholds that there is still hope for a sustaining political framework (Mbeki, 1998: 201).

Gueye dedicated a section on democracy and he states that, “democracy is another demand for sustainable African Renaissance” (Gueye, 1999: 255). He further, articulates that there is a need to investigate the presumed universality of the western concept of democracy, and its adaptability to our African context (Gueye, 1999: 255). African Renaissance, while affirming that national governments are the principal guarantors of security and the well-being of Africa’s people (Stremlau, 1999: 101), there is a need for the guarantors to be accountable and transparent. The government is also an administrative arm of the nation, meant to serve people. African governments are challenged to serve people and achieve to provide conducive

conditions in which all people, can live as fully accepted members of society. The post-colonial Zimbabwe's government should ensure that every citizen has an equal opportunity of access to all those things which promote their full dignity and value. What comes first is being a Zimbabwean; the pride this attracts and draws requires the government to affirm and to ensure for all citizens.

Good governance and stable democracy value all sectors of human life and encourage the upholding of people-centred policies. There is need to democratise the media in to Zimbabwe, to allow the independence of judges and to remove the bully striking face of government. People need to be able to progressively criticise its policies and operations without fear. This is a renewal principle as summed up by Semou Pathe Gueye when saying;

Calls for a renaissance encourages, separation of legislature, executive and judiciary bodies, their mutual independence and equilibrium, freedom of opinion, regular free and fair elections which enable citizens to remove bad rulers. These are well known institutional conditions for improving the effective and promoting stability in any nation; promote effective performance socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural of the state (Gueye, 1999: 258).

He went further, to articulate the role of a dynamic and informed public opinion with the promotion of a free and independent operation of the media, which are essential elements in a democratic society (Gueye, 1999).

The proponents of African Renaissance would further argue for the greater recognition of human value and respect of human rights. Mbeki maintains that "there is a need to establish in political and constitutional terms mechanisms that entrench, strengthen, and reaffirm the conditions for the respect of human rights" (Mbeki, 1998: 56). The renaissance emphasis is also enshrined in the reconstruction theology. Accordingly, Charles Villa-Vicencio (1992: 46) states that "democracy should be promoted at every level of society. Nation-building is possible when its operations are premised on best and effective policies that promote and ensure respect for humans and '*all creation*' rights".

#### **5.5.4. African Unity Renaissance**

The roots of the idea of African unity can be traced way back to the nineteenth century, coming together and enmeshed with the ideas of nationalism and Pan-Africanism credos. Moving along, the same emphasis was on the issue of anti-colonialism. With the successful founding of the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) in May 1963, subsequently transforming to become African Union (AU) this became the culmination of the desire for African unity. The

most respected hero for calling for a United States of Africa was Kwame Nkrumah. He believed that as a united front, Africa would achieve more politically, economically and socially. On the eve of the formation of OAU in Addis Ababa, in 1963 Kwame Nkrumah behests Africans saying;

Our objective is African union now. We must unite now or perish. I am confident that by our concerted effort, commitment, and determination we shall lay here the foundation and the basis for African unity... Conquer against colonialism and attain national independence which is not the end in itself... The social and economic development of Africa will only come within the political kingdom.... For the political independence, we are learning is not enough to rid us of the consequences of colonial ruling (Nkrumah, 1963).

Nkrumah saw the need for collective purpose, collective planning and collective endeavour as the means to enhance Africa's productivity (Kaumbi, 2001: 23). Nkrumah understood the power of unity and its consequences for the development of the well-being of Africa. It can be equated that the same unity, if applied to the separate nations could provide a foundation for reconstruction.

Kwame Nkrumah analysis was that Africa's status and the state of affairs was directly and logically linked to the aspect of unity. The deplorable state of most of the African nations is a result of ignoring Nkrumah's prophetic utterances some fifty years ago. Kaumbi commenting on the state of affairs of Africa states that;

Post-independence Africa has had more than its fair share of civil wars; continued foreign interference; political unrest; coups d'états; unprecedented loss of natural resources and economic marginalisation. Then comes the fate of some natural disasters, droughts, and famines, epidemic outrages such as HIV and AIDS, Ebola and cholera which have left Africa torn apart (Kaumbi, 2001: 49).

This lack of unity contributes to Africa's continued manipulation, marginalisation, being discriminated against, exploited and dominated in the neo-colonial process. The great old dictum "keep them divided and rule them" is still significant in the face of suffering in Africa today. While this is so, African Renaissance calls for reawakening should be considered seriously.

Kwesi Kwaa Prah then argues,

An Africa united, in spirit of the poverty that we face today, would immediately be a force in world affairs to be treated with respect and equality. An Africa divide along the lines we have today would forever be at the mercy of external power and influence (Prah, 1999: 60).

He underscored that development and wellbeing of Africa is hampered without unity. Whilst some have called for solidarity among African states, African Renaissance critically argues for unity, which is beyond mere solidarity.

African Renaissance calls for serious and critical reflection on African unity, which surpasses the conceived neo-colonial units of Africa as defined by the partitioning of Africa of 1885, at the Berlin Conference. Kwesi Prah states that “regional integration based on African states as they stand today defines little that is organic to African history and culture” (Prah, 2001: 33). To this understanding, African Renaissance is coming to encourage Africa to create the basis for the institutionalisation of their aspiration to unite. Kwesi Prah argues that “the celebration of diversity under a common African unitary institution appears to be the most realistic approach to end the struggles of Africa, ranging from civil conflicts, political segregation, economic underdog and slavery that still have a face in the debt rise” (Prah, 1999: 53).

Thabo Mbeki (1998) is of the view that regional integration of Africa will redefine people’s destiny. Unity brings about peace and stability and it is through unity that results of all the efforts of the economic or developmental drives will begin to yield fruits, which will be enjoyed by all Africans. This was then emphasised by Gueye when he states,

Not a single African country, regardless of its geographic or demographic size of economic potential could on its own achieve genuine and sustainable development on the basis of its own forces, resources, and capacities or even successfully resist the various and subtle attempts of western management with is perpetuated under the auspices and guise of globalisation (Gueye, 1999: 262).

#### **5.5.5. Self-definition and Self-determination Renaissance**

African identity is crucial to the continent’s renewal. The question, seeking an African Renaissance answer is, “who am I?” Thabo Mbeki would not hesitate to announce “I am an African” in 1996 with boldness, following the footprints of Pixley Isaka ka Seme, who stated unequivocally in 1912 that “I am an African, and I set my pride in my race over against a hostile public opinion” (Magubane, 1999: 32). It has been argued that identity, self-definition and national determination are critical elements to any development.

Commenting on what he termed “Mugabeism”, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni said, “Mugabe Robert, the president of Zimbabwe, could be read along the lines of left nationalism, Afro-radicalism and nativism. Mugabe, the most charismatic and an eloquent African leader, has invested in the issue of patriotism, national sovereignty and African-ness identity” (Ndlovu-

Gatsheni, 2009: 1140). However, having said that, the realisation is that over the years, between 1996-2016 “people black and white; high and low have struggled to make sense of Robert Mugabe” (Norman, 2008: 161). He has been described as donning the hat of a great nationalist revolutionary, a great liberator, father of the nation, concurrently with that of a tyrant, a dictator and undertaker of the nation (Norman, 2008).

When national identity and cultural determination are not “clearly defined or articulated, societal tension increases and positive living and success are stunted” (Makgoba, Shope and Mazwai, 1999: v). These elements are a common thread that weaves society together and facilitates coherent, sustainability and people-centred development. Africa should reawaken from being her own enemy by redefining self with the understanding that African challenges can be eliminated by self, through self-determination.

Malegapuru Makgoba understands the value of re-evaluation and redefinition of what Africa and Africans are. Not to mean bluntly that Africans do not know who they are, but that the African Renaissance is opening a new opportunity to redefine self by self. Makgoba argues,

The African renaissance is a unique opportunity for Africans to define ourselves and our agenda according to our own realities and taking into account the realities of the world around us. It is about Africans being agents of our own history and masters of our own destiny. (Makgoba, 1999: xii; Matthews, 2002).

This is a recovery of African pride, African confidence and African being, which redefine the destiny in light of the conditions and realities of Africa.

African Renaissance acknowledges that the dominant discourses of the West and its imperial motive were derogatory and degraded Africa and Africans to subhuman levels. European anthropology, history, philosophy and theology, all provided a false, humiliating image and definition of Africa. GWF Hegel (1770-1831) as quoted by Bernard Magubane say;

Africa proper as far as history goes back has remained for all purposes of connection with the rest of the world shut up... The peculiarly African character is difficult to comprehend... The Negro (African) represents natural man in all his wild and untamed nature... If you want to treat and understand him rightly you must abstract all elements of respect and morality and sensitivity. For, Africans, moral sentiments are weak or more strictly non-existent (Magubane, 1999: 24).

Such definitions and understanding need to be challenged by the Africans themselves. It is from this that Thabo Mbeki will call African Renaissance a revolution, and a rebellion. With strong emphasis, Mbeki underscores;

I believe that the spirit is abroad in all Africa in favour of a sustained offensive against all imperialist thinking, colonialism, neo-colonialism and all the degeneration that presents. As every revolution requires revolutionaries so must African Renaissance have its militants and activists who will define the history, reclaiming and restoring the African dignity and charter the tomorrow that belongs to African people (Mbeki, 1999: xxi).

This emphasis asserts that all imperial definitions of “African” have no meaning and value. Kwesi Kwaa Prah says “these imperial definitions driven by racism and wickedness are bankrupt. The African identity is not a closed phenomenon cast in stone” (Prah, 1999: 40-41). Thus, self-definition and affirmation of African dignity is seen as essential, if reconstruction and renewal is to be achieved in Africa.

Self-determination is critical for the development of Africa. This was the spirit of Nehemiah and the builders in that the walls might have been broken but it was possible to rebuild them, not by reconstructing the walls to their former glory but surpassing the former glory. Self-determination should drive people to the attainment of that future which can never be compared to any other to the effect of shedding off shackles of colonialism.

#### **5.5.6. Other Components of African Renaissance**

A discussion of African Renaissance remains open as to the issues or components it seeks to address, for new components will emerge and require critique. These emerging components will add up to the dominant themes with the same wave value. Among the dominant themes discussed above, the list continues to include moral renaissance, education and *intelligentsia* renaissance, media and language renaissance, sustainable environment renaissance, HIV and AIDS renaissance and mainstreaming gender renaissance. As earlier stated, the themes of African Renaissance remain open-ended.

#### **5.6. Critique of African Renaissance**

There is no discourse which enters the scholarly arena that can survive without some critical scrutiny. To take that African Renaissance is without criticism will be tantamount to academic fallacy. Several critiques have been advanced on this subject.

The first concern has been on the terminology “African Renaissance”. Some discerning voices have pointed out that using the “term “Renaissance” which has roots in Europe and specifically is used to refer to a specific era of history, remains a challenge to the achievements it desires” (Matthews, 2002: 103). The term as it appeared and was used in the European context referred

to a historical era. The European period of renewal was “characterised a *posteriori*, while the vision of an African Renaissance is a *priori* wish rather than an a *posteriori* assessment” (M'Baye, 1975: 69).

It is further argued that if African Renaissance is about rediscovering, reinterpreting and restating Africa's past, then the use of a European word is inappropriate. Mulemfo (2000: 46) points out that “European ‘Renaissance’ was a celebration to socio-economic developments, socio-political markets and inventions which ultimately were the medium to African exploitation and colonialism”. Thus, the word can be read and seen as exploitative and imperialistic (Mulemfo, 2000: 47). Looking at the etymology and the historical significance one would then suggest that an African word to refer to the African concerns would have been more appropriate.

Secondly, the content of the African Renaissance has been argued as more appealing to the political leaders, some government institutions and academia while the individual is not taken on board.

### **5.7. Reconstruction Theology Paradigm with African Renaissance Perspective**

What African Renaissance has provided as the agenda for African renewal is not divorced from what reconstruction theology paradigm is providing as desiring reconstruction. Jesse Mugambi adopted a wide ranging approach to reconstruction in which he focuses on wide facets of society and social realities. In *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*, Mugambi (2003) set out that African society is yearning for reconstruction and requires reconstruction. The end of colonialism and the coming of neo-colonialism, globalisation and modernity did not usher in a better life for Africans; on the contrary it saw the destruction of African social, cultural and physical infrastructures and the amassing of wealth by Europe, North America and now China (Fischer 2013: 102).

The theology of reconstruction, Mugambi (2003:27) suggests that it has to be introspective and self-critical. This is the recasting of thoughts reflectively and reflexively, allowing constructive change of attitude towards the circumstances. As for Villa-Vicencio (199:40), reconstruction theology has to be characterised by social analysis. Introspection, self-critic and social analysis is aimed at reshaping and redirecting the movement of currents for the better living of the people of Africa. Villa-Vicencio (1992:275) contends that reconstruction theology has;

To discover, clarify and explain what is going on in a given context. It should not end there but then, engage in critical, non-ideological analysis, given to uncover the power relations, socio-economic, socio-political and socio-religious structures and cultural values which are responsible for suffering, exploitation and social disintegration.

This thesis asserts that for Zimbabwe, the time is now for introspection and social analysis of the contributors of the painful realities to which the post-colonial community is exposed. The aim is to transform not just to uncover the structures and values that caused society to fragment and to break the walls of human dignity. Reconstruction theology then proposes an ethic of renewal that has to set the community on track of reconstruction and transformation.

The reconstruction theology can be set to be an African renaissance theology in perspective and African renaissance can be African reconstruction. African reconstruction calls for multi-disciplinary effort in addressing the various actors in the circumstances of social realities. Villa-Vicencio (1992) concludes that the reconstruction theology is a theology of nation building, aimed at transforming and renewing the national outlook for the good of the citizens. He asserts that “a theology of reconstruction is pre-eminently a contextual theology. It explicitly addresses the present needs of particular society” (Villa-Vicencio 1992:41). So Vicencio addressed issues such as economics, ethics, human rights, law formulation and enforcement, politics, democracy and theology. In other words reconstruction is concerned with the wellness of the citizens of the given community. In summing this perspective Vicencio argues that;

There can be no healing or sense of completion in the health, purpose and security of the individual without the restoration of the entire community (Villa-Vicencio 1992:166).

When one analyses the call and perspective of African Renaissance, it is seeking renewal, regeneration and transformation of the African community. The renaissance call is to see the wellness of the individual nation in Africa.

Jesse Mugambi (2003:39-41) affirms the impact of social constructive systems such as Pan-Africanism, with the notion of a “United States of Africa” under the influence and inspiration of Kwame Nkrumah. This dream of a united Africa finds resonance in Mugambi’s (2003:39) reconstruction paradigm which involves politics, economy, morality, aesthetics, and theology. He alludes;

It makes political sense for Africa to affirm its unity as a political, economic and cultural entity, which can evolve internal markets for goods and services. Such an internal market would help Africa to grow out of its current marginalisation in international fora, technology and world trade (Mugambi 2003:41).

Transformation and renewal in reconstruction theology has to accept the missiological mandate of the church, then position the church in the centre of the compass of reconstruction. The role of the church can be paralleled to that of the diviner in African Tradition, where the diviner serves as the mediator between adversaries (Fischer 2013:105).

Theology of reconstruction, much as in African Renaissance, has on its agenda economic reconstruction (Mugambi, 2003; Villa-Vicencio, 1992). Africa is blessed with resources and yet it is impoverished. Zimbabwe's has fertile land, a variety of mineral resources and a collapsed economy. Self-identity (African image) is part of the reconstruction theology agenda as much in the African renaissance concern of renewal. Aesthetic reconstruction, moral reconstruction and theological reconstruction are critical for African renewal. It is the mandate of the missional church to champion reconstruction which is multi-dimensional and inclusive for a better Africa. It is through the renaissance drives that a renewed brand of Africa is envisioned. However, this renewal and reconstruction is not an event; it is generational and it remains a process and continuous re-engagement between the stakeholders.

### **5.8. Renaissance and Reconstruction a Process: The Africa We Want**

The legacy of the O. A.U is ongoing and as such the legacy of reconstruction remains alive in Africa, for transformation and renewal is a process not an event. This thesis is made more relevant since the publication of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want 2015<sup>54</sup>. The vision document affirms the desire for a collective and inclusive vision of a better Africa. The vision document asserts;

We, the people of Africa and her Diaspora, united in our diversity, young and old, men and women, girls and boys from all walks of life, deeply conscious of history, express our deep appreciation to all generations of Pan-Africanists and African Renaissance.... We echo the Pan-African call that Africa must unite in order to realise its Renaissance. The present generations are confident that the destiny of Africa is in their hands and that they must act now to shape the future we want (Commission, 2015: 1).

A united vision triggers hope. History has proven that united Africans conquer and divided Africa was colonised. This vision affirms the potential of this generation in shaping the future. This is critical as the Renaissance's emphasis is that renewed attitude in seeing the future from

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<sup>54</sup> This Agenda was ratified by the Heads of States and Government of the African Union on the 24<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union in January 2015, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. AU which replaced the OAU (established in 1963) in 2002, is comprised of 55 African Member States and Government see (African Union Hand Book 2017)

where we stand is important. For this reason, the analogous reality of observing the sun setting on the mountain horizons in Africa brings a sense of delight, joy and peace. The sun will produce the rays of hope and beauty from where you stand to an endless horizon, so is the vision of renewal from where this generation is standing should produce hope and delight.

In laying out the focus of the Agenda 2063, Africa Union heads of state who are the signatories to the vision set out seven African Aspirations (African Union Commission 2015:2);

- 1) A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development
- 2) An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance
- 3) An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law
- 4) A peaceful and secure Africa
- 5) An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics
- 6) An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people especially its women and youth, and caring for children
- 7) Africa as a strong, united and influential global player and partner

These aspirations invite all Africans to realise their value. Reconstruction theology in Zimbabwe is bringing most of the aspects addressed in the Africa We Want document as relevant for transformation. This Agenda 2063 may appear a dream, but it is a good dream worth dreaming since it calls for commitment from all citizens to ensure its achievement.

The Agenda 2063 upholds the role and relevance of religion and African spirituality in reconstruction (African Union Commission A 5:46). In this light, Christianity has a profound role to influence reconstruction and social cohesion.

In terms of economic reconstruction Agenda 2063 builds on the principles of African Union Abuja Treaty of 1991.<sup>55</sup> The treaty outline the desire and need for equality, inter-dependence, solidarity, collective self-reliance and harmonious co-operation (see Article 3 Abuja Treaty 1991). In outlook the economic justice, accountability and popular participation of members

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<sup>55</sup> The Abuja Treaty of 1991 was signed by 51 heads of states. It is aimed at establishing the African Economic Community, as the values of OAU are continuing to evolve for the sustenance of the African community and the wellbeing of the African people. <https://au.int/en/treaties/treaty-establishing-african-economic-community> accessed on 9 August 2017.

states, can only be achieved at the organisational level when they are fully achieved at the grass roots level. The AU, in setting out these treaties and agendas, are outlining the roadmaps for transformation of community and Africa's revitalisation.

### **5.9. Zimbabwe: The Post-colonial Transformational and Renewal Efforts**

Zimbabwe has, since independence in 1980, put efforts into restructuring and transforming of political economies from dependent to self-reliant existence. However, these fundamental changes in the structure and outlook did not produce significant human wellness. Among other reasons is the fall back to the history and legacy of colonialism that is failing to create success. Having said that, Zimbabwe has put into place some transformative blueprints post-independence. Whilst Makumbe (2003: 5) asserts that at the attainment of political independence in 1980 "... ZANU PF took on a *commandist* and *regimentalist* character rather than a democratic character in its operations". Post-independence developments in Zimbabwe pointed to the right transition, seeking to benefit the generality of the people. However, if these efforts were driven from the reawakening premise, and the desire to reconstruct society for the benefit of all Zimbabweans reconstructively, wellness would be different.

According to Moyo, Makumbe and Raftopolous (2000: 28), "the expansion of educational and health facilities was the most concerted attempt to establish and extend the support of the state" which was an investment for ZANU PF. Zimbabwe is celebrated in empowering its citizens through education. These policies earned Zimbabwe a good mark in post-colonial development efforts.

Zimbabwe's development was nurtured by the concept of indigenisation and black empowerment. The good of such movements, post-colonial is evidenced in economy and business when young entrepreneurs rode the wave and survived the political tide. Good

examples are, Strive Masiwa<sup>56</sup>, Nigel Chanakira<sup>57</sup> and Farai Rwdzi<sup>58</sup> only to mention the young comers. Others are Philip Chiyangwa<sup>59</sup>, James Makamba<sup>60</sup>, and Patrick Kombayi<sup>61</sup> among others. These business entrepreneurs benefited because of the post-colonial Reconstruction Renaissance efforts, in Zimbabwe. Having mentioned these, this research is aware of the many small-scale entrepreneurs who survive the demands of the time in Zimbabwe.

Inculturation was emphasised in Churches. This finds many European founded churches becoming independent and autonomous from the European hegemony. There is evidence in churches of incorporating the cultural values of worship.

### **5.10. ZIM-ASSET: Towards an Empowered Society and a Growing Economy**

In pursuit of the new trajectory of accelerating economic growth and communal wealth creation, Zimbabwe formulated a new socio-economic and socio-political plan known as Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZimAsset) with a time

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<sup>56</sup> Strive Masiyiwa, is an influential businessman in Africa, renowned philanthropist and a founder of Econet Telecommunications network offering products and services in mobile telephone, broadband, satellite, solar, cable television and fiber optic networks. Econet has recently revolutionised how Zimbabweans and Africans bank and pay for products and services using their mobile networks and phones. Strive has Telecommunications operations in seventeen African nations as well as in Europe, Latin America and Asia. Strive Masiyiwa founded Econet in 1993 after winning a five year court battle against Zimbabwe's state-owned telecommunications monopoly. see [www.africaprogresspanel.org](http://www.africaprogresspanel.org)

<sup>57</sup> Nigel Chanakira, chairperson of Zimbabwe Investment Authority (ZIA), founder of Kingdom Bank in 1994 and that came into merger with Miekles Africa, forming Kingdom Meikles Africa which became one of the largest listed groups by market capitalisation on the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange, with a secondary listing in London.

<sup>58</sup> Farai Rwdzi set up Inter-Fin Merchant Bank of Zimbabwe Limited in 1999, one of the respected entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe. He has interests in financial services, agro business, property and mining business. See also [www.newsday.co.zw](http://www.newsday.co.zw) article of June 21 2012 in Business Column.

<sup>59</sup> Philip Chiyangwa, is a ZANU PF politician and businessman, founder of Affirmative Action Group (which was a black empowerment lobby group). The group was very vocal for the empowerment of black people in Zimbabwe. Chiyangwa is now the Zifa President and COSAFA president. His interests are construction, hospitality and football administration.

<sup>60</sup> James Makamba is an entrepreneur, ZANU PF politician and former commercial broadcaster. Makamba founded Kestrel Corporation and he became a major shareholder in Telecel Zimbabwe, the second largest subscribed mobile telecommunication network. He has fallen out with ZANU PF and he was forced into exile.

<sup>61</sup> Late - Partick Kombayi, who died in 2009, was a ZANU PF politician, a pronounced businessman during and after colonialism. He later defected to the opposition politics in Zimbabwe. At one time a member of Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) and he died a member of Movement for Democratic Change (MDC- T), see also [www.pindula.co.zw](http://www.pindula.co.zw)

frame 2013 -2018. This plan aimed at enabling Zimbabwe to achieve economic growth, and to reposition the country as one of the strongest indigenously run economies around the region. The Agenda was built around four strategic clusters; Food Security and Nutrition, Social Services and Poverty Eradication, Infrastructure and Utilities and Value Addition and Beneficiation.

The formulation of this strategic plan came from the background of Zimbabwe's deterioration in the economic and social environment at an alarming rate since 2000. This decline has been arguably due to a number of internal and external motivated factors. The government of Zimbabwe under the ZANU PF regime, would indicate the economic sanctions imposed by the Western countries (particularly Britain, the EU and the United States of America) to be the major contributing factor. However, some point to internal errors postcolonial that culminated in Fast Track Land Reform Programme known as third Chimurenga/Jambanja. This Chimurenga is timeless and is not located in the land agricultural sector only, but also in all sectors, including mining and manufacturing and industries.

The period of post 1996 resulted in a deep economic and social crisis characterised by a hyperinflationary environment and low industrial capacity utilisation, leading to the overall decline in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 50% by 2008.

### **5.11. Inclusive Strategies: Renaissance and transformation is possible**

Zimbabwean efforts for renewal and transformation struggle to produce the much needed results because they are obstructed with the political inventiveness of the players at the expense of the common people. There is wide evidence that a political party that has claimed the God-given mandate to rule the nation of Zimbabwe, strives to please its own party cadres and to remain in power. The efforts of transformation in Zimbabwe are either turned down or accepted as long they meet the categories of ZANU PF perspective. Any other initiative that is outside the scope of ZANU PF is not to be sanctioned to reach the people of Zimbabwe.

Regardless of the many challenges the church in Zimbabwe might be facing in advocating for the transfiguration, renewal and regeneration it should remain faithful to the propagation of the Gospel and also the influence of conscious transformation. The church as a social institution remains the most accessible medium of communication and it serves as the bridge for the desired transformation (Mugambi, 1995:50). Alluding to the immensity if not the complexity of the need for renewal, reconstruction and renaissance in Africa, Mugambi advocates that God

can make possible what to human beings appears an impossibility. The churches should stir up people's minds and let them realise afresh the deep meaning of faith, hope and love without which life is impossible (Mugambi, 1995:50).

This thesis argues that renewal, renaissance, transformation and reconstruction will not be achieved if left entirely to the political players. The church is the institution with resources and authority to lead the renewal for the benefit of the nationalities and the common citizens. In Zimbabwe, the church is structured to meet the demands of reconstruction. The church is also strategically positioned to reach out to the grassroots levels. In Zimbabwe, the Christian church bodies affirm the need for democratisation that affords the Zimbabwean community wellness and wholeness. These bodies which include Zimbabwe Council of churches and the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, if given the space to operate without the political influence, produce results. The politicisation of every policy and operation in Zimbabwe is a cancer that has erodes the possibilities of transformation. Furthermore, the corrupt mindset of seeking individualistic glory and gain has hampered progress at the greatest level. The church, as a "moral" institution, is challenged to live up to the expected moral level of national commitment and responsibility thus, displaying a national efficiency discipline in reconstruction theological paradigm.

## **5.12. Conclusion**

Ezra Chitando (2016) notes that some African problems are internally driven, while not underemphasising the outside forces that benefit from the instability of Africa. Jesse Mugambi (2003) argues that much African impoverishment is a result of Africa possessing products it does not produce while having great deposits of minerals she does not process and use. "Africa is a continent which produces what it does not consume and it consumes what it does not produce" (Mugambi 2003:43). This economic overview can also be ascertained in all other sectors of the African way of existence. The abandonment or demonization of the African cultural heritage of community mobilisation and communal wholeness is one clear demonstration that Africa is trading in and consuming what it does not produce. In terms of politics, Africa has been on the receiving end while Africa is a rich continent in wisdom and intelligence. In terms of religion, Africa looks up to the continents that are secular for affirmation while John Mbiti (1969) strongly presents that Africans are notoriously spiritual, therefore the time is now ripe for African Reawakening.

This section has critically provided the concern of the African Renaissance and its relationship to the Reconstruction theology discourse in the post-colonial era. Reconstruction theology recognises that the demise of the cold war is an opportune time for Africa to refocus. This is so because during the cold war era any transformational or human-oriented systems were not permitted to mature since empirical hegemony was still defining Africa (Mugambi 2003:40).

The chapter argues that Renaissance, which is renewal, transformation and revival, as a European originality has been redefined in Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The former president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki (1997), who then founded a Renaissance institute, has courageously revived the African vision. African Renaissance calls Africans to challenge the historical labels and shake off the imperial hegemony. It is positive transformation cultural, social, political and economic well-being. The African Renaissance vision is in line with the reconstruction theology. African Renaissance is determined to challenge African people and their institutions to develop and to foster socio-economic, socio-political and socio-moral processes and practices that define Africans as competent and proud citizens. African reconstruction theology challenges Africans to understand that the way to ensure such processes and practices is to affirm the Africanness responsiveness to the struggles of the time.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **ZIMBABWE: THE CONTEXT OF RECONSTRUCTION DISCOURSE**

#### **6. Introduction**

The discourse of reconstruction from a missiological perspective requires this research to produce the context and its settings. This section offers an overview of the history of Zimbabwe pertaining to this study. The chapter tracks down the contours of societal configurations that include the social setups, economic parameters and political changes, so as to produce the relevance of reconstruction. This chapter gives a brief history of Zimbabwe, takes a brief set up of the people pre-colonial, colonial and moves into the main thrust of post-colonial context. It is through these brief sections that a post-colonial analysis will be produced.

The Zimbabwean society, like any other country cannot claim a clear and unambiguous disjuncture with its history. The creation of the modern day polity, which has come to be defined as Zimbabwe, lay between Zambezi and Limpopo rivers, has been a process laden with various but continuous historical interactions (Mlambo, 2013). From the 10<sup>th</sup> to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the country witnessed the immigration of different peoples who included the ancestors for the Shona, Nguni, and others who left an indelible ethnic imprint on the plateau (Beach, 1994: 78). The society was shaped and defined by migration, wandering and settlement. These overlaps of history have included ownership, dispossession, conquest, co-existence, colonialism, commerce, Christianity, African nationalism, revolutionary war, colonial independence, the Cold War and the broad pursuit of democracy.

Zimbabwe is a small land-locked country. It borders Mozambique, South Africa, Botswana, Zambia and a bit of Namibia. The country has a number of valuable minerals and fertile farm land. It is historically known as the breadbasket of Africa because of its thriving economy and its hardworking people. This position has changed since the year 2000.

Rhodesian colonialism did not invent ethnic groups or divisions in Zimbabwe. Like many pre-colonial African societies, present day Zimbabwe is a multi-ethnic society inhabited by a number of IsiNdebele speaking people and ethnic groups occupying part of the southern and central parts of Zimbabwe. The MaShona - Shona, being a generic term referring to the five dialects that are Manyika-Maungwe, Zezuru, Korekore, Ndau and Karanga occupying the central up to the northern regions of Zimbabwe. The IsiNdebele–Ndebele and MaShona- Shona are the major ethnic tribes in Zimbabwe.

The political and economic relationships among the various groups inhabiting the plateau were always dynamic and changing. Their complex and fluid relations were characterised by both conflict and cooperation, both incorporation and fragmentation and raids and counter-raids. This was facilitated through marriages, political alliances and constant population movement. Their sense of identity was more of a social than political (Beach, 1984: 46; Raftopoulos and Mlambo, 2009). What Rhodesian colonialism did was to polarise and reinforce these ethnic divisions among the Africans thereby deliberately preventing them from developing a nationally integrated identity, societal discipline and determination. These ethnic groups were very cultured to combat any enemy and any challenge to their way of life. It would be prudent to say that Zimbabweans are culture oriented; they are resilient, courageous, hardworking, respectful, and mannered to honour, regardless of circumstance calling for disrespect and dishonour. This is exhibited even in the modern context of socio-economic and socio-political difficulties.

Chinua Achebe argues, “people did not hear of culture by the coming of the Europeans. They have a great philosophy deep in value and dignity. It is this dignity that many African people lost during the colonial period and it is this that they must now regain (Achebe, 1973: 8). For certain, the African societies with such imperfect configurations were not consumers but producers of a culture and a custom of determination and community efficient discipline.

### **6.1. Zimbabwe: Pre-Colonial People and History**

The majority of Zimbabweans pride themselves on having a proud, rich history and heritage of being descendants of illustrious forebears; Mwenemutapa, Torwa, Rozvi, Nguni, and Ndebele. These forefathers and foremothers, set in as Tribal Empires, were characterised by contestation, raids, and out powering each other. Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, commenting on the identity of the peoples during this period argued, “identities prior to colonialism were very fluid, permeated by complex processes of assimilation, incorporation, conquest of weaker groups, inter and intra-marriages, alliance, fragmentation and constant movement” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2011: 22). Identities that crystallised in this milieu were social and moral in character, rather than political or otherwise. Lonsdale (1992; 2004), argues that identities founded on moral and social imperatives are more to do with culture enhancement, communal security and social membership as opposed to political identities mediated by competitive confrontation over material resources and political benefit and dominance. Due to the moral dimension of identities in the Zimbabwean plateau, the people had no real political enmity and ethnic hatred.

However, the political contestations were felt within the individual dynasties. The people in their respective empires still found value in defending their empire's economic and political dominance as the pride and honour of their cultural supremacy.

They lived in a harmonious unit with a respect for their culture and a value of their empire. The Great Zimbabwe heritage of the Mwenemutapa Empire remains the great citadel ruins, which exhibit the culture of sovereignty, dedication to state security, commitment to economical preservation and discipline to remain successful regardless of the challenges of the time. Horace Campbell (2003: 7) would argue that, "Great Zimbabwe monument attests to the vibrancy of the culture and civilisation that existed from the ninth to the fifteenth century". This city of the Mwenemutapa is to be viewed as the epicentre of an extensive multi-ethnic and multi-national tributary state that embraced people.

On the other hand, the Ndebele Empire was a centre of cultural and security value. The Ndebele people were known for being Great War warriors, strategists and protectors of their minerals.

Land, minerals, and herds of cattle defined the economic stability and livelihood of the empires. Pre-colonial Zimbabwe has been defined as the Great Ceramic Crescent, where the land is fertile and with great deposits of minerals (Beach, 1984; Mazarire, 2009: 5). For the pre-colonial society well-being was defined by land ownership and productivity. Zimbabwe's prehistoric states have been depicted chiefly as farming communities that adopted iron to modernise their agriculture. "Herds of livestock occupied a central place in their economies because they were important indicators of wealth and social stability" (Mazarire, 2009: 35). There is a need to emphasise that land was owned collectively and distributed for use by the clan heads. For this reason, the land was held in trust for the unborn generations and the living dead (ancestors). In this day, people in Zimbabwe are referred as "*vana wevhu*" meaning children of the soil, implying that as one is born Zimbabwean he is a son or daughter of the land/soil with rights to ownership. Sebastian Bakare (1993: 48) echoes that, "to deprive him/her of it is to rob him/her the birth right and death right. For the black Zimbabwean, he/she is in the soil in life and death".

Even though people did not understand how to purify them, they used minerals in the barter economy which was introduced to the Empires by Portuguese sailors and traders around 1500. Gerald Mazarire argues that there were effective external pre-colonial relationships "based on participatory trade, which witnessed the corresponding growth of new economic, social and political organisations" (Mazarire, 2009: 36). Indeed, because of vast deposits of gold, the

Portuguese were attracted to enter the interior of Zimbabwe, well before the British establishment of Rhodesia. The interior was a Golden Crescent that cut across the Great Ceramic Crescent Plateau.

By the nineteenth century, the dispersed Shona people and the Ndebele in the south eastern part of what would become Zimbabwe had established a distinctive petty commodity mode of production, in part through the influence of Portuguese merchants (Bond and Manyanya, 2002: 3).

Hunting was a respected activity in the empire life of the people. There were some religious-spiritualisation associated with the activity of hunting. This made the hunting part of the communal mobilisation activity. This supports John Mbiti's assertion that Africans are notoriously spiritual (1969: 49). Religious beliefs were deeply entrenched in human existence and value of existence and this religious belief influenced community coexistence and activities.

Religion was centred upon the worship of spirit mediums and *mhondoros*. Religion was considered to have a direct bearing on the socio-economic well-being of the people (Manyeruke and Hamauswa, 2013: 287). Religion, culture and tradition permeated the people; hence, society was defined through its religion, culture and tradition. There was no life outside the passage of time for an individual, and initiation ceremonies were held with high honour. Humans and nature were considered related and this is reflected in the concepts of totems, from the knowledge of animals, plants and herbs. Elders in the community were the wells of all knowledge from whom the young ones drew inspiration and gave society its stability due to the wise advices with deep religious connotations. Elders were not selfish or individualistic; they considered the unborn generations as much as they defended the interests of the living. The economic, political and religious were interconnected. Religion, culture and tradition were the engine of society in which participation in all community activities was genuine (Campbell, 2003: 9).

The essence of society was defined in the rubrics of national cohesion. There was a clear societal collectivism and a willingness to share. The ethics of the Bantu, enshrined in the Ubuntu humanity (Campbell, 2003: 18) became the guarding philosophy for existence and sustainability of society. Community mobilisation was not difficult hence there were some traditional community support systems such as *nhimbe*, "supporting each other in harvesting",

and the *zunde remambo* “mechanism to support the poor though having the whole community setting aside a field, at the discretion of the chief, to help those in need of food.

## **6.2. Zimbabwe: People and History of the Colonial Era**

This section looks at the forces and agents of colonialism, particularly the role played by Christian missionaries, traders and concession seekers and their empire – minded sponsors. Sabelo Ndlovu- Gatsheni (2009: 39) argues that “concession-seekers put pressure on African leaders to sign the fraudulent Rudd Concession that was used to justify the occupation, conquest and colonisation of Zimbabwe in 1890”. However, the concession did not include the right of settlement. It is evident that when the white settlers arrived in the Zimbabwean plateau, they were there to take over the land, to rule and to settle. This marked the beginning of colonial repression, suppression and dispossession (Kavanagh, 2014). History has it that the Pioneer Column under the leadership of Cecil John Rhodes, with the British South Africa Company, (BSAC) was granted the occupation and governance rights by the Queen of England. This shows that the Queen understood the mission of the BSAC as that of occupation of land and the rule over its inhabitants, while the kings in Zimbabwe understood the mission of the whites in terms of mineral rights. It can be argued that Christian missionaries who resided in the king’s palaces were part of the scheme for British colonialization. This was the starting point of fraud, misrepresentation of facts, plunder and selfish attitudes in Zimbabwe.

## **6.3. Unitary National Identity: The Reconstruction Cornerstone**

Colonialism fuelled rigidity and polarisation in Zimbabwean society. It should be noted that colonialism fabricated and constructed ethnic citizenship in Africa. Prior to the settlers, Zimbabwean people were characterised by pluralism, flexibility and multiplicity. Whereas, the British upon setting themselves as the administrators began identifying people in accordance with their tribe, gender, status, and colour. Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2011: 23) states that, “citizens (white settlers) were governed through urban civil power, while subjects (natives/ black African) were governed through decentralised despotism permeated by tradition and customary order and overseen by a rural chiefly authority”. In Zimbabwe, ethnic citizenship was enforced through the national identity card system “*chitupa*” that coded and classified Africans according to an assigned village and district of origin. While this system may seem civilised, it was more to do with control, dominance and governing people’s movement. “This ‘caste’ division succeeded in the construction of a separation of races in the economy, the political system and law” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009: 59). At the same time, it was through this

system that some people were given superiority over others. The class stratification of people created a selfish identity against the communal identity of belonging. Reconstruction theology argues that colonialism never intended to create a nation in Africa on the basis of common national efficiency identity. Instead, colonialism wanted to create colonial states. Colonial hegemonic socio-political ordering exploited the fluid identities to marginalise people and to redefine them along the contours of belonging, colour, ethnicity and political affiliation (Daimon, 2014: 141).

Some of the problems in Africa are outlined against the backdrop of the crisis of national identity. A commonly celebrated historical identity can move the nation of Zimbabwe toward the ideals of reconstruction. Nation-building and reconstruction favours among other things, the unitary and purposeful ideals of national identity and belonging. Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2011: 29) argues that the daunting task for African governments and nations is to build from state identities, to rebuild and to reconstruct nations. These governments should reconstruct stable, common and single citizenship of people, based on genuine principles of national belonging.

#### **6.4. Christian Influence in Colonial History**

Christian missionaries were the earliest representatives of the imperial world that would eventually conquer the Ndebele and the Shona. The missionaries were not only the bearers of a hegemonic Christian ideology, but they were also vehicles of a colonial western culture and worldview. The earliest were from the London Missionary Society (LMS) seeking the conversions of the African “natives” to Christianity. They were active in Matebeleland as witnessed by King Mzilikazi Khumalo, who established friendship with Robert Moffat in the 1820s. In Mashonaland Fr Gonzalo da Silveira managed to convert one Mutapa.

The missionary activities did not directly contradict and challenge the autonomy of the Shona and Ndebele polity. However, Christianisation by its very nature was entailing the colonisation of the natives’ consciousness with the axioms and aesthetics of Europeanism. Christianity by its mere presence, contradicted the setup of the natives and indigenous people. Christianity emphasised the holiness and accountability of an individual to God therefore challenging the communal accountability theory of the indigenous groups. The equality of men and women was also emphasised in Christianity, a position which contradicted the local traditional ethos. Christianity disapproved of and castigated raids, spirit mediums, veneration of the living dead and polygamy. It also dismissed the African worship models, tools, and social gathering styles.

That being so, to some Africans, Christianity appeared more like a royal-court religion. This is so because missionaries such as Moffat operated from the royal courts. This led to questions about whether Christianity was seeking authentication or whether it was in the courts to spy on the set up of the land.

However, it remains clear that religion in the form of Christianity was influential to the settler invasion. Prior to the colonialization, some Christian missionaries are accused of their indifference or facilitating perpetual dominance of some states by others. The coming in of the BSAC clearly indicated the known role of missionaries. Ruzivo (2012: 10) underscores that “missionary churches were rewarded for their service to the colonial influence and success by given vast lands to possess”. The Christian landscape in Zimbabwe is evident to the partitioning of the plateau. Due to the Christian influence, the native Zimbabweans were dispossessed of their birth right; their land and cattle wealth were taken and people’s rights were disregarded. Their God was belittled and their ancestors were disregarded.

While Christianity was viewed as a colonial mission, another school of thought argues that women and the weak found solace in this new religion. Women were happy recipients of the religion as they were not happy with the arranged marriages, child -pledging, practice of killing twins and the boy child superiority. That being so, mission centres became educational and empowering.

### **6.5. A Theology of Land in Zimbabwe: - In Reconstruction Theology**

Sebastian Bakare in 1993 produced a magna carta “*My Right to Land in the Bible and in Zimbabwe: A Theology of Land for Zimbabwe*” in which he argues, “Land is one of the fundamental issues in the history of humanity” (Bakare, 1993: iv). Indeed, the quest for land is fundamental to existence and to freedom. Reconstruction theology argues that freedom and independence remain a hollow dream unless they are accompanied by a just balance of material factors and forces that are essential for sustainable existence and being (Banana, 1982: 12). The being and identity of Africans is defined in the ownership and possession of land. The attachment to land is also spiritual, economic, social and cultural affirmed. This implies that land was and is viewed as sacred in Zimbabwe. To regard land as sacred means land determines African Zimbabwean identity, history, and livelihood. Sebastian Bakare argues that it is more than just a solid part of the earth’s surface (Bakare, 1993: 23).

It is historical in that much of the wars around the world are fought over valuable resources, including land and minerals. This being so, Zimbabwe is not spared. The colonial regime did not hesitate to devise political and administrative systems, which would guarantee the settlers the resources they desired. In these systems the kings, chiefs and spirit mediums were excluded and as a result Africans were disenfranchised and they lost their land rights. Paul Gundani attests that colonisation and the fundamental land question should be read as a history of alienation (Gundani, 2011: 308). It is a paradox that Africans in Zimbabwe were forced to leave their historical and ancestral land and were driven into the so called Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs) which were soon known as native reserves. They were not fertile; they were hot and they were not good for the value Africans placed on agriculture and cattle ranching.

#### **6.6. Alienation and Dispossession of Land: Enforcement of Acts**

Significantly, by 1899 the white settlers had possessed the best land in the plateau. But the white-colonists hunger for more was not quenched; this resulted in the Land Apportionment Act (LAA) of 1930. The Act increased and legalised the possession of land by the white settlers, while officially and brutally denying and dislodging the Africans' right over any space called land (Bakare, 1993). This was more to enhance the economic stability and vibrancy of the white settlers as they were given loans and implements to do agriculture.

The 1969 Land Tenure Act made it more difficult for Africans to possess land and power was given to the President of the State (Palmer, 1977; Auret, 1992). In furthering dispossession and brutal plunder, the Native Husbandry Act 1951 came into effect stipulating that the eight acres of land and five head of cattle per family be reserved in communal areas, which were becoming more crowded thereby bringing environmental challenges (Bakare, 1993). Further to that, a number of controlling measures of the colony were enacted into law. Every Act was meant to make the black Zimbabwean suffer more while the white settlers enjoyed. These included the Cattle and Dog Levy Act (CDLA), the Maize Control Act (MCA), and the Hut Tax Act (HTA) among others. Sebastian Bakare argues that "due to land contestation, Zimbabwe was typified by a series of wars of resistance against the foreign invaders who sought to dispossess the natives their land" (Bakare, 1993: 42).

#### **6.7. Colonisation: The African Response and Resistance**

The scramble for Africa entailed territorial dominance, rule and governance. The European colonisers of Zimbabwe were determined to fulfil their agenda, politically and economically.

Rhodesian colonial political economies created a system of racial hierarchy and discrimination that reserved the best privileges and resources for the few whites against the African indigene majority. The colonial whites enjoyed a high standard of living, while Africans, besides being alienated from their land, were excluded from all forms of power, living within racist and severely discriminatory confines (McCandless, 2011: 27). Further, under duress they were to pay homage to the settler whites. This setup had a severe impact on the indigenous people's way of life. The introduction of caste capital economy, urbanisation and industrialisation favoured the white settlers. The African people were exposed to hard labour, taking them away from their cultural agricultural economy and livelihood. All these triggered the courage to resist and to revolt.

### **6.7.1. The First Chimurenga 1896-1897**

There was no way the colonial endeavour would succeed smoothly, since the imperial settlers had taken a position of disregard, denial, and rule. In 1893, the Anglo-Ndebele war of resistance became the first revolt. The Ndebele were defeated, at the Mbembesi-Shangani battle and King Lobengula fled and was never found (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). Realising the weakness of stand-alone tribal resistance, the Ndebele and the Shona united and staged a resistance in 1896-1897. The 1896-1897 revolt became the first mass, unitary, nationalist resistance. Terence Ranger (1979: 218) commented that, "the 1896 risings drew upon the creative strengths of Shona and Ndebele culture. The revolt was nationally taken with the religious leaders stirring commitment, unity and determination while the chiefs and indunas led and influentially strategized the uprising". The revolt was referred to as the Chimurenga war, the term which comes from *Murenga*, the totem name of a spirit medium and resistance leader, Kaguvi, who was executed in 1898 (Chitiyo, 1993). Maurice Vambe (2004) explains the meaning of Chimurenga as;

The term Chimurenga comes from the name of a legendary Shona ancestor, *Murenga Sororenzou*. Believed to be a huge man with a head (*soro*) the size of an elephant's (*renzou*), *Murenga* was well known for his fighting spirit and prowess and legend has it that he composed war-songs to encourage his soldiers to continue the fight against their enemies in pre-colonial Zimbabwe (Vambe, 2004: 167)

Therefore the word Chimurenga significantly implies war, fight and revolt against any form of tyranny. The Chimurenga phenomenon brings up the communal mobilisation strategy, the determination to transform the status quo of suffering and the hope of victory in the fighters.

T O Ranger (1970) suggests that there was a mixture of complicity, resistance and other reactions in the mobilization, culminating in a number of battles (*zvimurenga*). Vambe (2004: 167) notes that “black Zimbabweans talk of *chimurenga* in the singular (*chi+murenga*), but there have actually been various (*zvi+murenga*) fought on different cultural sites during and after colonialism.” Chimurenga protested the colonial exploitation of Africa and it continues to protest against such exploitation in the post-colonial context.

These responses (*zvimurenga*) ranged from outright resistance, to taking part in the colonial economy as labourers, deploying pre-colonial dogmas, and gulping colonial claims of civility (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009: 69). It was from here that some form of organisation was witnessed among and in the Ndebele and Shona. Such significant developments included the Matabele Home Movement (MHM), the Southern Rhodesia Bantu Voters’ Association (SRBVA), Southern Rhodesia African National Congress (SRANC) and some workers’ trade union resistance which come to the interface of economic resistance and political revolts (Mlambo, 2009).

Christianity was not far from being effective as the case of African Independent Christian Movements (AICM) such as *vapostori* who become involve in sabotaging the colonial masters. They strategically became a self-sustaining Christian movement in direct protest of the Rhodesian way of life. They resisted participation in the Rhodesian economic setup. They advocated creative means of production such as weaving, dress making, and creative employment in the form of basket making.

In the main-line churches, many people found the hope in the Christian God, soon after the defeat of the 1896-1897 revolt. It is known that Rev John White, the Methodist Missionary and Minister, openly criticised the colonial agenda, and colonial abuses of Africans. Christian Mission schools became the training ground for many who became educated and the mobilizers of resistance and some of them later became nationalists.

### **6.7.2. Nationalist Movements: Reconstruction Mission in the Difficult Rhodesian Space**

Between 1945 and the 1960s, the sense and scope of nationalist mobilisation and interaction broadened in strengthen the national call for justice and human dignity (Mlambo, 2009: 85). The nationalist moments were advocating for provisions of fair government and equitable distribution of resources. The regime’s failure to extend the benefits of political, social and economic participation gave birth to the determined militant nationalism that demanded self-

government. Mlambo (2009: 85) argues that “prominent to the nationalist were African grievances over land; peasant farmers were affected by the measures that denied them productivity in agriculture. Strained conditions of overcrowding in the reserves made it easy to mobilise communities”.

There was a close relationship between the workers’ trade unions and the militant political nationalists. The labour unions made formidable efforts to push the agenda for socio-economic and socio-political justice. These labour movements saw the birth of Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU) with Joshua Nkomo, Enos Nkala and Jason Moyo who were known trade unionists and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) under Ndabaningi Sithole. Masipula Sithole (1999: 53) comments that, “this was not a birth but a split due to personality and temperamental differences, not any fundamental strategic differences”.

Youths in most revolutions are powerful and dedicated. This was the case with the formation of the City Youth League (CYL) in 1955 by Salisbury youth activists. There is need to acknowledge that urban youths became the powerful movement of the militant political resistance to colonial hegemony. The coming together of the Salisbury Youth League and the Bulawayo based political nationalist movement the African National Council (ANC) in 1957, renamed the Southern Rhodesia African National Council (SRANC) set the tone of anti-colonial and anti-racial (Mlambo, 2009: 107). The activities of the ANC were banned and a number of its active nationalists and leaders were detained in 1959. However, the seeds had been sown and Africans were now determined. In 1960, African Nationalists launched the National Democratic Party (NDP). This time, there was a strong growing demand for majority rule, abolition of the Land Acts, improved social conditions and better housing in the urban areas (Mlambo, 1972: 129). The NDP have gained popularity in both urban and rural areas and this led to the nationwide protests of 1960 which resulted in the widespread destruction of property and deaths of protesters. The party was subsequently banned in 1961. This never stopped the spirit of commitment, determination and courage. The Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU) was formed and Joshua Nkomo was the leader (Mothibe, 1996: 168).

Central to the rise and determination of the Rhodesian Nationalism movement was the influence of successful independence struggles elsewhere in Africa, such as Ghana, Kenya, Zambia, Malawi and Congo. There, freedom was granted due to nationalists taking up arms and managing to stage great resistance against the colonisers.

In all the nationalist movements, the role of Christianity should not be understated. The nationalism narrative cannot be complete without mention of the missionary education that influenced the robust critique of imperial rule in Africa. Fabulous Moyo notes that, “many scholars recognise the significant role played by missionaries in offering education in most colonial territories” (Moyo, 2015: 4). Ezra Chitando (2008: 24) observes the role of missionary schools when he comments that, “by providing the ‘boys of the 60’ with education, the church empowered the nationalists to challenge the status quo”. Hence, it is not surprising that the leading nationalists had a Christian background or were clerics.

In Zimbabwe, Bishop Abel Muzorewa, Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole, and Reverend Canaan Banana were ordained ministers, while Joshua Nkomo, Robert Mugabe (Catholic), and Joyce Mujuru (Salvation Army), to mention a few, were educated by missionaries and identifies themselves with Christianity. Although some contend that the missionary education was not intended for African benefit, rather it was to serve the colonial interests in producing the literate, industrial, black labour force required for the railway, mining, offices, houses and other services. While this can be true, it remains true also that nationalist, literate cadres emerged. It would be folly to marginalise the Christian influence from the discourse on nationalist movements in Africa. Christianity became part of the package of peace, development, democratisation and post-colonial reconstruction since it was part of the struggle that facilitated the emergence of the independent nations.

### **6.7.3. The Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) of 1965**

Fearing the British decolonisation of Africa, and nervous about the growing African Nationalist mobilisation, Ian Smith declared an illegal ‘Unilateral Declaration of Independence in November 1965 (Bond and Manyanya, 2002: 6; McCandless, 2011). The UDI attracted international resistance. Britain declared it illegal and other states were called upon to not recognise Rhodesia, economically or otherwise.

### **6.8. Sanctions Could Not Stop the Determination**

The trajectory of events from 1965 are of interest to this research. Rhodesia was under international sanctions as Britain considered the Rhodesian government as rebels, and the African Nationalist Movement was calling for majority rule and anti-colonisation. The situation was made worse by the wave of colonial independence in some African countries. While this was the case, the Smith government and white Rhodesians were determined to

safeguard their economic and political privileges and to move towards consolidating Southern Rhodesia as a “white man’s country” (Mtisi, Nyakudya and Barnes, 2009: 115).

There was a growing African national militant resistance and confrontation after confrontation with the Rhodesian government. Urban riots were becoming the order for the Rhodesian government. The government had to re-strategize to make sure their idea of a white man state became a reality, regardless of the various factors that were amounting in the territory.

The sanctions forced the Smith administration to turn inward economically, resulting in what has been described as the siege economy (McCandless, 2011: 29). This siege economy was locating the internal economic strengths and strategies targeting to benefit the local market marked by import substitution industrialisation. Producers of capital goods were championed; the production of luxury goods were not prioritised (Bond and Manyanya, 2002: 7). The sanctions strategy by United Nations and the severing of diplomatic ties were hoped to put pressure on the Smith government to reverse the UDI. This optimistic sanction view was based on the understanding of the Rhodesian economy, which was dependent on external economic relations (Mtisi, Nyakudya and Barnes, 2009).

The radical reforms were not in the manufacturing sector only, rather the Smith-led government also had to reorganise the agriculture sector. While tobacco exports had been the biggest revenue earner, other cash and food crop production replaced it. The rationale was that besides reducing the farmers’ exposure to the impact of sanctions, this was also aimed at national food self-sufficiency hence the prioritisation of maize, wheat, rice, and cotton (Mtisi, *et al*, 2009).

Apart from the internal reorganisation, the apartheid South Africa and Portuguese Mozambique also supported the Rhodesian government. These countries issued certification of origin for goods in their own names to disguise Rhodesian exports. “South Africa is known to have been the lifeline for the beleaguered Rhodesian economy, becoming the major source of investment finance, the main market for both primary and secondary exports and the transit route for much of the trade traffic of Rhodesia” (Mtisi *et al*, 2009:134). The “genuine” cooperation between these governments founded on the motive to benefit Rhodesia, should be applauded. The South African apartheid regime did not seek to loot Rhodesia as the case is argued in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Look East policy taken by Zimbabwe, where other nations such as China come to benefit more than Zimbabweans are benefiting (Matahwa, 2014: 1; Hogwe and Banda, 2017: 238).

Whilst the nature of sanctions and the period under review is different from modern day Zimbabwe it can be noted that Rhodesia was also under sanctions and pressure from many sectors including racial confrontations and internal disagreements on the UDI. However, the reorganisation of the crucial sectors meant the colonial state would progress in providing for its people. Roads were constructed, food was available and there was no outcry blaming the failures on sanctions. If there was any failure, it was mutually owned by the administrators and citizens. What can be witnessed in post-colonial Zimbabwe is that there are some efforts of reorganisation and re-strategize to cater for the basic needs of the citizens, these efforts are shrouded in corruption, self-ego and blame game without a genuine national drive.

This reorganisation is what this research is envisioning in the form of reconstruction debate to take place. Reconstruction calls for determination, self-analysis, reorganisation and accountability for results. Further to that, the proposed reconstruction has to be complemented by national discipline and inclusive efficiency.

#### **6.9. The Second Chimurenga 1965- 1980**

The Second Chimurenga became the final push for political independence from the Smith Rhodesian government. It was a process which saw many strategies being tried and tested before the armed guerrilla warfare became the formative strategy.

The nationalists, the urban activists and the trade unionists had genuine grievances; their agenda for transformation was genuine and they managed to garner support from the discontented peasants. With this, the grievances became national and there was a common drive to achieve decolonisation. The agenda for transformation and renewal when it becomes national would draw the courage to secure it under all the common challenges. This led Mwanzi (1985) to conclude that the peasant revolution for change is inevitable and by all means successful. This is why most nationalist governments in Africa seem to concentrate their efforts in pacifying the rural peasant population with incentives to keep them with a hope (Bond and Manyanya, 2002). In Zimbabwean politics, the rural peasants are not only given incentives to pacify them, but they are dosed with rhetorical patriotic promises and re-engaging the memory of the struggle for liberation.

The traditional-cultural setup of the society afforded the smooth flowing of information during the Chimurenga. It is noted that everyone from the young to the old, male or female, the educated or uneducated, employed or unemployed, and the urban or the rural got the wave of

Chimurenga and many participated. This shows that to achieve transformation, everyone has a role to play and everyone is important.

The Second Chimurenga achieved the unity of purpose for the divided ZAPU and ZANU, resulting in some coordinated efforts in the armed liberation war fought under the armed wings of Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) and Zimbabwe National Liberation Army (ZANLA) (McCandless, 2011). This happened with the help of neighbouring countries and nationalist movements such as the South African's, African National Congress (ANC), Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), with Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya and Ghana serving as training and war technical strategizing nations and the war for freedom was eventually won. Internationally, Russia and China strongly supported the liberation movements alongside some other individual international groups supporting the movements for change.

### **6.10. The Second Chimurenga and Religion**

Karl Marx (Marxism and Religion) 1843, resoundingly detested religion and posed that religion is the opium of the people. However, religion can both to pacify and to instil vigorous energy. In the case of liberation Chimurenga, religion both traditional and Christianity (interest of this study) played significant roles to the demise of the Rhodesian state. The missionary churches and institution were advocating for transformation for the betterment of society.

Religious art and rituals effectively were employed to mobilise, control and disseminate the liberation ideas. Further to that, the spirit mediums, such as the known Dzivaguru, Mukwati, Kaguvi, Chaminuka and Nehanda, became the rallying force for liberation war. Stories are told that fear was not a factor in the guerrilla life style since the spirits of the living dead were always present (Bourdillon, 1984; Kazembe, 2011). During an interview with Tabona Shoko on 8 August (2016) he posits that even if these spirit medium leaders were executed in the first Chimurenga, their value and spirit had lasting impact in the second Chimurenga. He pointed to Chaminuka's last words on the death day were "*mapfupa angu achamuka*" translated "my bones shall rise again". This was a militant political prophecy, which drew the attention of many nationalists during the Second Chimurenga. Robert Mshengu Kavanagh also comments "the liberation Second Chimurenga had other deep social, cultural and artistic effects, the spirit belief of Ambuya Nehanda, Chaminuka, Kaguvi, became the spirits guiding and inspiring the struggle" (Kavanagh, 2014: 56). Further to that was the commitment of the community and traditional leaders. Rekayi Tangwena is one such community leader who effectively sent

shivers in the Rhodesian Government through his determination and resilient leadership. The community was mobilised to stand with the liberation struggle.

The Second Chimurenga saw the revival of the historical and traditional consciousness and culture. The *pungwe*—nocturnal meetings in the rural and countryside led by the comrades became very popular. Through these meetings the masses were educated in the aims and objectives of the armed struggle. It was here also that people would instil the sense of the bounds of the community through revolutionary songs, eating and communing with the comrades.

The other side of these meetings was the aspect of public discipline and violent punishment of offenders. The comrades would execute instant justice to suppose ‘sell outs’- *vatenges* and this became the depressing element of *pungwes*. Some developed hatred, due to their relatives being executed publicly for selling out or dining with the Smith regime (Mtisi *et al*, 2009:156).

The influence of the Christian mission churches and schools during the liberation struggle was significant; Christianity empowered the masses in the aspects of resistance to the domination of the white minority. Most of the nationalists who participated in the armed struggle against the imperialists were trained at mission schools such as, Kutama Catholic Mission School (Mugabe), St Mary’s Anglican School Nyanga, Mount Selinda Methodist in Chimanmani, St Augustine Anglican Mission Mutare and St Faith Anglican Mission Rusape. These mission schools became the gateway to the armed struggle, where students were encouraged to join the struggle after being given basic education on what it meant to fight for liberation. Rev Ndabaningi Sithole (1959: 56), a key player in the Nationalist Second Chimurenga, argues, “The Christian Church played a significant role in the forging of African nationalism on the anvil of history. Christianity influenced the colonial resistance and the coming of independence in Zimbabwe”. That Christian Churches believed that they had a role to play across Africa in nationalist movements for independence was witnessed in the declaration of the All African Council of Churches in 1963;

We identify ourselves with the aspirations of our people towards development of dignity and mature personality in Christ and we exhort the churches in this nation to participate wholeheartedly in the building of the African nation (Koschorke, Ludwig and Delgado, 2007: 246; Moyo, 2015: 11)

Thus, whatever the faults of the missionaries may have been it is clear is that the Zimbabwean revolution was a harvest of Christian missions and a triumph of Christian ideals. This was

despite the fact that some missionaries had the intention to support the colonial domination agenda. Not surprisingly, Christians were often the leaders of the struggle for independence. As a result, by the time Zimbabwe's independence, there was a significant group of mission-educated leaders in Zimbabwe who had espoused or been introduced to Euro-centric democratic values, and trained in democratic procedures (De Gruchy, 1995).

### **6.12. The Lancaster House Agreement and Zimbabwe's Independence**

The Zimbabwe liberation war, Second Chimurenga lasted from 1965-1980. An estimated fifty thousand people perished; both liberation fighters and civilians. A great number of the Smith Rhodesian Front (RF) also perished in the battles, although there were systems in place to help and nurse injured ones. This brought the end of the white minority rule and dominance in Rhodesia and led to the de facto independence of Zimbabwe (Kavanagh, 2014: 14; McCandless, 2011: 30).

The Lancaster House London peace agreement that was chaired by Lord Carrington. It drew in the Commonwealth Secretary General, Rhodesia-Zimbabwe delegate of Bishop Abel Muzorewa, Ndabaningi Sithole and Ian Smith, together with the Patriotic Front led by Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo. While these were the main players in the conference, there was also interest drawn from Mozambique, Zambia and Tanzania who were now very keen to see the war in Zimbabwe ending. The meeting of 1979 the negotiation of a transitional independence constitution and a ceasefire from fighting mooted (McCandless, 2011).

In the Lancaster negotiations, the bone of contention was the issue of land. The liberation Patriotic Front wanted the majority government to have the right from the onset to expropriate white commercial land in order to resettle the main land hungry Zimbabweans. Moyo (1987: 172) notes that, "the Lancaster House Constitution stated that land could not be confiscated, or touched but would have to be bought on a willing-seller-willing buyer basis". This was completely outside the scope of expectations of the Patriotic Front, since the struggle was driven by land contestations. However, "the matter was resolved somewhat; by Britain and America verbally promising to buy the land or to sponsor the new government to buying the land for resettlement" (Moyo, 2015: 168). It is here that, Joshua Nkomo, one of the important participants during the Lancaster House concession states that "this incomplete arrangement, acceptance and accede was a result of muddle and compromise, reached in haste in order to end the bloodshed" (Nkomo, 2001: 204). Further, the Lancaster House agreement reserved 20% of the seats for the white imperialists in parliament for at least seven years. The liberation

forces were to be integrated into the regular army. The new state in 1980 inherited all the state debts, and had to pay the pensions to all Rhodesian Civil servants.

In entering the conference, the Patriotic Front was a united front of the leadership of ZAPU and ZANU. Soon after the Lancaster the alliance disintegrated. As a result they (Mugabe and Nkomo) entered the 1980 election as oppositional candidates. ZANU won 57 seats mostly from their Shona constituencies. ZAPU won 20 seats mostly in Matebeleland–Ndebele constituencies, with Smith took the 20 seats reserved for whites and Muzorewa won 3 seats (Mtisi *et al*, 2009). On 18 April 1980, Zimbabwe was officially born under a nationalist government with Robert Mugabe ZANU–ZANLA installed as the first Prime Minister with a resounding victory and celebration of the new Zimbabwe.

### **6.12. ZANU–Mugabe Election Victory Strategies: Bird’s Eye view beyond the 1980 Election**

It is interesting to note that many scholars categorically state that in the 1980 election, it was expected Joshua Nkomo or Abel Muzorewa would be the most expected leaders to have won the election. However, Robert Mugabe succeeded winning the election with the majority. Varying arguments have been presented which will help the research in underscoring the post-colonial victories of ZANU and the successive rule of Robert Mugabe.

It can be said that Mugabe understood that going to the 1980 election as an alliance, would mean that Nkomo would be the best choice for the people. This was the most logical since Nkomo was in the urban workers’ revolts and he was the most popular in the politics of resistance rather than Mugabe, who had been a background politician. Mugabe was a teacher in Ghana when the resistance and revolts had long been on the streets of Rhodesia.

According to Sister McLaughlin, Mugabe declared, “these people (those advocating for unity between ZANU and ZAPU) do not understand we must go into these elections as different parties. If we are to fight the elections as the Patriotic Front our people will choose Nkomo since he is older” (McLaughlin, 1994: 143). The elder-leadership theory is traditional in the African Chieftaincy inheritance, where the eldest son is to be leader. Hence, this tradition was expected to determine the vote in 1980 if the Patriotic Front was to enter the elections as the united front, Nkomo was to be considered as the candidate over Mugabe.

It must be noted that the division of the vote was possibly strategic, since the stronghold of ZANU was in the Shona regions who were the majority. In post-colonial Zimbabwe, the

strategy seems to be working. In 2008, three months towards the national elections, Dr Simba Makoni broke from ZANU PF unceremoniously and he formed a political party, Mavambo Kusile Dawn. Reading in between the lines, Simba Makoni, a former Finance Minister, had become powerful in his financial reforms and many people saw him as a potential successor to Mugabe. It was such a sacrifice for Simba Makoni to stand as a Presidential candidate, which split the vote. Simba Makoni, (Mavambo Kusile Dawn Political Party) after the elections went into hibernation ignoring to issues of peoples' concerns and issues of reconstruction soon after the election.

Another example is of Joyce Mujuru, the former Vice President of Zimbabwe. A strong member of ZANU PF with celebrated liberation war credentials, Joyce Mujuru rose through the ranks and fame of Zimbabwean politics. She enjoyed all the benefits of ZANU PF and in 2015, she was sacrificed and sacked publicly from ZANU PF. In a few months, she and other high level political cadres that were sacked together with her grouped to form a political party known as The Zimbabwe People First (ZimPF). Then, questions are raised as to the genuineness of Joyce Mujuru's dismissal from ZANU PF. It can be argued that anyone who seems too popular and the favourite of the people at a particular time in ZANU PF is sacrificed as a strategy to divide the vote and confuse the electorate. This is a narrative which requires critical political analysis, yet it remains that ZANU PF is in power since 1980.

The voting in 1980 was conducted along the ethnic-tribal and racial lines (Moyo, 2015). Racially, ZANU PF had to demonise the white population and its standards. It is true that in 1980, the mind of every Zimbabwean wanted nothing less than a black majority government. The minority government had perpetuated evils, alienation and dispossessed the Africans (Zimbabweans) since 1890. According to ZANU PF ideology any association with Western countries is evil, even in post-colonial Zimbabwean politics. Morgan Tsvangirai and the Movement of Democratic Party (MDC) are labelled white puppets since the inception of this strongest opposition to stand against ZANU PF in 1999. It is public knowledge that the MDC party was made strong by its labour-working class appeal and roots. It is not in the scope of this research to argue for the funding of the MDC but the basis of its target constituencies.

It could not be established clearly, the levels of intimidation and violence that started once a ceasefire and election campaign had been announced in 1979 to the culmination of the 1980 election. Nevertheless, cases of intimidation or violence were sighted after the elections. Barbra Tredgold an Anglican sister stationed at Mbare wrote in a letter addressed to Lord Bishop

Carrington that “we are told of many instances in the villages of particularly ZANU people, waiting swearing to beat up all those who would not vote for ZANU–Robert Mugabe” (Tredgold, 1979). Further to that, Fay Chung (2007: 244) notes, under the grasp of Tongogara, who was superior in political and military strategies, ZANU and ZANLA did not surrender all the freedom fighters into the British manned camps. Some experienced political commissars were deployed in every village ostensibly, to protect the people from any likely attack from the Rhodesian army, but in addition to this role, they were to influence the outcome of the election. The presence of the comrades (freedom fighters) in the villages would send the message right into the electorate. The village people are pragmatic and very timid.

This has remained the situation in postcolonial Zimbabwe where the security chiefs openly declare their partisan voice to ZANU PF during the elections, since the formation of the MDC. The security chiefs further declare that it is only the nationalists – war liberators who are to be saluted by the army or the security services in Zimbabwe. During the most open election of 2008, Zimbabwe experienced the intimidation and violence from serving and retired army officers who were posted in the rural villages. In addition, that violence became the eyesore in every election campaign in Zimbabwe.

### **6.13. Post-Colonial Zimbabwe: The Zimbabwe We Dreamed**

In reading the theological, social and anthropological literature in post-independence Zimbabwe one is attracted to the “celebrationalist ideology”. Where everyone was for liberation and it had come; therefore, celebration was to be the grinding principle. Independence laid the foundation for a new society in whatever form or shape. It ushered in a majority government. The political, racial and economic hostilities that defined coloniser-colonised relations and that had been sustained over generations were in principle disarmed. A new society in the form of a nation was to be defined. Such was the excitement and mood that independence had at last come to Zimbabwe.

Largely, there was a sense that everything and anything was possible. The new government set about to redress the inequalities of the past. There was a daunting urgency to address the imbalances of history. Education, social services, infrastructural improvements, employment and integration were a priority for the new Zimbabwe. Banana (1996: 219) states that “independence was a monumental victory for the forces of sanity and of civilisation in its true character”. Now the demand to usher in a real deal of promises and aspirations, for many, was

here. This was anchored by a great prevailing “euphoria for the independent Zimbabwe as a hot property” (Kavanagh, 2014: 26).

The struggle for Zimbabwe was perceived as a collective effort of all the institutions of existence. Canaan Banana (1996: 220) argues that;

The coming of independence should not, be perceived or attributed to, individuals or single personalities. While there are such persons who made outstanding and remarkable contributions to the achievement of self-rule. Rightful applause must be credited to the masses of people that comprised of nationalist forces, and their leaders, ecumenical organisations, both national and international, regional and universal sympathisers and a host of small but vastly insignificant assemblages.

Such a mood were maintained in Zimbabwe to this day, the national efficiency determination would have brought significant outcome. Such a perspective encourages national value and instils the discipline required for development and reconstruction. The moment the struggle was accredited to only a few individuals, the more problems the nation finds itself in.

#### **6.14. Reconstruction Post- Chimurenga Zimbabwe: - Efforts**

It would be folly, and uncanonical, to deny that the independent Zimbabwe began on a positive transition drive. The newly elected government faced tremendous political, social and economic challenges not the least because the war had caused much destruction throughout the country. Taken together, with the legacy of the hurt, dispossession and discrimination policies of the settler Rhodesian state, it was necessary to focus on rebuilding and development (Schmidt, 2013: 211).

A policy of reconciliation adopted by the Robert Mugabe government was necessary for national reconstruction and development. This policy may be criticised at length, but much has to be celebrated for it allowed the smooth transition in a nation that was haunted by hatred, dispossession, denial, discrimination and dominance. Reconciliation is an acceptance of the damage and barriers to progression and development. Reconciliation becomes a mission enterprise in the search for just co-existence. Reconciliation becomes the project of transformation. Johnny Hill (2007: 15) attests that “reconciliation should have a balance between individual autonomy and social transformation and renewal”. Therefore, it becomes a mutual attempt to heal, to overcome enmity and to build trusting and relationships while aiming at sharing a commitment to peace and justice in society (Shambare, 2010). Robert Mugabe, rooted in the spirit of transformation and renewal set the tone of forgiveness and development, his speech is cited in Huyse (2003) as;

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. The wrongs of the past much now stand forgiven and forgotten (Huyse, 2003: 34; Raftopoulos and Savage, 2005: x)

The economy of the newly born nation required some attention since it was strategically, run by the Rhodesian whites. Moyo (2015: 175) notes that the “white settlers were in control of the economic road map and many were owners and directors of economic investments”. The whites retained their organisational means of influence and then encroached upon influencing government transformative economic strategies. This was allowed to be so since transformation and reconstruction was the key road map dream and vision. The government embarked on a programme of post-war reconstruction which aimed at recapitalisation and reintegration of the economy into the world economy which incorporating the black empowerment integration (Muzondinya, 2009). The new ZANU PF government embarked “on a “growth with equity” development policy, that included minimum wages, transformative labour-worker protection laws, strict price controls and increased access to social-economic service” (McCandless, 2011: 33).

There was the “Africanised” (Muzondinya, 2009: 167) or the “Zimbabweanised” (McCandless, 2011: 33) bureaucracy which promoted the communal farmers and other common people. This Zimbabweanisation policy saw the development of the black middle class and transformation in education and health. Tor Skalmes (1995: 97) argues that the “new government focused on an economic and public social transformation, which adopted the “welfarist” principles that saw the thrust focus on health and education”.

The new government was anxious, in the first decade of independence, to dismantle the vestiges of colonial rule. Education was one area in which the government set out to reverse the narratives. It was believed “strongly that the unemployment rate among Africans was the result of inadequate educational opportunities. Therefore, the solution was deemed, provide more educational opportunities to people” (Zvobgo, 1994: 95). For this reason, there were great efforts to de-racialise and democratise education. Education was subsidised by the government with an “Education for All” policy being the driving reconstruction effort. An adult literacy programme was introduced, in order to bring education to the doorstep of every willing adult. Another effort was the Zimbabwe Foundation for Education with Production (ZIMFEP), with the empowerment in skills training being entrenched for the peasants and youths (Chung, 2007: 272). This model of education was not applauded by many traditionalists, yet skilled

curriculum has been a reconstruction model worth celebrating. Many other schools and clinics were built to allow access to these institutions by the majority.

Important infrastructure was reconstructed and/or created. Of notable interests were the roads, bridges and water boreholes were drilled in most parts of the nation. Despite the daunting legacy of war, the formative years of independence saw Zimbabwe becoming a success story with government providing unprecedented access to service for the majority of the population. The District Development Fund (DDF) became very popular in most rural areas, through road reconstruction, borehole drilling and good sanitation, in form of standard toilets being built. Access to clean water should be recommended as a reconstructive transformation. Water is a necessity and the Zimbabwean government invested in providing the systems for clean water.

### **6.15. Post-Colonial Reality Issues Haunting Zimbabwe: Demands for Reconstruction**

The efforts and gains made in the first decade of independence were limited, and shrouded in struggles. Zimbabweans continued to experience serious social and economic problems, as well as redistributive challenges, especially in the spheres of land and the economy (Muzondinya, 2009). Zimbabwe was further faced with adopting or inheriting the Rhodesian system in a more compromised stance than was necessary for reconstruction and transformation. One has to realise that the Rhodesian systems were meant for white supremacy, domination, suppression and the denial of natives. This was not a worthy system to adopt or to inherit.

The first decade compromises had some lasting consequences to the post-colonial socio-political, socio-economic and socio-religious landscape. Fay Chung (2007), who was in the deep end of the liberation struggle, laments the concept of compromise, as the tragedy the newly-born nation found itself in. For her, “Zimbabwe’s independence presented a mass of contradictions from the agenda of the liberation struggle” (2007: 253). The political compromise led to the formulation of a cabinet that included some prominent members of the Rhodesian Front government. These people would operate with their bags packed, with suspicion and with different objectives for transformation and reconstruction. Brian Raftopoulos (2005), contends that reconciliation has limitations, for there are unreconcilable differences which do create problems when reconciliation is extended without addressing them. For him, “the Zimbabwean polity attempted to build politics of reconciliation in the context of gross inequalities inherited from settler colonial rule” (Raftopoulos, 2005: viii). This was also part of the political compromise that was deficient in outlook.

Furthermore, as Wallace Chuma (2004: 120) posits that, “some thorny issues such as the distribution of power within the new state, land reform, and the direction of economic and social policy were constant sites of contention between the “new” and the “old” elites (and their local and international allies) throughout the Zimbabwean transition”. There was much uncertainty that underpinned the transition period in terms of sustainability of the social transformation. The question of land distribution, power distribution and economic distribution remained thorny issues to haunt the government. The majority government upheld the socialist reconstruction transformation perspective, while in practice it adopted the Rhodesian economy which was characterised by both free-market enterprise and selective state intervention in sectors such as agriculture, mining and manufacturing.

The inequality of access to the means of production was not fully addressed during the independence celebration period. This continued to haunt Zimbabwe, thirty-five (36) years later. There is an emergence of an elitist generation in the form of politicians, amassing properties and taking industrial and business control at the expense of the desirable transformation. This led Gunda (2009: 89) to argue “the suffering of common people is a contribution of the evils committed to the African Nations by the self-serving politicians and scandalous elites”. Fay Chung (2007: 255) would put it scantily, “one of the noticeable changes was that the liberation government rapidly transformed itself from the liberation dictums into a business conglomerate. Politicians and government personnel soon became formidable economic players”. This situation led to the neglect of transformational national policies, when people entrusted with the stewardship responsibility, became self-seeking.

The patronage system which sowed the seed of labelling the “other” against “us” became a tree of violence and repression in post-colonial Zimbabwe. This system of patronage established itself from the very beginning. Hence, the campaign for a one-party state was very pronounced in the 1980s through to 1990s (Chung, 2007: 257). The one-party state philosophy was perceived as the right solution to guarantee national unity from the very beginning, as the liberation movements were trying to bridge the gap of the ZANLA and ZIPRA operations during the struggle. The demobilisation exercise saw the coming together of the forces as the epitome of a one-party state. The unification of ZANU and ZAPU in 1987 (Unity Accord) was hailed by many as a monumental achievement in nation building by strengthening the one-party state. It was through this that the ZANU PF labelled any Opposition Political Party an enemy of the nation and the people.

### **6.16. The 21<sup>st</sup> -Century Outlook of Zimbabwe: “The Third Chimurenga”**

Zimbabwe came under social and political the spot lights of regional and international media coverage. It is a period characterised by more international media attention than has ever been accorded to Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe, plunged into an economic crunch, political instability and social polarisation. Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town South Africa, Njongonkulu Ndugane, pointed out to the misery of Africa saying;

Many of us hoped that the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century would usher in a new millennium of development and renewal of nations in Africa. Instead, Africa has experienced a contradiction; drown deep in crises of poverty, jobless, political madness, strife, war, corruption and HIV and AIDS pandemic sweeping across the continent. The African people have suffered mercilessly due to some selfish leaders emerging and the ingenuity financial commitment of the nations in the North or East, whose aid comes as debt with onerous conditions (Ndugane, 2002: 7).

Zimbabwe has received its fair share of the litany of struggles which has left the environment with a mixture of narratives of causes of the problems. The 21<sup>st</sup> Zimbabwe, became infiltrated with the revival of Chimurenga ideologies. ZANU PF party loudly claims that it was Chimurenga of defending Zimbabwe’s sovereignty and the liberation war values, hence the 3<sup>rd</sup> Chimurenga slogans. While the opposition political led by MDC and the social human rights activists would ascribe to the era as Chimurenga, where everyone was now demanding accountability from the government of ZANU PF. It was a Chimurenga as people were voicing and demanding their denied rights.

### **6.17. The Third Chimurenga: ESAP and Land Redistribution**

Since 2000, the political climate of Zimbabwe’s turned bad due to macro-economic hardships. The negative consequences of ESAP in Zimbabwe were both economic and social and they were both immediate and sustained (Hammar and Raftopoulos, 2003). When ESAP was abandoned, the economic and social damage had already been done. In an effort to reconstruct from the damages of ESAP, the Zimbabwean government proposed a home grown economic and social recovery plan named the Zimbabwe Programme of Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST) (Kavanagh, 2014: 150).

Thus, when this thesis argues that reconstruction of Zimbabwe is possible it takes note of the efforts by the Zimbabwe government in its various economical, agrarian and social programs that are aimed at improving the lives of people. The immediate “home grown” reform packages

include, ZIMPREST, Millennium Economic Recovery Programme (MERP), National Economic Revival Programme (NERP), the Strategic Grain Reserve (SGR) and ZIMASSET.

The transformational efforts by the Zimbabwean government were then deemed unethical internationally, especially by IMF and World Bank. In all this, the West responded by imposing economic sanctions against Zimbabwe with the IMF in 2001, the United States law S494, Zimbabwe Development Recovery Act of 2001(ZIDERA) and the European Union in 2002. Some Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) were then sponsored by the international agenda and among them were the genuine development, humanitarian projects and grass roots mobilization.

Internally, resistance voices rose inexorably with growing civic and civil unrest in Zimbabwe. The War Veterans, civil servants, colleges and students, doctors, farmers and industrialists under the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) were all disgruntled (Kavanagh, 2014). For them, the fruits of Independence were not being realised and widespread alienation from government intensified. Bakare Sebastian (1993: 69), argues that “the time has come when those who had hoped for an immediate repossession of stolen land after independence were becoming, disillusioned about such prospects”. The Promised Land they fought for was nowhere in sight, except in the pages of political party manifestos for general elections. Such a perspective was shared by many who participated in the war of liberation who were not realising the fruits of independence having no access to land.

The depressed economic climate led to inflation, shortages of basic commodities, fuel price hikes, no water supplies in towns, power cuts or no power at all and corrupt dealings (Kavanagh, 2014: 167). As a sign of disgruntlement opposition parties such as the MDC (Movement for Democratic Change) and pressure groups demanding constitutional change and other parties such the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) emerged. After the failure of the referendum on the constitution, the government was faced with new threats from war veterans demanding war compensation and gratuities. All these factors exerted pressure on the government to address land reform issue. All this, exacerbated by drought, greatly contributed to the worsened economic and social crisis.

Whilst analysts hold that the Zimbabwe’s land seizure of 2000 is the source of the country’s economic and social problems, the government attributes the problems to sanctions imposed by IMF, Britain, USA, EU and its allies. In order to offset the crisis, the government adopted the ‘Look East Policy’.

Zimbabwe had running battles in history due to the land question. Zimbabweans were massively alienated and dispossessed from the land, which formed the basis of their livelihood by the white colonisers. The decolonisation process would not have been fully addressed unless the land question was asked and answered. Land is a critical component of one's existence in an African setting. Accordingly, Walter Brueggemann posits that "even in the Biblical narratives, land is the central reality of the Judeo Biblical faith" (Brueggemann, 1977: 3). For Zimbabweans, land defines their identity, history and originality. Land is thus, sacred!

The land question commenced when Robert Mugabe assumed power in 1980, promising to give white owned land to the majority black people. Nevertheless, 20 years into independence, the land had not been adequately redistributed with 4 500 white farmers still owning 70% of the prime land (Bond and Manyanya, 2002). What followed were successive struggles for land by Zimbabweans against the government and the whites. Disputes surrounding the issue of land have created a serious problem that have plunged the country into economic meltdown. There have been two notable land redistribution reforms in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

The first was in the mid-1980s, under the Lancaster House Constitution. This was, based on the willing seller–willing buyer principle. The government would buy from the willing white farmer, with the United Kingdom and United States of America backing the process with funds to purchase the land (Hanlon, Manjengwa and Smart, 2013: 55). The willing buyer–willing seller exercise was very slow since only the most unsuccessful white farmers with the poorest land opted to sell. It became known as Intensive Resettlement Programme (IRP), where a few were also willing to be resettled. The first land reform managed to resettle 75,000 families by 1996.

The famous and second land redistribution was in 2000. The agrarian revolution or land reform programme has been known by several names in the political discourses in Zimbabwe. Chiefly among them are the Third Chimurenga (the struggle for independence) – *Hondo yeMinda* (battle for land), Fast Track Land Reform (Jambanja) (Maphosa, 2012: 69; Chitando, 2005). These names evolved from the tactics of the revolution and appeal to the people's vulnerability in order to win their confidence in the system. ZANU PF had realised the possibility of losing its grip on power through the coming of the MDC as a strong opposition party. Land reform in Zimbabwe was a revolutionary challenge, with history (Hammar and Raftopoulos, 2003). Revolution is more or less a fundamental transformation of power and property in a society. It is a structural re-organisation and this pits the interests of those who possess power, wealth and

property against those who do not (Kavanagh, 2014). It is often associated with violence – and this is to be expected seeing that very few people, social groups or communities possessing power, wealth and property, will consent to relinquish them peacefully or in a nice, planned way.

Further to that, the land reform in Zimbabwe was labelled “Land Grab” and “Land Invasion” to which grabbing or invasion is not about right or law. The law is the least of concern in a grab and possess formula; rather what determines success is simply power especially political power. Historically, the strong grab from the weak and justify it possession by promulgating rights and laws so as to legalise their possession and then to enforce them through their power (Kavanagh, 2014: 225). In mid-2000, the ZANU PF government passed the Land Acquisition Act that made possible compulsory acquisition of land. As a result, almost 4 000 – 10 000 white farmers had their farms listed for acquisition. Then, finally, through the Zimbabwe Amendment (no.17), the ZANU PF government nationalised land, thus declaring all land state land. The Zimbabwean government has since embarked on a full-scale land redistribution alongside continuing invasions.

### **6.18. Self-Determination and Poverty**

The struggle for political self-determination is continuous in Africa. In Zimbabwe, this struggle is complemented by the challenge for economic self-determination. In the period of the twenty first century, Zimbabwe abounded with new stories of people living below the poverty datum line, and formal employment loss as an everyday occurrence. Unemployment is associated with socio-economic and socio-political crisis that leads to poverty, crime, violence, loss of morale and degradation of self- determination (Saungweme and Mutandaedza, 2013: 20; Levinson, 2008). Zimbabwe is one of the countries in African that has experienced the highest “formal” unemployment<sup>62</sup> of a long period of time. Statistically, by 1992/1993 between 45,000 and 60,000 people had lost their formal jobs (Zivanomoyo and Mukoka, 2015: 38). These job cuts came in just as the expanded education system was putting more that 100,000 new high school graduates on the job market each year. According to Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Transformation (ZIMASSET) 2013 blue print, 50% of the population are not formally

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<sup>62</sup> For home-based, on the road side and on the open space initiatives of employment became a common option of employment. As hardships increased and more were entrenched the informal sector (hand to mouth) models of employment became strategic, including the popular cross-border buying and selling.

employed, while it is argued by other sources that the rate was 85%-95% in 2013 (Rusvingo, 2014; Luebker, 2008: v).

In the 1990 Zimbabwe entered a period that has come to be generally referred as the “Crisis in Zimbabwe”. This consisted of a combination of political and economic decline that had “origins in the long-term structural economic and political legacies of colonial rule now exploding” (Raftopoulos, 2009: 201). Zimbabwe, like other African countries was forced to accept the World Bank structural adjustment program that sounded helpful yet it deepened poverty levels and halted progressive development (Chitando, 2005: 221). The World Bank; Economic and Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) had a lasting impact on the self-determination of Zimbabwe (Onslow, 2013). ESAP meant market-oriented reforms, rapid devaluation and floating exchange rates, eliminating controls on prices and salaries, liberalisation of trade and investment, ending subsidies and privatisation of much government-owned institutions (Hanlon, Manjengwa and Smart, 2013: 56). The adoption of structural adjustment policies was premised on the assumptions and notions advanced by international lending institutions (IMF and World Bank) that this would increase economic activity and create more jobs. However, the dream became a nightmare as the urban and rural populace were abjectly affected by employment reduction and layoffs in all sectors. This prompts Marie Bonarjee (2013: 15) to comment that, “job losses in town were far more than just an urban problem- the most impact was in the rural economy that was structurally dependent on wage remittances from urban sector employment”.

Meanwhile health and education fees were introduced in the same period of ESAP. This led to sharp dropouts from school and a decline in hospital attendance. These cuts came face to face with the HIV and AIDS pandemic. The gains of independence were reversed with a great exodus of experts and professionals as retrenchments and job cuts were being experienced (Makamani, 2010: 2).

The poverty levels in Zimbabwe increased from 26% in 1990/1992 to 55% in 1995/1998 and then to 72% in 2003/2005 (Nsingo, 2009; Mpondi, 2015). Poverty has manifested as a complex reality in Zimbabwe. Then, the World Bank’s own Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) commenting on the effect of ESAP stated that “the program did not reduce poverty and unemployment as its architects and the receiving governments had anticipated” (Bond and Manyanya, 2002: 35). After all of this, the middle class that had benefited from independence found itself pauperised and the young found themselves jobless. More industries shut down at

an unprecedented rate. The economy was shrinking, while the population seeking employment was increasing.

This rising political and social discontent in the 1990s was not simply a product of ZANU PF's poor policy choices, unemployment, rising inflation and poverty. It was matched by social grievances from other sections of society, including war veterans demanding compensation for being guerrilla fighters, and the landless rural population. Thus, the crisis in Zimbabwe became systematic, multi-layered and multi-faceted.

The narrative of the Third Chimurenga has much concern with re-organising and re-directing the course of the livelihood of the people. The war of liberation was not only fought for the land. The great hymn, which was sung by the comrades in the liberation, would caricature the aspects of the Third Chimurenga (Kavanagh, 2014: 227);

<i>Nyika yedu yeZimbabwe</i>	(our beloved land of Zimbabwe
<i>Ndimu matakazvarirwa</i>	is where we were born
<i>VanaAmai naanaBaba ndimo mawari</i>	our mothers and fathers are in
<i>Tinoda Zimbabwe neupfumi hwayo hwose</i>	we love and want our land with all
<i>Simuka Zimbabwe</i>	in it, land and wealth
	Zimbabwe Arise!)

“*Tinoda Zimbabwe neupfumi hwayo hwose*” implies that it is not only land, but also everything including self-determination, justice, dignity of being Zimbabwean and wealth. The history of the Third Chimurenga was not going to be complete without the “indigenisation”- majority shareholding in mines, black control and ownership and challenging the white monopoly.

The desire for Reconstruction theology in Zimbabwe would be to create a self-determined individual who is determined to see the future, regardless of the current crisis. For it is through individual self-determination that societal-determination is attained. When destiny is defined through determination, a nation of no class or no othering will be born and achieved.

The eradication of poverty is another the call for Reconstruction theology. Theology has to stress that God created all people out of love and destined them to live as fully human, in a humane, dignified manner.

### **6.19. Inequality a Call for Reconstruction Theology**

Zimbabwe was colonised in a manner that egregiously deprived the indigenous people of their fundamental freedoms. The ferocious oppression by the British conquerors became so

appalling in history, that it probably outdid most other colonial arrangements in the continent (Matikiti, 2012: 36). The aftermath of this historical subjugation and oppression, left the society with gruesome levels of inequality. In Zimbabwe, as it may be in other parts of Africa, the visible strand of inequality and class stratification has grown. Even if the classes may be officially denied they significantly contribute to the struggles in Zimbabwe today. In Zimbabwe, there are the have and the have-nots. Furthermore there are some structures that have promoted segmentation in society, producing social inequalities, gender discrimination and even political exclusion. Inequality has been experienced in the social services accessibility and distribution so that some have no access while others enjoy excessive access.

The church is challenged to assert itself in mitigating the struggle of economic disparity, political monopolisation, and social disparity. This challenge resonates with the prophetic mission the church has to articulate for justice and development. Julius Nyerere (1973) invited the church to take its position and responsibility critically when he states;

Unless the church and all responsible citizens come to actively participate in the rebellion against those social structures and economic structures which condemn people to poverty, classes, humiliation and degradation, then we will be ready for extinction... The Church has to remain relevant in this cause. In no time the church will become irrelevant to people and the Christian religion will degenerate into a set of superstitions accepted by only the fearful. (Nyerere, 1973: 215)

Theologically the church has to assert the equality gospel as demonstrated in the Trinitarian understanding of the Godhead. In the post-colonial era, the challenge is to eradicate the classification of the other and the superiority of cultures, race and ethnic grouping (Makamani, 2010: 7). Also women emancipation and girl child affirmation are missional concerns. This is a call for reconstruction theology.

The church of God is to proclaim God's word of justice, fairness, and wellness existence to the world in the context and circumstances of the day. At all times the church carries the responsibility of reading the signs of the time and interpreting them in light of the gospel. The church in mission in Zimbabwe must consciously undertake a new reading of the signs around the reality of existence of the community in fulfilling its vocation of being the light and salt of the earth.

## **6.20. Conclusion**

The trajectory history, as presented, has clearly shown that Zimbabwe is renowned in "uptunes" of resilience and "downtunes" of struggle and crisis. This has been well captured by a person

who had worn hats of true patriot, cadre and son of the soil, Liberation War Veteran, Founding member and vice-president of MDC Political Party; late Gibson Sibanda, as he is quoted saying;

Our struggle in Zimbabwe has always been a struggle for the dignity and sovereignty of the people. Peasants have always been on the receiving end of the fate of history and still stood up to lead the struggles of their emancipation. In the first Chimurenga/umvukela, peasants fought against expropriation of their land, joined by the workers who stood strong against massive exploitation. The nationalist and liberation movement that led the second Chimurenga/umvukela was born from and built on the struggles of peasants and workers. However, years after independence we now have a ruling nationalist elite that has exploited this long history towards its own ends, betraying the people's struggles (Bond and Manyanya, 2002: 89).

This can only lead one to ask if this was what Zimbabwe wanted and rejoiced for in 1980, as there is now new struggles after another. The post-colonial terrain demands a reconsideration and reconstruction. It reasonable to ask, what requires reconstruction in Zimbabwe, or which part of history will stand as the foundation of reconstruction strength. The whole desire of renewed society, a transformed community and renaissance Zimbabwe is, based on the people's dignity and wholeness.

This chapter has provided the outline of the context of Reconstruction Theology in Zimbabwe, while detailing the context of its operative context. The context of Zimbabwe from pre-colonial period to the twenty-first century produced the hope for a better future. The Zimbabwean people are waiting for a just community, recovered and reconstructed from the debris of this present struggle and crisis. It cannot be theologically and philosophically life giving to argue that there was never a time Zimbabwe was well off in social, moral, economic, and political arenas that requires return to that glory. However, the fact that Zimbabweans are people in need of a just society entails that there exists a model to return to. The chapter managed to highlight that the crisis and struggle after struggle is not life sustaining hence the need for reconstruction theology.

It is relevant to talk about reconstruction in Zimbabwe. How long can Zimbabwe be in a dilapidated transition? Zimbabwe yearns for a reconstruction period from these debris of pain, suffering, struggle, violence, dispossession, inequality and injustice to a society of wellness and wholeness. The question which begs an answer, is on whose efforts this reconstruction will be possible. For reconstruction to be successful, it requires the combined efforts and accountability of all its nationals and citizens.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **WHOSE COMMUNITY IS ZIMBABWE? – IN RELATION TO THE BIBLICAL MOTIF OF EZRA- NEHEMIAH**

#### **7. Introduction**

This chapter deals with the question of whose community Zimbabwe is in relationship to reconstruction. It seeks to produce the relevance of being a nation, ownership, cooperation, national discipline efficiency and community mobilisation as mission imperatives. This will be put side by side with the Ezra-Nehemiah Biblical Motif narratives. Zimbabwe attained liberation from colonial rule in 1980. It was ushered into a democratic nation after a protracted and painful struggle. The nation upheld reconciliation as the stepping-stone to rebuilding and reconstruction during the transition period (Shambare, 2010). The signs for Zimbabwe's growth and stability looked encouraging and at that time, the world looked at the new nation as an epitome of a democratic and just community. The new black government was applauded since everyone had been expecting a revenge head for head. The new nationalist government under the "statesmanship" of a younger, Robert Mugabe, focused on reconstruction, reconciliation and redistribution under an apparently socialist banner (Hammar and Raftopolous, 2003: 7; Shambare, 2010).

Nevertheless, today, the country is among those with extreme poverty, inequality, and unemployment (Makamani, 2010: 3). In fact, Zimbabwe is reckoned to have one of the highest rate of corruption, a selective application of the law, violence, and a censored expression of freedom. The nation is among those with the greatest gaps between the rich and the poor in the world. This gap and poverty levels are real, yet the nation is rich with great deposits of minerals. This led to the conclusion that Zimbabwe is in a crisis. Hammar and Raftopolous (2003:2) assert that "the crisis is not about a single issue, neither is it rooted in a one off event or single historical trajectory nor is it the predictable outcome of an assumed pattern of "failed state or nation" in postcolonial Africa". While the democratic right of voting is exercised, the elections are periodically contested as not free and/or unfair and haunted with pre-election violence. The important questions to ask in this section are; what went wrong in the democratic journey of Zimbabwe? Who is behind this nation's decline? How can the nation be redirected into the route of justice and development? How can there be reconstruction, renewal and/or transformation?

There is much scholarly and social debate as to what constitutes and has caused the Zimbabwean crisis, what its consequences are and for whom the consequences are affecting. The reality is, there is room for reconstruction. All this begs the question of whose community Zimbabwe is, as the conditions of post-colonial reflects a nation in a crisis. The stories of this nation are stories of dilapidation, struggles and post-colonial crisis. This interrogation will bring out the principles underpinned in the biblical Motif of Ezra-Nehemiah.

### **7.1. Being a Nation: Nationalism, Identity and Reconstruction**

Karl Deutsch (1953), a known expert in nationalism, maintains that territory, language, history and social heritage gives problems in defining a nation. He viewed nationalism not as a contagious idea but as a form of relations between people; between individual and a larger community the social grouping of the nation (Oommen, 1997: 13; Hroch, 2012: 115). Karl Deutsch (1953: 14) states;

The coming together of the state and people makes a modern nation. A nation is a people who have hold of the state or who have developed quasi-governmental capabilities for forming, supporting and enforcing a common will. Moreover, a nation-state is a state that has become largely identifiable with people's interests. (See also (Deutsch, 1969; Deutsch and W.J.Foltz, 1966)

Zimbabwe experienced a state-led nationalism during the colonial regime and this was a decisive moment in that citizens were to subordinate their interests as demanded by the rulers. What is more desirable in the definition of nation is when the people's interests are considered paramount. A nation with quasi-government principles, where people are there to enforce a common will and their capacity to hold the vision of transformation.

Nationalism has been explained in terms of identity making, incorporating beliefs, values and commitment to safeguard the collective interest (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2011). Then, (Ignatieff, 1994) categorised and explains nationalism from two different classes;

'Civic Nationalism' is "broadly inclusive nationalism, a nation should compose of all those with inclusive interest to maintain the dignity of the all, justice and sovereignty wellbeing of a nation. This nationalism is referred to as civic because it envisages the nation as a community of equal rights bearing citizens, united in patriotic attachment to a shared set of values, practices and beliefs" (Ignatieff, 1994: 3). This nationalism understanding, which will see reconstruction taking place in society.

‘Exclusive Nationalism’, “deals with new, essentialised categories of authenticity, attachment, loyalty and entitlement” (Ignatieff, 1994: 3). This will categorise others as enemies, strangers to the national patronage while others are the super nationalities, with the expected access to resources.

In Zimbabwe, the Ignatieff “exclusive nationalism” would be best understood as, Brian Raftopoulos posits “in Zimbabwe one is confronted with a ZANU PF ruling party’s national ideology that is cast in more ‘authoritarian’, superiority, monopolised, selective and racialized notion of citizenship and belonging” (Raftopoulos, 2009: 213). While the “civic nationalism”, on the other hand could be characterised as “exhausted nationalism” (Bond and Manyanya, 2002), which looks at its challenges without the hope of coming out of them.

It is from the above that the question of nationalism remains a reconstruction question in our search for transformation in Zimbabwe. It is evident that the post-colonial crisis has much to do with the constructions of narrower or complex categories of identity, defined in terms of political party loyalty and credentials. This has led to the emergence of a bourgeoisie super identity state (Mandaza, 2015). Ibbo Mandaza (2015: 1) went further to argue that “in a bourgeoisie state, the executives in authority becomes as committee for managing the common affairs of ‘the whole bourgeoisie interest in disregards of the other’”. Patrick Chabal (1983) did well in producing the voice of Amilcar Cabral (1924-1973), who critically observed that “when the African petty bourgeoisie claims to be patriotic and super nationalities and becomes the only stratum capable of controlling or even utilizing the instruments which the imperial colonial regimes used on Africans and now on the other citizens is in pursuant of their hidden agenda of becoming the unquestioned nationals” (Chabal, 1983: 23). In Zimbabwe as anywhere else in Africa, questions are raised about the interests of the politically rich personnel who own shares in most of the essential sectors of the economy.

Perhaps Frantz Fanon, put the measure of value of nationhood when he stated that,

The fight for democracy against oppression... will emerge sometimes laboriously, a claim to nationhood. Yet formulating a bourgeoisie elite ... lacking a link between them and the mass of the people, their greediness and let it be said their cowardice at the decisive moment of the struggle and giving birth to a nation will give rise to tragic mishaps to the intents of a nation (Fanon, 1963: 148).

Thus, the point of departure for reconstruction in Zimbabwe is nationhood, or nationalism, not assumed or imagined nationalism. Nationality is significantly necessary for renewal and reconstruction for it commands profound emotionality and legitimacy. Reconstruction

nationalism considers the fundamental transformative issues and does not simply strive to revisit history, but also reassesses the present for a renewed future.

One clear aspect of nationality is the concept of dignity, which can be juxtaposed to sovereignty. National sovereignty defines the commitment levels one exerts on the reconstruction or rebuilding of the nation. Chinua Achebe asserts that, reconstructing a nation anew, demands resolving the question of national sovereignty (Achebe, 2001). The constitutional stipulations of “we are the people of Zimbabwe” should be understood in terms of a commitment to national transformation. This is where Rosa Luxemburg (1909: 34), would state that, “nation should have the right to self-determination”. This “self-determination” begs the reconstructive “self-assertiveness” which disregards contradictions that may intend to hold transformation back (Luxemburg, 1976: 15; Prah, 2009). Defined nationality can be an exhilarating revolutionary force for reconstruction. Historically, Zimbabweans are a product of the nationalist struggle, with the national collectivism in pursuit of a common freedom and colonial emancipation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2011). Therefore, the nationalism collectivism narrative produced the resilient character of nationality to resist colonialism and to contest the impartialities of the imperialist regime.

The Zimbabwean political government led by ZANU PF, upholds that China (with the Look East Policy) will solve the economic problems in Zimbabwe (Nyemba, 2014). The Look East Policy was adopted in 2003 had its contemporary roots in the 1992 economic thrust to Zimbabwe’s foreign policy based on the premise of the success of the Newly Industrialising Countries, particularly the rise of China (Chan and Patel, 2006: 182). The Look East Policy was adopted by the Zimbabwean government as an attempt to find a new international identity after the stalemate and fallout with European Western economic blocs, and subsequent alienation of the country (Makamani, 2010: 4). The policy and the relationship thereof was deemed to achieve some economic and social improvement to the living standards of the people of Zimbabwe. This research argues that replacement of the Western Economic Principles with the Chinese Policies will not solve the economical struggles in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe will be reconstructed when the national question is addressed. China is like a wolf in sheepskin, for they can plunder Zimbabwe and strip her heritage and inheritance. Commenting on the catastrophic condition of Zimbabwe, Edgar Tekere<sup>63</sup>, a former cabinet minister lamented that,

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<sup>63</sup> He is the former secretary-general of ZANU PF, was sacked from the position in 1988 after he clashed with the rest of the party’s leadership following his single-handed campaign against corruption.

“we are in a fix. Zimbabwe is thoroughly poor, thoroughly plundered, the leadership has stolen from it. It is completely destroyed, the Look- East Policy is an economic and political gimmick to jointly loot Zimbabwe’s resources” (Tekere, 2009; Makamani, 2010: 3).

If nationalism is mobilised for reconstruction it can lead to the formation of a national identity characterised with wholeness and communal empathy. This identity will then bring out the concept of national solidarity. National solidarity equips members of the community to commit to reconstruction. Bound together by the ties of national solidarity, Zimbabwe can discover and implement principles of transformation, reconstruction and renewal that all can share (Miller, 2000: 34). It has to be admitted that some of the crisis, struggles, and challenges Zimbabwe faces in the twenty first century can be ascribed to the crisis of individual and group identity. These struggles are visible in the context of deepening social inequality or fragmentation that has perpetuated injustice.

The quintessence of nationalism remains a demand and a struggle against the denial of humanity. The denial of respect and dignity and the denial of the Africanness of the African (Shivji, 2003). This case of nationalism struggle does not consider the period and space. Nationalism remains a central theme in the development of post-colonial Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe has to “*rebecome Zimbabwe*” as expressed in style by Amilcar Cabral (1980: xxii), who argues that “Africans should *rebecome* African so as to rebuild their own, manage their own and become responsible to their own continent”. Nationalism as a concept, as movement, and as being, remains central to contemporary Zimbabwe and still requires a great deal of reconstruction questioning.

Being a nation is to serve the interests of the citizens while maintaining collective nationality. The nation of Zimbabwe could be transformed when the concerns of the common citizen are listened to and understood. The ordinary people in any society cry out for the simple and they have uncomplicated concerns; they cry for social service access and economical fairness. Barack Obama<sup>64</sup> commented that the power of transformation and change is in the ordinary people’s efforts. In his words, “change only happen when the ordinary people get involved and come together to demand the change. It is this insistence that citizens are the instruments to democracy and transformation” (Obama, 2017).

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<sup>64</sup> Barack Obama during his Farewell Speech in Chicago, Illinois on January 10 2017. see also <http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/10/politics/president-obama-farewell-speech/index.html>

## **7.2. Fragmented Zimbabwe: Reconstructing a Collective Nationality**

The situation of the time demands a reconstruction of collective nationality against the backdrop of fragmentation. This thesis takes fragmentation to encompass the struggle in politics, the challenge of patriotic leadership, the meltdown of the economy sectors of manufacturing, and the various voices searching for solution (Raftopoulos, 2009). Fragmentation further implies the breakdown of social genuineness. Zimbabwe is a country that can best be described as a fragmented developing nation. This is witnessed when all sectors are literally collapsing. The sectors which used to function are no longer operating at capacity. Examples are; the national parastatals, national civil services (educational and medical), and the public transportation, among others. In the national transportation, the rail mode represented by the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) is one which stands out fragmented. The airline, Air Zimbabwe is rocked with challenges of leadership, corruption and ZANU PF political party involvement and there is limited operation. Coming to politics, there are some ugly infights in ZANU PF, and fragmentations in the opposition MDC (Mpondi, 2015: 512). This demands the Nehemiah model of reconstruction, to reconstruct the collective nationality against fragmentation.

Historically, the situation facing nationalism as an emerging African praxis ideology in the 1950s and 1960s was a desperate desire for transformation. Communities were dislocated as the imperial regimes in Africa were becoming unconcerned with the demands of justice. Traditional African leadership rubrics that held the community together were demonised and all the mobilisation techniques were disregarded. This led to the reconstruction of a national citizenry that spearheaded a resistance movement that was driven not by ego, but by belonging and justice. Zimbabwe is at the threshold that needs to conjure a strong ideology of reconstructive nationality.

## **7.3. Being a Nation: Democracy and State-Society Relationship in Reconstruction**

It has to be admitted that over the years, democracy has been subjected to various competing explanations and definitions. John De Gruchy (1995: 6) says that “trying to define democracy is notoriously problematic, yet it is essential to try to understand democracy in reconstruction”. It has been problematic because philosophers, politicians and policy makers sometimes chose to adopt definitions of “democracy that best suits them and they hope would influence public opinion and solve their immediate challenges at a given time” (Ambrose, 1995: 16). Further to that, no government would accept to be labelled undemocratic in outlook and operations. This

eventually led to simplistic definitions of democracy with the popular one having been advanced by the former president of the United States of America, Abraham Lincoln, in 1863 and subsequently served as the rallying point in many debates (Akopari, 2001: 84). Democracy is taken to mean “government of the people, by the people and for the people” (Ambrose, 1995: 16; Akopari, 2001). This definition will “entail the twin principles of popular control over collective decision making and equality of rights in the exercise of that control” (Beetham, 1995: 1). There is no good democracy without a capable, responsible and accountable government. Zimbabwe has to become a nation where government accepts societal enquiry on its programs and in turn gives the society answers to enquiries (Gunda, 2009). There are apt reasons to conclude that ESAP failed, ZIMASSET struggled and Indigenisation left many impoverished because of corruption and a lack of accountability on the part of the government. Gunda (2009: 92) states “in Zimbabwe alone there have been more than three corruption commissions, and inquiries whose findings have never been made public”. A nation has to “become a nation” for democracy to be transformative.

Brendalyn Ambrose defined democracy as

A system of governance which allows people to freely elect their leaders and hold them accountable and which provides opportunity for the greater number of people to use their human potential to survive in dignity (Ambrose, 1995: 16).

Commenting on the concept of people having a right to vote or right to elect their leader. David Beetham (1995: 2; 2012: 56) echoes that this shows that all members of the nation have interests that are worthy. Therefore, it is a principle of democracy that citizens’ concerns, interests and self-worth are to be honoured. Further, picking from Ambrose’s definition, the very sense of good governance, holding leaders accountable and the utilisation of the people’s potential, brings transformation. Some societal structures and institutions such as churches, civil organisations and non-government organisations (NGOs) should be encouraged to participate in democratisation programs without any political party or government tutelage. One of the incentives of democracy is the survival of nationals with wholeness and dignity.

The question that has bothered many is how to transform Zimbabwe from a pseudo democracy to a real democratic nation. Democracy is more than just fulfilling an election calendar once every five years when it is due, while lacking the real measure of communal interest in access to resources, physical and social (Dabengwa, 2015: 25). Democracy upholds the shared value of responsibility and accountability. When democracy is real, there is a robust aspect of

solidarity, the idea and sense that the challenges and struggles affect the national integrity, therefore a national resolve to responsibly reconstruct emerges (Obama, 2017).

Zimbabwe is rich in resources and all this economic, political and social woes are a case of a forgotten or failed nationhood. Shortly after gaining political independence in 1980, Zimbabwe became one of the most promising countries in Africa, economically, politically and democratically. The founded grounds of independence were conducive for democratic transition and nationhood. Zimbabwe contemporarily is experiencing serious political, economic and social problems and has slid towards authoritarianism, despite having made significant steps towards democracy in the earlier years of transition to the late 1990s (Moyo, 1992; 1993: 4). In Zimbabwe, the ZANU PF security system, has penetrated in all sectors; it is witnessed that civil society, churches and citizens are all under the tutelage of state power. This prevents the transformational drive that a nation looks for.

Charles Taylor explained the three fronts where civil society exists for transformation;

Civil society exists for transformation where there are free associations that are not under the tutelage of the state power. Secondly, civil society exists only where society as a whole can structure itself and coordinate its actions through such associations free from state tutelage. Thirdly, civil society exists where they can determine or inflect the course of state/national policy (Taylor, 1990: 98)

The civil society in Zimbabwe is treated with suspicion and it is not free from state tutelage. Nehemiah invited all people to the reconstruction of the wall. The future of Zimbabwe lies in the capacity of the common interest of all citizens and organisations. The envisioned renewal, that reconstruction can become a reality in Zimbabwe when the question of whose community Zimbabwe is, is answered.

#### **7.4. Citizenship: A Watchdog of Reconstruction**

There are various concepts defining and about citizenship. This section produces another view of citizens and citizenship from a reconstruction theology perspective.

The conversation on citizenship most often focuses on how individuals get to exercise their rights. This is categorised as the liberal perspective, which values status. Central to liberal thought is the notion of entitlements, where individual citizens act ‘rationally’ to advance their own interests and that the role of the state government is to protect citizens in the exercise of their rights (Jones and Gaventa, 2002: 3). In this protection of rights, liberty is understood in negative terms from freedom. Whilst, rights are a vital part of citizenship and social movements

have mobilised around them. Where rights have been mentioned, in liberal thought form, reference is made to political participation rights such as the right to vote. Nevertheless, the language of rights does not always fully translate the meaning of citizenship. It has to be noted that an emphasis on rights alone will not necessarily translate to equality and justice in the nation. Therefore, there is need to underscore the concern of citizenship which is anchored by responsibility and public obligation.

There is a communitarian perspective of citizenship. This communitarian view perceives that an individual's sense of identity is produced through relations with others in the community of belonging (Santal, 1998; Fischer, 2009: 63). Communitarian citizen emphasis is on socially embedded membership and belonging. The individuals, can only realise citizenry interests and identity through dialogue with the surrounding circumstances, deliberation over the common good and understanding solidarity with others (Jones and Gaventa, 2002: 5). This aspect of citizenry begs the values of civic virtues. This civic virtue develops the respect of others and a recognition to uphold public morality that is necessary for transformation. The quest of transformation should develop a "contending culture of citizen entitlement that translates to obligation and public morality that safeguards the common interest of all the nationals" (Zulu, 2013: 25). Indeed, achieving transformation in Zimbabwe can only come through genuine, selfless commitment to service. The defining moment for reconstruction is when the citizenry/ individuals have a willingness to participate in transformational communal affairs. This understanding of citizenship, with a moral public obligation, is what is lacking in Zimbabwe.

The general citizenry should be protected against tyranny, greedy and corrupt leaders, for citizenship is fundamental to reconstruction discourse. Citizenship claims represent an expression of human capacity that enables people to act as agents of reconstruction. Reconstruction theology emphasises the central role of the individual's self-identity, which influences transformative attitude and action.

The Ezra-Nehemiah biblical narrative typifies the aspect of citizenry in reconstruction. The shameful state of affairs triggered cooperative and maximum commitment in the people of Israel. This commitment is contrasted against the rhetoric claims of citizenship (Fischer, 2009: 67), without commitment to transformation and commitment to safeguard the integrity of the nation with dignity

While Nehemiah and Ezra, were regarded as the new comers in Jerusalem, together with the remaining citizens, they joined forces to rebuild the wall for they understood their communal

citizenship responsibility. In Zimbabwe, the desire is to transcend above the construction of “outsiders” and “enemies of the state” vs the “patriotic” and “nationalists” citizenship to consider duty, obligation and public morality (Raftopoulos, 2009: 204). Citizenship with a moral obligation and duty, exists within a normative system informed by the philosophical, religious belief systems, societal values and traditions of a people. It is these rubrics of belief, value and tradition that must govern the behaviours of citizens in the call for transformation and renewal (Zulu, 2013: 26). Reconstruction theology calls for a revisit to the cultural values, traditions and beliefs that help in transformation.

The crisis in Zimbabwe, as elsewhere in Africa, cannot be resolved through change of political leadership. After the many coups in Uganda and changes in political leaders in South Africa, Zambia, Malawi, Kenya, Egypt, Somalia the crisis did not end. Instead, the challenges and crises took on new forms and perspectives. The issue of national obligation, with a national mandate remains a bone to contend with in the struggle for transformation and reconstruction. Dumiso Dabengwa (2015: 33) came to the realisation that it is naïve to imagine that replacing current president Robert Mugabe with a younger or whosoever leader, will cause all the struggles and problems to vanish. He concludes “these were the illusions during the war of liberation that the moment Ian Smith was overpowered and a black majority government was in place, the Zimbabwean struggles and problems would be over” (Dabengwa, 2015: 33). The struggles are numerous and the problems have become worse, depending on the glasses you are using to analyse the current trends in Zimbabwe. What is required now, is a reconstructed-transformative citizenship.

The transformed citizenship will possess the national consciousness, which values the justice of all, a consciousness of the wellbeing of all, and the wholeness of Zimbabwe, regardless of the aptitude of the struggles encountered in history. The *rebecoming* Zimbabwe will be moulded and based on concrete realities. One of the concrete realities is envision to reconstruct Zimbabwe to be a better society.

The Zimbabwean history of colonialism shapes the nationalist question, but it should not haunt the society. As the demised colonialism was a historical event, so are neo-liberalism, neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism. These current hegemonies require a founded nationalism and a definite citizenry to overcome their insurgences.

## **7.5. Being a Nation: Belonging and Reconstruction**

The process of decolonisation and the struggle for justice by the people of Zimbabwe remains fundamentally a call for social democracy in intent and purpose. This begs the values of the struggle to be for restoration of collective human dignity, the pursuit of equality, socio-economic justice, democracy and moral collective obligation to safeguard integrity of all citizens.

However, it has to be noted that central to securing liberation from foreign domination was the slogan of “self-determination”. That being so, this slogan brought the aspect of revived or limited nationalism, where belonging was defined in ZANU PF political ideology and contestation. This was an inherited understanding from the colonial legacy of nationalism, where belonging, access and ownership of resources was shaped by contestation. This narrow and limited nationalism perpetuated ignorance of suffering, corruption and bred violence.

Reconstruction theology calls for what Ignatieff refers to as “blood and belonging” (1994: 213) or bond sacrifice. This understanding of belonging is not on ethnicity or political line, but on the national interest of a society. It is through belonging that a national identity is mimicked. Whilst individuals could possess multiple identities, the nation and its concern should produce and provide its nationalities with a primary form of belonging (Raftopoulos, 2009). This “blood-belonging” conversely will bring the belief and an appreciation of a national sovereignty that is capitalised with national self-determinism. It is this “blood-belonging” which made Nehemiah to consider sacrificially returning to Jerusalem, specifically to take the challenge of the broken walls and burn down gates. Anthony Poggo (2013: 13) argues that, “the strength of Nehemiah’s reaction (1:4) shows that his request was not a fleeting concern but born from bond sacrifice, blood-belonging and bond patriotism, a deep love of his country and status”. Citizenship will entail the value of ownership and belonging. Regardless of Nehemiah’s senior position of and in the king’s courts and table considered his nationality his belonging and he took the concern of his people to be more important. In Zimbabwe there is need for consciousness reorientation in some who are in senior positions to return to the reconstruction of the country through the bond sacrifice attitude.

Zimbabwean context is defined by multi-party politics, that belonging has become politically defined rather than national blood or bond sacrifice. This entails that national sovereignty should be every citizen’s responsibility. However, claims to be defending national sovereignty have been “especially central to ZANU PF party rhetoric, masked in exclusionary and violent

partisan projects” (Hammar and Raftopoulos, 2003: 26). This can be typified in President Robert Mugabe’s speech of the third session of Zimbabwe’s fifth parliament in 2002 July;

We remain quite wary of countries and organisations which seek to take advantage of our hour of need to attenuate our sovereignty or even reverse those vital policies we have adopted as a sovereign people” (Worby, 2003: 50; Editorial, 2002).

National sovereignty should move from the talk show podium pronunciations to the implementation of the conducive national policies that will create a just community for the sovereign people. Sovereignty entails affording wholeness to the people in a “democratic” society. Moreover, Zimbabwe boasts to be a democratic nation, with subsequent democratic elections carried out since independence. Reconstruction theology contends that rhetorical pronunciations of sovereignty without reconstruction is an incomplete equation. Reconstruction here embodies an enigma. It draws metaphorically upon a figure of imminent, autonomy (sovereignty), yet it is grounded in the ethics of a trusteeship of protections, stewardship, care and concern (Worby, 2003: 58).

#### **7.6. Ownership and Cooperation: Whose Community is Zimbabwe.**

Since the mid-1990s, three issues have characterised President Robert Mugabe’s speeches and rhetoric (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009), shaping the ZANU PF narrative and perspective of Zimbabwe<sup>65</sup>, amid the opposition MDC narrative and the general populace confusion. The first is the obsession with the concern over Tony Blair’s interference in Zimbabwe’s National Sovereignty. It was then at the Earth Summit in South Africa in September 2002 amid the course of Land/Fast Track Land Reform Programme that Mugabe denounced the then British Prime Minister by telling him “to keep and to take care of his Britain and to allow Mugabe to keep his Zimbabwe” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009: 139; Makamani, 2010: 8). This statement shows that space inside Zimbabwe is opposed to space outside.

The second concern has been with the transfer of all the land owned by the white imperialist farmers to the black Zimbabwean people. Since 1890, land has served as a source of political contestation. To Mugabe, land was not a mere commodity of production but a maker of African being. The loss of land “through colonial conquest went deeper in meaning than the mere loss of means of production. It amounted to the loss of our being” (Hanlon, Manjengwa and Smart,

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<sup>65</sup> There has been in ZANU PF ideology a deliberate taking that ZANU PF defines the birth of Zimbabwe. Hence, ZANU PF is read as a state party.

2013: 67). The third Chimurenga has the issue of ownership related to the means of being. These means of being include the land and the economy.

The third issue is the concern of belonging, as an authentic national subject and the creation of a patriotic citizen. The concern of belonging should bring the cause of national discipline efficiency to realisation. When the citizens understand self-identity and belonging efficiency (right action) is recognised as everyone's duty. This aspect of authentic nationality will influence the maximum cooperation required in the community. For reconstruction to be possible, the question of authentic patriotism and qualification for authentic nationality should not be based on political division but should be measured by belonging and cooperation.

Robert Muponde (2005: xvii) contends that authentic patriotism and nationalism should build the person's confidence in participation in society's transformation. Ownership brings about participatory involvement in the life of the institution.

### **7.7. Patriotism and Reconstruction: Whose Community is Zimbabwe**

The word patriot is derived from the Greek word *patriotes* and the Latin word *patriot*; its usage can be traced in the Ancient Roman Rule settings, signifying the commitment to one's possession and belongings (Monda, 2016: 5). Patriotism has great dimensions of devotion, commitment, passion, virtue and love with attachment to one's country.

In Zimbabwe, discussions on patriotism, or being patriotic have come from the historiography, psychology and political discourses. Patriotic history appeared more pronounced in the late 1990s when "it appeared as a direct product of, the emerging alliance between ZANU PF and the war-veterans" (Onslow, 2013: 5). The narrative drew upon a wider society, and the astute use of state control of the media. This repackaging of history, and its use and distortion of legitimate grievances contributed to patriotic blackness, centred on the ZANU PF perspective. O. T. Ranger (2004: 215), contends that this is a different form of historiography departing from the mere celebration of historical nationalism aspirations. This political patriotism regards, as irrelevant, any history that is not political. In the context of Zimbabwe, the history of colonialism and the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Chimurenga have been, kept as crude history that defines the configurations of the community. The ZANU PF government set structures that the government broadcast channels, (television and radio), the press (Daily Herald and Chronicle) and any national event, emphasises Chimurenga and its values. The Herald Newspaper columnist and intellectual Godfrey Chikowore (2002) states that, "Zimbabwe is the product of

a bitter and protracted armed struggle. It is from this struggle that the Zimbabwean value and heritage stumps and stands lively. This armed struggle should serve as the guiding spirit through any presidential election” (The Herald, Feb 16, 2002). Themes and events that do not relate to the struggle were downplayed and misrepresented.

This patriotic narrative view time as linear and space as not being homogenous. In the Zimbabwean perspective of this history, the future is defined from the liberation struggle. “We were colonised and displaced from our lands, then the rural space and people are authentically patriotic and the urban space and people are suspiciously unpatriotic” (Muponde and Primorac, 2005: 5). Hence, the space and people inside Zimbabwe, who chant ZANU PF slogans are different from the space and people outside Zimbabwean borders. The dominant narrative in Zimbabwean patriotic landscape is ZANU PF; “ZANU PF as the sole champion, past, and present, of the independence and sovereignty which is under constant attack from ‘imperialist forces” (Tendi, 2010: 1). This leaves the research to ask if the rural people are not aware of the crisis in their motherland. Are those people in urban centres and outside Zimbabwe, “citizens” or “strangers” to their beloved country? Who is the true patriotic or true unpatriotic? Should patriotism be lip service rhetoric comradeship while plundering and destroying the heritage and legacy of being Zimbabwean? Zimbabwean patriotic narrative has become narrower, since hardly anything is said about ZANU PF’s modernising, reconstructing and welfare agenda. What is witnessed is condemning others, naming and shaming of each other and politicking about the opposition (Ranger, 2004: 220). This research asserts that patriotism should be reconstructive and transformative rather than being a political party manifesto and propaganda rhetoric.

Patriotism as a tool for reconstruction seeks to mobilise the citizens towards rebuilding, and transforming a community. There should be a conscious connection between national interest and democracy prepicked in the patriotic narrative.

### **7.8. African Sense of Community: Wholeness**

In Zimbabwe, community is defined in the fibres of wholeness, completeness and intactness. Community understanding is related to the traditional triple division of human being. Zimbabweans uphold that a human person is made up of three components, body, soul and spirit. This worldview brings to the intactness of community. Thus the general conception of the person in Africa is that the person finds his/her full human significance within the wider

social communal structures (Mulemfo, 1995: 339). The structures of ordering that exist show that wholeness and wellbeing are the objectives.

For Mugambi (1995), Africans have a net sense of nationality defined in the communitarian wellbeing that comes from an inclusive sense of belonging and identity. “The community can be considered to be interchangeable with nation and people in the widest sense of worthiness of belonging” (Mugambi, 1995: 199). In Africa, belonging is necessary for full participation. The system makes it so easy for one to participate in, for individuals are defined in terms of relationship with others. In Africa, “there are no efforts spared to help a stranger to become adapted to the community one has joined” (Dedji, 2012: 121). Confidence to participate is, “gained in the stories we share, genealogies we trace, rituals we enact, libation we pour and prayers we offer together” (Mugambi, 1995: 199). Society can be transformed with the ownership Africans possess by virtue of belonging with geniality of purpose to safeguard the integrity of the other.

The church is often referred to as a community, a community of faith. The church is a community bearing witness and living out its faith in the larger context of a nation for reconstruction (Dortzbach, 2002). Therefore, as the church lives out the mission of God and bears witness it is seeking the transformation of the broader community.

Biblically, community is upheld in the sense of covenant. God is the creator and giver of a community. This is pronounced in the words of Reyburn (1987: 104) “sin in the life of ancient Israel has been understood in the notion of covenant and community. Any offense, which breaks this community, is also an offence against Yahweh”. This was also commented on by Lambourne (1963: 25), saying “the action of the individual, more especially if he be acting as a group leader or representative whether as patriarch father, king, prophet, carries with it possibilities of blessing or punishment for the whole group /community”.

### **7.9. The Quest for National Discipline and Efficiency**

Responsibility implies awareness. This awareness implies efficiency. The concept of national discipline efficiency is very African, since traditionally, people appreciate communal efficiency in all expectations. Among the Shona people of Zimbabwe, *nhimbe* (*working communally*) is a clear social component for working together to achieve more.

Further, the Shona concept of *Zunde ramambo* (the field managed by the chief on behalf of the community) is a national efficiency model. This is one that entails a leader is a steward and

considerate provider. Community, traditionally would not celebrate poverty, suffering and social class stratification. Every member of the community has a share in the *zunde ramambo*, while the chief becomes responsible for safeguarding the interests of the community. *Doro remusha* (beer brewed for libation to appease the living dead), *Doro reMukwerera* (rain praying celebration through libation) and *Ndari* (home-made beer brewed for commercial purpose), these are expressions of communal efficiency, of genuine communal solidarity and beliefs of sustainability.

When Mugambi encourages the shift of theology from liberation to reconstruction and transformation, his basis was;

The themes of reconstruction and restoration are also powerful and relevant as concepts motivating the Hebrews to transform their own society and culture at different times in their history. These themes are also for renewal and survival (Mugambi, 1995: 24; Farisani, 2012).

The aspect of survival is critical to the theology of reconstruction as depicted by the Ezra-Nehemiah Model. Survival stimulates the community to effectively go beyond mere analysis of crisis but also nurture in people a vision of a different future. This vision is achievable through the national discipline efficiency attitude.

Mugambi argues that theology of reconstruction has a national social transformation mandate. This mandate;

Involves discerning alternative social structures, symbols, rituals, myths and interpretations of Africa's social reality by Africans themselves, irrespective of what others have to say about the people and the content. Whilst the resources for this re-interpretation are multi-disciplinary, that involves social scientists, philosophers, creative writers and artists, theologians, politicians, biological and physical scientists (Mugambi, 1995: 40).

This social reconstruction belongs to all the inhabitants of the given community and society. In the case of the Israelites in Jerusalem, during the call for reconstruction by Nehemiah, the people became very effective in defining times. They discern the meaning of their crisis, against what the outside people perceived of them. Valentine Dedji argued,

“Nehemiah's strategy consisted in remaining faithful to God, seeking cooperation among religious, political and spiritual leaders of his homeland, and finally bringing awareness among his people about the imperative need to join their efforts in what may be termed a ‘national reconstruction task’” (Dedji, 2003: 61).

This is the appeal for reconstruction; it demands a national discipline efficiency. Surely, Nehemiah is admired for his ability to stir up the national efficiency in people from all walks of social conditions (Nehemiah 3).

### **7.10. Are We Still of Any Use? A Challenge to Zimbabwe**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer is renowned of his theological convictions in Germany when the society and community were swept over by evil and struggle. Bonhoeffer asked this soul-searching question at the climax of a sad portrait of a whole community;

We have been silent witnesses of evil deeds, we have been drenched by many storms; we have learnt the art of equivocation and pretence; experience has made us suspicious of others and kept us from being truthful and open; intolerable conflicts have worn us down and even made us cynical. Are we still of any use? (Bonhoeffer, 1971: 16).

This situation resonates with the crisis in Zimbabwe in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Evil deeds exist within and from the four compass directions. In 2007-2008, Zimbabwe recorded election brutality where people's hands were being chopped off by a machete according to shirt sizes; short sleeved or long sleeved, people were tortured and burnt; violence was unleashed (Sachikonye, 2011: 23). Commenting further upon this era and the brutality Robert Mshengu Kavanagh stated;

This torture involved placing black plastic bags over the victims' heads, drawing them tight so that they could not breathe, applying electric shocks on their bodies and beating them up with fists, boots and other objects. Victims have been left blind, impotent, and permanently crippled (Kavanagh, 2014: 338).

There is no excuse when violence and torture becomes a routine in society, especially in the century of high civilisation with the knowledge of wrong and right.

Historically in 1982-1983, Zimbabweans were shocked with Gukurahundi atrocities against '*dissidents*' whoever they were. The common people of Matebeleland and Midlands provinces were gunned down and set on open fire in broad day light (Auret, 1992; McGregor and Ranger, 2000).

Zimbabwe, the cradle and the citadel of minerals, natural resources and rich soils has become drenched by many storms of struggles. The levels of corruption, selfishness and greed has not spared many in political, social, economic, and religious institutions. Thus, Bonhoeffer's, critical question becomes a challenge to the community of Zimbabwe that awaits a reawakening and transformation. The high levels of poverty and unemployment are a testimony

to the crisis, at present, in the community. The question is whether Zimbabwe can transform and recover the sense of community after all the brokenness that has developed and stretched since political independence. “We are still useful” (Bonhoeffer, 1971: 16). Zimbabwe is still useful. Africa is still useful. This resonates with Nehemiah’s attitude in view of the ruins. He perceived that Jerusalem could not remain in ruins and shame; the community was still useful.

What is crucial in making Zimbabwe useful is to adopt the Nehemiah and the Jerusalem community’s attitude, summed up as transformed civil courage (Bonhoeffer 1971). This transformed civil courage is different from ordinary civil courage which is to be obedient and loyal to the “powers that be” in an acquiescent manner derived from fear and hopelessness. Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s comment is critical as he states;

In struggling times, what is witnessed is a great deal of bravery and self-sacrifice and yet hardly would you see transformed civil courage. For him, Germans then have learnt the need for and the strength of obedience. This readiness to follow the command from ‘above’ rather than the community’s integrity and outcries is a legitimate sign of self-distrust. (Bonhoeffer, 1971: 28)

In Zimbabwe in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there is peace which was proclaimed since 1980; yet, this peace is not realised since the people are struggling. Episodes of brutality, violence, denial of human rights are evidenced in the peaceful nation. To this end, the sense of quality of life is swept under carpet and the society remain in narrow definition of quality of existence. Unless there is courage to fight for a revival of the wholesome respect between man and man, society shall perish in an anarchy of human values (Bonhoeffer, 1967: 35). Reconstruction theology upholds that the church and the Christian religion has a great mandate in the revival of wholesome reserve. For Christians, “*orthopathos* (right feeling) is just as important as *orthodoxy* (right belief) and *orthopraxis* (right action), vividly lived out in Nehemiah chapter 1, grieving and weeping for the broken walls” (Poggo, 2013: 25). For Nehemiah, the process of reconstructing community begins with the grieving and weeping attitude. Dietrich Bonhoeffer echoes this reconstructing attitude when he challenged the German community;

When we forget what is due to ourselves and to others, when the feeling for human quality and the power to exercise reserve ceases to exist, chaos is what we come to affirm. When we tolerate impudence for the sake of material comforts, when we abandon our self-respect, the floodgates are opened, chaos and struggle bursts the dam that we were to defend and we are responsible for it all. It is the business of Christianity to champion the equality of all men (Bonhoeffer, 1967: 35).

If every member of the Zimbabwean community reconsiders the value of human quality, then the journey of reconstruction becomes a reality. The Zimbabwean situation of decadence

started from somewhere, where individuals witnessed the levelling down of all ranks, the shutting down of social responsibility and they witnessed the birth of a new sense of nationality and citizenship. The nation is desperately in need of a physician, and that physician is none other than the Christian people of Zimbabwe. The church in 2006 came up with a document of courage known as the ‘Zimbabwe We Want’ (2006) which asserts “we are as people of Zimbabwe; part of the problem and we are part of the solution. We must honestly face the sources of national disappointment so that we, as a nation, may have the determination to collectively seek appropriate remedies”. In this, the challenge of reconstruction involves everyone to see the vision. Zimbabwe is useful and it can be reconstructed.

### **7.11. Components of Reconstruction Theology: Zimbabwe is Useful**

Reconstruction theology identifies some components which are closely similar to the African Renaissance concerns. Some of these components will be analysed so as to show how Ezra-Nehemiah as a model for reconstruction, remains relevant to the Zimbabwean community.

#### **7.11.1. Personal – Individual Reconstruction**

In Zimbabwe, there is need to accept Mugambi’s proposal that “individuals must continually reconstruct themselves in readiness for the tasks and challenges ahead” (Mugambi, 1995: 15). The community cannot be transformed when the individuals do not have the base understanding of their input to the perpetual sustainability of the community.

Indeed, Karamanga asserts that human beings are co-workers with God in the reconstruction of both the church and the nation (Karamanga, 1997: 190). David Kaulem has observed that post-colonial Zimbabwe is suffering and in a crisis of lack of individual morality and spiritual dryness (Kaulem, 2007: 5). Whilst crisis in Zimbabwe can be pointed out and explained in socio-political, socio-religious and socio-economic terms, the perspective of moral decadence becomes relevant. Personal and social morality has been ignored when everyone is participating in the crisis directly or indirectly. Zimbabwe is on record of high levels of corruption yet the majority of the people profess to be spiritual, with Christian spirituality dominating the religiosity landscape. There is need to readdress the crisis in Zimbabwe from a Christian mission moral perspective.

Ezra-Nehemiah Motif inspires the reconstruction of the individual capacity against the backdrop of the levels of destruction. This was well captured by Julius Gathogo (2012: 145)

“the turn to the books of Ezra and Nehemiah is because the two books portray the efforts at restoring the people of God after the critical period in Babylon captivity”.

The individual is located in the circle and cycle of existence. In Zimbabwe, the family unit becomes the greatest individual nuclear circle of existence. “The individual gets a sense of belonging and responsibility from within the home and with family” (Mugambi, 1995: 138; Heaney, 2015: 153). Reconstructing the individual involves shaping the individual’s personality, attitude and values. This will successfully engrave a sense of communal responsibility and public accountability in individual citizens of a given community. For this to be achieved there is a need to restructure and position the role of the family. (Chirozva, Mubaya and Mukamuri, 2013: 5), argue that family is a central unit of social organisation, where men and women had defined roles that gave them authority, responsibility and accountability within the family and society. Family encourages respect, working together for the benefit of every member. Therefore, family unity and values of love, respect and togetherness defines productive and success. The traditional values of hospitality and social cohesion were manifested in the collective efforts of the family. Regardless of whether the family was extended or nuclear, family members helped each other. In Zimbabwe social existence, kinship is communally driven and defined rather than not exclusively biologically explained. As a result, people respected each other and affirmed each other’s worth not for blood relationship but for the rubrics of existence. Post-colonial Zimbabwe has lost the communal definition of existence that kept everyone in check of actions and behaviours.

Self-sufficiency, self-confidence, self-determination and efficiency are a result of family stability and responsibility. What reconstruction theology is arguing is that when individual personality is positively transformed, then people and more so communities, are empowered to have choices and actions that enable them to have a better life. This empowerment may be economic, social, political or cultural. Personal reconstruction is crucial for Zimbabwe’s transformation.

The key pathway to personal reconstruction and in turn socio-economic, socio-cultural, socio-political and socio-religious reconstruction is associated with family capital and family resilience (Mokomane, 2012: 2). The concept of family capital takes on the route base of social capital that is defined as “resources embedded within a person’s social network that influence decisions and outcomes by shaping a personal identity while, delineating opportunities and obstacles in the social world order” (Belcher, Peckuonis and Deforge, 2011: 69). Family

resilience refers to the ability of families “to withstand and rebound from disruptive life challenges” (Walsh, 2003: 1). Accordingly, families and their members in Africa, demonstrate resiliency due to the caring support systems and the problem solving strategies. This way, the African family has sustained itself through economic, political and social adversities. This family understanding is necessary in shaping an individual in the post-colonial situation of Zimbabwe. Jesse Mugambi (1995: 16) asserts that the “key to social transformation is the appropriate disposition of the individual members of the community concerned and this begins with family”.

### **7.11.2. Cultural and Moral Reconstruction**

Zimbabwe reconstruction case is a unique opportunity to redraw lines of self-identification and self-imagination of the Zimbabwean agenda in the face of post-colonial realities. Whilst the crisis of Zimbabwe may seem a nightmare to talk about renewal, there is a strong deposit of hope when the concern is looked at from the cultural-moral heritage perspective. For,

“Political democracy and independence will not automatically create a healthy economy, developmental growth and a healthy society. In Africa, political liberation has not changed the plight of the poor. In fact, the continent is today poorer and more marginalised than before. While politics, economics and colonial legacy undoubtedly have a role to play; however without a strong cultural and moral conscience then society is soulless” (Teffo, 1999: 149,168; Vil-Nkomo and Myburgh, 1999: 269; Farisani, 2002: 57).

The question of cultural and moral reconstruction brings to the forefront the component of value. Value is fluid in every structure, all operations and all institutions. For Zimbabwe, the value of being a just conscious, peaceful, democratic, honourable, prosperous, united and stable nation is a moral wake up call for all citizens. Reconstruction theology problematizes this cultural-moral component and clearly invites Zimbabwe and Zimbabweans to redefine the national value.

Reconstruction theology underscores that; “cultural reconstruction should be, consciously directed, for if it is left to chance, the community risks losing its integrity and identity” (Mugambi, 1995: 17). Proverbs 14:34 stipulates, “Integrity makes a nation great...” This Biblical passage challenges the Zimbabwean landscape to redirect energy towards integrity, core-values and public morality. Jesse Mugambi (2003:52), poses a relevant question, “how can Africans maintain the African ethic while embracing modernity?” He further cites other countries that have embraced modernity, technological advancement and the new world order

and yet maintained their cultural and religious heritage, such as Japan, South Korea, China and India. Therefore it should be possible for Zimbabwe to reassert her values, ethical heritage and culture. For this to happen, “Africa have to regain their lost self-confidence and stop copying and using other people’s cultures (European and North American) as standards for measuring the level of cultural and religious advancement” (Mugambi 2003:53).

Furthermore, recognition of the envisaged reconstruction will require a new moral compass and compact, based on the obvious need to shun selfish tendencies and egocentric existence. Instead integrity around the core-values should be promoted. This thesis argues that the starting point of reconstruction is upholding the values of *Ubuntu/Hunhu* into the everyday life of the community. Further to this call of cultural, moral and value-based re-awakening is the need to understand the role of religion; the Christian church, the civic organisation, the youth, the women and men. This call will also incorporate a more co-operative and inclusive approach, which involves all other stakeholders, such as business and government.

Zimbabwe’s traditional values of *Ubuntu/Hunhu* encourage the individual and the society to remain honest, reliable and peaceful, harmonious and decent. Oruka (1983: 105,106) concludes that “cultural values are rooted in attitudes which transcend any given differences in Africa, be it ethnicity or religion”. Cultural values to Africans are human; they define being. However, what is evident in Zimbabwe as anywhere else in Africa, is a cultural values crunch and an African moral heritage demonisation. Sadly, elders lament daily that there are behavioural shocks in the nation; sexual immorality, dishonesty, corruption and violence, are things they have never experienced or imagined. While the middle-aged Zimbabweans mourn the loss of their children to uncultured circumstance the young people complain of a lack of moral example from the elders. This becomes a vicious cycle of knowing what is needed and yet failing to aggressively transform the nation. This is a shared cultural-moral value crisis, in which reconstruction theology and discourse will realign and reconstruct.

Reconstruction is necessary to transform the society. Villa-Vicencio (1992: 42) believes that social cultural-moral values are located at the heart of constitutional debates and law making. For him, there is a great “urgent reconstruction need to establish a culture that respects the dignity of people, the right to dissent and meaningful existence” (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 42). To achieve the demands of transformative culture and a re-awakened moral value, the community should be ready to participate.

Closely interlinked with the discourse of morality and cultural value are the ethical principles that are critical when it comes to public behaviour. “Ethics is the scientific study of morality where morality constitutes the rules and principles that guide and regulate human behaviour” (Mangena and Hove, 2013: 236). Reconstruction theology mourns the violent behaviours displayed in Zimbabwe pre and post-election, and elsewhere in Africa; there is political violence with lot of bloodshed. In Zimbabwe, the case of the land redistribution (an exercise that in itself is reconstructive) became violent, as shown by the use of such terms as *Jambanja* (violence) or *Hondo Yeminda* (War for the Land). President Robert Mugabe slatted the land redistribution as an economic war to redress an enduring colonial land imbalance between black majority and white minority farmers (Mugabe, 2001). The use of violence became endemic with political moralists who are driven by selfish desires and who lack the public moral objective, in their leadership (Mangena and Hove, 2013: 238). Reconstruction theology challenges the political leaders, social leaders, religious leaders (Chiefs and Village Heads, Christian heads of Denomination) and the business leaders to value moral responsibility which is transformative.

### **7.11.3. Leadership Reconstruction**

Africa has had a fair share of decadent history of leadership problems (Obiakor, 1992: 55; Obiakor, 1998: 57). Nation political leadership in Africa has influenced the general execution of leadership duties in communities. This has given leadership a bad reputation. According to Ebegbulem (2012: 224), bad leadership is characterised by corruption, leaders rise to power by all means and when they exploit and oppress the people they should lead.

During the transition period of 1980-1990s, the President Robert Mugabe, was a darling of the Western bloc and the globe. Regardless of the Gukurahundi atrocities of 1982-5, Zimbabwe did not come into the spotlight as it became from 2000-2013. Ezra Chitando (2013: vi) puts it across that “Zimbabwe’s overall significance to postcolonial Africa and the global political configuration is sizeable. It was only recently 2000 -2008 and beyond, that Zimbabwe captured global media attention, due to the political, economic and social drama that was underway”. Post-2000 Zimbabwe government and history began to be defined in; one centre of power, executive powers and personal terms as an entity that belongs to the person of the president. The personal ruler and the all-powerful president, whose words sometimes matter more than the country’s constitution. This view of a nation through the leader, led to the institution of economic sanctions whose effects are not felt by the targeted leaders but by the common

citizenry of Zimbabwe. “Zimbabwe was suspended from the Commonwealth, and cut off from IMF and World Bank assistance as well as from most forms of European and North American bilateral aid” (Worby, 2003: 53).

This personification of leadership cult has pervaded the political, economic, social and religious realms of Zimbabwe. In political parties the observation is interesting, sadly Christianity is gripped with the same scenario mostly driven by power and prosperity leadership sickness. In the neo-Pentecostal Christianity, church is personified in the apostle or the prophet. Therefore, now God, God’s power and miracles are an emblem of the prophet and the founding apostle of the church. Reconstruction theology challenges the leadership crisis at stake in Christian organisations and the church should not emulate the state in leadership formula.

ZANU PF political party upholds the life presidency of one person and the party loyalists and cadres believe that without Robert Mugabe, there is no ZANU PF. This aspect is justified because Robert Mugabe has been the leader of ZANU PF since 1976. He has been the President of Zimbabwe since the country’s independence and the succession debate is anathema. This creates patrimonial governance.

In opposition politics, there is witness of fractured, institutionally weak and fragmented parties. This model of personification of leadership, has left the people vulnerable to abuse and confusion in Zimbabwe. Llyod Sachikonye (2011: 60) argues that, “political parties in Zimbabwe are indeed strongly identified with their founding leaders; Robert Mugabe with ZANU PF, Joshua Nkomo with PF ZAPU, Ndabaningi Sithole with ZANU Ndonga, Edgar Tekere with ZUM, Morgan Tsvangirai with the MDC- T, Welshman Ncube with MDC-N, Progressive Democratic Party (PDP) for Tendai Biti and ZimPF People First (which later morphed to National People’s Party (NPP) with Joyce Mujuru.” What this means is the political party belongs to the individual and if that individual is no longer interested in the party or if he/she is replaced a new name is created. This patrimonial governance has spilled over into the managing and governing of other institutions of service. Actually, former war veterans with liberation war credentials or retired and tired army generals, brigadiers and air marshals have been entrusted with the management of many civil institutions and departments.

The president of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, as the leader, has developed like-minded leaders to his liking. The government ministers, top security officers, economists, judges, heads of departments, religious leaders and business owners have declared allegiance to the president in

many forms and ways (Moyo and Ashurst, 2007; Mlambo, 2013). This has created a vacuum of objective leaders, who seek the wellbeing of the community over their authority and the benefits their positions derive. In terms of governance, the ruling party leadership is comfortable with any policy as long as it benefits them. The public moral responsibility has been lost. To the detriment of African leadership, in Zimbabwe, what is witnessed is a corrupt, dictatorial, rebellious, greedy, incompetent and politically unstable leadership which is ready to use its muscle for its personal benefit (Masango, 2002). This model of leadership is enshrined in the Western Colonial view of conquering and being in total control.

Reconstruction theology is inviting a revival of the African leadership that valued humanity over conquering and power. Leadership that builds and sustains the capacity of communities and its members. A reconstructed leadership is an art that individuals and movement cultivate and blossom in changing a dream into reality. This leadership seeks to transcend the perversions of today to a future with full of hope. The church should lead the nation and itself in the paths of sincere and committed efforts to develop servant leaders.

#### **7.11.4. Economic Reconstruction**

Africans should determine their destiny. This has been emphasised in the African Economic Renaissance, that Africans should decide on the African economy or economic system that works for African people and their concerns. The point for reconstruction is that Africans have had priori to colonialism and imperialism economic sustaining systems. Vusi Gumende (2015) proposes the revisit of historical systems when he take notice of their impact in sustaining community and economic stability. Gumende (2015: 123) articulates that, “the traditional historical basis of African economy was entwined in the sense of communalism and associational existence that defined and ascertained the wellbeing of the community”. This system is germane today in Zimbabwe as the Eurocentric capitalist economic system, which was superimposed on Zimbabwe has left more scars than the intended economic boost it was praised for. Zimbabwe has great deposits of minerals, great soil for farming and hardworking people who are educated in various faculties, yet, there is little to show for it. The scenario is well captured by Jesse Mugambi (2003:43); “Africa (Zimbabwe) produces what it does not consume and consumes what it does not produce”. Reconstruction is possible when the economic system imposed as “the model” of operation is reviewed in comparison to the traditional communal economic system. This should not be taken as a call to return to

traditional way of existence. It has to be read in light of the plight at hand in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe has witnessed the enactment of economic policies such as the Land reform, Indigenisation Policy and Community Share Ownership that have been hijacked by failing political leadership. Politicians in Zimbabwe are the owners of the land, mines and are major shareholders in almost every sector of the economy. They own and run supermarkets and manufacturing companies in addition to their political, and ministerial responsibilities. It is therefore concluded that the one who designed the policy benefited more than the intended beneficiaries. The entrepreneurship model of development has to be interrogated in light of the national efficient people centred model.

Zimbabwe's economic prowess and pride is in the good soils. If the socio-economic structure is given a new expression then the culture of wellbeing will be long lived. Zimbabwe remains a wealthy country. The scenario in which Nehemiah was eager to see the walls built was the position of Judah. Grabbe (1992: 23) states that "Judah was a small country, heavily agrarian: Jerusalem was the only real urban area". The soils and climate were suitable for vineyards and olive orchards. Reconstruction theology in Zimbabwe argues that the climate and the soil is suitable for more production. Zimbabwe pride is in farming, commercial and communal. As such it seems obvious that this sector of economy is to be revived in order to encourage production of food enough for the consumption and surplus. The churches who have these economists, farmers, theologians and politicians in their pews every Sunday. The church has to influence change through its structures encouraging sustainable economic community responsibility (Mugambi, 2003:41). The economic reconstruction is possible in Zimbabwe since the citizens are hardworking, committed and resilient.

Perplexed by the food deficit manifesting in Africa, Mugambi (1995: 160), is determined that this is not permanent. He argues that "in order to reconstruct Africa there is need to understand why there is so much food shortages and hunger". The Reconstructionist believes that food shortages and hunger in Africa has to do with the infrastructures, which have been crafted by Africans (Farisani, 2002: 107). Evidently, there is a need for commitment from all stakeholders to reform the social structures in order to make them more effective, efficient and productive (Mugambi, 1995: 161).

### **7.11.5. Religious Reconstruction: - The Impact of the Church**

Jesse Mugambi (1995: 17) argues that “religion provides the most accepted world-view which synthesises everything that is cherished by individuals as corporate members of the community”. This means that religion is the key component of reconstruction. It cannot be denied that religion, ranging from African Tradition to Christianity has influence on the way of conduct of its adherents. This section assesses the case of Christianity – Ecclesiastical reconstruction, yet the thesis does not disregard the value and impact of any other religion.

Ragies Gunda (2009) cast doubts on the church’s ability to mobilize society for reconstruction unless it is empowered. Gunda (2009:95-96) asserts that;

What we need is to institute reconstruction in the church and restore the church as an institution that not only represents the common men and women but effectively we need the church to act for and with these common men and women in Africa.

The most striking limitation to reconstruction is when church is tumbling in self-doubt. The church must lead in creating space and atmosphere of respect for the other, listening not only to the words but also to the spirit and experience of the community. This church will be able to see, hear, speak against and act against all forms of evil (Gunda, 2009:96). The empowered and reconstructed will articulate and champion transformation for the common good of all citizens.

Reconstruction theology under the tutelage of Jesse Mugambi (1995; 2003), has argued for ecclesial reconstruction and independence (Conradie, 2012). Ecclesial reconstruction involves an undertaking of the value of ecumenical unitary voice of hope and determination, political independence (from imperial outlook and the local political dictatorial influences) and an acceptance of the mission responsibility mandate. The church is that “organisational framework within which a people’s world-view is portrayed and celebrated. Therefore, its readjustment and reconstruction is necessary for the new social demands” (Mugambi, 1995: 17).

The church in Zimbabwe is understood along ecclesiastical ecumenical bodies whose outlook appear to be in opposition competing for relevance. The church in post-colonial Zimbabwe is, categorized in “four major groups –or associations” which are (ZCC (*Zimbabwe Council of Churches*), ZCBC (*Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference*), EFZ (*Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe*) and UDACIZA (*Union for the Development of Apostolic Churches in Zimbabwe Africa*). It is evident that group interests and emphasis are difficult to synchronize. Isheunesu

Gusha<sup>66</sup>, during an interview on 04 January 2014 commented that “these groupings are the main reason why the church is at its weakest and it appears in most cases the church is fighting itself” (Gusha, 2014). Reconstruction is possible, when the body of Christ becomes ecumenical without measuring doctrinal variances, but the mission of God as is demanded in Zimbabwe. Jesse Mugambi (1995: 128) states that “the unity of church as proposed by Paul, is a reality proposal not for one denomination but rather for all those who confess Jesus as Christ”. The church in Zimbabwe has acknowledged the inefficiencies caused by the diversity of the church face. The church’s diversity of creeds, denominations, tribes, races and constituencies demands a weighed and measured approach to national issues (2006). Reconstruction theology challenges the inability of the church to speak with one voice on national issues and its concentration on the inward rather than the outward concerns.

The politicians in Zimbabwe are on record in using the religious-Christian themes for their selfish benefits. The church has the mission responsibility to superintend and declare the Christian themes for the benefit of rebuilding community. This responsibility will ensure that the church will not just spiritualise the existence of destruction of the fibres of existence. The church should challenge the status quo in society. For example, the dictatorial rule of one political party (ZANU PF) since 1980 (Gunda, 2009; Mpondi, 2015). Mpondi (2015: 511) articulates that, “Mugabe’s political leadership has predatory interests and instincts to which the church should challenge for the good of Zimbabwe”. There is a real danger that some self-serving politicians and economical masterminds have hijacked the church’s mission business in Africa and even worldwide.

To reconstruct the church means also to shake it off from individual personification. Church has to be church, identified by its mission of God. It is known in that churches are seemingly trapped in a political patronage in Zimbabwe, to the extent that some church denominations and leaders are structured in a similar style as political parties, while some admire the political rhetoric that becomes the line of preaching and teaching. There has been a growing prophetic ministry in Zimbabwe, with prophets performing self-centred miracles, which are contradictory to what can be decoded with common sense. The social impact of the Christian church has to be reconstructed so as to have miracles that benefit the society rather than enriching the prophet.

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<sup>66</sup> Reverend Isheunesu Gusha is the rector of St Aidans Seke Parish in Chitungwiza. He is a lecturer in New Testament and Old Testament at Wadzanai Theological College, Harare Theological College and Bishop Gaul Theological College

The rebuilding and subsequent rededication of the temple (Ezra 3-6) and Nehemiah's interest in the temple affairs, indicates the significant position the temple has. As such, the impact of the church can never be undermined if society has to be reconstructed. Farisani (2002: 221) explains:

It will not be necessary to labour that construction, maintenance and control for temples had broad social and political implications. Temples became the focus of a new type of social-political organisation, self-management and mutual economic assistance.

The Christian leadership has a moral and social responsibility in Zimbabwe that has been infected by corrupt tendencies, political patronage, and social decay. The Christian church leadership and church structures should not resemble any other institution in the land especially the political parties. As God instructed Moses in Leviticus 19:2, "Be holy because I the Lord your God, am holy". The church should have a similarity with their God, who ordained it with the mission mandate. Here, the church will then seek to serve the community and the people rather than its own interests. Jesse Mugambi (1995: 133) captures it correctly by saying "a church with the mission mandate ought to help its members live more abundantly, as members of the society to which that church renders service". The Christian mission ought to be conducted in such a way that society and its challenges identify with the Church as a source of encouragement, guidance, hope and renewal.

It is worth noting that the mobilising potential of the church, especially during the period of the postcolonial crisis is to be acknowledged as the reason why Zimbabwe still has remained in the crisis stage and not reached the revolt stage. Mandipoane Masenya (2004: 59) captures it correctly, writing; "a sense of maintaining human integrity and self-worth in our view enables victims of harsh circumstances not to give up, but to continue to struggle as agents of change even in the face of life-denying circumstances." These historical efforts of the church, lived out as agents of change, signify the value of transformed mobilisation. Reconstruction of Zimbabwe is not just an envisaged discourse but also a possible transformation prospect.

## **7.12. Conclusion**

This chapter explored the question of "whose community Zimbabwe is", by producing significant aspects that the thesis deems of value to the demands of reconstruction discourse. Being and belonging are critical components in national reconstruction and for that reason, this chapter produced relevant views of nationality, citizenship and belonging. More importantly, this chapter argued that reconstruction theology has brought a paradigm shift in understanding

the crisis in postcolonial Zimbabwe. At the heart of the question of whose community Zimbabwe is, is the aspect of identity. When a nation is in a crisis, questions of identity are relevant questions. As noted in this section, Zimbabwe is confronted with a ZANU PF national ideology that is cast in more authoritarian, superiority, monopolistic, selective and racialized notion of citizenship and belonging. This notion is exclusive and what is constructive should be inclusive. For reconstruction to be possible, the section argues for the redefinition of nationality, for in so doing, there will be answers to the national question of belonging. A reconstructive approach to belonging demands responsibility and effectiveness for the benefit of the national good.

The national identity produces determination, accountability and solidarity. This has to be the rallying point in national mobilisation for a better Zimbabwe. Where the identity is made real then people will not compete over issues of national interest. However, currently, in Zimbabwe there is a lot of politicisation of national heritage sites and the National Heroes' Acre. In which case it is the ZANU PF politburo and ZANU PF central committee, which decides who should be buried on the site. This has been exhibited in that Ndabaningi Sithole (1920 -2000) and Canaan Banana (1936-2003) were not laid to rest at the National Heroes shrine when in all fairness they are heroes in every respect. These two played significant roles in the nationalist history of Zimbabwe and both tested the Presidency office, yet they became fallen enemies of ZANU PF. National Heroes to date receive a state funeral with full honours; this is rated as the country's highest national award. If this is so, all those who might have contributed to Zimbabwean's wellbeing should be recognised as heroes. Yet, what is evidenced is the narrow definition of hero status and the status of a national hero is defined in the perspective of ZANU PF patronage.

This chapter challenged the construction of "outsiders", "enemies" vs "patriotic", "cadres" as citizenship marks. Citizenship entails duty, obligation and morality. A transformed citizenship understanding will not undermine the legality and right concepts attached to it, but it will attach national consciousness. Nehemiah displayed the blood-belonging citizenry responsibility as he championed the reconstruction of the walls of Jerusalem.

This chapter articulated that Zimbabwe is still useful and it is not doomed. Zimbabwe is a cradle and a citadel of minerals and rich soils. Therefore, the church has to stand up to prophetically instill hope, and to encourage the nationals towards reconstruction of Zimbabwe. This section then looked at the components of reconstruction which include; individual

reconstruction, moral-cultural reconstruction, leadership and economic leadership and ecclesiastical reconstruction.

In the next section, an analysis of the voices of those who participated in this study is reviewed. It is important that this study depended also on the conversations with people in Zimbabwe and these conversations are infused with library materials to substantiate the thesis that, reconstruction discourse is a relevant theology. Tables and charts will help in summarising the views gathered during interviews, social conversations and questionnaires.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION: RECONSTRUCTION IS POSSIBLE**

#### **8. Introduction**

This chapter discusses the findings obtained from the semi-structured questionnaires, which had 53 respondents, of which only 50 were validated. The data is presented in tabular form, graphs and charts, and then an analysis where necessary. It is in this section that analysis shall be done while incorporating extensively the interview results and outcomes. These questionnaires and interviews were mostly sampled through the random selection of participants with various backgrounds and expertise. There is a pool of theological richness in the streets of Zimbabwe and critical theological reflections going on in the Kombis (Commuter Omni-Buses) travellers. The authentic theological reflection could be found outside of established ecclesiastical institutions, seminaries and universities as critical bible reading is taking place by ordinary readers (West, 1997: 142; Chitando, 2009:38). The people traveling by the public transport are exposed to music that convey opinions, influence public debate, stimulate hope, regenerate resilience, and challenge stereotype perspective on the life situation in Zimbabwe (Vambe, 2000: 75; Togarasei, 2007: 53). The common people in the streets and in Kombis have turned to the Bible aiming to both encourage each other to be strong and to theologially explain socio-economic and political realities in Zimbabwe. This relates to “theology of the streets” which perfectly encapsulates lived religiolisation emphasis of the complex and sophisticated people’s daily life experience (Nixon, 2013: 24). It is possible to honour the stories of ordinary people who speak of God and honour the Bible as the normative text for Christian theology. This chapter displays the current perception and views of the research participants toward the discourse of reconstruction theology in Zimbabwe.

The section utilises the questionnaires and the interviews to produce the perspective of the participants on issues affecting Zimbabwe. The analysis of data begins with the population data analysis and how the population set out as female, male and youth are critical to the reconstruction discourse in Zimbabwe. This thesis seeks the holistic commitment to transformation.

The thesis will then narrow to the demographic information, analysing the characteristic of the participants. Zimbabwe’s historical factors will follow looking at the pre-colonial, colonial and

post-colonial data on community mobilisation, political setup and economic setup. This section produces the prioritised areas that require reconstruction. In the section, the role of the church is emphatically stated as essential and relevant in social transformation.

### 8.1. Zimbabwe Population: Human Capital and Reconstruction

Zimbabwe held the population census in 2012 and the National Statics Agency produced a census report. A country’s human capital is an essential component of development, transformation and reconstruction, contributing to growth and benefiting from that growth. In the past three decades based on socio-economic, and socio-political variables Zimbabwe human capital has been eroded, with large numbers of both skilled and unskilled labour migrated to other countries in search of better opportunities (Crush and Tevera, 2010:1; Tevera and Zinyama, 2001).

**Table 8.1: Population Distribution in 2012**

Total	Female	Male	
13 061 239	6 780 700	6 280 539	
Urban Population	Urban/ Rural 4 284 145	Rural Population	8 777 094
	Age Composition %s		
Under 15 years	41%		
15- 64 years	55%		
65+ years	4%		

*Source:* Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZimStat) [www.zimstat.co.zw-population-census-vital](http://www.zimstat.co.zw-population-census-vital)

In 2016, the population of Zimbabwe was calculated and recorded to be 15 966 809 (see [www.populationpyramid.net/zimbabwe/2016](http://www.populationpyramid.net/zimbabwe/2016)). However, while the population was growing, mass emigration has increased. In an interview on 16 August 2015 Bishop Bakare states that, the exodus of thousands of Zimbabweans is a result of the Zimbabwean government’s political actions and the country’s decline which led to the economic destitution and desperation to citizens especially young people. This has ultimately forced them to leave their country to survive somewhere else, with South Africa being the most preferred destination. Although, a large number of people have left, the majority remained and they are soldiering on with hope of transformation. Those who remain are determined as much as those who left are hopeful for

reconstruction. The question is who will bring transformation in Zimbabwe unless the Zimbabweans themselves come together and demand “let’s start reconstruction”.

## **8.2. Zimbabwe Fragility and Reconstruction**

The fragility is evident when basic services and functions that ensure livelihood are not available or are collapsing (Bird and Prowse, 2008: 3). The environment of fragility is worsened when there is no political will, economical capacity and institutional incapacity to directly or indirectly ensure wellness. This thesis asserts that Zimbabwe’s environment is fragile and requires reconstruction for the benefit of the citizens. This fragility is part of the crisis and struggles that cut across the whole Zimbabwean demography and space. Zimbabwe has potential to rise up from the situation for it is rich in resources and a strong Christian population. The reconstruction vision transcends crisis and despair and is centred on ensuring a future. The Zimbabwean quest for social transformation and for the building of a new society can be established in spirit, consciences and creative imagination of the people (Mana, 2004: 3).

In the urban (Harare as a case study) people are living under difficult conditions; inadequacy of safe and clean water in most urban suburbs, collapsing waste management system, dilapidated sanitation system, no electricity and unemployment. The national economic crisis also has a strong bearing on the performance of the public health sector, education, and social outlook of urban centres. The street people (no longer only street children) are increasing every day, drug and alcohol abuse and increased criminal activities. This creates a vicious cycle of crises in which the major victims are the ordinary citizens. The urban environment in Zimbabwe depicts high levels of poverty in which the poor live in invariable suffering due to the tragedy of the commons and they become prisoners of economic and political dilemma. This bleak scenario has been exacerbated by the outbreak of communicable diseases such as; cholera, and typhoid, 1992/1993, 1994, 1997, 2008/2009 and 2014/2016 (WHO, 2009; Shimomura and Matsumoto, 2010/1; Chigudu, 2016: 41). These communicable diseases outbreaks (cholera and typhoid) thus, are not only a social health challenge; they are signals to Zimbabwe’s deepening political and economic crisis.

Poverty and suffering is still predominantly labelled a rural phenomenon because the people depends on agriculture and relies on the support from the urban residues. Rural areas have suffered the mass migration of breadwinners or home care givers into urban or neighbouring countries exposing more children and elderly people to untold crisis. The United Nations

Country Office report in 2014 suggest that almost 80% of the rural population is poor, compared to 40% of the same in urban areas (Dzingai, Mutopo and Nyikahadzoi, 2015: 9). Access to education and health institution remain a challenge to the rural population. Children-head families is a common case in rural Zimbabwe as parents might have died due to lack of medical attention, or they have migrated in search of economic survival. Several livelihood strategies become subject to the behaviour and choices adopted by many people in Zimbabwe. The diaspora population is affected by the economic and political instability in the country. They are expected to support their families in Zimbabwe.

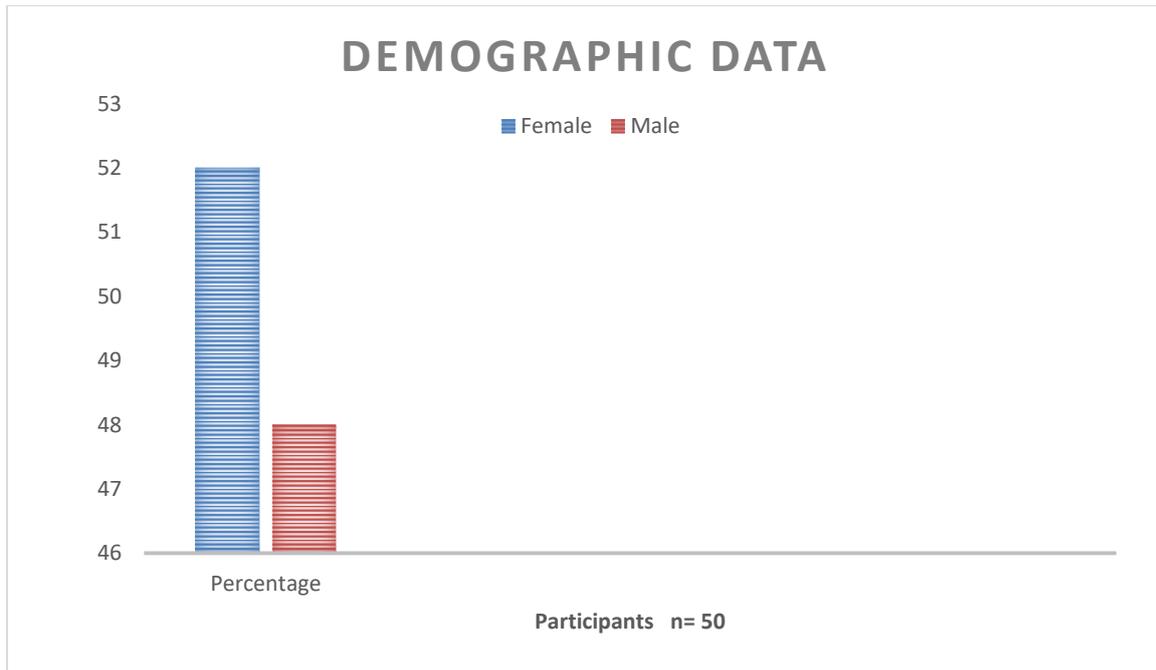
### **8.3. Women's Engagement with Crisis: The Concern of Reconstruction Theology**

It cannot be denied that women, including girls, comprise the highest number of the Zimbabwean population (see Table 8.1). Women become vulnerable to the crisis in Zimbabwe, because of the cultural concept "*musha mukadzi*", meaning the wellbeing of a household is in the hands of the women. Further, in postcolonial Zimbabwe, there are large numbers of female-headed families. The roles and responsibilities of women in post-colonial Zimbabwe comprise of handling the daily survival issues of the family, teaching the children because teachers are not there and crossing the borders for economic sustenance. As such, women are the worst affected by the socio-economic and political distresses that Zimbabwe faced with. This section informs that African women have a crucial role to play in the development, reconstruction and stability of their communities, churches and nations. Women are the fountain of life, responsible for human growth.

In this thesis, the role of women in transformation comes from the roots that they are the mothers who mobilise consciousness of effectiveness from conception through to death. As they carry the child African women speak sense to the unborn child and during breastfeeding they teach responsibility. Zimbabweans have a strong value of mothers and family. Communities are made strong with the family values taught mostly by mothers.

Figure 8.1 supports the undertaking of the role of women in reconstruction as they responded effectively to the questionnaires and they were more willing to engage in conversations with the researcher.

**Figure 8.1. Demographic Data**



The sample consisted of participants 53 and 3 questionnaires were not validated, as the responses were not complete. The research was intended to have more participants but some the recipients of questionnaires did not commit themselves to the research, while some declined to participate in the research. Hence, the number of respondents became 50 (N=50).

Figure 8.1 represents the distribution according to gender, where 52% were female participants with 48% being male participants. This figure indicates that females are more concerned with the welfare of the nation. In addition, females are active participants in various matters. This led Prim Nyabadza during an interview on 23 April 2015 to assert that, “women are more vulnerable and too delicate in this environment” (Nyabadza, 2015). This is indeed true since women are found to be numerous participants in political rallies and Christian churches. Mashalaba (2012: 123) asserts that, “in Southern Africa, women are affected most by social issues than their male counterparts are and females are more likely to participate in social motions that seek to redress the burning issues”. Elizabeth Vengeyi (2012: 366) bemoans the land redistribution “Jambanja” of 2000 as it created more suffering for women in Zimbabwe. The political violence of that era affected women badly they were raped, tortured and left without accommodation and sustenance.

Reconstruction theology recognises the importance of women. This attention and “focus arises from the facts that women are the majority, programmes will be needed for enabling women

to increase their productivity and efficiency in sustained well-being” (Mugambi, 1995: 177). Women are less selfish and more dedicated to their responsibilities and duties. If women are the most affected with crisis in Zimbabwe, so they should be the champions of reconstruction. This involvement will, in turn boost self-confidence, self-efficiency, self-determination and self-driven desire to transform the history of despair and suppression. The church is therefore, challenged to consider the women in her mission and service, for the church already have structures to utilise to achieve transformation championed by women.

#### **8.4. Women Ruwadzano<sup>67</sup> (Mothers’ Union) and Reconstruction**

In the Anglican Church in Zimbabwe, women and children make up 65% -75% of most of the congregations both in rural and urban parishes. Reverend Shelton Namanzonjo<sup>68</sup> who is a parish priest in Dowa Rusape rural during a telephone interview (16 July 2017), commented that, “Mothers’ Union is the church in the rural areas for most families are women headed since the man (husbands) have either passed on or they are in South Africa (mostly) or in towns here in Zimbabwe”. This sustains Marguerite Akossi-Mvongo’s argument that “women are the mainstay of the church in Africa and around the world. At gatherings of prayer and Eucharist celebrations women are heavily represented” (Akossi-Mvongo, 2016: 243). Therefore, women contribute to the sustenance of the parishes but more significantly they become true disciples for they read the Bible from a perspective of commitment and encouragement.

Reverend Jasper Ziera<sup>69</sup> and Reverend Kingston Kajakata<sup>70</sup>, during a conversation (group skype interview) on 23 July 2017, affirm that Mothers’ Unions in other parishes are the co-workers with the priest for they cooperate with dedication and passion regardless of the struggles they face. They referred to Philippians 4:1-3, where Paul was moved to say sisters Euodia and Syntyche had become true labourers and fellow workers in the gospel to point to

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<sup>67</sup> More of the material on Women Ruwadzano (Kuwadzana) would focus on the Anglican Church initiatives. But Ruwadzano is a familiar Zimbabwean term referring to women ministry – Mothers Union. It is dominantly used in Anglican Church, Methodist Church, United Methodist Church, Roman Catholic and Baptist Church. However it has become also popular in the Ecumenical Fellowships of Women in Zimbabwe where denominations come together usually on Saturdays to fellowship and pray together as a RUWADZANO – Mubatanidzwa weMadzimai.

<sup>68</sup> Reverend Shelton Namanzonjo, is an ordained priest in the Anglican Diocese of Manicaland (Mutare) serving in Dowa Parish in rural Rusape. He is also the Manicaland Diocesan Youth Chaplain.

<sup>69</sup> Reverend Jasper Ziera is an ordained priest in the Anglican Diocese of Manicaland (Mutare) serving in the Nyanga area. He is passionate in healing ministry and talent in singing.

<sup>70</sup> Reverend Kingston Kajakata is the Rector of St Peter’s Anglican Parish in Marondera (Harare Diocese).

the role of Ruwadzano in mission and ministry in the local parishes (Sampa-Bredt, 1997: 209). Mothers' Union are the ones who take the responsibility to give children education and community stability. Ruwadzano constitute the majority of catechists and this role would not end in only church or parish life but even in society.

During an interview Faith Gandiya<sup>71</sup> (popularly known as Amai Gandiya) the president of the Mothers' Union in the Diocese of Harare (23 July 2017) articulates that Mothers Union are involved in society, they are taking active participation in sustainable development, advocacy, HIV and AIDS education and community development". The church has empowered the Mothers' Union to reach its full potential in society and in community development, showing that the church acknowledges the reconstruction value of Ruwadzano.

The Anglican Church in Zimbabwe adopted the Church Community Mobilization Process (CCMP). This initiative was introduced by the global Tearfund organisation in helping churches to be part of the solution in their context (Reverend Manjengwa during an interview 8 January 2015). Through the CCMP, churches inspire and empower citizens to identify needs in their community and to mobilise their own resources to address them (Zimunya, 2015: 2). The mobilisation process is centred on biblical reflection which then stimulates action and rightful projects to be undertaken. The CCMP encourages Ruwadzano to fellowship, pray together, listen to each other and then work together with commitment and passion for the wellbeing of the community. In Karoi the CCMP opened a health garden which is helping in the healthy eating and living for the better of the community (Zimunya, 2015: 4). Such interventions and initiatives becomes reconstructive and liberative since the community's welfare is being transformed for the better.

It is significant that most women in the rural Zimbabwe have become heads and bread-winners through their resilience in economic struggle. Survival is now by subsistence farming. This subsistence farming has translated to the urban farming. Commenting on urban subsistence farming, Chipso Mutonhodza<sup>72</sup> (interview on 19 July 2017) coordinator of Church Community Mobilization at Ruwa Parish said, "small urban subsistence farming is helping people have

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<sup>71</sup> Amai Faith Gandiya is President of the Mothers' Union Guild in the Anglican Diocese of Harare. She is the wife to Bishop Chad Gandiya.

<sup>72</sup> Mrs Chipso Mutonhodza is a committed member of the Mothers' Union Guild and she is a parishioner at Holy Trinity Anglican Ruwa Parish.

basic food on their tables. Women are working in their small portions and producing enough for their families”.

### **8.5. Kuwadzana (Ruwadzano) for Social Transformation**

Kuwadzana gather for prayer or fellowship mostly on Thursdays (*China* or commonly *Kuchina*) in most urban areas. In the rural areas Kuwadzan meetings are on Fridays (*Chishanu* mostly known as *Kuchishanu*). In Harare Diocese the rallying song-cum-slogan is *Kuwadzana woyeee!! Mukristu Usanete!!* (Women! Christian Seek ye no repose!). These meetings are characterised by exuberant singing and dancing over and above the contextual Bible teachings.

Faith Gandiya states that “Kuwadzana has been ministering to families—men, women and children and making a difference in societies for 140 years in Zimbabwe. The Mothers’ Union contextually preached to the needs of the family, peaceful society, and transformation” (Gandiya, 2015: 1). Kuwadzana’s life is not a bed of roses, it is punctuated with experiences of joy, suffering, endurance and uncertainty given the myriad of concerns she has to handle. However, Kuwadzana is an emancipatory identity constructed as liberating and sobering when faced with challenges. *Huamai* (motherhood) of a Kuwadzana has social sanctions as behaviour and livelihood is guided by Christian ethics. Kuwadzana earns respect among the members of their fellowship and in community at large (social esteem). Lucey (2006: 476) asserts that, “of all contexts in which identities are shaped, it is in families that the tension between self and collective most effectively works to pattern the frameworks through which we come to make sense of ourselves and the world around us”.

Africans are known for being rhythmic; song and dance define their gatherings and events. It is in song and dance that emotions are expressed and felt (Mawusi, 2015: 129) . Leah Chipesa<sup>73</sup> during an interview on 12 June 2015 explains the essence of Kuwadzana gatherings saying, “Kuwadzana gathering is about singing out your anger, your frustrations and then dancing out the crisis women are subjected to economically, socially and politically. Such that by the time you arrive home your perspective of life is transformed since the existent of singing and dancing will carry you till the next China”. While this can be argued against as not a correct way of living, the point is that Kuwadzana is therapeutic for most women. When they gather there

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<sup>73</sup> Ms Leah Chipesa is a committed member of the Mothers’ Union Guild and she is a parishioner at Holy Trinity Anglican Ruwa Parish.

is solidarity and there is healing. This therapy is reconstructive as Yoga or Zumba<sup>74</sup> in other parts of the world are considered therapeutic so is Kuwadzana's singing and dance in the Anglican Church in Zimbabwe. Dancing feet and jubilant songs give relevance to the balance between the spiritual and the material existence (Daneel, 2007: 3).

### **8.6. Reconstructed Masculinity: Men's Role in Reconstruction Discourse**

In Zimbabwe, men are believed to be strong and upheld as the providers, protectors and victors. From early childhood, the roles of a boy are defined in terms of physical strength and the expectations of taking initiative. Historically, Zimbabwean culture was no different from that of the Judeo-Christian perspective when it comes to masculinity. Based on this for a long time the privileges of girl-child were categorically different from those of boy-child. In family and in society men are leaders. Sadly though, violence, suffering and abuse have been instigated by mostly men against women or other men (van Klinken, 2012).

Reconstruction theology cannot be complete without men. With the centrality of the Bible in Zimbabwe, the biblical manhood and fatherhood is emphasised. Man is viewed as the head of the family. Some critics argue that Zimbabwe is a patriarchal society, where men are left to lead, decide, dominate and direct (Vengeyi, 2013). The socio-economic and political crisis forced many citizens to take up the exit option, thereby contributing to the ballooning of the Zimbabwean Diaspora (Chitando, 2012). Many men left Zimbabwe, in efforts to scratch for economic means to feed their families. Traditionally men are viewed as solution finders.

Reconstruction theology seeks the wholeness of the community and the well-being of the society. This entails also challenging transformatively some of the socially dominant forms of manhood. The academic landscape took interest in seeking the connection of the social ills of millennium with men and masculinity. Zimbabwe, faced with issues such as HIV and AIDS, sexual abuse, corruption, domestic violence, plunder and dispossession as perpetuated by men, has to challenge manhood. Reconstructed manhood instils the value of integrity, service, love and being bold to challenge the destructive status quos in Zimbabwe. Men have so much to offer, as protectors of society, as husbands and fathers, as grandparents and as role models

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<sup>74</sup> Yoga has origins in India Hindu spirituality. It includes posture, breathing, control of some forces, visualisation, chanting of some songs, and meditation. It is spiritual and yet therapeutic for the mind and the body. While Zumba is mainly dancing which is also rated highly relevant for healing and right state of living.

(Parry, 2013: 98). The notion of men's (patriarchy) dividend has to be replaced by virtues of reconstruction. Ezra Chitando (2016: 2) argues that the era of patriarchal benefits seeks to be analysed alongside the coming of patriarchal burden – which includes the commitment, expectation, and responsibility”. In the call for reconstruction men ought to be “real men” as the circumstances are real and commanding real solutions.

Churches are to explore principle values of concern in men that will help in the reconstruction of society. Men are crucial players in the reconstruction discourse in Zimbabwe. There is a need to redefine and reemphasise men's role of protectors, providers, and gatekeepers in light of the value of reconstructing better society.

*Hurume* (strong man) is complimented by *hubaba* (fatherhood), implying provider, and protector of the family. *Hubaba* has more to do to fathering and to be able to produce the seed from your loins implies that one is mature and accountable. This maturity is realised in being able to responsibly caring for your home and carry the burdens productively, determinatively and transformatively. *Hurume* is when men become solution providers in situations of despair. *Hurume* is not to shed tears and show that one is scared even if everyone else is in tears, *hurume* is to assure hope and wellness. The church in Zimbabwe is to exhibit *hurume* in being the wall builders and at same time being providers of hope. The *hurume* (strong men) and *hubaba* (fatherhood) Shona understanding has to be engaged and revived as to effectively achieve the envisioned reconstruction.

### **8.7. Vabvuwi men's Guild<sup>75</sup> *Dare revarume* for Reconstruction**

In Zimbabwe African traditional religion, men were to sit at *padare* (meeting place). At *padare revarume* (men's meeting place) critical family matters were discussed and in most cases communal wellbeing was strategized. *Padare*, men of wisdom, dignity and experience participate in the social communal issues as they are consulted during the *dare* (men's meetings) conversations (Chimuka, 2001). Chigidi (2009: 2) observes that “every society and

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<sup>75</sup> The information on Men's Guild will be focusing on the Anglican Church. Although there are similar setups in many other churches such as Roman Catholic, United Methodist, Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, Reformed Church in Zimbabwe and Baptists. Guilds are the special groupings of men according to interest and value. In Pentecostal denominations the popular ones are Men's Fellowship and Young Couples Association. All these groupings are relevant as they aim to address the specific contextual needs of men.

every culture has its own ways of socialising its own people” so that they are made socially responsible and determined.

In the Anglican Church, the Vabvuwi (Fishers of Men), are significantly known with their black badge and the blue guild belts which symbolises determination and commitment. Their purpose is to study the Bible from the perspective of empowering and transforming man as an individual and transforming the family life thereafter. During an interview on 18 October 2016 Precious Shumba<sup>76</sup> emphasised that, the Vabvuwi guild places value on the family, the church’s wellbeing and societal stability. The Vabvuwi guild regularly meets on Thursdays for contextual Bible study (*dare revarume*) and Saturdays for all-night vigil prayers (*pungwe*). During the *dare revarume* Thursday meetings, Vabvuwi at Holy Trinity Ruwa Parish discuss topics of relevance, specialist facilitators are invited and the *dare* is open to all men of the community. Precious Shumba (interview 18 October 2016) alludes that Vabvuwi meetings have transformed in form, in the past it was strictly Bible studies but now socio-economic and socio-political topics are openly discussed for the benefit of a transformed awareness and attitude. The church as the children of God shares in Christ’s prophetic office by means of bearing witness to the Gospel. In the social and political life of the nation, the church is expected to contribute to its welfare (Taylor, 1957: 50).

During an interview on 2 September 2017 Reverend William Nyapokoto<sup>77</sup>, indicated that “Vabvuwi are a pillar in the ministry and in the well-being of the community. They are dedicated in demonstrating the gospel message”. Vabvuwi have the spiritual and the worship commitment. The Vabvuwi mission orientation is importantly geared towards reconstruction. During an interview on 7 January 2015 Rev Gwese indicated that “Vabvuwi have clear concepts of way of life and conduct their personal business, which is a valuable asset for the church”. This affirms what Micheal Gelfand (1981: 52) has earlier observed when he comments, “the Shona have a definite concept of virtues and vices, which constitutes behaviour in their society and it is important”.

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<sup>76</sup> Mr Precious Shumba, is a senior Mubvuwi member. He is also the communications officer of the Zimbabwe Anglican Vabvuwi Guild Association.

<sup>77</sup> Reverend William Nyapokoto is the Zimbabwe Vabvuwi Guild National Chaplain while he is also the Diocese of Harare Vabvuwi Guild Chaplain.

The Vabvuwi have a strict adherence to the purity codes where one has to exhibit a pure life. According to their constitution; article 3 a (Membership), “the guild is for married men in the Anglican, with a single wife, devoted to abide by the Ten Commandments as prescribed” (Vabvuwi Constitution, 2011). The Chibongore village headman Mr Petros Muzembe during an interview on 3 August 2017, commented on the Vabvuwi’s impact in community cohesion, saying “*mumusha munekutsiga varume awa vanebasa*”, (the village is dignified by the Vabvuwi presence and mission). The moral value regulates conduct and mould *hunhu* (commendable character) Shona principles. These, Vabvuwi strict moral values are not distanced from the Shona virtues and values. For Chimuka (2001: 26), “Shona virtues are socially determined and social cohesion is based on the Shona system of values”. Chimuka identified a number of virtues upheld by the Shona such as truthfulness, humility, love, compassion, self-control, forgiveness, mercifulness, sufficiency, trustworthiness, strength, courage and industriousness (Chimuka, 2001:26; Gelfand, 1981: 82). All these are values if utilised to fullness, reconstruction of communal conscience of accountability and responsibility are achieved. Reconstructively the church has consciously become a morally relevant social agent of change and transformation. Through their mission, Vabvuwi in various local parishes encourage avoiding vices and promote virtues that enhances social cohesion.

### **8.8. The Young People in Reconstruction of Zimbabwe**

The terms young people or youth will be used interchangeably in this section. Youth is a cultural bound concept to refer to that group of males and females aged from 13-35 years<sup>78</sup>. The history of the young people, during colonialism is a mixture of suppression, denial and then political activism. During the colonial era, the black youth were not counted, their voice was not to be heard and they were discriminated against by the white regime. However, this research produces that it was in 1955 that George Nyandoro, aged 29, led the formation of Salisbury City Youth League (Chung, 2007). The Zimbabwean liberation war was largely waged by the youth who had either left school or who had failed to secure employment. Some youths participated in the struggle as *chimbwindos* and *mujibas* (war collaborators or informants). This shows that young people historically contributed significantly to the building of Zimbabwe. Reports from Uganda, Somalia, South Sudan, Nigeria and Democratic Republic

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<sup>78</sup> Zimbabwe’s definition of youth or young person is in line with the African Union (AU) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Youth Policies. The United Nations provision that youth is any young person between the ages of 15-24, is too restrictive in the African scenario.

Congo have also shown that ethnic or regional wars are resourced by the energy of the young people.

This research asserts that, from 1980-2000, the youths became a forgotten social component in politics and social transformation. However, acknowledgement has been made of the educational policies of the “celebration transition phase”, which allowed many youths to access education, such that in 2000, a great number of young people were holders of university degrees (Chitando, 2012). The postcolonial Zimbabwe regime of ZANU PF reawakened to the need to invest in the youth from 2000. This was not incidental, but timely with the formation of a strong political party MDC in 1999, the success of the no vote to the draft referendum of 2000 and the economic decline. The Zimbabwe Constitution section 20:1(b) and the Zimbabwe National Youth Policy (ZNYP) 2000 then stipulates that all institutions and agencies of government, at every level, must ensure that youths have opportunities to associate and to be represented in politics, social and economic spheres of life (Daimon, 2014). Youth development is crucial in addressing reconstruction challenges in Zimbabwe. Conventionally, youth have been looked at and represented as nuisances, outgoing, pleasure seekers, misguided energetics, and delinquent, misguided, individuals causing social crises, as being coerced into mischief and as subjects rather than agents of their own lives.

### **8.9. Christian Youth<sup>79</sup>: Impact Mission for Transformation**

Figure 8.2 indicates 13% (18-25) and 20% (26-35) as comprising of young participants which corresponds with the Zimbabwe Anglican Youth Association (ZAYA) and Anglican Youth Association of Harare (AYAH) constitutions definition of a youth. The constitutions affirm membership to be open to single and childless individuals between 12 years to 35 years (ZAYA Con 15.1; AYAH Con 8.a). Reconstruction theology pays attention to the capacity of the young people in transformation (Mugambi, 1995: 181). The church has to harness the energy, the intelligence, adventurous determination and the brightness of the young people for transformation. This should happen earlier before they are led to believe in the quick fix mentality, passivity to social realities and deviance.

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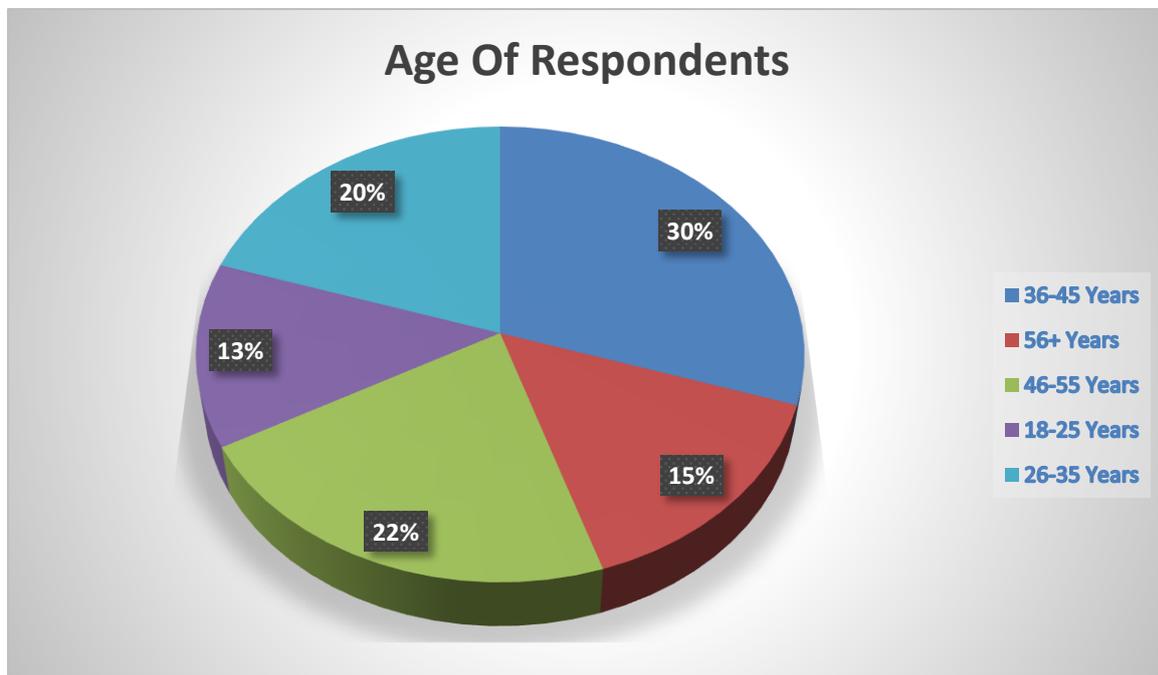
<sup>79</sup> This research will address the Christian Youth understanding from the Anglican Church denomination, as a representative of the Christian fraternity in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe Anglican Youth Association (ZAYA) is the mother board for all the 5 Anglican Dioceses youth association such as Anglican Youth Association of Harare (AYAH).

The mission school of the post-colonial Zimbabwe are relevantly crucial in the education system of the country. It is in these mission (mostly boarding or residential) schools that young have more interactions than with their families. The church schools should serve as centres for the cultivation of moral norms (Mugambi, 1995: 187). Moral education includes a range of components and is not limiting. The transformed integrity and identity is a moral concern in the young people in Zimbabwe. The principles of virtues and responsibility are basis of moral uprightness. The church should train its school chaplains in relationship to the demands of reconstruction and transformation.

In Zimbabwe theology of reconstruction is to instil transformed attitude and conscience in the mind-set of the young people. This is to bring the Christian vision of stewardship which includes and not limiting to responsible stewardship to the values of being a Zimbabwean, responsible stewardship to resources, transformed stewardship to power dynamics, politics and economics. Reverend Shelton Namanzonjo (interview on 16 July 2017) adds on to the list “with responsible understanding of sexuality, stewardship to their environment, their families and their neighbours. In the rural areas the reverend and the church should prepare the young to embrace the challenges with hope”. Reverend Jasper Ziera, (interview on 23 July 2017) states that “the church in the rural area is an institution established to give hope to the young people. The young girls with a bright future can be manipulated for sexual favours for a sweet/caddy or small bar of chocolate. Young boys can easily give up on education and get into drugs and alcohol”. The church has to fill the gap of parenting, for most families are now children-headed. It is in the church that young people can learn how to be responsible, honest, determined and accountable.

In addressing the social transformation the Anglican Diocese of Harare has initiated youth programs that are reconstructive. Reverend Paul Gwese (interview on 7 January 2015) said, “it is no longer Gospel without relevance when it comes to youth ministry. The young people are longing to hear the Christian view on the social, political, and economic challenges we are facing as a nation”. The church mobilised young people to realise their impact to social transformation.

**Figure 8.2. Age Group Respondents**



The chart shows that 36-45 year old participants are at a prime age to be affected by the crisis of Zimbabwe as presented in this study. This range had 30% of the participants. This age group is the most productive category of people in Zimbabwe. They are industrious and they desire a just society where means of productions are accessible. Tirivanhu Matambanadzo (2014), when asked in an interview (09 July2014), “what do you consider requires reconstruction today in Zimbabwe?” He responded saying, “the structures which can assure the well-being of the industrious young people in Zimbabwe. Young people desire good life and yet they cannot afford it because the means of production are not available”. Indeed, the future of the Zimbabwean community depends largely on the motivation and preparation of the young generation. Reconstruction is possible when the energy of the young and industrious is channelled towards national transformation. The “church is challenged to restore hope and confidence in the young” (Mugambi, 1995: 178).

This range is followed by the 46-55 years old who make up 22% of the total respondents. These are considered to have enjoyed the life of the transitional Zimbabwe from 1980 – 1988. During this period, apart from the Gukurahundi massacres in Matebeleland, the socio-economic well-being was somehow labelled good. This was the time of structural reconstruction, education

for all, the resettlement programme and social warfare support for the under privileges. This range of respondents can be argued to have tested good times of the transition period. Some of them argue that indeed the fruits of Independence are being realised. Norman Muzanenhamo during an interview on 5 September 2014, responding to the question, “what does Zimbabwe’s Liberation entail for the ‘common’ Zimbabwean?” highlighted, freedom of “rights”, the ability to own a house in any suburb one desires, to walk in any street of Zimbabwe without fear and to have access to services without discrimination, due to colour or tribe (Muzanenhamo, 2014). This clearly supports the assertion that, during colonialism, blacks were not allowed to walk in certain streets, to shop in certain shops and to be found owning a house in certain suburbs. Hence, a great musician of his time Simon Chopper Chimbetu<sup>80</sup>, composed a song in the album “African Panorama Chapter 1” entitled Ndima, in which he lamented the class distinction that was pronounced in the locations where blacks and whites were found. Archford Musodza (questionnaire) in responding to the meaning of liberation to the “common” Zimbabwe, he wrote;

*To the ordinary Zimbabwean liberation entails walking in 1<sup>st</sup> Street of Harare, without being arrested by the white man or harassed by the police. In the rural areas, it means grazing cattle everywhere and in the villages, it means there are no fences of demarcation of black plots and white plots. To some, it means staying in urban locations and suburbs of choice even without electricity or running water and roads frothing with potholes. A liberated Zimbabwe means the rich and powerful continue to amass wealth while the poor continue to slide into abject poverty.*

This means that liberation remains abstract when people are only free to move around, yet not enjoying access to the means of production. The “common” people were expecting a better life than just walking in 1<sup>st</sup> Street of Harare. Although they were denied access to the street their wellbeing is more expected in liberated Zimbabwe.

Of interest is the participation of the 26-35 year old respondents who made up 20% of the survey. In Zimbabwe, these are commonly referred to as “the born frees” implying that those who were born after colonialism or those who are born free of white rule. The questions they struggled with most were those of the pre-colonial and colonial experiences. Interviewing Doctor Mike (not real name) on 13 August 2014, a “born free” who was born in 1990s after independence states that, experience of colonialism is library based and it sounds more fascinating than the experience of the independent Zimbabwe, while the black politicians

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<sup>80</sup> Simon Chimbetu is a late Zimbabwean musician, talented as a guitarist, vocalist and composer. He was the founding member of Orchestra Dendera Kings Band. He was popularly known as “Chopper”.

(government/ regime) cannot openly declare the Unilateral Declaration of Autocratic Rule as Ian Douglas Smith bravely declare the Unilateral Declaration of Independence. However, Zimbabwe is experiencing a silent Unilateral Autocratic Rule under the ZANU PF tired and sleeping nationalists (Doctor, 2014). For Doctor Mike (2014), Zimbabwe requires reconstruction from the top to the bottom. The leaders require transformation to appreciate the values of stewardship. During an interview on 15 August 2014 young Hezel Machuma (pseudo name) who is a first year student at Bindura University emotionally said “since my birth, I have known ZANU PF in power with Cde Robert Mugabe as President. I want to experience a new Zimbabwe with a different president and/or different political party. This made some school children in Zimbabwe to even aspire to be Cde Robert Mugabe for they think for one to be a president in Zimbabwe one has to be Robert Mugabe”.

This chart has managed to categorise the distribution of the research participants according to age. Age in this research produced the varied perspectives the people have concerning the subject of transformation. This sampling of data is critical since perspective is shaped by the particularity of age.

The participants regardless of their ages, agreed upon the need for reconstruction. However, the 46-55 age category view independence of Zimbabwe in the eyes of the struggle for liberation. This means they are “happy” with what Zimbabwe is now. For them, colonialism was worse and the liberation war was horrifying and if there is anything to celebrate it is the absence of war. It is among this category where there are some who are in politics, although they did not go to battlefronts. In the political discourses, they are referred to as G40, meaning Generation of the 40s.

**Table 8.2. The Socio- Distribution Characteristics of the Respondents**

Variables	Gender		Total N=50	Percentage
	Male n=20	Female n=30		
<b>Marital Status</b>				
Single	7	10	17	34
Married	11	16	27	54
Widowed	2	4	6	12
<b>Level of Education</b>				
Ordinary Level	2	3	5	10
Advanced Level	1	2	3	6
Diploma	4	4	8	16
Bachelor	7	5	12	24

Masters	5	4	9	18
other	9	4	13	26

**Occupation**

Teacher	3	3	6	12
Banker	2	0	2	4
Health worker	3	3	6	12
Industry worker	2	2	4	8
Tertiary Experts	4	2	6	12
Unemployed	1	4	5	10
Self employed	4	6	10	20
Farmer	3	2	5	10
Student in tertiary	3	3	6	12

Table 8.2 illustrates the movement of respondents as distributed in categories of status, gender, levels of education and professionalism. This table demonstrates that a wider range of participation and perspectives on reconstruction is restricted. Married Zimbabweans are affected with the crisis in society and at the same rate their desire for reconstruction is a higher percentage than that of the singles.

Table 8.2 shows the make-up of the respondents in terms of occupation. The highest percentage of 20% is attributed to those respondents who are self-employed. This can be explained through the transformative economy of Zimbabwe where Small and Medium Entrepreneurs (SMEs) are being encouraged to try to close the gap of formal unemployment rate. The struggles in the country have abject effects upon graduates from universities who are without employment. This led some critics to argue that the buying and selling economy of Zimbabwe left everyone educated and uneducated a vendor. The largest population became “self-employed” (to make their survival activities sound technical uplifting) but in essence vending is their business.

The table does not reflect any political players. This is because the situation in Zimbabwe is sensitive so that even the politically inclined respondents preferred to be identified with other interests or profession.

Where education is concerned more than 90% of the respondents indicated that they had achieved the ordinary level or equivalent standard. The aspect of education is critical in Zimbabwe, for the ordinary person is able to read and write. These results are congruent with

the report presented to United Nations on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, which rated Zimbabwe high in terms of literacy.

This table confirms the rate of education and the literate levels in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe's education system since independence has been strong. There was education for all program that enabled almost everyone to receive the basic education. Zimbabwe has been recommended for its adult education programs; thus, most adults who were denied education during colonialism are able to read and to write. During the war of liberation, many schools were closed down, thereby disturbing the education for some people. In post independent Zimbabwe, the government initiated that those who were denied education in one way or the other be given an opportunity to have basic or standard education. A good example is of former vice President Dr Joyce Mujuru (now president of People First opposition political party), who due to war dropped education to join the freedom fighters, upon return went back to school until she earned a Doctor of Philosophy Degree.

Nevertheless, the education system in Zimbabwe leaves much to be said as from 2000-2013 the levels shifted to the negative. Teachers, who used to be highly respected in the community as mentors of good behaviour are now regarded as poor civil servants. The government of ZANU PF suspected that teachers were influencing the community in regard to political criticism, thus they were exposed to suffering through low salaries. They became victims of political violence; in some areas teachers were tortured in broad daylight only to humiliate them. Their conditions of living became worse due to lowered salaries and no further gratuity (13<sup>th</sup> cheques) to their teaching services. While other civil servants were paid first they were paid last or went months without salary. This created a mass exodus of teachers and migration, exposed education system to unqualified and inexperienced personnel. This brain drain had some effect on the students and the quality of education. Teaching, which used to be an attractive profession has been turned into an embarrassing profession in Zimbabwe. Reconstruction values the importance of education and teachers in the community. The well-being of the community demands people with a passion to teach and to develop understanding. These people come in different forms, but professional teachers and the education curriculum remain a force which cannot be ignored.

**Figure 8.3. Zimbabwe and Reconstruction**

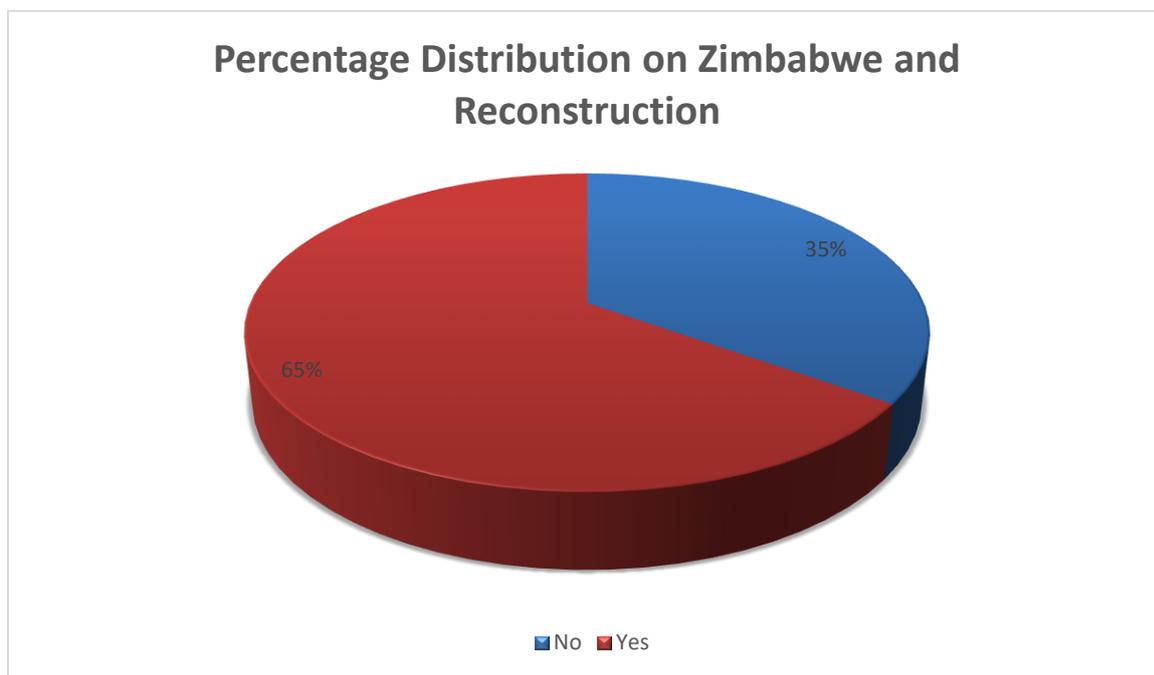


Figure 8.3 shows the results of responses in the research concerning the issue of Zimbabwe and the desire for reconstruction. The questionnaire and interviews were aimed at producing an understanding of the context for reconstruction discourse.

The majority of the respondents showed understanding that Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980 after a protracted armed struggle. The majority rule ushered in a dispensation of a “free Zimbabwe” from the British rule. This concurs with what Canaan Banana wrote of in “The Dawn of the New Zimbabwe” saying;

April 1980 was the finest moment for Zimbabwe, Africa and the whole progressive world. The long awaited moment ushered in an era of self-determination. After long years of dispossession, Zimbabweans were finally able to celebrate a well-earned victory to freedom. The birth of a New Zimbabwe (Banana, 1996: 218)”.

Indeed, independence signalled a turning point in the history of Zimbabwe. The momentous hoisting of the flag of Zimbabwe, “so designed in colours that scream of a history of oppression, resistance and ultimately of gaining freedom and independence” (Banana, 1996: 219) was significant. The euphoria of the early 1980s points to the fact that there was an unprecedented hope for every Zimbabwean to enjoy this newly won independence.

Then Arthur Mupunga (2014), a war veteran who experienced the struggle for independence vividly as a “comrade”, in an interview (26/08/2014), spoke with excitement of the feeling of April 1980.

Independence can mean different things to different people but in 1980 people converged upon common point, implied or expressed, that we were witnesses to the historic demise of the stifling and degrading shackles of colonial subjugation. It was indeed, an experience to be remembered. The dawn of a new nation of equal opportunity (Mupunga, 2014)

These words confirm the feeling expressed by Canaan Banana (a theologian and the first President of the New Zimbabwe) in his book *Politics of Repression and Resistance: Face to Face with Combat Theology*. Banana states that, “independence was a monumental victory for the forces of sanity and of civilisation in its true character” (1996: 219). Independence should be seen as the culmination of the collective efforts of several groups working towards a common goal of an open and all-inclusive society.

However, Ragies Gunda has questioned whether Zimbabwe is “Independent” with what is evident in the nation today. Internally, people are not free or independent, while external forces continue to influence the cause of Zimbabwe (Gunda, 2009).

The respondents commented on the pre-colonial and colonial setups. Of particular interest was the community mobilisation to sustainability, resistance and co-existence. Most of them affirmed that religion and spirituality were a critical rallying point of mobilisation. Communities were structured around traditional, cultural values that instils a sense of belonging and ownership. Farai Mutamiri<sup>81</sup> during an interview on 05 January 2015, stated that, “traditional religious leaders were the epitome of communal values, justice, accountability and responsible. They chartered the course of direction with a communal interest over their individual interests” (Mutamiri, 2015).

The majority of the respondents, as represented in the figure 8.3, affirm that while Zimbabwe had experienced some struggles and challenges pre-colonial and during colonialism, the struggles of the post-colonial era became more painful, for they are not supposed to be. The

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<sup>81</sup> He is a senior clergy in the Anglican Diocese of Harare. He was appointed the Rector of the Cathedral of St Mary's and All Saints and the Dean of Harare in 2008. The Very Reverend Mutamiri, is passionate with pastoral theology, church history and ecumenical studies.

respondents lamented that Africans, in particular, Zimbabweans, should be champions of an open, progressive, industrious and just society. One respondent Oripa Ameer wrote;

*Zimbabwe at independence was the jewel of Africa. Even today in 2014, Zimbabwe has the highest literate population who can read, write and decode English fluently. Zimbabwe has the most industrious and highly qualified personnel in all sectors of industry, commerce and sociology. Zimbabwe is rich in natural resources, minerals and rich soils for all agricultural production. However, what baffles many is the level of poverty and the struggle Zimbabweans have been exposed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century era.*

The question mostly asked is why Zimbabwe would fail its citizens as more are in economic or politically forced exiles (Chitando, 2013). South Africa is hosting a great number of Zimbabwean exiles, statistically. One respondent Eng Musa (not the real name), wrote the following in lamentation of the deplorable state of Zimbabwe that requires critical attention;

*Zimbabwe has virtually failed as a nation, having fallen from the glorious first fifteen years of independence. The economy and the infrastructure have collapsed, and they require full reconstruction. A third of the population is political and economic refugees in the diaspora, yearning to be repatriated to their motherland.*

Retired Bishop Sebastian Bakare (2013) then wrote *Broken Promises: A Letter to My Children* in which he also lamented to “his children” the deplorable state of Zimbabwe, the frustrations and the promises which never were. He states,

*The Republic of Zimbabwe is more than thirty years old. The years of political independence have been a period of mental devastation for those of us who had hoped for a better life and prosperity. Ordinary men and women feel betrayed and are hurting because the promises made during the liberation struggle have become pipe dreams (Bakare, 2013: 7).*

Indeed, independence was the first step forward from the colonial past, while the struggle for democracy remains ongoing. This thesis argues that reconstruction theology should be given consideration in a nation where the promises of independence have ruined and shattered due to selfish attitudes of the leaders. One respondent, Noah Muwaki (not the real name) with emotionality, wrote,

*Rhodesia, the country's name before independence had something desirable and/or admirable than Zimbabwe, as we now know it. The present scenario is such that not even a single thing of this country is desirable, enjoyable or admirable. The system of governance, the rule of law, the economy, the life, whatever you name it. In short life in Rhodesia was far much better than it is in Zimbabwe, so to speak.*

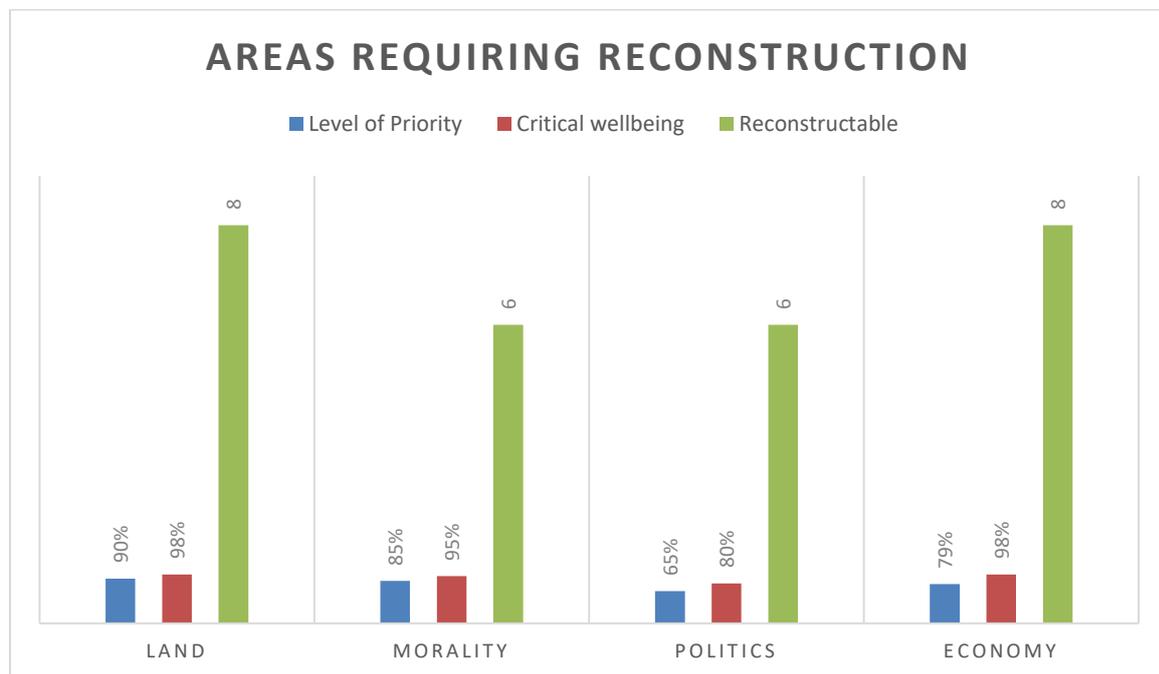
The common person is trapped in a deadly conundrum of poverty and pain. Archford Musodza laments:

*The majority are jobless to the dismay of the expectations of independence. Many children have been pulled out of school, making ends meet is generally a tenuous reality. The pain is just unbearable for the commoners as it is, whilst the ruling elite continue to plunder whatever little is left in the country*

The questionnaire and interviews further questioned the areas of priority for reconstruction and transformation. It is paramount to note that the majority of the respondents seem to agree on the areas. The chart below (Figure 8.4) will show the priorities participants put forward in percentages and on a scale of 1-10. With one (1) being the lowest and impossible and ten (10) being the highest and possible in terms of reconstruction.

One respondent Wycliff Magada, affirms that reconstruction is critically needed in Zimbabwe. He wrote, *“Total Reconstruction is required in Zimbabwe. We inherited a viable economy in both Agriculture and Industry but that has since gone”*. For him, the demands for reconstruction in Zimbabwe now cannot be sectorial but total and whole. He asserts that, the decay and fragile of the country is immerse and most visible in the shrinking economy.

**Figure 8.4. Priority Sectors Crying for Reconstruction in Zimbabwe**



Although the question sought for three priorities, figure 8.4 depicts four frequently mentioned areas by the respondents.

Agriculture represented here by land, is at the top of the list of priority. The concern confirms what this thesis alluded to earlier, that land is the backbone of Africa. Sebastian Bakare argues

that land is the birth right of Zimbabweans; hence, the reference to *mwana wevhu* “son of the soil” it is a pregnant statement pointing to the importance of land (Bakare, 1993; Mpondi, 2015: 512; Mangena, 2016: 95). Land in Zimbabwean culture is the authentic signifier of national, communal and village belonging and identity. Whilst identity and belonging cannot be limited to access to national resources, it is important in reconstruction that access to means of wellness is not a privilege of the few but for all. Whether poor or rich access to land is critical, not only as a means of production but also because it defines one’s belonging and identity. The respondents stated that land is critical to the well-being of the nation and citizens as shown by the 98% response on the chart.

One respondent commented

*Zimbabwe was once, and can become again, self-sufficient in most agricultural produce like maize (staple of Zimbabwe), with a surplus to exported to neighbouring countries, which is now the opposite, with neighbouring countries importing maize to Zimbabwe. This is largely due to the politically motivated, partisan and haphazard manner in which the land redistribution programme was implemented. This resulted in the total decimation of agricultural production. Land use must be de-politicised and rationalized to ensure maximum usage and production.*

The equitable land redistribution is possible where merit not party politics is the criteria for access to land. Archford Musodza commented that the land redistribution had turned violent. This is so because land is rich and land production enriches people.

*In postcolonial Zimbabwe, the economics of owning the means of production became hook and crook as the black elites scrambled for the well to do stable companies and well-resourced farms (with good farming equipment and implements). The white farmers were violently dispossessed. It became a retaliation type of reverse history of grab and own, as war veterans were on the rush and to grab a farm of choice. The land redistribution is by no means a noble program in postcolonial Zimbabwe; however, the way it was implemented left many without having and a few owning more than they can productively utilize.*

The same view is shared by Nisbert Taringa and Macloud Sipeyiye (2013: 56) who argue that “the land reform was a noble program is an undeniable fact. The colonial imbalances that hitherto had been obtaining, surely needed to be redressed”. It is not overreaching if one states that the Fast-track Land Reform of 2000-2008 was politically masterminded to keep ZANU PF in power and with a relevant rhetoric at the expense of the unpretentiousness of the objective of land redress post-colonial. “The ZANU PF government manipulated even the traditional belief surrounding the land issue to advance a political project. It clearly appeared that the program was not executed in all sincerity, but for political expedience, exploiting what is

politically advantageous, when Zimbabweans were eager for colonial reconstruction” (Taringa and Sipeyiye, 2013: 58).

Morality is the one critical component for reconstruction. Whilst the definition of morality could be contested here, reference should be made to integrity. Integrity involves behaviors, ethical principles and sound morals. The problems facing the just future of Africans is nothing less than the tension between individual interests and national interests (De Gruchy, 1995: 33). This tension is enshrined in the integrity of critical concerns to the well-being of the nation. With all due respect, without denying the negative legacy of colonialism, it has become evident that colonialism can no longer be held responsible for the present corruption, mismanagement and the abuse of human rights in Africa. In this light one respondent stated

*Due to years of mismanagement and neglect, our society is facing moral decay. Good is now bad and bad is now good! This has become a serious rust, corroding almost all sectors of life. Moral concern has to be addressed, since all other endeavors will continue to be negatively undermined by the immorality and selfishness that has now become characteristic of our society. Corruption is endemic now because we have lost our moral compass. It is critical, therefore, that programs be put in place from primary school through tertiary education where moral courses become compulsory and all institutions, including churches, be roped into imparting moral lessons to the society.*

There is a need to reconstruct the African understanding of human beings (Ubuntu) which is not infected with Europeanized understanding. For this the “Ubuntu, emphasis on respect for each person as an individual is fundamentally a morality subject. The emphasis is on human sociality, on inter-personal relations and on the need which each person has for others in order to be herself or himself” (De Gruchy, 1995: 191).

Politics is the other priority case for reconstruction. Politics here refers to all activities associated with governance and administering the means of production and people’s livelihoods. Politics seems to be a deciding factor in the national configurations setups. When there is “wrong” kind of politics, as exhibited in Zimbabwe post 2000 well-being is challenged for every other sector will collapse. In this light Sextus Samanyanga (not real name) a respondent to the research wrote scantily;

*Our problems are not natural nor mechanical but they are mere political. There is bad governance (if at all there is a government, for our political leaders are fattening themselves). It is a jungle life situation in Zimbabwe. As elsewhere in Africa, if you want to be rich quickly, join politics. The country is on autopilot with the symbolic pilot, Robert Mugabe, wearing pajamas in the cockpit. Corruption and poor international relations are our worst enemies. We need new blood in government. The country cannot*

*prosper with the recycling of ministers and one president, since independence. New ideas are lacking in the government and self-interest is the order of the day.*

The claim by the nationalist government that it is there to safeguard the Chimurenga interests and the sovereignty of Zimbabwe is a hard bone to chew. This has exposed Zimbabwe to one ruling political party for 36 years with one narrative of liberation. The liberation narrative has been bruised by the economic crisis and political instability, therefore reconstruction is a relevant discourse. The church is challenged to speak out against the political crisis in Zimbabwe.

One respondent lamented the postcolonial political outlook by saying:

*The postcolonial politics remained fragmented and polarized. The ruling elites tried one party state politics but that failed dismally. The polarity has now continued amongst the black people themselves, with the few whites left in the country not worried about politics or just supporting those who will help them keep their properties and asserts. The best way to describe this politics is that it is a politics of the stomach, with those who have developed big bellies wanting more and amassing more. Those who have nothing, hence, small bellies folding into their graves with nothing.*

This politics of enrichment requires reconstruction; hence, it was a source of worry for the participants in this research.

Commerce and economics had total 79%. This is so, not because it is not critical to the well-being of people in the community but when all the other three are critical and once industry and commerce are reconstructed, economy will then be transformed. The chart depicts 98% on its importance to the wholeness of the nation, meaning it is a crucial sector. When the economy is viable, then all other services, such as health and education will be transformed. Zimbabwe is currently experiencing a struggle in health services, with medical doctors charging high fees when the population is not economically sustained.

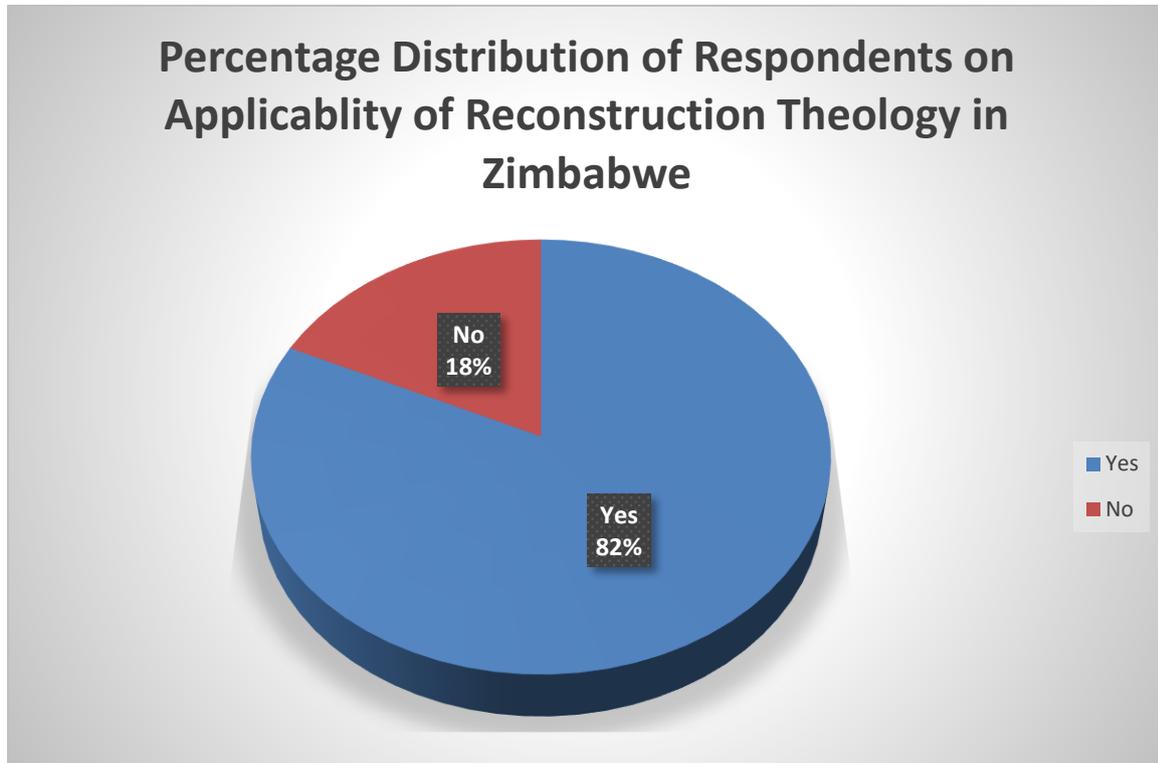
One respondent, on the case of the economic transformation and stated that;

*“Zimbabwe’s economic sector requires liberation, liberation from the neo-colonial insurgences of the capitalistic nations who continue to boss the developing countries and liberation from the postcolonial selfish administrators. The selfish administrators have accrued a selfish sense of entitlement that is holding the economy at ransom”*

The churches can design new, alternative, genuine strategies to enable people in the exploited communities to cope within a segregated, a shrinking economy that is driven by selfish behaviour. For Jesse Mugambi (1995: 156), “at the grassroots, church should empower the

locals with self-reliant programs, preservation and education on management”. There is also a need to preach truthful stewardship to the economic administrators.

**Figure 8.5. Applicability of Reconstruction Theology in Zimbabwe**



Only 18% of the participants professed some difficulties with the research interest. Some felt reconstruction discourse is worthy of opening. However, the political environment is still not safe to have such a dialogue. For this reason, they shunned questions such as “comment on the political situation in Zimbabwe post-colonial” and “what do you think caused the Zimbabwean current crisis state of affairs that requires reconstruction”. One participant Rudorwashe (not her real name), openly stated;

*This research is too sensitive given the volatility of our political status. While Zimbabwe is democratic and should respect the human rights and all human freedoms, at the moment, this is not granted. I am not protected if I comment on political influence and contributions to the Zimbabwean crisis. I do not have the freedom to express fully my option without being seen as an anti –regime.*

Indeed, this confirms what Kaulemu has observed;

Since 1890, Rhodesia and now Zimbabwe, has been monopolised by an empowered minority. Since colonialism, it has been a fort, or laager, protecting the interests of the few against the interests of the many. Institutions and processes of war, surveillance, and suspicion moulded the lives, of Zimbabweans (Kaulemu, 2010: 49).

This response of 18% underscores that the Church has to be prophetic in its mission mandate. The question on the role of the church in reconstruction was emphatically responded to. The majority of the participants agree that, “for good the church has the right and responsibility to ensure that the state did not transgress the boundaries of morality in pursuing its policies” (De Gruchy, 1995: 61). Thereby, the church should develop a prophetic vision in reconstruction and seek to revive the spirit of the Bible through prophetic advocacy. Ragies Gunda, during a conversation on 13 August 2015, said that the word of the prophets has always challenged the unjust social structures and in so doing, the prophetic voice is reconstructive in nature (Gunda, 2015).

Most of the respondents (82%) appreciated the study and the relevancy of the discourse. It has been affirmed during research that transformation is reconstruction and thereby, to reconstruct, brings renewal. The participants appreciated the value of the Christian faith in shaping the context of renewal in any given community. It is from this 82% section that the crisis in post-independence Zimbabwe was highlighted. In the whole socio-economic and political chaos and crisis that characterised Zimbabwe post-colonial there was a constant trading of blame regarding the source of problems. Some blamed this on ZANU PF, while some think that the crisis in Zimbabwe is multi-dimensional and multi-sectional. The laying of the crisis on ZANU PF is also echoed by David Kaulemu (2010) who argues, “ the desire to hold onto power by ZANU PF and by Mugabe, himself, contributed to the crisis that developed and came to a head in 2000” (2010: 48). This brings the dimension of politics to the crisis. Some have an economical narrative to the crisis, saying that the crisis or struggles are a contribution of some outside factors and made worse by the inside factors.

Molly Manyonganise (2013) took a critique upon the Christian bodies’ vision document “The Zimbabwe We Want of 2006” in which the title, itself, admits to the desire of a better Zimbabwe than the current on. This 2006 vision by the Christian heads of denomination was a vision for reconstruction discourse. The diagnosis of the crisis in Zimbabwe, by the church leaders pointed out that “part of the problem Zimbabwe faced was that it lacked a national vision since 1890 which had resulted in people failing to rally behind a common goal” (Manyonganise, 2013: 148). Other factors contributing to the crisis were political intolerance,

contentious laws, corruption, and international isolation (Mabanja, 2007; The Zimbabwe We Want: Towards a National Vision For Zimbabwe: A Discussion Document, 2006: 12). The applicability of Reconstruction Theology has been appreciated since it was envisioned long before by the Christian heads of Denomination. Ezra Chitando (2012: 281) affirms the role of the church when he argues “when Zimbabwean Christians uphold their civic responsibilities, they brought about change in the socio-economic and political context”

**Figure 8.6. The Role of the Church in Reconstruction**

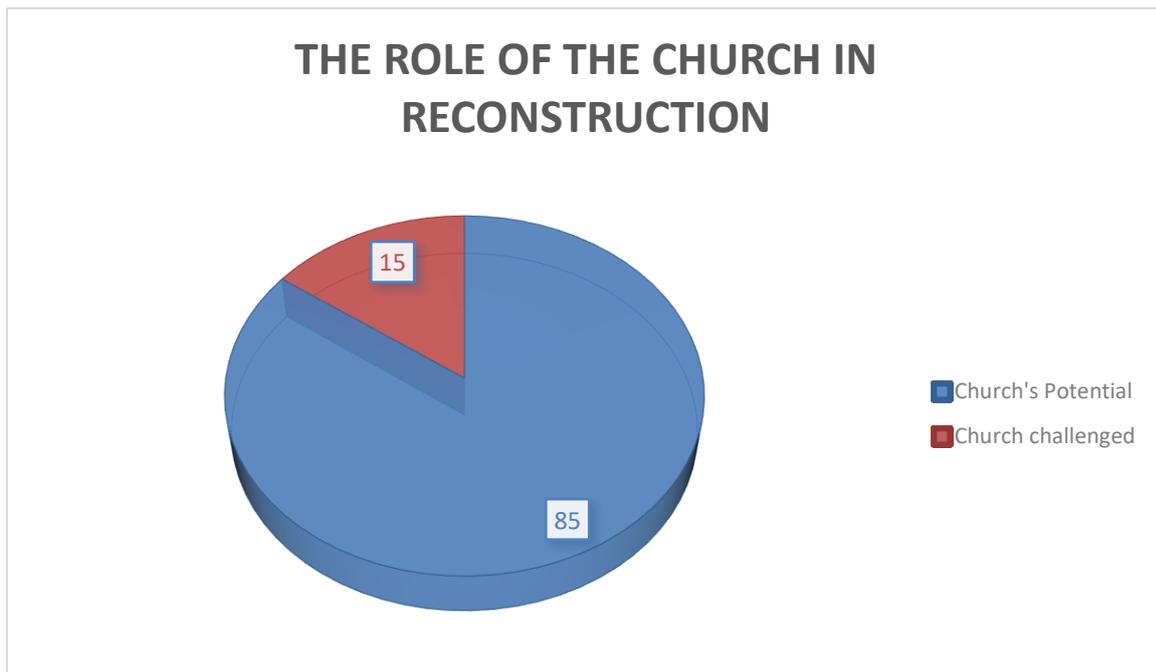


Figure 8.6 provides the findings on the section of the role of the church in reconstruction in the questionnaire. This section required the respondents to highlight the potential of the Christian religion to champion reconstruction. It further sought the relationship of the Church and State in the transformation of Zimbabwe.

The majority of the respondents depicted by 85%, assert that the church is a potential player in reconstruction and democratisation. They affirmed the colonial influential role played by the church. The church became the breeding ground of the nationalists and the church influenced critical resistance to white rule. The ecumenical movement of the day joined forces with the traditional leaders in the struggle for independence. This relationship was mutual since there was a common enemy. Florence Wise Woman (not her real name) wrote;

*If only the support between the Christian Fraternity and the Traditional Fraternity had been maintained post-independence then Zimbabwe would have been prime as it was,*

*hoped at independence. However, what we see today when unity is really needed, there is a lot of blackmailing and Church Leaders are the most affected as Chiefs (Traditional Leaders) are now, politically aligned with the government of ZANU PF.*

The church-state relationship in the post-colonial period is best described as fragmented, suspicious and strained. Mugabe accused the Church of meddling in politics and of “peddling falsehood” (Chitando, 2013: 84). One needs to see that during the time when the economic, social and political situation in the country worsened following the ESAP (Economic Structural Adjustment Programme) of the 1990s and the FTLR (Fast-track Land Reform) exercise of 2000, the church’s citizenry and nationality was redefined. Increasingly ZANU PF employed violence as a political strategy (Sachikonye, 2011).

Indeed, as the situation in Zimbabwe has become deplorable, the church is rated to have the potential to speak into the situation thereby giving hope and seeking transformation. Chitando Ezra captured the situation in Zimbabwe from 2000 to 2013 in a poetic but critical style;

*With inflation reaching into the stratosphere, unemployment soaring and millions of citizens fleeing into economic and political exile. The Church was called to task to speak into the situation forcefully and prophetically. Christian musicians intensified their lament to God to intervene and heal Zimbabwe (Chitando, 2013: 84).*

The church has potential, regardless of the opposition to its operations. During the struggle for liberation, the church as an institution, the church as an individual and church as a denomination sacrificed and became the agent of change. The attitude during the struggle for independence should be revived in the church. ZANU PF, as well as other African political parties, understand the power of the Christian religion. Therefore, the efforts are to manipulate, to divide, to create competition, to infiltrate and to frustrate the institution.

Tsungirirai and Engineer Musarurwa affirmed the aspect of manipulation when they wrote,

*The Church in Zimbabwe is vulnerable to manipulation and infiltration by the political powers. The political powers seek by all means to derail the focus of the Church by creating division among denomination, by demonising some Christian leaders who are too vocal and silencing through other means the outspoken churches or individuals. The case of the former Roman Catholic Archbishop Pius Ncube who was highly critical of Mugabe and his regime.*

With this, the Church is challenged to stand together and to become dirty for the sake of transformation and renewal.

Other participants in the research indicated the weakness of the church in addressing the powers that be. Ragies Gunda critically argues that the Church should be reconstructed first so as to be able to seek the transformation of society. He wrote:

*A proper reconstruction of the church must seek to establish one body of Christ with one voice, and then the powers that be will sit back and listen, maybe, even get worried! Only then will the church realize the power it is sitting upon.*

Many in the survey then noted that the Church has the authority to champion reconstruction. They shared the view that the Church needs to work towards unitary social prophetic mission.

Whilst the desire to seek reconstruction of the church is there, the majority affirmed the potentiality of the institution to champion democratization transformation. Frank Chiunya wrote;

*Churches in Zimbabwe are a critical player in addressing the issues of development. They are in direct contact with the majority of people every Sunday. The Church is still respected in society regardless of some episodes of misconduct. This makes the Church a well-positioned mobilization institution for any case, socially, economically and politically. As the church prays for the nation and its sustainability, she does that knowing the powers invested in her.*

The research underscores that Christianity, together with its institutions and adherents is an important part of the wider socio-political narrative in Zimbabwe. Christianity has been historically labeled as a newcomer religion, which came through the same wave strength of colonialism. This led Ali Mazrui to assert, “Just as Augustine had allied Christianity with a concept of *Pax Romana*, and so did Christianity later come to be linked to the whole vision of *Pax Britannica*” (Mazrui, 1967: 123). Whilst this is so, most of the respondents confirm that, today, Christianity has transformed itself to be a religion seeking the wholeness of the nation and people. Venerable Vincent Fenga<sup>82</sup> wrote,

*Christianity has become the most acceptable religion in Zimbabwe and for this the Christian principles and programs of development act as the model for any development or transformation. More people now identify themselves with a particular Church or denomination.*

This confirms what Fabulous Moyo has stated; “the pervasive influence of Christianity in Africa is displayed as are tomatoes on the market place. Christianity has become influential in

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<sup>82</sup> Rev Venerable Vincent Fenga is a senior clergy in the Anglican Diocese of Harare. He is the Rector at St Paul’s Highfield in Harare and he is the Archdeacon of Chitungwiza area.

the socio-political times” (Moyo, 2015: 9). One respondent stated what the Christian church, during this time should do for reconstruction to be realized,

*We cannot theorize on justice that is for lawyers. As Christians we must practice justice and fairness wherever we are. We cannot theorize poverty and hunger; we must work to ensure everyone has food. The church must move away from useless theoretical sermons about heaven and hell to practical sermons about how to fight poverty, climate change and injustice in our world. The church must challenge people to change their behaviors.*

Ragies Gunda added a critical concern when he wrote also,

*The Church must become the ideological intellect and then it must lay the first bricks of reconstruction. If women must be empowered, the Church must lead by example not set standards for others when the church continues to discriminate against women.*

This whole section affirms the vibrancy and potential of the Christian faith, which is not passive, but a practical way of life. Hence, the Church remains the institution which is highly geared for reconstruction regardless of the multi-dimensional aspects of Africa’s problems (Dedji, 2003).

**Figure 8.7. The Relevance of Christianity and the Use of the Bible in Reconstruction**

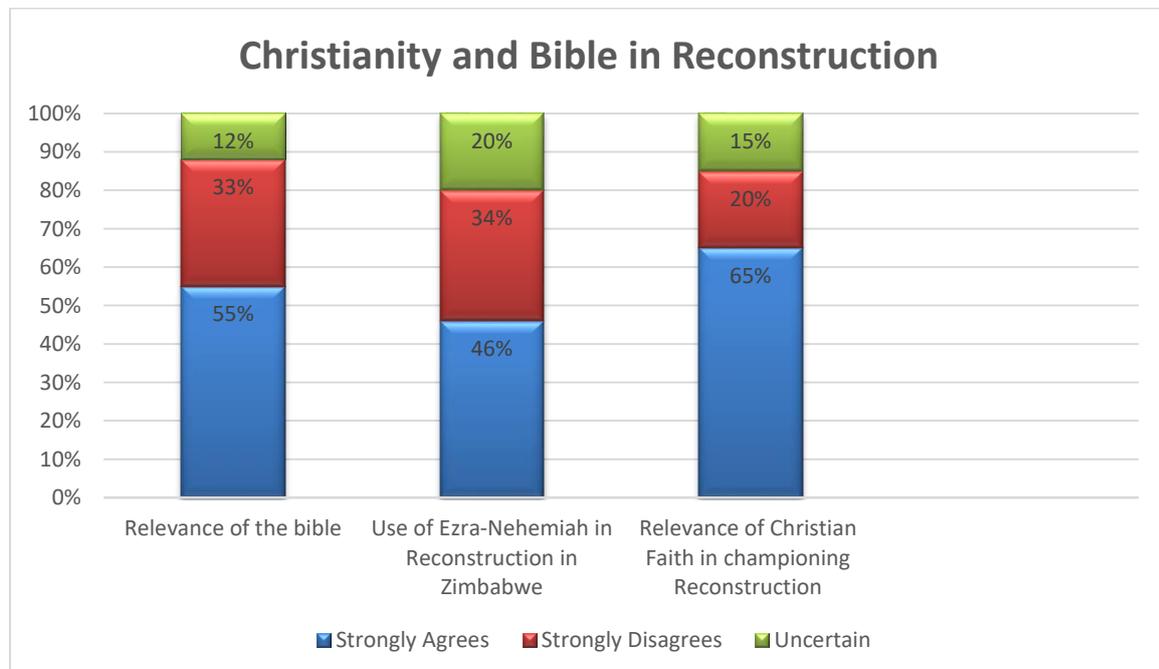


Figure 8.7 reflects how the respondents have reacted to the question on the relevance of the Christian faith, the relevance of the Bible and the use of Ezra-Nehemiah as a model in reconstruction discourse.

Of particular interest was the applicability of the Ezra-Nehemiah model to the envisioned, reconstruction theology. There were some mixed feelings about the best model due to the micro-dimensional challenges Zimbabwe is facing. The respondents felt that one Biblical model would not best address the demands and crisis. 46% represents strong agreement with the use of Nehemiah Model, while 34% of the respondents proposed other Biblical models. Some of the proposed models are the Isaiah Reconstruction Prophecy and Jesus Christ model. In an interview, John Chawarika<sup>83</sup> on 12 August 2015 said,

While, the book of Nehemiah is a reconstruction narrative, which is relevant to the ideals of reconstruction. Zimbabwe would also best suit not one narrative as a model of reconstruction, rather the complimentary synergies of models. To this value, the Jesus Christ critical desire to transform all faculties of Jewish society from individuals, economics, politics, traditions and religious should be interrogated in our time (Chawarika, 2015).

What is of paramount importance in this field research is the people confirmed the applicability of the selected model of Ezra-Nehemiah. 46% of the respondents affirmed the usage. Rev Isheunesu Gusha wrote,

*The country has collapsed and needs to be rebuilt and this has to be led by individuals who see the need, like Nehemiah. It needs individuals who are not afraid, who holds the trowel on the left hand and the sword on the right, the sword for fighting evil systems and the trowel for building.*

This concurs with Mugambi's view that, "the central Biblical text for African theology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will perhaps be the book of Nehemiah" (Mugambi, 1995: 166). Indeed, despite the chaotic and unhelpful situation which presented itself, Nehemiah's faith and relationship with God gave him the dignity to be accepted and supported by all in Jerusalem and Judah.

## **8. 10. Pre-Colonial Community Mobilization and Social Stability**

A crucial component of successful reconstruction is community mobilisation. In pre-colonial Zimbabwe, the chieftainship managed to hold the community together. Chieftaincy in Africa is a common feature of history and it has to be accorded that it works in the best interests of

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<sup>83</sup> Reverend John Chawarika, is the Rector of Transfiguration Kambuzuma Parish in Harare. He is a lecturer at the Anglican National Theological College (Bishop Gaul) specialising in Evangelism and Church History

political, economic and social security. Chiefs of the time, although they yielded to power, never abused the stewardship responsibility invested in them. Ragies Gunda wrote,

*The family unit dominated the pre-colonial set-up, which was responsible for many things in the community from educating the children to mobilizing members for communal projects. Even though chiefs and kings were very powerful, the fact that they chose family elders to be their advisers meant that power was not too divorced from the family unit. Decisions were taken with the perspective of the family being fairly represented.*

This view concurs with the assertion that the Shona generally lived under chiefs who did not wield a lot of political power or control over them. They could hardly be viewed as subjugated. The chief was viewed as a senior elder who had to guide the community (Moyo, 2015: 19). Therefore, chiefs became responsible family leaders who sought the protection and well-being of the community. Stan Mudenge (1988) observed and commented about the Mutapa Kingdom saying “throughout its history was never a militaristic one nor were the powers excessively oppressive. The genius of the Chief was the creation of a resilient institution which accorded with the environment and the culture” (Mudenge, 1988: 362).

It was within the dictum of chieftaincy and family that religion permeated and controlled the moral identity of a community. Fabulous Moyo (2015) states that the socio-political and socio-moral life of the Shona people of Zimbabwe was characterized by peaceful existence and moral aptitude. Oripa Ameer noted in response to the questionnaire that;

*To be a good person in this set-up was to be in communion with the family and the community. Morality was marked by the desire for harmony between and among community members and communities. Only those things that do not cause disharmony were regarded as moral.*

Harmony and co-existence was the moral duty of the people. Where morality is regarded with esteem then responsibility becomes a virtue. The post-colonial Zimbabwe crisis has been traced to the decadence or lack of spiritual and moral aptitude; hence, corruption, violence and plunder with greediness defines the community.

### **8.11. Colonial and Post-Colonial Community Mobilization**

The colonial era displayed a shift in community mobilization. The newcomer administrators used methods which were foreign to the Shona. Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo (2009) have correctly noted the situation by saying,

under early colonial rule, in the aftermath of brutal suppression of the Shona and Ndebele uprisings of the late nineteenth century, as emergent capitalism began to transform social and economic relations on the land and in the early mines and towns, new forms of social struggles and identities emerged (2009: xix).

This has been affirmed by one respondent to the study who noted the situation by saying;

*The colonial set-up relied on coercion and force in the mobilization of the community. Since most black Zimbabweans did not trust the new system, they did not cooperate with the new system willingly. Upon realizing this development, the colonial system created structures of coercion and force in order to force the blacks to work for the system. Arrests, harassment, curtailing of markets for farm produce from black farmers were all methods used to force blacks to join the system.*

This aspect of coercion has not spared the post-colonial landscape. The consequence of this state of affairs is a society which is not driven by responsibility but fear; a society that demonstrates unity of purpose, yet in reality is disgruntled. It is coercion that begets violence and violence becomes institutionalized. Violence breeds violence and the victims of violence become violent themselves (Sachikonye, 2011). David Kaulem (2004: 81) observes that, “at independence, our society did little to rehabilitate itself from the habits of violence prevalent during the liberation war. We have assumed that violence is a tool that we can take up, use and drop at any time”. To this effect Ragies Gunda is correct in pointing out “*the colonial set-up relied on coercion and force in the mobilization of the community*”. The strategy has not been fully dealt with and still haunts Zimbabwe. Memory is stuck with the historical violence of colonialism and the violent struggle of liberation through the war. This has left the political landscape of Zimbabwe marred with violence and of rhetoric of liberation which revives memory more it than heals memory.

The desire for reconstruction post-colonial is to reorient community towards national responsibility and national involvement efficiency discipline over coercion and violence. It is possible to build a society that is responsible and that is mobilized under the principle of love of the nation. A nation whose values are developmental, not individual gain. The church is the institution that has the mission mandate to develop individuals and to channel the nation towards the desired reconstruction.

## **8.12. Conclusion**

This chapter analyses the data collected in this research through the voices of the participants. Tables and graphs were produced to relate to the data collected. The challenges of Zimbabwe

are unique, and the crisis levels high but there is hope since the church in Zimbabwe remains rooted in transformative mission.

The holistic participation of the citizens of Zimbabwe in reconstruction was emphasised. Women, men and young people are valuable resources in reconstruction. Women in Zimbabwe are resilient and the most affected by the crisis and hence, reconstruction theology must consider and value the role of women in transforming society. The women fellowship of the church represented by the Mothers' Union (Kuwadzana) is a critical starting point in holistic mission in society. The chapter outlined the effective influence of *humai*, *hurume* and *hubaba* in reconstruction. A transformed masculinity is also a concern of reconstruction theology in Zimbabwe.

The analysis of the presentations given on each item depicted the results of the research. The results of the study demonstrated that the issues affecting Zimbabwe are shared across the sections of professionals, the employed and the unemployed. The sampling of data also confirmed the high level of literacy in Zimbabwe. The factors of economic meltdown have been cited as the major reason why small and medium entrepreneurs (SMEs) are being encouraged.

The findings of the study revealed that reconstruction theology is a relevant theology of this day. The issue of historical memory should not haunt, but encourage Zimbabweans to be focused and to be determined on transformation.

## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **LET US BEGIN RECONSTRUCTION: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **9. Introduction**

This chapter concludes the research. It summarizes the research and makes recommendations as part of the conclusion. The research outlined the objectives and sought to answer the questions as set out in chapter one (1). It is in this section that a summary of every chapter is provided. The section also highlights some challenges to reconstruction. The church, being the community established for the wholeness of human beings on earth has to redirect its mission in light of these challenges. The chapter has four aspects: a summary of study, an outline of some challenges hampering reconstruction, recommendation for mission perspective and a conclusion. The research was shaped through published and unpublished literature and the gathering of people's views through questionnaires and informal and formal interviews. The dialogue of reconstruction theology has started in Zimbabwe from the engagements with this research. Therefore, the research admits that there is no sealed conclusion to the discourse of reconstruction in Zimbabwe.

Reconstruction Theology takes the form of a work-in-progress; a dynamic process in constant need for nurturing and re-invention. This theology of reconstruction has a radical, human wholeness quest that is concretised with a desire of a better, just future for Zimbabwe. The theology asks relevant questions concerning the setup of the postcolonial Zimbabwe. It challenges the history of colonialization and mourns the postcolonial outlook of an independent country. It is through the research that functional proposals to achieve reconstruction were raised. The theology positions the relevance of the Christian church in reconstruction, using the Nehemiah determination model.

#### **9.1. Summary of Thesis Research**

The research through chapter two (2) pinpoints the use of the Bible, in determining models of reconstruction theology. One relevant model is the Nehemiah Reconstruction Model as found from reading the Ezra-Nehemiah biblical narrative. The Nehemiah model demonstrates that reconstruction is possible, regardless of the hopelessness of the situation. The setup depicted in the Nehemiah Biblical Motif informs us that there was unwillingness from other sections of the community in and outside Judah. There were some inconsistencies; some people were for

physical and verbal threats, whilst, on the other hand there were others with commitment and determination to rebuild.

Reconstruction theology, like all other theologies transcends borders. Its applicability is relational to the context of the given community. Hence the arguments of proponents such as (Villa-Vicencio, 1992); (Mugambi, 1995); (Dedji, 2003); and (Gunda, 2009) were engaged throughout the thesis in relation to the Zimbabwean context.

The Bible is central to African Christianity. It is the most read book in Africa (Togarasei, 2012). The “book” appeals to Christians and non-Christians as some biblical idioms are commonplace reference. The research asserts that closed or open the Bible speaks from birth to death, in every rite of passage in Zimbabwe. Reference is given to the sacred scripture.

The discourse examined the biblical narratives and engaged them from theological missional perspective. The biblical passages cited were made alive from a theological standpoint. In this light, the reading of biblical Nehemiah was cited to produce the possibility and applicability of reconstruction. Reconstruction theology underscores that there are many other biblical references that could be used to advance the agenda of reconstruction in post-colonial Zimbabwe. However, the Nehemiah biblical passages resonate with the demands of reconstruction determination and national interest responsibility that is missing in order to have a Zimbabwe characterised by human wholeness.

Chapter 3 (three) traced the development of theology from monastic theology to reconstruction theology. It is in this chapter that the continual evolution of theological thinking was emphasised. This makes theology of reconstruction a contextual praxis discourse. In Zimbabwe, this discourse is necessitated by crisis after crisis, postcolonial. David Kaulem (2010) argues that the postcolonial Zimbabwe is best described as a nation of struggles. Reconstruction theology informs that Zimbabwe is not meant to be politically, economically and socially struggling. The struggles are not all attributed to natural phenomena, for there is evidence of human pride and error. Indeed, something has been missing since independence. The reconstruction vision after the war of liberation was not accomplished. The complete shaking off of the Rhodesian policies of governing was not done. This saw the constitution of Rhodesia being maintained under the Lancaster House Agreement/Constitution until an attempt to change it was made in the year 2000. This new constitution proposal was rejected through the referendum of 2000, because the majority felt betrayed, the proposals were politically driven from the ZANU PF perspective and the political environment was not

conducive. Finally, Zimbabwe instituted a new constitution which came into law in the year 2013.

The research through chapter 4 gave the missiological perspective. This missiological perspective became the paradigm shift in doing reconstruction theology in Zimbabwe. It means reconstruction theology, has been discussed from other faculties and institutions, but this proposed reconstruction will position the Church rightly.

Chapter 5, analysed the aspects as presented in the theoretical framework of this research. This research, explored the relationship between African Renaissance and Reconstruction theology. Of interest, the theoretical concept of African Renaissance, which implies renewal or transformation, asserts that Africans should charter their solutions for African problems. Reconstruction theology confirms that the citizens of the community should re-evaluate the levels of decadence and seek to build from the debris of destruction. Reconstruction is not a case for politicians, sociologists, and/or economists; rather reconstruction is a case for the citizens with faith in God, who can stand to reconstruct their communities. The genuine citizen values the national interest against pride and denying others.

The chapter highlighted the pillars of African Renaissance and the components of its agenda. African Renaissance transcends time, but it seeks to address issues affecting African people in any context. The deplorable conditions which cut across the socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political divide require reconstruction. It is here that Reconstruction theology, with the church as the agent of the discourse, becomes an effective theology in postcolonial Zimbabwe.

Chapter 6 highlighted the context of the research, outlining the history and the understanding of the *sitz em lebem* (setting) of Zimbabwe, its people and the importance of their values. The contours of history were traced from the pre-colonial to postcolonial. In this chapter a clear view of the need for reconstruction theology is made alive. History shows that Zimbabwe is endowed with a rich heritage of culture and the values of wholeness. Regarding the wars of liberation the methods of mobilisation and creation of a communal determination towards emancipation cannot go without being celebrated. This spirit of mobilisation has to be revived in the period of postcolonial Zimbabwe, for the good of the nation. For this to happen the church has to step up its missional articulation.

Chapter 7 of this research dealt with the question of whose community Zimbabwe is. The community which identifies itself, in the context in which it finds itself, can charter ways and strategies to solve its challenges. It is through this section that a transformed perspective of nationality, citizenship and belonging was produced. This chapter exposed the Nehemiah Model, in particular, with the concern of belonging, nationality and being a part of the solution. Nationality and belonging produce determination to champion reconstruction. The usefulness of the debris of destruction is no doubt a possibility in Zimbabwe. Whilst some scholars have argued that there is no known better Zimbabwe to which reconstruction theology can point, as a healthy standard of measure. It is folly not to admit that Zimbabwe and Zimbabweans yearns for liberative reconstruction and renewal. Reconstruction theology argues that Zimbabwe is useful and reconstruction is possible. This calls for the reconstruction of a transformative nationality and citizenry, as demonstrated in chapter 7. The paper unveils that the condition Zimbabwe does not affirm the belonging of its citizens. Therefore, reconstruction should take place.

Chapter seven (7) could better, be defined as the recommendation piece of the research. It brought forth areas that require attention. When the reconstructionist, Jesse Mugambi (1995), classifies components of reconstruction he asserts that individual/personal reconstruction is critical. This section of research outlined the perspective of individual reconstruction in relationship to individuals in Zimbabwe. The chapter established that reconstruction is possible in Zimbabwe and that reconstruction theology should be allowed to be a theology to reckon with postcolonial. The “Zimbabwe is still useful” section in the chapter was a catchy section as it related and answered the question asked many years in Germany by a theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Chapter 8 is the data analysis chapter. Charts, tables and diagrams were used to decode the conversations of those people who participated in the research. It was this individualistic contributions, which came out in the conversations, which makes this research relevant in the current context of Zimbabwe.

Finally, the research concludes with chapter 9. This chapter provides the summary of the whole research in a conclusive way. It discloses that this research adds a voice to the arena of reconstruction theology. Nevertheless, for reconstruction, some socio-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural symbols and values were theologically interrogated. The summary of study and further recommendations were provided in addition to those provided in chapter

7. This is so not to make this debate closed and sealed since this topic remains debatable to some scholars and an eye opener to others through the proposed recommendations.

For a better conclusion, the following section provides a few challenges to be aware of, as reconstruction theology is taking shape in Zimbabwe. This is followed by the recommendations of selected areas of concern.

## **9.2. Challenges before Zimbabwe's Reconstruction**

In the quest for reconstruction theology and transformation, success may be achieved and may be the ultimate goal. However, there are areas of reflections which seem to impinge upon the desired objective of reconstruction. These are challenges and they are surmountable; reconstruction will be fully achieved. Mentioning them here shows that the application of reconstruction theology in Zimbabwe takes into account all of these challenges. It cannot be denied that Zimbabwe, like any other African country, has challenges, but these challenges do not block determination. Nehemiah was faced with challenges, from the kings and territories on route to Judah, what and where to get the material to use on rebuilding the wall, the criticism and the trust of the remnants in Jerusalem. However, he was determined beyond any level of challenge. Zimbabwe's reconstruction is possible but is marred with some challenges that include; history and memory, a generation of selfishness and a lack of common vision.

### **9.2.1. The Challenge of History: Colonialism**

The historical legacy of colonial rule created some challenges for national transformation in Zimbabwe. Colonial rule employed the divide and rule strategy. Colonialism was not concerned with developing Zimbabwe, for the betterment of the existence of black Zimbabweans then or now. The conquering and displacement strategies and policies remain visible in the attitude of Zimbabweans. The colonial policies of superiority, class division and dominance are evidently utilised for the benefit of a few individuals at the expense of the majority populace.

The legacy of colonialism evokes memories of dispossession, trauma and hardship amongst the deprived blacks and of conquest and superiority among the white. This history stretches over a period of 100 years (Sachikonye, 2004). Indeed, the memories are stoked by the "liberation struggle, a war that was mainly waged in the rural areas, the communal reserves became the battlefield. Leaving a memory of atrocity and pain" (Sachikonye, 2004: 2). There is a need to interrogate the space of the rural areas (villages) in relation to colonial and

liberation war memory in Zimbabwe. By so doing, the concern will be to transcend the traumatic legacies and to bring the reconstructive memory.

To deny that colonial hegemony affects post-colonial Zimbabwe, is tantamount to academic fraud. No wonder the proposal of reconstruction theology is a relevant undertaking. Contradictions in contemporary Zimbabwean society are intimately related to the social, political and political legacies of colonialism. The theology of reconstruction did not only accept this fact but it went further to ask whether Zimbabwe should remain in this historical legacy. The time is now to shake off, or to shade off the colours of colonial legacies and to start rewriting a new history of a postcolonial Zimbabwe.

### **9.2.2. The Challenge of Neo-colonialism**

Africa has been the playing ground of the masterminds of Europe and America, in terms of keeping their economic prosperity alive and political undertakings. Africa provided the space for resources and experiments. It is historically considered uncivilised, a source of cheap labour, abductions, wars, and a space to plunder. This found Africa ripe for partitioning. The famous scramble for Africa should be read as economical and business transaction. When Africans and Zimbabwe in particular, are busy butchering their citizens, some Euro-American (China-Japan now coming) economic thinkers are drafting policies and looking for loopholes to crack and manipulate Africa. Africa is challenged to wake up from slumber and to begin to defend its integrity and challenge the gimmicks of globalisation and neo-colonialism. The second or third class citizenry tag placed on Africa should be challenged and actually dismissed. Africa is encouraged through reconstruction discourse to rebrand its identity and position.

### **9.2.3 The Challenge of Lost Cultural Values: This Generation**

Historically, the struggle for justice by the people of Zimbabwe has been fundamentally, socio-cultural and socio-religious in all intent and purpose. From the years of the initial resistance of traders and explorers in the kingdoms of Munhumutapa and Ndebele through to the First and Second Chimurengas. The values of such a struggle had to do with the protection and restoration of collective human dignity, the pursuit of equality, justice, democracy and good governance at all levels. The challenges that have become full circle are to be questioned, in hindsight of the protection and reconstruction of Zimbabwean cultural values, that are futuristically wholesome in ensuring humanity's wholeness.

The challenge of moving forward as new people with new mind sets, and a vision of a better destiny demands everyone's effort. Zimbabwe has to go through what Valentine Dedji (2003: 80) notes "unless African people are reconciled with their culture, their true selves and among themselves, there will not be any genuine reconstruction of their brokenness". The return to lost cultural values is a necessity to reconstruction in Zimbabwe. Ragies Gunda (2009: 14) echoes that, "for a successful reconstruction to happen, Zimbabweans should have a critical self-introspection into their cultural values. This self-introspection must lead to the acknowledgement of our own role in the mess we find ourselves in". The mess of Zimbabwe is the rejection of cultural values that moulded communal integrity. The selfish tendencies evident in politics, economics and social existence are proving that the values of belonging together are lost. For reconstruction to take place, it has to overcome the challenge of cultural confusion and selfishness which exists in postcolonial Zimbabwe.

There seems to be an official green light to corruption in the public and private sector in postcolonial Zimbabwe. The modern day generation has ceased to be sincere and accountable by any measure. The question being asked is whether reconstruction is possible in this generation. Can the political environment as witnessed, today, allow reconstruction to take place? Who can spearhead reconstruction when the liberators have become the oppressors?

The right to vote is not translatable to rights for life. In Zimbabwe successive electoral contests have produced contested results and this has been attributed to the defective electoral legislation and electoral flaws. However, at the centre of it all, there are highly educated people, qualified resourceful personnel and people with public oaths. Public values have been lost in this generation, posing serious challenge to reconstruction.

The truthful narrative is difficult to ascertain from the Zimbabwean media. This has left a confused public with newspapers ranging from state controlled to privately owned, reporting the same event in conflicting manner. What the media in Zimbabwe has done is to nurture a culture of ignorance from the leftist perspective or rightist perspective of the happenings in Zimbabwe. The public is confused as to the rightful way to come out and to resolve the crises. Zimbabweans interpret and understand the sufferings and the crisis in a contradictory manner, for the media has contributed to the confusion. Truth-telling culture requires restoration. The church is to as an institution established for God's mission should create space for story-telling and conducive environment for reconstruction narrative.

In Africa in general and in Zimbabwe, in particular, cultural imperialism has robbed the value and vitality of indigenous languages. There is a need to reclaim the cultural value of indigenous language and words. One's language evokes passion and emotionality of belonging. Ezra Chitando (2001: 144) observed that considerable care is, "taken in naming newly born children, for names have religious and cultural connotations. To be human is to have a name, to be named and thereby to possess full being and the ability to participate in the life of the community meaningfully is drawn from the name". Even if the world is collapsing into a global village, the symbolism connected with names remains a way to assert local belonging and contribution to the reconstruction of society of origins. Furthermore, names in Zimbabwe represent the most cherished thoughts and the state of mind of the giver at the time the name is given. There is a direct denial or abandonment of Zimbabwean Shona vernacular names or historical inspirations. It is now common to find children with names from other languages and cultures. This shows that people are inspired and desiring to belong somewhere other than their country.

Through interviewing Mr Manjeese (2014) a Shona father, born and educated in Bocha Marange in Mutare, concerning the meaning of the names of his children "*Tsakani*" and "*Tshilidzi Tsha Mulena*", he said, these are Venda South African names meaning "happiness" and "The peace of God" respectively. He confessed a fascination with the Venda lifestyle and communal setup. "I just love the Venda version of the names", retorted Mr Manjeese. In the Bocha-Marange (Chibocha) vernacular, the names could have been "*Rufaro*" and "*Rugarerwashe*" translated in English to mean "Happiness" and "The peace of God" respectively. Many other names are taking other dimensions such as Tuesday (Nigeria Ghana naming style), Barack (Kenyan names). During an interview on 04 January 2014 Rev Isheanesu Gusha asserts that, "culture has impact on one's perspective of belonging and value of contribution to the sustenance of the community. For, common language and common religion constitute communal membership"

Anthony Poggo (2013: 9), describes the power of naming, for Nehemiah means "Jehovah Comforts", implying that naming is of significance. In African societies as in ancient Israelite society, names are laden with meaning. Ezra Chitando maintains that Africans "believe that a name could shape a person's character and have a bearing on future behaviour. Thus, it acts as a benediction, a wish, a motto and a blessing to the bearer" (Chitando, 2001: 1). In the traditional Shona culture of Zimbabwe, parents gave their children names that reflects their socio-cultural context. Like Nehemiah's father Hachaliah, parents in post-colonial Christian Zimbabwe are challenged to name their children names that have positive meanings.

The challenges picked here would not completely deter the applicability of reconstruction theology in postcolonial Zimbabwe. There is a need to focus and to remain resolute as to afford Zimbabweans the opportunity to reconstruct from the debris therein and to have a community defined by well-being.

The following section offers some recommendations.

### **9.3. Recommendations: Towards a Theology of Reconstruction**

Some areas require emphasis as these will cement Zimbabwe's readiness for reconstruction discourse. Zimbabwe has to accept independence and to set solutions to the crisis, so a move from Rhodesia to independent Zimbabwe comprises desire and eagerness from all sectors of life. The definitions and values of sovereignty cannot be left to politicians or one political claim. Reconstruction of a nation is recommended. Zimbabwe is a sovereign nation where belonging has to be real. The land question is to be transformative rather than being used as a political gimmick. The church remains a critical player in reconstruction.

#### **9.3.1. From Rhodesia to Independent Zimbabwe**

In 1980, Zimbabweans celebrated independence and the prospect of majority rule. The Prime Minister-elect, Robert Gabriel Mugabe, anticipated his responsibilities on the eve of independence, April 17<sup>th</sup> 1980, by saying;

The final countdown before the launching of the new state of Zimbabwe has now begun. Only a few hours from now, Zimbabwe will have become a free, independent and sovereign state, free to choose its own flight path and to chart its own course to its chosen destiny (Mugabe, 2007: 17).

This entails a historical transition which was every citizen's expectation. Independence from the colonial powers brought the "celebrationist mood". Robert Mugabe (Mugabe, 2007: 17), articulated the meaning of independence by saying, "Independence bestows on the people new personality, new sovereignty, new future and new perspective, and indeed a new history and past". The goodness to be achieved when aspects of goodwill, commitment, accountability and co-operation from all citizens should be the benchmark of existence. The new nation of Zimbabwe was born and its sustenance rested on the collective individuals, constructive mind-sets and progressive attitudes (Mugabe, 2007). The post-colonial perspective and scope of this research is founded on the historical existence of a new nation, born out of the armed struggle that lasted fifteen years.

To deny that Zimbabwe became an epitome of inspiration and a beacon of hope during the Chimurenga War of Liberation and through to the first election in 1980, is tantamount to mischief. Zimbabwe promised a move beyond the kind of coercive rule entrenched by colonialism and Ian Smith's white minority regime. The inspirational spirit and the promissory hope was undergirded by political reform and openness, the reconstruction and restructuring of educational policy, facilitation of social subsidies and military integration. The liberty of civil community, including the freedom of the church and church leaders to contribute meaningful to the transition, created the space for dialogue and debates postcolonial.

Robert Mugabe, in 1980, understood the responsibilities ahead of the government. However, the statements of April 1980 did not seem genuine, but rehearsed rhetoric, since there was no effort to set reconstruction in motion, or the redress of the postcolonial setup. What came to be was the reconciliation invitation. The call of reconciliation by Robert Mugabe made him an icon of reconciliation for others expected a direct revenge. Instead the call for reconciliation;

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. The wrongs of the past must now stand forgiven and forgotten (De Waal, 1990; Huyse, 2003: 34; Mugabe, 2007).

The argument that ZANU PF had no vision of leading the independent Zimbabwe from birth becomes sustained. Since this statement of reconciliation comes out as said, rehearsed and given to Mugabe. Two years after independence, the Gukurahundi Massacres were not viable to the reconciliation call of "if yesterday I fought you....you have become a friend and ally with the national interest". For Robert Mugabe's administration, Gukurahundi was a war that was directed at eliminating "dissidents" (whoever they were other than Zimbabwean citizens and nationalists) emerging in Midlands and Matabeleland provinces. Joshua Nkomo, was forced into exile, by his fellow nationalist cadres. Further years witnessed castration of other political leaders. Rev Ndabaningi Sithole (a Nationalist, Former President of Rhodesia-Zimbabwe coalition and founder of ZANU Ndonga Political Party), was arrested in 1997 at the age of 70 and in 2000, he died but he was denied the national hero status. Therefore, for ZANU PF and Mugabe regime priorities are misplaced. They are towards power consolidation, plunder and self-enrichment instead of national reconstruction.

Zimbabwe should shake off the politics of discrimination and elimination. The politically powerful should be challenged through reconstruction theology and the mission of the church

to demystify the dirtiness or evilness attached to politics. Politics should ensure good governance and allow democratic values of solidarity to be nurtured. Indeed the present political assault, politics of elimination, politics of castration and suppression have seriously closed down the spaces for alternative debates around national belonging and social amenities (Raftopoulos, 2004).

Indeed, African visionaries, theologians and theological debates continue to imagine a new, possible way of living. Thus, the theology of reconstruction should remind the politicians that they are their own liberators, and they should allow new visions to come through for the betterment of governance.

### **9.3.2 Building a Nation: Zimbabwe**

Nations are an important part of reconstructed-transformed society. Historically, the modern day Zimbabwe, used to be clustered into kingdoms and previously empires. For example one can talk of the Rozvi Kingdom, Nguni Kingdom, Ndebele Kingdom and Munhumutapa Empire (Mudenge, 1988; Gundani, 2011). These historical set ups had their progressive trends and their challenging downward status. The colonial masterminds were concerned with dominance, they concentrated on building a racial and caste state not a united progressive nation.

Benedict Anderson observes rightly that a racial nation is not a nation, “by virtue of the fact it defies a basic principle of any imagined community, namely the fundamental assumption of a deep horizontal brotherhood” (Anderson, 1991: 6). The time is ripe to reconstruct nations in Africa. Therefore, Charles Villa-Vicencio (1992), critically understands reconstruction theology as a nation-building theology in postcolonial Africa. The essence “of a theology of nation building is to guard against a repeat of the same mistakes of history” (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 19). Nation building is possible and it should not be an accident of history. Nation-building takes the efforts, determination and commitment of the citizenry with a vision and a resolve.

Nation-building is based on a culture that is founded on national interests, self-definition, integrity-affirming and dignity-insuring. Culture, defined as a set of “rules, implicit or explicit, of life standardised modes of behaviour and thought to which the members of a community conform, became a means by which to determine inclusion or exclusion of one another in the community’s wellbeing” (Alexander, 2004: 197). It is possible to have cultural reconstruction,

for one powerful institution that has to realign Zimbabweans is the Church. For Christianity is still a religion which is honoured and respected.

This research argues that nation-building is a conscious strategic-craft that is engaging and challenging. Zimbabwe has come of age, and the theology of reconstruction affirms that being a nation is a continuous dynamic process in constant need of nurturing and re-invention.

### **9.3.3. Land: Reconstruction Theology Perspective**

The reconstruction of a prosperous Zimbabwe is made real through transforming the appropriation and usage of the land. Land is economy and the economy is the defining factor of the well-being of people. This is true when analysis is made of all nations in Africa that are, infested with ethnic or regional wars. The major contribution to these wars is “LAND”, which implies that land is important. Land houses every mineral that is, this transforms land to be the economy of any nation. Being an agro-based economy, Zimbabwe’s hopes of economic recovery are strongly based on the land (Togarasei and Chitando, 2011). A reconstructed land appropriation and reconstructive value and usage will return the status of being “the bread basket of Africa” to Zimbabwe rather than what it is currently a “beggar basket case of Africa” (Bakare, 2013).

The research recommends that a reconstructed land reform is adequate to lead the nation on the prosperity trail. Zimbabwe should take lessons from the Asian “green revolution” land reform. Mandivamba Rukuni and Stig Jensen (2003) studied the Asian land reform and argue that;

The national prosperity exhibited in Asia today has roots in long-term investments in agriculture and particularly in smallholder agrarian systems. Furthermore, the land reform in Asia was based and founded on principles of modernisation and surplus production, not only allowing greater access to land for the landless. They were backed up with massive investments in rural development that led to increases in production and yields as well as incomes and food security (Rukuni and Jensen, 2003: 257).

In Zimbabwe, the land issue remains politically viewed in historical anger and subjugation of the colonialism mentality. This contributes to the perpetual inability to enjoy a stable economy and social progress, because the land reform triggers violent political emotions. There is need for national reconstructive justice in its distribution and use.

The questions to be asked are as follows. Is the land question an open and closed case now? Are the people in Zimbabwe enjoying the economic and social development after the land

reform? These questions lead to the reconstruction review to ask, whether Zimbabwe can move towards a modernised land justice and reconstructive solution, which can be inspirational to other like nations in Africa. Currently, while many African nations seem to celebrate Zimbabwe's land reform of 2000 and Mugabe's brevity in challenging the former colonisers, what they miss is the gross imbalances the reform has created among the black, poor households. The land redress in Zimbabwe remains a reconstruction theology concern as it deals with the livelihood of people of God.

#### **9.3.4. The Church for Reconstruction**

The Church in this thesis has been viewed as the religious agent established for the well-being of the community. It is important to recognise that the church has evolved in Zimbabwe as elsewhere on the globe. The Christian church has become scientifically theological in outlook. Hence, theological discourses and Biblical interpretations are now scientific. For this reason, the church is empowered to address issues of human beings in their localities and to participate in discussions of transformation, without being compartmentalised. Hence, the church as an institution becomes a social institution of relevance for reconstruction and the wellbeing of humanity. For "the call of the gospel is now for people to live, lives transformed by the power of God, to love one another and to grow in social and spiritual wholeness wellbeing" (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 154). Documented evidence has shown that the church's nature is socially defined. This social-orientation of the church positions it rightly to mobilise society for socio-political and socio-economic transformation.

Political participation of the church is God oriented. For everything that deals with human beings is political even reading the Bible to the congregation becomes political. Therefore to leave the fate of humanity in the hands of politicians is suicidal and "unChrist-like" since Christ himself, is involved in the wholeness of human beings and he speaks out to all faculties stretching from politics, economics, culture, religion, social existence and even after death. The role of the Christian Church "not only in nations facing reconstruction, but also in nations engaged in the process of continuing renewal and reform, is of significant theological and political importance" (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 20).

It has been noted statistically that Christianity dominates the religious space in Zimbabwe, resulting in Zimbabwe being a *de facto* Christian country (Manyonganise, 2013). The history of Christianity (church) in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century cannot continue to associate with abuse of the institution to theologially legitimise political or ideological triumphalism, cultural

transplantation, and economic plunder (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 20). The church in Zimbabwe has to guard its integrity as it operates in the landscape, which is volcanic. Church should be aware of the political times of its existence in order to be effective in upholding her mission. The socio-economic and socio-political instability should not stop the church to uphold its mission integrity. While anything the church advocate that contradict the political patronage can bring the church to political garrisons. The church is to remain resolute to its mission of speaking the truth for the benefit of national wholeness.

The church for reconstruction is the church of the future (Mugambi, 1995). The post-exilic church (Villa-Vicencio, 1992), should develop an uncompromised prophetic theology. A theology which is not only resistant in nature to the present era or context of Zimbabwe's existence but a theology that "says "NO" to all political, social, and/or economic endeavours that could give rise to a sense of human pride and human greedy and human subjugation" (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 22). Charles Villa-Vicencio did justice in outlining the Christian abesses of history, tracing it from the Hebrew era, "discerning a theological propensity to legitimise political domination ever since the time of the Hebrew monarchy...the theology of political submission can be readily identified in the New Testament" (1992: 21). The church should rebuild the conscience of the builders. This is critical since reconstruction is an inclusive theology. God's vision should be instilled in the mind-set of all Zimbabweans to begin the process of transformation.

The mandate from God through Jesus Christ is that the Christian faith should bring about peace on earth and goodwill among humankind. For this to be effectively met in Zimbabwe, a new Christian theological emphasis is necessary. This theological emphasis comes through reconstruction theology. Jesse Mugambi (1995: 165) is perplexed by the deep crises that surface or continue to haunt African nations after thirty years of colonial independence. Thus, theology of reconstruction should be propelled in Africa, with the church and its leaders, appreciating the value of the gospel mandate. The church should reshape the imagination of the people in relationship to reconstruction.

#### **9.4. Paradigm Shift in Context: Demands Paradigm Shift of Mission**

David Bosch did outline what it means to have paradigm shifts in theology and mission, stipulating that there is no complete discarding of old or former paradigms. Instead there is enhancement and necessitated shifts due to societal concerns (Bosch, 1991). Societal realities are shifting and the signs of the times have shifted and as such theology has the mandate to

address these shifting contexts creatively. The church's mission is dynamic and here the church has to provide the missional interpreting of the Bible in ways that ensure wholeness.

#### **9.4.1. Mission as Restoring Hope**

The church is being challenged to champion holistic mission as to achieve reconstruction in Zimbabwe. The assurance of hope in a devastated community is a practical, contextual mission. In the face of the seemingly hopeless and precarious socio-political, socio-cultural and socio-economic situation in Zimbabwe, there is demand to revive and inculcate hope (Shambare, 2010). While planting churches and emphasising on personal healing is essential the church is invited to consider hope giving as a mission paradigm. The denominational emphasis of planting churches, conversion and church compartmentalisation should be revisited in light of the conditions of suffering, despair, destruction and collapse of the most conventional views of good governance in Zimbabwe.

#### **9.4.2. Promoting a Common Story of reconstruction**

Robert Schreiter (1990: 33) puts it across that “people's peace, wellness and security is not only found in the material factors such as land, economic resources and political institution, but also in ideational factors, especially their collective identity expressed in common story”. Having a shared common story removes suspicion and defiance to calls of reconstruction. James Cone (1984: 142) notes that in struggle for justice “community's shared value, and shared story transcends the boundaries of past hurts and reaches towards a shared just future”. When talking of common story, the inevitable questions arise as to who defines the nature of the story. Who mobilises community to rally behind the common story? How can a common story of reconstruction become missional in outlook for the better of the Zimbabwean community? Critically, a common story should be apolitical, factual and commonly taken to reaffirm the dignity of the society.

#### **9.4.3. Mission as National Discipline Efficiency**

The Zimbabwean church needs to direct its efforts towards transforming energies of self-glory and corrupt individualistic tendencies that in most cases have left Zimbabwe divided and torn apart. Selfishness has led Zimbabwe to a condition of decay. This calls for a courageous prophetic engagement for the effect of creating a national identity that is aimed at achieving reconstruction. Efficiency should be citizen responsibility towards the sustainment of the nation of belonging.

## **9.5. Reconstruction is Possible: Theology of Reconstruction**

Theology of reconstruction is capturing restoration of the walls of existence, seeking wholeness. It is a theology emphasising the transforming of society and culture at times of despair (Mugambi, 1995: 24). For Ezra Chitando, the reconstruction theology in Zimbabwe can also closely mean a “theology of enough” (Chitando, 2016). The society seeking survival is triggered to see the position of the status quo in reverse, hence, demanding “this is enough”. Theology of reconstruction is taking renewed survival seriously. It then touches life issues demanding renewal. Women are seeking liberation from the twenty-first (21<sup>st</sup>) century male domination to be listened to and to be respected; they are saying “it is enough”. The theology of reconstruction is saying a transformed masculinity is possible. The community should reconstruct its perspective of women.

Zimbabweans who are affected by the postcolonial crisis of governance are demanding a better way of governance; they are saying this is enough. HIV and AIDS people are crying that they are infected but still humans, not crushed. The health institutions and community should see in them the being of God. Indeed, discrimination and pointing at people living with HIV and AIDS from the moral perspective is enough.

People who did not benefit from the agrarian land reform are witnessing the corrupt implementation of economic policies are hopeful for a better Zimbabwe. Reconstruction theology is that a hope filling discourse and praxis theology. Theology of reconstruction becomes that messiah in Zimbabwe corroding with corruption.

Zimbabwe is fertile for the theology of reconstruction to take shape. The continuous emphasis on colonialism and liberation revivalism of memory rhetoric is not benefiting Zimbabweans. “Let start reconstructing” Zimbabwe will bring a paradigm shift in the attitude of the people. Reconstruction theology seeks the wholeness of the human being. Zimbabwe is defined by the collapse of people centred policies, such as denial of freedom of expression, suppression of critical progressive voices and bad governance that has forced many Zimbabweans to seek asylum and to be refugees in other countries. South Africa has been home to millions of Zimbabweans in the postcolonial period. The claimed peace in Zimbabwe is only the absence of real war, yet the country is at war with its citizens. Zimbabweans are suffering, the community is devastated and infrastructures are collapsing. The once beautiful and progressive Zimbabwe has become an unbearable country, with despair being exhibited in every corner of the country.

Julius Gathogo (2007: 19) points out “the challenges facing African Christian theologies today concerns the need to think differently about our context and crises”. This implies that theology of reconstruction is the new creative engagement in the light of the crisis context of postcolonial Zimbabwe. Since 1960s, emphasis was on the Exodus metaphor as the dominant motif. Indeed, the motif resonated with the Zimbabwean context during the colonial period of history. The African people have metaphorically been likened to the people of Israel from bondage (colonialism) to settlement (independence). Metaphorically, therefore, the context of Zimbabwe has to be read in line with the Nehemiah biblical Motif of reconstruction.

## **9.6. Conclusion**

This study has explored the value and applicability of reconstruction theology in Zimbabwe. The quest of reconstruction became inevitable in a Zimbabwean society that is raising questions about the meaning of independence that became historic in 1980. The research managed to engage the use of the Nehemiah biblical Motif as the model applicable for reconstruction theology. The biblical narrative of Nehemiah brings hope to the community of Zimbabwe.

The Bible has been noted as the authoritative last book of appeal. The Bible is the last court of appeal; regardless of whether the book is closed or open, people find meaning. The church has been recognised as the critical institution established with authority to champion reconstruction. The context of postcolonial Zimbabwe to 2016 is fertile to talk about reconstruction as events signify that a better community is possible. It is established in this research that belonging and transformed citizenship brings the eagerness for reconstruction. As part of this conclusion, emphasis is placed upon the fact that reconstruction is possible, for Zimbabwe is still useful. As long as Zimbabweans still exist, a solution to the concerns of the present period rest on their shoulders.

Charles Villa-Vicencio (1992), in summing of the discourse of *A Theology of Reconstruction: Nation-building and Human Rights*, affirmed the relevant open-ended critique of reconstruction by inserting “an unconcluding postscript” (1992: 274). He argues that theology of reconstruction is not a closed science “it is a creative and imaginative art, grounded in the contextual hard realities, inevitable contradictions of human life and political manoeuvrings” (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 274). Thus, theology of reconstruction, referred herein, interchangeably with reconstruction theology, is about confidence building, re-orienting and believing in the activity of God of transforming love regardless of the diverse matters that appear. Theology of

reconstruction is there to tear down the barriers of history, the barricades of political instability and build societal hope based on the mission of God.

Zimbabwe's lethargic situation requires the collaboration of all Zimbabweans for a better nation to be realised. Therefore, it is not a political rhetoric but a God-given blessing that Zimbabwe is transformable when mobilisation and collaboration is shared among its citizens. What theology of reconstruction is reiterating is national accountability and collective responsibility. Saint Augustine long said, "God created you without you, but will not save you without you" (Chitando, 2009: 141). Therefore, Cardinal Renato R Martino made it clear that reconstruction and transformation rest upon the shoulders of Africans, Zimbabweans included;

If yesterday the history of Zimbabwe was shaped one way or another by foreigners, what Zimbabwe will be tomorrow will largely depend on your efforts today. Therefore, work hard towards reconstruction of a living environment for all, with a special interest in the generation of your children and the unborn Zimbabweans who will be your pride tomorrow. Struggle to leave them a harmonious society founded on the recognition of the dignity of each person, where transparency and honesty prevail and where attention is also given to the weak and the most vulnerable of society (Martino, 2005: 23)

Indeed, this is possible when there is a reconstruction desire. Reconstruction theology is a positive and constructive discourse, concerned with the realignment of actions that make and sustain human life. It is more than a theology of resistance, but a theology committed to continuous social renewal, which knows no boundary of critique and is concerned with social, economic, political, moral and cultural structures (Villa-Vicencio, 1992).

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### ACADEMIC QUESTIONNAIRE

**Student Number: 13396902**

**Blessing Shambare (Rev'D):** PhD Student with the University of Pretoria South Africa. Is doing a Research Study in the Department of Science of Religion (Missiology) – Faculty of Theology. His research focus is on the applicability of Reconstruction Theology in Zimbabwe post-colonial.

**Topic of Research:- Towards a Theology of Reconstruction for Post- Colonial Zimbabwe: A Missiological Perspective**

This questionnaire is meant to help **Rev Blessing Shambare** understand some issues pertaining to the history of Zimbabwe; pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial, in terms of its configuration and the Church –State relations and other related issues of sustainability. The questionnaire also seeks to gather data on issues of concern when it comes to rebuilding and reconstruction. The research study is focused on how possible it is for Zimbabwe to be reconstructed, using the Ezra – Nehemiah Biblical Model.

The information you provide here will not be used for any other purpose or be shared with anyone else who is not part of this academic exercise. Your honest and thoughtful responses will be greatly appreciated.

**EMPHASIS: - Please note:** All your contributions will remain anonymous; they will be treated with strict confidentiality. Please do your best to complete this survey, in confidence, honesty and open manner, giving details and explanations where possible using the space provided or using an extra sheet of paper. Once more thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire.

*Please download this form, respond to questions and send it back as soon as possible either as a hard copy to Reverend Blessing Shambare; 2820 Benjamin Burombo Road, Ruwa, Zimbabwe or through email as an attachment to [shambarebf@gmail.com](mailto:shambarebf@gmail.com) and +263 772 361 890*

1. **Consent Statement:-** This information will remain strictly for the researcher and the University Academic Purposes Only. Strictly confidential and cannot be released to anyone other than these.

I (full Name and Title):- ----- Other details of Academic/Work /Interests (i.e. Theological College Principal/ Secondary School Teacher/ Engineer/Bishop etc.) -----  
-----

Have read the information and understand fully that my support will help the academic arena. Thereby I have enjoyably and freely consented to participate in the research by answering to the questions stated here and others not stated but which will inform the research fully. I further affirm that the researcher has fully explained the details of the research.

Signed at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee Signature:- -----

Researcher: **Blessing Shambare**

Signature:- 

**2. Citation Preference**

**How do you prefer your Information Referenced?**

**Cite my name as:** - .....

**Use a pseudo- name as:** - .....

**3. Demographic information (Please put a tick where applicable)**

**Sex:** Male ----- Female -----

**Marital status:** Single ----- Married -----

**Age:** 18-25years ----- 26- 35years ----- 36- 45years ----- 46-55years ----- 56+ ---

**Highest Level of education:** Diploma ----- Bachelor ----- Master ----- Other (*give details*)

**4. Research Question on Zimbabwe and Reconstruction Information**

**Do you have an understanding of when and how Zimbabwe was liberated from Colonial rule?**

**YES/ NO**

**Please give details.....**

**May you provide any historical data of Zimbabwe (you may put dates or periods and use separate sheet) you know and you regard necessary to this study:**

**a. Pre-Colonial Setup**

**Community Mobilization Setup .....**

**Religious Influence Social Stability or otherwise (Community Religious Leaders vs Christianity)**

.....

**Social and Moral Identity .....**

**b. Colonial Setup**

**Community Mobilization Setup** .....

**Religious Influence to Social Stability or otherwise** (*Community Religious Leaders vs Christianity*)

.....

**Social and Moral Identity** .....

**c. Post-colonial Setup**

**Political Setup** .....

**Religious Influence to Social Stability or otherwise** (*Community Religious Leaders vs Christianity*)

.....

**Social and Moral Identity** .....

**What does Zimbabwe's liberation entails to the "common" Zimbabwean?**

.....

**Do you think today "common" people are enjoying the benefits of independence? Yes /No**

**If Yes, explain:-** .....

**If No, explain:-** .....

**Reconstruction happens when something desired is no longer visible or ceases to be. Do you think that Zimbabwe was or had something desirable which ceased to be:.....**

**Comment on the Political Situation in Zimbabwe:**

**Colonial** (*During the Colonial Regime*) .....

**Post-Colonial** (*After Political Independence*).....

**Comment on the Economic Situation in Zimbabwe:**

Colonial .....

Post-Colonial .....

If you are asked, to prioritize areas or sectors which require reconstruction which one would be your top 3 and please make a comment to each one of the priorities giving suggestions to the best transformation you envision

1.

Comment and Suggestions: .....

2.

Comment and Suggestions: .....

3.

Comment and Suggestions: .....

Whom should you say is responsible for the Zimbabwean current state of affairs which require reconstruction? *(Please be academic and explain fully /use a separate sheet of paper if necessary)*

.....

**5. The Role of The Church in Reconstruction**

In your understanding and your context what is the “Mission of Church”?

.....

In your opinion what should be the mission of the Church in Zimbabwe in its current state of affairs? .....

The Church in Post-colonial Zimbabwe is categorised in “four major groups –or associations” (ZCC, ZCBC, EFZ and UDAZISA). What will be your comment on such groupings in light of manipulation by any power that be?

.....

**In your opinion is the Church in Zimbabwe well positioned to be the voice of reconstruction?**

.....

**Is the Church authoritative enough to be honored/respected by the powers that be?**

.....

**In your opinion is the Church in Zimbabwe effective in addressing issues of development and reconstruction? Yes/ No**

**If Yes, explain** .....

**If No, explain** .....

**Do you think the Church can do anything more other than theoretical preaching on issues of development/reconstruction? .....**

**What is the role of the Church in reconstruction or rebuilding? .....**

**Should the church partner the state in reconstruction? Yes / No**

**What type of relationship would you recommend? .....**

**6. The Use of the Bible in Reconstruction**

**In your opinion and view does the Bible have relevance to the:**

**Zimbabwean People** .....

**Politicians and Politics** .....

**Economy and Business** .....

**Social Value and Morality**.....

**In your opinion the Biblical Model Selected (Ezra-Nehemiah) in this research applicable to reconstruction in Zimbabwe? Yes or No**

**Details and Suggestions:** .....

**Do you think Zimbabwe is now fertile for reconstruction or rebuilding? Yes/No**

**Give reasons:** .....

**What other values or Zimbabwean cultural values would you suggest that will complement the reconstruction process if considered?**

7. **Any other Critical Suggestions or comments** *(that will help shape the research or that the researcher has to considered-use a separate sheet)*

**Appendix 2**

**INTERVIEW SET QUESTIONS**

**Student Number: 13396902**

**Blessing Shambare (Rev'D) : PhD Student with the University of Pretoria South Africa.** Is doing a Research Study in the Department of Science of Religion (Missiology) – Faculty of Theology. His research focus is on the applicability of Reconstruction Theology in Zimbabwe post-colonial.

**Topic of Research:- Towards a Theology of Reconstruction for Post- Colonial Zimbabwe: A Missiological Perspective**

This set of Interview Questions is meant to help the researcher understand some issues pertaining to the history of Zimbabwe; pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial. The Interview will also seek to gather data on issues of concern as outlined in the Chapter Breakdown and Objectives of Research. The research study is focused on how possible it is for Zimbabwe to be reconstructed, using the Ezra – Nehemiah Biblical Model. This then allows questions to be raised such as outlined in this question set which requires your help as to produce the thesis of reconstruction in Zimbabwe.

The information you will provide here will not be used for any other purpose or be shared with anyone else who is not part of this academic exercise. Your honest and thoughtful responses will be greatly appreciated. Thank you for accepting to help the researcher.

**EMPHASIS: - Please note:** All your contributions will remain anonymous; they will be treated with strict confidentiality. Please do your best to respond to the interviewer (researcher) in confidence, honesty and open manner, giving details and explanations where possible.

***Reverend Blessing Shambare contact details; 2820 Benjamin Burombo Road, Ruwa, Zimbabwe or email [shambarebf@gmail.com](mailto:shambarebf@gmail.com). Cell Phone: - +263 772 361 890. He will be pleased to meet you at your nearest convenience for a full interview***

1. **Consent Statement:-** This information will remain strictly for the researcher and the University Supervisor-Strictly confidential and cannot be released to anyone

I (full Name and Title):- ----- Other details of Academic/Work/Interests

(i.e. Priest/Bishop/Pastor/Farmer/Human Rights Activist/Teacher/Retired Government Officer/etc.) -----  
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Have read the information and understand fully that my support will help the academic arena. Thereby I have enjoyably and freely consented to participate in the research by answering to the interview questions stated here and others not stated but which will inform the research fully. I further affirm that the researcher has fully explained the details of the research.

Signed at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee Signature:- -----

Researcher: **Blessing Shambare**

Signature:-



**2. Citation Preference**

**How do you prefer your Information Referenced?**

**Cite my name as:** - .....

**Use a pseudo- name as:** - .....

**3. Demographic information** *(Please tick where applicable)*

**Sex:** Male ----- Female -----

**Marital status:** Single ----- Married -----

**Age:** 18-25years ----- 26- 35years ----- 36- 45years----- 46-55years ----- 56+ -----

**Highest Level of education:** Diploma ----- Bachelor ----- Master ----- Other -----

**4. Structure of the Interview and Questions**

>Reconstruction comes after there is destruction. In your opinion would you support the assertion that Zimbabwe needs reconstruction theology now?

>What will be your comment on the choice of Ezra- Nehemiah Model as ideal for Zimbabwe’s reconstruction?

>What is your view on the influence of African Renaissance ideology? Can it be taken as a backdrop of the Reconstruction?

>In 1980s the Economy of Zimbabwe was vibrant, in your view what went wrong and when?

>In your opinion who is (are) responsible for the Economic down fall in Zimbabwe?

>What is your comment on the political situation of Zimbabwe in colonial and post-colonial times?

>Is politics related to the social and economic status of the society?

>The Armed Struggle for Independence brought about independence; do you think the objectives of Liberation Struggle are being lived currently?

>What is the role of religion in Zimbabwe?

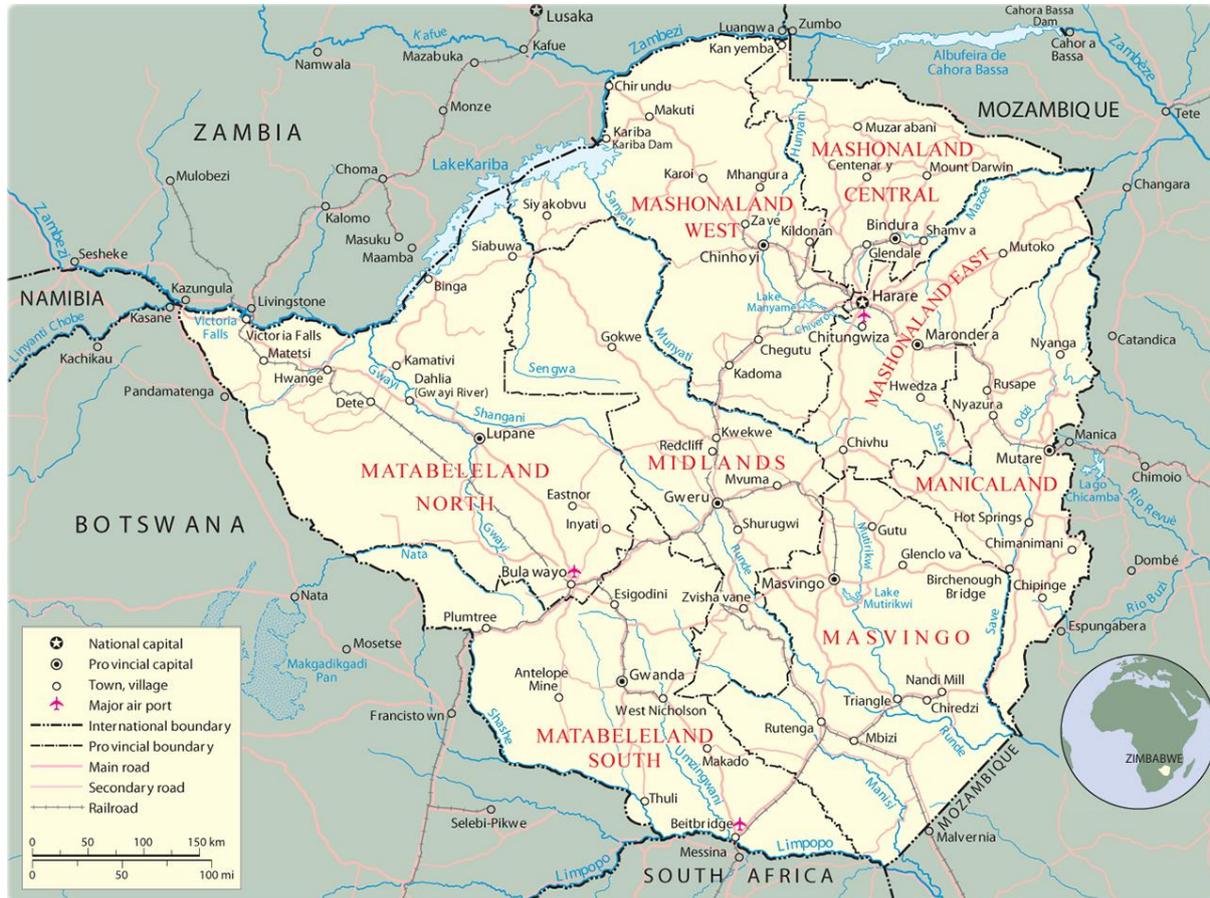
>Is Christianity influential in Zimbabwe? What then should be the role of the Church in Reconstruction?

>Can you comment on the ideal Church –State relationship model that is transformative and helpful to the reconstruction of Zimbabwe?

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## Appendix 3

### The Zimbabwean Map: The Context of Study



<http://www.geographicguide.com/africa-maps/zimbabwe.htm> accessed on 26/04/2017