

**PASTORAL CARE IN A CONTEXT OF POLITICAL, CULTURAL  
SOCIO-ECONOMIC INJUSTICE: THE CASE OF MATABELELAND**

**by**

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Mabutho Mkandla, student number 16402091 hereby declare that this dissertation, "Pastoral care in the context political, cultural and socio-economic injustice: the case of Matabeleland", is submitted in accordance with the requirements for the Doctoral degree at University of Pretoria, is my own original work and has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher learning. All sources cited or quoted in this study paper are indicated and acknowledged with a comprehensive list of references.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mkandla', is written in a cursive style.

**Signature**

**August 2019**

## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to my late grandfather Mthenjwa Thebe whose courage and quest for justice both during Zimbabwe's liberation struggle and the *Gukurahundi* era was inspirational. At the same time this work is also dedicated to all those people who have cherished and championed the cause of human rights, justice and peace both in and outside Zimbabwe's borders. Special tribute goes to the church in general and in particular the Roman Catholic Church whose contribution to the cause of justice, reconciliation and peace is quite significant. The victims of degrading forms of inhumanity remain in my memory that one day God's reign of justice and peace shall be realised.

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## ABSTRACT

In the polity of Zimbabwe the region of Matabeleland has become synonymous with marginality. It is a region that has, since the arrival of colonialists, been subjected to the brutality of the powers that be. The colonial agenda in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century brought about impoverishment of the people. Primarily the focus of the colonial protagonists was to destroy the Mthwakazi or Ndebele state to subdue and dominate its people for the benefit of the colonial agenda as enunciated in the 1884 Berlin conference. This did happen and the Ndebele state was annihilated resulting in the heavy losses that included cattle and land. However, paradoxically these injustices did not end with the collapse of colonialism. Since Zimbabwe's 1980 independence, the region witnessed terror and brutality of political violence unleashed on civilians by the new political administration of black majority rule. This political mayhem left a trail of destruction, not just of the thousands dead and the countless traumatised and maimed but also of the economic plunder leaving people without a basic livelihood. What was envisaged, namely reconciliation, justice, peace, national cohesion, progress and prosperity, did not come to realisation, particularly in Matabeleland. To date the region still suffers serious political, cultural and socio-economic disadvantages. This is the context of the study. In order to facilitate a remedy to a myriad of the many challenges besieging the region this thesis proposes a theological approach of pastoral ministry of care. The aim is to make a practical theological investigation and on this social context with the view of formulating and applying practical methods relevant to the pastoral ministry of care recommendable to the context. Through the mediation of pastoral cycle the study carries out a social analysis as a tool to expose aspects of concern. Hence a means of understanding the context, the study presents a critical historical overview of three major historical periods, the pre-colonial era, the colonial era and the post-colonial era. Each of these periods of history has contributed to the legacy of injustice and political violence that undermines progress and peace not only in Matabeleland, but in the entire country. Historically the Roman Catholic Church has been involved with the country's political and socio-economic realities. The study investigates that involvement in order to ascertain whether and how the Church can, also in the present and future, play a meaningful role in the region to provide a critical alternative to the status quo.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Setting the scene

After decades of independence from the colonial regime, Zimbabwe has not yet attained to political, cultural and socio-economic sanity, let alone progress and prosperity. There is lack of justice when it comes to the distribution and sharing of the common goods. It is a country that still encumbered by the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial legacies of inequality, injustice and violence. In essence there are still gross human rights violations for lack of justice, equality and peace testifies to the claims of this study. According to John Kusumalayam (2008:135, 182) the human right “is something that cannot be denied without a grave violation of justice and degradation of one’s dignity ... [for] human rights derive from human dignity”. Zimbabwe’s 1980 independence did not usher in a new dispensation envisioned during the liberation struggle save for change from white minority rule to black majority rule. It was a mere transition from colonial rule without the much needed transformation that would bring about justice, peace and social progress. There is sufficient evidence that democratisation has been a failure and the rule of law has also been scantily observed.

However, this trend seems to be common among most of the post-colonial states in Africa. Post-colonial states of Africa have been plagued by political violence, the breakdown of social fibre and high levels of economic decline necessitated by unbridled corruption. Nevertheless, the Church has always maintained a positive attitude for the African continent. According to Guido Oliana (2014:24) there is “great human and spiritual resources of African people ... the variety of cultures and the abundance of material resources of the soil, Africa holds a precious treasure in itself”. For the positive exploitation of these resources the Church, through its faithful has to play its role as well. “A great sense of responsibility is therefore laid on African Catholic shoulders in the person of its religious leaders at all levels and of all Christians as individuals and as communities” (Oliana, 2014:24). Fundamentally, the onus to transform human society to achieve truth, justice and peace, thereby enabling its development and progress is laid at the doorsteps of the Church. Oskar

Wemter (2003:7) suggests that “Africa needs political alternatives to the violence and that have characterised so much of its history”. This observation is also true of the Zimbabwean context. At the very beginning as an independent state, Zimbabwe abandoned the foundational principles of nation building, reconciliation and national cohesion. Joshua Nkomo (1984:200) has this to say: “the national campaign of reconciliation that I dreamed of remained a dream”. To this day these words are still true. As a result of the lack of national cohesion and unity, as well as sectarianism, progress and development have been elusive. The region of Matabeleland in particular is still paying a great price in the current political, cultural and socio-economic situation of Zimbabwe.

At the dawn of the newly independent Zimbabwe there was a sense of optimism. Andrew Meldrum (2004:17) expresses it as “a deep sense of what the country stands for: liberation, majority rule, democracy and human rights”. This sense of optimism was born of the positive pronouncements of the incoming government at the demise of colonialism. There seemed to be an express desire to chart a new way that would right the wrongs of the past. The newly elected government announced a policy of reconciliation which, according to Brian Raftopoulos (2004:x) “clearly embodied this delicate task of nation-building”. For a country emerging out of a prolonged struggle for independence characterised by conflicts and divisions, reconciliation was to be the panacea for a smooth transition to a new dispensation of justice and peace. Fidelis Mukonori (2017) claims that “[t]he safety, security and, development of any nation is determined by a forthrightness of its historical legacy”. However, the problem of Zimbabwe is that its historical past is fraught with the injustice of inequality, of violence, racial and ethnic divisions. Nonetheless, the reconciliation announced by the new administration at Independence generated a sense of hope. The expectation was that all the forms of political, cultural and socio-economic exclusion that had been the mainstay of white minority rule, would be overturned. Such developments would, of course, be welcomed by the Roman Catholic Church. According to Caritas Internationalis (2002:3) the Church envisions “a world that that does not know what exclusion, discrimination, violence, intolerance or dehumanising, poverty are, but rather a place where the goods of the earth are shared by all and creation is cherished for future generations”. In the new government born of a long and enduring liberation struggle seeking to establish

democracy, the stakes for the fulfilment of this vision were high. Everything seemed to be on right course.

There were hopeful signs of an inclusive strategy as a coalition government that involved all major players in that conflict was formed. According to Charles Villa-Vicencio (2016: v) “[i]t promised a move beyond the kind of coercive rule entrenched by colonialism and Ian Smith’s minority regime”. A new dispensation within a framework of reconciliation was anticipated. The formation of the Government of National Unity was an expression of the desire for the Zimbabweans to put the past behind them and forge ahead with the daunting task of nation building in the spirit of reconciliation. It called for the equal and respectful recognition of the role both major nationalist parties and their guerrilla movements played in the struggle for independence. They had overthrown the one common enemy of colonial rule. Their differences should not have been allowed overshadow the broader ambition of nationhood.

The legacy of colonial rule included multiple limitations to justice, peace, equality and fairness. There was an urgent need for a new dispensation to sever ties with that legacy. A two-pronged approach was necessary that would include a focus both on justice and on reconciliation. Villa-Vicencio (2016:v) points out that “justice and reconciliation need to be inextricably linked”. The future would be rooted in justice and peace that would bring about solidarity and respect of all tenets of human growth and progress on the basis of equality. Forgiveness would be the foundation of a future Zimbabwe. The words of Desmond Tutu (1999:35) apply to the context: “Thus to forgive is indeed the best form of self-interest since anger, resentment, and revenge are corrosive of that *summum bonum*, that greatest good, communal harmony that enhances the humanity and personhood of all in the community”. The policy of reconciliation announced on the eve of independence in 1980 was to usher in a new beginning.

The long years of colonial rule had hardened the hearts of many black people and the magnitude of racial discrimination had resulted in a serious rift on the level of ethnic and racial relations. Raftopoulos (2016:viii) identifies the key issues as follows:

The challenges that have confronted the Zimbabwean polity in attempting to build a politics of reconciliation in the context of gross inequalities inherited from settler colonial rule, and within the constraints of particular international pressure.

Concepts such as justice and reconciliation have an important grounding in biblical thought and Christian theology. This then points to the role that religion and faith can play in the context. Regis A. Duffy (2011:830) claims that “reconciliation is a complex biblical term which includes God’s invitation and our response to ongoing conversion within a community of faith”. So the ‘gross inequalities’ inevitably created divisions in the country between groups invited justice and reconciliation. These would be fundamental components for nation building. According to John Paul II’s encyclical, *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (1988:no. 40) “in the light of faith, solidarity seeks to go beyond itself, to take on the specifically Christian dimension of total gratuity, forgiveness and reconciliation”. Mukonori (2017:176) recalls that on Independence Day in 1980 people were “running around in a frenzy of joy and camaraderie ... a sea of bright smiling faces sharing in one moment of beautiful unity”. However, it soon became evident that this moment of shared joy and celebration was not anchored in the true values that contribute to peace, truth, justice and reconciliation. A critical observer could surmise that this euphoric atmosphere would not last. The book of Amos (5:21, 23-24) articulates a similar situation as follows:

I hate, I spurn your feasts, I take no pleasure in your solemnities. Away with your noisy songs! I will not listen to the melodies of your harps. But if you would offer me holocausts, then let justice surge like water and goodness like unfailing stream.

According to this biblical text, the priority in any given social context is justice and righteousness rather than festivities.

In view of the political conflict that had just ended in the country the tasks ahead were enormous and complex. Duffy (2011:830) puts it as follows: “This complex situation includes both pastoral practice and the particular social context in which Christians find themselves”. The Church as an integral part of the human society has something to say about truth, justice, reconciliation and peace. These values are not only religious, but are about humanity and humaneness. Naturally, any genuine

theological engagement with social contexts should not be seen as mere capitulation to the powers that are. According to Mary M. Veeneman (2018:2) this is seen “as evidence of a fundamentally bankrupt theology ... unable to do anything but endorse the actions of the culture” and therefore a need for “a new theology that did not make quick link between the idea of the kingdom of God and social action”. Such a position is but a legitimate clarion call for an independent practice of the church and its theology in order avoid any compromise in matters of truth, justice, reconciliation and peace. This position profoundly resonates with the Roman Catholic Church’s approach in dealing with social context. Hence according to the ZCBC (2004:3) “the Church as such does not align itself with any single party. In fact, the Church looks beyond the parties and derives its ethos from the eternal Kingdom of God, a kingdom of love, truth, justice, freedom and peace”. The nascent state of Zimbabwe needed to work within such a framework in order to achieve the goals of political, cultural and socio-economic growth across its two major regions of Matabeleland and Mashonaland. According to Kenneth R. Himes (2013:204) “social justice requires that societal institutions be structured and organized in such a way that the demands of commutative, distributive, and legal justice can be adequately met”. Indeed these demands sufficiently addressed and guaranteed coupled with equitable distribution of the economy would consolidate the nationhood of a new Zimbabwe.

However, over this incipient state hung a cloud of uncertainty because of the legacy of historical conflicts. The outcome of a first democratic election was less than optimistic. The Lancaster House talks that mediated negotiations between warring parties had its own merits and demerits. It did not succeed in securing lasting peace between the nationalist parties. Fay Chung (2006:248) observes that once the Lancaster House “agreed to the main features of a post-independence Zimbabwe, the challenge was to steer the country towards independence as quickly and as peacefully as possible”. This was not, however, what happened after the election. The country had practically split into two competing regions based on ethnicity. Meldrum (2004:31) explains it as follows:

Joshua Nkomo, a towering figure in Zimbabwe’s history, widely acknowledged as the founder of African nationalism in the country ... was Mugabe’s great rival, having led a competing guerrilla movement in the

war against Rhodesia. The differences between the two leaders highlighted important divisions in the country.

Those divisions would create political, cultural and socio-economic imbalances along regional lines. Following the events of political violence that ensued in the immediate post-colonial Zimbabwe, the two leaders' differences had actually sealed the fate of the country. Brenna Bhandar (2007:95) explains the process of reconciliation as follows:

Both literal and broader, contextual definitions of the concept of reconciliation require a 'settling' of the past in the nation's attempt to move towards a post-colonial conflict, post-colonial state of being.

The failure to settle the conflicts of the past had catastrophic results of political, cultural and socio-economic nature, particularly in Matabeleland and parts of the Midlands. This study aims to investigate this situation of political, cultural and socio-economic injustice in these regions from a practical theological perspective in order to ascertain what role the Church can play to contribute to individual and social healing. *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (1988:no. 41) explains how the role of the church can be envisaged and also categorically states what it is not:

The Church does not propose economic and political systems or programmes, nor does she show preference for one or the other, provided that human dignity is properly respected and promoted, and provided she herself is allowed the room she needs to exercise her ministry in the world.

This predisposition towards the dignity of the human persons that they must be respected and promoted has served as the motivation of this investigation. Since the first social encyclical, *Rerum novarum* in 1891, the Roman Catholic Church has remained resolute in its concern for social issues, especially those that infringe on the well-being of humanity. The Second Vatican Council shed more light on how the Church aimed to deal with social issues of concern in the world. The Zimbabwean context would not be the exception. Introducing the Pastoral constitution, *Gaudium et spes* (1966:9), Angelo Scola declares the following:

In the light of Christ, the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation the Council means to address itself to everybody, to shed light on the mystery of man [sic] and cooperate in finding solutions to the problems of our time.

The context of Matabeleland's glaring reality of political, cultural and socio-economic injustice is solicitous for the Church's intervention. It is a context that requires constructive engagement. This could lead to solutions with regard to the logjam on the political, cultural and socio-economic development and progress of marginalised regions. Paul VI in his encyclical, *Populorum progressio* (1990: no. 12) claims that "the Church has never failed to foster the human progress of the nations to which she brings faith in Christ". The region of Matabeleland, due to its unique circumstances is a compelling case.

Zimbabwe is experiencing social; economic and political challenges. However, from the 1980 independence leading to the 1983 to 1988 events of disproportionate political violence by the government, the Matabeleland region has not experienced the benefits of independence. In exploring this context of injustice from a practical theological perspective the study underlines the Church's pastoral ministry of care as a critical dimension that is one among other applicable efforts for solutions. Thus the Church is mandated to pay attention to social contexts of need. John XXIII in his encyclical, *Mater et magistra* (on social progress) (1989:no. 4) recalls Jesus' words that when "seeing the hungry crowd, he was moved to exclaim sorrowfully, 'I have compassion on the crowd', thereby indicating that he was also concerned about the earthly needs of humanity". The Matabele context meets the appropriation of John XXIII's words, and therefore the need for a pastoral ministry of care praxis as Zimbabwe continues to experience great socio-political and economic challenges.

Notwithstanding the common challenges in the country as a whole, the Zimbabwe's Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC) acknowledges the uniqueness of Matabeleland's problems. Thus the ZCBC (2009:9) unequivocally states that, the people of Matabeleland "are wounded and they do not feel that they have enough solidarity from fellow Zimbabweans even as they struggle with regional development challenges". This special mention of Matabeleland is necessary because of its unique situation. Earlier, in 2007, the ZCBC noted with deep concern that "[t]he

people of Zimbabwe are suffering. More and more are getting angry, even from among those who had seemed to be doing reasonably well under the circumstances”. Indeed the situation was, and still is dire for Zimbabweans in general. However, the eastern region, Mashonaland, had been doing reasonably well. This is confirmed in an ecumenical document entitled, *The Zimbabwe we want* (2009:5) which acknowledges that “for the first fifteen years of post-independence, Zimbabwe made tremendous strides in almost all spheres of life”. This does not take into account the atrocities, accompanied by socio-cultural and economic plunder, that were perpetrated in Matabeleland. It is, therefore, necessary to provide an extensive background to the situation as the study proceeds to unravel the complexity of the issues regarding Matabeleland and the role of the Church in the context of a general political and socio-economic meltdown that affects the whole country.

## **1.2 Background**

The background to the present situation in Zimbabwe has been summed up by David Harold-Barry (2004:256) as follows: “Unfortunately, the history of the previous 90 years cast a long shadow on the early 1980s and no one was big enough to free the country from it”. It is a history that pre-dates colonialism with its emphasis on the Ndebele-Shona conflicts of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, the backdrop to this history is that it was authored by colonial protagonists and therefore requires critical evaluation. According to Harold-Barry (2004:256) the Shona “have memories of Ndebele pillage of their lands in the years before the settlers came and this has to be acknowledged”. Without attempting to deny or justify the Ndebele military campaigns in Mashonaland, Pathisa Nyathi (2001:71) points out that “white missionaries were in the forefront of painting a negative image of the Ndebele”. These negative aspects have remained an indelible stain of the Ndebele-speaking people. The question is whether these perspectives serve as a justification for the actions of the post-colonial ruling party in subjugating and marginalising Matabeleland, and particularly the Ndebele-speaking people on the political, cultural and socio-economic front. The unleashing of the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade army on the civilians in Matabeleland and parts of Midlands has been largely viewed in political-ethnic terms. This historical episode has severely blighted Zimbabwe’s post-colonial history. Peter Godwin (2006:22) calls

this “a full-scale massacre” and the “sheer scale and ferocity of the killings dwarfed anything that had happened in the independence war”. However, the response of the international community to this was silence. The people of Matabeleland to this day remain suppressed and dominated. They are largely excluded from major political, cultural and socio-economic processes even in their own region. According to Shari Eppel (2004:43) “Zimbabwe is a nation with more than a century of unresolved conflicts ... intentionally exacerbated by colonialism”. Colonial protagonists successfully fuelled the ethnic regional divide of Matabeleland and Mashonaland so that the Harare government has consistently viewed the Matabeleland region as the other. These challenges continue to impair the region. This constitutes the background of the study.

The outcome of this practical theological study aims at a clear formulation of the contribution of faith communities with regard to justice, reconciliation, peace and social progress. Christian faith practice should be sensitive and responsive to social contexts. The role of faith workers is articulated by John Sullivan (2009:xiii) helping people “to raise themselves up through honest education and productive activity, while becoming better persons in their own lives”. Paul VI (1969) describes the role of the Church:

By spreading the light of Revelation, the message of Love, she promotes the dignity of man [sic], training hearts and minds in the virtues of a just and brotherly [sic] social life, for the cultural, moral, and social progress of people, in peace and, a common awareness of the good of all.

Such a socio-spiritual conversation within a specific social context can be undertaken in the form of practical theological discourse. According to Noel Woodbridge (2014:94) practical theology is an “empirical oriented theological theory of the mediation of the Christian faith in the praxis of modern society”. In this sense it is feasible that both academic theology and the church in practice have a role to play, even in politics. Veeneman (2018:10) states that “Christian theology is focused on the person of Christ, and the story of Christ tell us about God breaking into history in a particular time and place”. Basically, theology does not operate in a vacuum but is focused on the God-with-us in Jesus Christ incarnate truly present in human history. According to Himes (2013:28) “God is deeply engaged in human history,

hardly indifferent to what occurs in human life". It is therefore, noteworthy that God cares about people and their conditions of living. Hence Himes (2013:29) further explicates that "the fundamental premise of such a politics is the 'equal claim of all persons before God". This point touches the nerve of this study: Zimbabwe has engaged in the politics, culture and socio-economy of inequality and therefore injustice.

It is my contention that the source of these inequalities has historical dimensions of ethno-political differences between competing political leaders who represented their ethnically differentiated regions. Joshua Nkomo (1984:212) emphasises that the newly elected black government of 1980 "did make an attempt to reconcile the nation to itself". That was a necessary process that has to be pursued with dedication and commitment. Martin Meredith (2005:619) confirms that "[t]he sense of hope and optimism that accompanied the birth of Zimbabwe as an independent state in 1980 survived for several years". This sense of optimism is articulated by David Coltart (2016:111) who recalls that "Mugabe's first acts in office were constructive and designed to consolidate the peace". However, a closer analysis reveals some insincerity in this.

At the inaugural independence celebrations in 1980 Nkomo (1984:215), the representative of the entire Matabeleland and parts of Midlands "was hidden away like something to be scared of". This constituted a 'symbolic humiliation' and a sign that there were untied loose ends to the perceived unity of the parties in that first government of national unity of the post-colonial era. Not long, the falsity and deception of the unity arrangement were revealed. Nkomo (1984) calls it a "false start" for the country, an exclusionist beginning that epitomised the division along both regional and ethnic lines. Thus the 'sense of hope and optimism' survived in only one section of the country, in Mashonaland. In Matabeleland and parts of Midlands in which the post-colonial ruling party had lost the elections, there was a cloud of uncertainty right from the beginning. The Roman Catholic bishops in the country took note of the situation and issued numerous pastoral statements to encourage peace. They also warned that there was a prospect of political violence, should the acrimony between the leaders prevail. According to Meredith (2002:59), from the very moment Zimbabwe got its independence, the threat of violence was

ever present. According to Harold-Barry (2004:257) “we now know that 1980 was not the end of an era ... that independence was sadly not a new beginning ... In an uncanny way the new rulers proceeded just as their predecessors had done”. The new government assumed power without abandoning the colonial legacy of injustice. Of major concern was the aftermath of wartime conflicts and divisions between nationalist parties now in the government of national unity. The sustainability of this government was questionable.

As early as 1982, against the backdrop of a deteriorating political situation, the Roman Catholic Bishops of Zimbabwe (RCBZ, 1982) issued the following statement: “Insofar as men [sic] are sinful, the threat of violence hangs over them; but insofar as men [sic] are united in love, they can overcome violence”. There was a growing concern that the nascent state was grappling with a potentially explosive situation, particularly in Matabeleland and parts of Midlands where the state was dealing with what it called insurgency. Thus the rise of the so-called dissidents or bandits was certainly a factor of grave concern. It threatened the new state’s stability and peace. Not long after the new state came into being, Matabeleland and parts of Midlands were plunged into a state violence that undermined all prospects of development in all sectors.

The level political violence that undermined the value of the human dignity and rights was unprecedented. According to Andrew Meldrum (2004:50) “although trouble was brewing in Matabeleland, the arid southern region where most of the country’s Ndebele people lived, life continued as normal in Harare”. This took place at a time when the whole country was recuperating from the liberation struggle which had just come to an end. It is clear that Mashonaland, at the very start of independence became a sole beneficiary in terms of political, cultural and socio-economic development. These developments in certain parts of the country were diametrically opposed to the shared aspirations of peace and a new beginning. On the whole people were not prepared for further political turmoil, especially from a black government. Joshua Nkomo’s (1984:1) general overview of the situation almost sums it up:

Over the decades of our struggle for freedom I had grown used to the hostility, even the hatred, of governments representing the tiny white

minority of my fellow-citizens. But nothing in my life had prepared me for persecution at the hands of a government led by black Africans.

This describes the residual of the injustices of the colonial era in post-colonial Zimbabwe. On the whole his unpreparedness for injustice presided over by the post-colonial administration was shared by many people. When the new government failed to institute fundamental changes people in Matabeleland began to lose confidence. What they were beginning to witness, in a way it was a replication of the oppressive system that characterised Zimbabwe's political landscape under the colonial regime. This had serious political, cultural and socio-economic repercussions in Matabeleland. To this day the region remains behind in all sectors of development and progress. There are human rights abuses, sporadic outbreaks of political violence and an ongoing socio-economic crisis. These are the realities of this independent and democratic country.

The sectarian political violence that ensued in the 1980 has created a chasm between the eastern and south western regions of Zimbabwe. Frederick Charles Mutanda (1984: xi) describes the situation that ensued from the clashes between the armed forces and the so-called dissidents as "chaos and mayhem". The warring factions were destroying development projects, abusing women and girls and killing those in leadership structures of PF-ZAPU in Matabeleland and parts of Midlands. This resulted in a sense of alienation of the people of the regions from their own country. The outcome of the conflict was serious discrepancies and disparities of an ethnic nature in the politics, culture and socio-economic realities of the country. Douglas Roche's (2003:20) description fits the context: "To the human toll of warfare must be added the economic cost and the lost opportunities for economic and social development". The people in the affected regions were not only denied basic human dignity and the right to life and freedom, but also the opportunities of progress and development in all spheres of life. Inevitably, these developments impacted negatively on the social fibre. Daniel K. Finn (2015:ix) puts as follows: "Terrorism, environmental catastrophe, the loss of social cohesion, the breakdown of family, the deaths of innocents, and a billion people mired in crushing poverty can all be understood as both cause and effect of these divisions". According to David Coltart (2016:111) "hardly a single family had escaped its horror and its psychological

wounds affected virtually everyone". Yet to this day there has not being any recourse to justice.

What has been and to a lesser extent still is happening in the country since independence can be attributed to unresolved differences and conflicts that preceded the 1980 Independence. Frederick Charles Mutanda (1984:xi) describes the population as "a divided, confused and frightened people, led by a divided, confused and frightened government". At the height of the massacres, Nkomo's (1984:236) commended the Roman Catholic Church that "had bravely spoken out against the crimes committed by the forces of the Smith regime". This recognition and acknowledgement of the Church's role with regard to the social issues of injustice motivates this investigation that aims to trace and locate the role and contribution of the Church. The Church has to acknowledge its own complicity with colonialism as it identified and co-operated with colonial agents if it is to play a positive role in the healing of society.

The policy of reconciliation announced at the inaugural ceremony of new government was not demonstrated in practice. The political will and a sense of commitment seem to have been lacking all along. However, to evade the policy of reconciliation considering unsettled differences of the distant and recent past was brazen irresponsibility and quite daring. There was no way that history could be easily skipped and ignored without endangering the present and more seriously the future. Russ Parker (2001:47) puts it as follows: "Issues of unacknowledged history and unhealed memories [are] powerful contributory factors in engendering present-day conflicts, prejudices and bitterness". Considering that the leadership of the post-colonial ruling party were, most of them, highly educated, it cannot be doubted they such facts as regards the power of "unacknowledged history and unhealed memories". However, they had a mission to accomplish and clearly the disturbances and tension were in their favour. In Matabeleland and parts of Midlands the post-colonial ruling party had dismally lost elections, and so, political violence was both a method and strategy to coerce the electorate into voting for them in the next round elections. Raftopoulos (2004a:5) points out that the atrocities were "a means to establish control over the state and those sections of the population were [Zanu-PF's] support base was weak". However, in Matabeleland, there is an added

dimension of ethnic nature which further complicates the matter. Amnesty International (2003) has recorded many incidences of political violence, repression, arbitrary arrests, torture and unwarranted attacks by the state apparatus on civilians. Many cases of murder, abduction and the disappearance of people have been reported during the thirty-eight years of independence. In the context of this political miasma the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop's Conference (ZCBC) through its pastoral letters and its arm, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), engaged with the situation and the people. These activities and their effect form the focal point of the study.

During the past eighteen years the Zimbabwean economy took to a dramatic downward turn. Inflation was rampant. The result is that to date Zimbabwe is a sovereign state without a currency. Amid all of these general challenges, the specific focus of the study is the south western part of Zimbabwe, Matabeleland. Mutanda (1984: xi) describes the situation in Matabeleland and parts of Midlands:

The rate of killing was unbelievable and in spite of appeals by the clergy, the exercise went on. Meanwhile the international community looked away while the unspeakable horrors were perpetrated on innocent Zimbabweans.

The "appeals by the clergy" are quite significant for this study. They reflect the social concern of the Church and its involvement in the situation. These appeals form the bases of pastoral involvement with suffering people. From the perspective of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) in collaboration with Legal Resources Foundation (LRF), the massacres that occurred between 1983 and 1988 were unprecedented misdeeds in the history of modern Zimbabwe. According to CCJP and LRF (1997:209) the dossier was not just about what had taken place but rather most significantly "it catalogue(s) the present, continuing suffering of the victims. It is not merely a report about the dead; it outlines the legacy of war that still has to be endured by the living". In the context of this painful and indelible historical episode, there are huge negative implications on the political, cultural and socio-economic development and progress on the region.

### **1.3 Motivation of the study**

The issue of political, cultural and socio-economic injustice in Matabeleland has made an important impact in my personal experience. This experience has been the motivation to embark on this study. Fulton Sheen (1963:41) explains an people's human responsibility to their social their world as follows: "Because of our horizontal relations to the world, we must bear the name of Everyman [sic] in our hearts .... Always with sympathy for human infirmities we bear the burden of our nations in our hearts". Each person has a role to play in the social sphere. In an academic study the aim is for neutrality of objectivity. However subjectivity is always part of the investigator. Therefor the researcher's beliefs, interests, and intentions should always be investigated (Dillen and Mager 2014:309).

My interest in the social context of Zimbabwe with specific reference to Matabeleland from a pastoral ministry of care perspective derives also from my role as a pastor. This personal involvement will therefore have to be interrogated as the study proceeds. Christopher Owczarek's (2002:9) points out that "even though it is rarely admitted, personal emotions of an author usually play a significant role in the choice and treatment of an argument, either because of a particular experience of the author or because of the nature of the argument itself". My personal experiences of the context and my involvement with communities that live with the trauma of political violence have all informed my interest in this topic. Through this study I aim to make a contribution from a practical theological perspective.

### **1.4 Theological perspective**

Social contexts can and should be investigated also from a theological perspective and with a view to the role the Church in its pastoral ministry of care. The Theological commission ZCBC (1989:2) explains the relationship between theological questions and the socio-political realities of people:

Theological questions are not asked and answered in a vacuum. If they were they could be answered once and for all. They are asked in a particular cultural and historical situation and have to be answered again and again since culture undergoes change and history moves on.

The context of Matabeleland and its many socio-political, cultural and socio-economic problems form such “a particular cultural and historical situation”. The study does not wish to suggest that political violence and the lack of development elsewhere in the country are of lesser value. Zimbabwe as whole has degenerated to a state of political and socio-economic decay. The situation of Matabeleland should be understood within this broader context. However, Matabeleland does have unique challenges and this is the focus of the study. The enormity of the problems that the people of Matabeleland continue to face without recourse to political remedies compels the search for alternative responses. The Biblical Pastoral Ministry Department of the Roman Catholic Church, IMBISA (1999:14) argues that “[a]s pastoral agents of today, we cannot remain untouched by the experiences of Jeremiah”. The theological approach of this study is therefore a response of faith to practice – in other words; a practical theology in context. It is important to realise that theology derives its relevance in how it responds to social contexts. So it “must have an eye toward the human subject and must address the concerns of the contemporary person” (Veeneman, 2018:51). Thus theology in its reflection and praxis should encounter the existential space of humans and proffer solutions when the need arises.

The aim of pastoral agents is articulated by Godfrey Manunga Sibindi (2003:4) as follows: “Pastoral agents hope to be able to permeate with sympathy ... the collective mindset of the people, to grasp their anxieties and hopes in the evangelical encounter”. The people of Matabeleland are living with painful memories of the past and their present situation is not conducive to healing either (see ZCBC 2009:6). Sibindi (2003:5) emphasises the theological responsibility thus: “There is an urgent need to situate this problem in the present day theological debate on faith and politics, and to consider the tension people experience throughout to the Gospel.” The ZCBC (2007) express their concern that there are Christian believers on both sides of the conflict fighting one another. Specifically with regard to Matabeleland, Ben Freeth Mbe (2013:32) bemoans the silence of the church as follows:

The terrorization of the people of Matabeleland was widespread, systematic, and professionally executed over a lengthy period of time. The torture and murder of innocent people was calculated and supremely

evil. The church, and everyone else, was largely silent throughout that time.

The Roman Catholic Church, however, did become involved and played its prophetic role. The crisis continued to escalate. The focus was often on more recent events, whereas the historical grounds for the conflict were largely ignored. This does not bode well for the future unity of Zimbabwe. The ZCBC (2007) further expresses its intention to be involved with the people in a pastoral role:

As your Shepherds we have reflected on our national institution and, in the light of the Word of God and Christian social teaching, we have discerned what we now share with you, in the hope of offering guidance, light and hope in these difficult times.

These words urge tangible Christian action in order that justice may be achieved. The role played by the Roman Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Bulawayo particularly at the height of the *Gukurahundi* era, prompted this investigation. The Church, even in the aftermath of the *Gukurahundi* era could have continued advocacy for forgiveness, reconciliation and socio-economic development as a national priority in Matabeleland. The signing of the Unity Accord that witnessed the cessation of the massacres was not sufficient to affect healing. Much more needed to be done in view of the catastrophic effects on the political, cultural and socio-economic situation of the Matabeleland region. The suggestion of practical pastoral ministry of care as an alternative approach to the context of pain and suffering is the focus of this study which draws from Jesus' concern for the marginalised and oppressed in human society.

The Church is not lacking in its social concern. There is an abundance of literature regarding the Church's response to particular political and socio-economic situations that threaten peace and well-being of humanity. Scola in his introduction to the *Gaudium et spes* (1966:7) highlights the growing involvement of the church as follows:

The majority of historians and theologians agree in affirming that *Gaudium et spes* represents an exceptionally significant expression of the Church's

changed attitude to the contemporary world from the time of the Second Vatican Council.

Among many other reasons why this document is celebrated is that it represents the Church's sensitivity and attentiveness with regard to the social issues that affect the welfare and wellbeing of humanity. It displays the Church's readiness to encounter and engage the contemporary world as an integral part of its pastoral dimension. This document is often referred to as the pastoral constitution of the Church in the modern world. Its emphasis on the pastoral nature of the Church motivated this study with its specific focus on the social context of Zimbabwe and the situation in Matabeleland in particular.

The Second Vatican Council opened the Church to the world so it could see the contemporary world, but even more be affected by it, specially, in times of human plight. The case of Matabeleland presents an opportunity for this, given the injustice that prevails unabated without any foreseeable measures to alleviate the suffering of people on the political, cultural and socio-economic levels. The key to human progress and development is the presence and practice of social justice, peace, freedom and respect for human dignity and the inalienable value of life. In the absence of these there can be no flourishing in any sphere of human life and existence. Hence the purpose of political community is the creation of a humane environment in which humanity can realise its full potential for growth and development. However, decades after the end of colonialism, there has been no meaningful political, cultural and socio-economic growth and development in Matabeleland. This south western region of Zimbabwe has been deliberately marginalised.

Therefore, notwithstanding the fact that Zimbabwe in general finds itself in the throes of misgovernance, the case of Matabeleland is somewhat unique and requires specific attention. The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (CSDC) (2004:no.389) points out the consequences of a lack of action where action is required in the following manner:

Experience has taught us that, unless ... authorities take suitable action with regard to economic, political and cultural matters, inequalities

between citizens tend to become more and more widespread, especially in the modern world, and as a result human rights are rendered totally ineffective and the fulfilment of duties is compromised.

These inequalities constitute injustice or social injustice the result of which is the marginalisation of the deprived people group. Deprived of political power, cultural influence and socio-economic opportunities the human community is disfranchised and disabled to realise its growth in all spheres of possible progress and growth. The immediate response to such contexts should be some form of remedial action. Where political will is lacking other avenues of a non-political nature should be explored. The thrust of this investigation is to propose practical-pastoral theological solutions that would inform and inspire amenable and amiable pastoral care. Ultimately, the study is a call for the practice of pastoral charity which immerses faith action in a social context where critical challenges require a response.

Religion, faith and spirituality have been part and parcel of human experience from time immemorial. It has and continues to play vital role in particular social contexts of political nature where issues of social justice are concerned. The Synod of Bishops, *Convenientes ex universo* (30 November 1971:723) explains the relationship between religion and the context as follows:

We see in the world a set of injustices which constitute the nucleus of today's problems and whose solution requires the undertaking of tasks and functions in every sector of society ... Our action is to be directed above all at those men [sic] and nations which because of various forms of oppression and because of the present character of our society are silent, indeed voiceless, victims of injustice.

This observation of the Synod of Bishops pertains to general conditions prevalent in the world. It can, however, also be made applicable to particular situations of nations and peoples. They point to a world held hostage by a myriad of social crises emanating from various forms of oppression that require action in order for solutions to be found. The message of the bishops calls for action on behalf of the victims of injustice who cannot speak for themselves. Any injustice, whatever form it may take, is a threat to the welfare and well-being of persons, individually and collectively. Dignity and the inalienable right to life belongs all human beings. If this is threatened,

it makes an appeal to all people of good will who driven by a sense of the common good, to respond. The violation of these universal human values reflects an absence of justice. From the perspective of the Christian faith each person, made in the image of God, should be given their due. Tony Byrne (1992:86) argues that “[j]ustice is present when people are treated according to their God-given dignity. Injustice is present when people treated in a way which is contrary to their dignity”. Justice is a common good and therefore has both social and moral dimensions, hence social justice. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) (1995:no.1807) explains it as follows:

Moral virtue consists in the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbour. Justice towards God is called the ‘virtue of religion’. Justice towards men [sic] disposes one to respect the rights of each and establish in human relationships the harmony that promotes equity with regard to persons and to the common good.

In this case justice, or social justice, constitutes both the spiritual and the social dimension. This study as a pastoral theological discourse, deals with the question of a lack of social justice in a particular political, cultural, and socio-economic context. However, due to the universal nature of the values of life, dignity, respect, freedom, justice and peace, this question cannot be treated in isolation. The recognition of these values serves as a catalyst for human progress and development. If they are disregarded, human growth and progress are impeded. This goes for the political, cultural and socio-economic dimensions at the local and international level. The point of departure of the study is that the creation of space for justice and peace to flourish is an act which promotes human advancement in all spheres and dimensions. Humanity fully realises its potential for good in the absence of war and conflict. The destruction of conflict is the antithesis of growth. It is important once again to recall Roche’s (2003:20) words that “[t]o the human toll of warfare must be added the economic cost and the lost opportunities for economic and social development”. The pain of war and conflict has huge implications for people’s wellbeing. However, the 1980s disturbances do not qualify the category of war; unarmed civilians being killed by soldiers cannot be regarded as war. It was an unquestionable massacre.

In this context the people of Matabeleland counted political, cultural and socio-economic losses unjustly. The crux of the matter is the legacy of political violence and its debilitating effects. In moments of pain and suffering, religion has provided some solace and urged people to continue with their lives. Though the Christian faith is wide-spread in the country, there seems to be widening dichotomy between the reality of human experience and faith. This division requires a transformative approach that can bring about the newness of life among people. The mission of the Church is essentially concerned about the newness of life that can be realised through the evangelising mission of the Church. Paul VI (1975:no. 18) explains that “for the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new”. The unsavoury events of inhumanity in many parts of the world, even where Christianity is believed to be the main religion, dictate a missing link between faith and reality. It is in this context the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) notes with concern the worsening situation in the country. The legacy of violence has prevailed for decades without number in which people continue to experience its terror. In view of this scenario, therefore, the ZCBC (2009:2) acknowledges that “Zimbabweans, have hurt each other in many different ways and over long periods of time”. Such debilitating conditions call for relevant and meaningful faith responses. However, in practice religious responses are often experienced as superficial and unrealistic. Subsequently, the very mission of the church is undermined. Walter Kasper (2013:11-12) puts it as follows:

The wide divergence between the experience of reality and proclamation of faith has catastrophic consequence. For the proclamation of a God who is insensitive to the suffering is a reason that God has become alien and finally irrelevant to many human beings.

The context requires attention and a pastoral strategy that can proclaim the living God effectively in a way that is sensitive and attentive to human needs. The context of the study is post-colonial Africa and Zimbabwe in particular. The focus is south western region of Matabeleland. The study reflects on the role the church in response to human history with its challenges. Kasper (2015:17) explains what this would entail in the following words: “This means discerning the cry for justice as well

as making a passionate response to the appalling unjust relationships existing in our world". At the centre of this discourse is a plea towards an end to injustice and an establishment of relationships based on love, truth, justice and peace.

Africa in general has not fared well in the post-colonial period. Robert Guest (2004:12) states unequivocally that "since independence, African governments have failed their people". These failures could be accounted for by their inheritance of the colonial systems embedded with injustice and the inability to undo those systems. In those systems there is hardly any sense of the common good which derives fundamentally from the sense of justice and fairness. According to Michael Budde (2015:139) "[t]o desire the common good and strive towards it is a requirement of justice and charity". The colonial regimes did not exist for the good of greater majority of peoples but for the benefit of those in powerful positions of governance. This mentality became a trap for many African governments immediately post-colonial era. For many post-colonial governments this conception further degenerated into ethnic politics again courtesy to colonial mind of divide and rule. It became an easy trump card to get into power for political candidates who belonged to the so-called majority tribes. One could easily become a leader by virtue of tribe than by merit of competence and suitability. This became and continues to be the death trap for post-colonial Africa. Reflecting on the 1994 Rwandan genocide, Guest (2004:18) points out that the "tribalization of politics afflicts most African countries". The immediate victims of tribalised politics are the minority groups. A critical review of the Zimbabwean context does not reflect a departure from a tribalised politics, culture and socio-economics as a means of power retention. The concept of justice and the common good are lost in this miasma that barely reflects any logic and let alone sound reason. "The literature on the common good is extensive in Catholic theological, philosophical, and political circles" (Budde, 2015:138). Consequently this discourse endeavours to explore the context from theological reflections, particularly paying attention to the richness of the Catholic social encyclicals and other similar practical theological sources. Hence this study is, in the words of Terry Veling (2005: xv) "seeking justice and mercy for those whose voices that are drowned and ignored". While the focus of the study is on Matabeleland, it is important to acquire a general sense of post-colonial Africa. The voices of the people of Matabeleland can be heard within the broader context of similar voices elsewhere in and outside

Zimbabwe. Gerald West (2001:1) points out that, though Africa has “had to contend with colonialism, which siphoned its wealth for the benefit of colonial powers”, Africa fought and won its political freedom from colonial regimes. However, many states have failed to achieve true democracy, justice and peace. This has hampered political, cultural and socio-economic development and progress. In such circumstances the beckoning and most urgent task incumbent upon all people of good will, but in a pronounced way upon the Church is to challenge the legacy of violence and oppression that impedes social progress.

Admittedly the fundamental aspect is that the collapse of colonialism in some states of Africa did not succeed in eradicating unjust political, cultural and socio-economic structures. Human rights abuses and, political and socio-economic inequalities against which liberation struggles were waged continue to hog the limelight. Arguably, the structural systems of injustice of the past colonial powers remain deeply rooted in most of African states (Meredith 2005:14). West (2001:1) argues “that Africans have not given themselves space to reflect on their god-given potential and its ability to transform their lot decisively”. Notably, the frenzy and independence euphoria that characterised the mood blinded the leaders’ minds and their followers to the fact that political independence was not sufficient. There lacked the sense and appreciation that the greater job for transformation required skill, dedication and commitment to common good. Due to this lack of reflection, similar injustices are simply replicated. Africa has lost its acclaimed virtue of *ubuntu* which Richard Stengel (2010:ix) describes as a “profound sense that we are human only through the humanity of others”. Many of the problems today that persistently affect Africa are self-inflicted. Paul Coutinho (2012:25) points out that repressive socio-political condition affect the lives of millions of people in Africa as a whole.

The study pin-points the residual effects of colonialism that still plague Zimbabwe today and perpetuate injustice. According to Peter Stiff (2000:8), the post-colonial ruling party of Zimbabwe soon “realised that draconian laws could be very useful, particularly if used to further [its] aims of creating a one party state or to savage into silence an independent press”. The post-colonial ruling party’s quest for power led to various forms of injustice. In the early years of its independence, Zimbabwe turned against a particular section of the population. Lloyd Sachikonye (2011:16) describes

the brutality inflicted on civilians in Matabeleland as unprecedented. Geoff Hill (2005:15) calls it “southern Africa’s only modern-day genocide”. According to Godwin (2006:22), the scale of that violence “dwarfed anything that had happened in the independence war”. The manner in which it was carried out seems to have been calculated and executed with precision to achieve greater results. According to Ben Freeth Mbe (2013:32), the terror was orderly undertaken and covered the entire Matabeleland. There was a dire need for intervention yet it was slow in coming. During the colonial era the Roman Catholic Church and other Christian churches participated in the resistance against injustices. According to Brian Maye (2010:30) the Church strove for social justice and openly criticised racism and its systems of injustice during the colonial era. Paradoxically, the demise of colonialism did little to lessen the same evils of colonialism. Once again the critical role of the Church was needed to challenge post-colonial excesses. According to Himes (2013:10), the church has a part to play and its “call to be a leaven within the dough of society means the church must not abandon politics to the expedient and popular”. This study challenges the church to take up its prophetic and interrogate the continued abuses of human rights, not just in Matabeleland but everywhere in the world where they still exist.

The case of Matabeleland requires an urgent attention because of its uniqueness within the broader context of Zimbabwe. There is an emerging sense of consciousness; an awakening spirit for freedom and demands for justice. This emanate from a deeply felt sense of being oppressed in the same manner colonialism was doing to the indigenous black people. Colonialism seems to have been replaced while its structures of injustice remained intact. Hence Clifford Mabhena (2014:1) refers to the current situation as “internal colonialism” and explains it as follows: “Internal colonialism has largely been shaped by historical and ethnic factors that have come to dominate the political landscape of Zimbabwe before and after independence”. The events of ethnic-political violence unleashed on the people of Matabeleland and parts of Midlands in the immediate post-colonial era leave doubt if they were not a new form of colonialism. I argue that they were deliberate and meant to achieve to secure absolute political and subjugate the people of Matabeleland. This being the perception, the post-colonial government is largely viewed as being worse than its predecessor white minority regime. The ethnic

groups in Matabeleland, particularly the Ndebele speaking people, had to be subdued. According to Roche (2003:22), political conflicts “usually result from deliberate political decisions”. This view has informed the undertaking of this investigation with the desire to challenge responses to the problems faced by the people of Matabeleland.

The present-day drive to subdue Matabeleland has distant historical roots. In the pre-colonial era the Ndebele had military power over the Shona people. The memory of those historical tribal conflicts more than a century ago survived the brutalities of the colonial era and the advent of Christianity to manifest again in the post-colonial state. Today the position of power has been reversed and the power is in the hands of the Shona people. This can be deemed a matter of ‘settling old scores’ in Matabeleland. In many ways the people of Matabeleland were excluded from the benefits of the post-colonial era. They were disillusioned.

The study aims to explore the relevancy to the role of religion and particularly Christian faith in the context of social injustice. Kasper (2015:14) argues that “religion and mercy have often been the source of protest against injustice and violence as well as the impetus for powerful action against them”. This suggests that the Church’s has a crucial role to play in order to stop the on-going injustice and facilitate healing and reconciliation. Robert Kaggwa (2005:208) contends that “there can be no peace, no harmony, without forgiveness and reconciliation”. The role of the Church will be highlighted through a perusal of the Church’s pastoral documents in the light of challenges of the particular context. According to Jon Sobrino (2005:9), an effective response to the realities of any given context would require “getting a grip on reality”, “taking on the burden of reality” and “taking responsibility for reality”. A holistic and comprehensive approach is necessary in order to identify the roots of a complicated historical situation. Sobrino (2005:9) points out that this would require “reclaiming traditional categories of justice and injustice”. This study engages the context by means of these categories in order to evaluate the situation and identify the prevalent political, cultural and socio-economic injustices.

## 1.5 Problem statement

Central to the question of Matabeleland is a lack of social justice. At the centre of any form of injustice is the negation or even more seriously the abrogation of human rights. After decades of independence the region of Matabeleland has not had an equal part of the political, cultural, and socio-economic developments in the country. The region's human and natural resources are exploited. The local people remain poor and do not receive the benefits of the natural resources in their region. This lack of political, cultural and socio-economic equity seems to be based on past ethno-political events. According to Karl Peschke (2010:240) "social justice further demands a proportionate and equitable distribution of the wealth of a nation among different groups and regions of society". Such demands have not been met with respect to the region. This has created a schism in Zimbabwean society. Masiwa Ragies Gunda (2018:13) describes the Zimbabwean situation thus: "From the bread-basket of Africa, we have gradually and rapidly fallen to become one of the basket cases of Africa". Zimbabwe grapples with plethora of political, cultural and socio-economic challenges, and has plunged into social chaos that threatens its stability. These recent developments that are much felt across the country after 15 years of Independence have been the reality of the people of Matabeleland since 1980. Thus the country is caught up in both political and socio-economic mayhem of enormous proportion. Raftopoulos (2004:2) candidly states: "As a nation, we are at the most critical point of our history, struggling to chart a peaceful path beyond present devastating political and economic conditions". However, these same challenges in Matabeleland are linked to the ethnic and political conflict that caused a rift between the south western part of the country and the east. This has hampered progress and development and has had a detrimental effect on the standard and quality of life in the south western region of Zimbabwe.

Many of the issues dealt with in this study have not been adequately documented and are rarely mentioned in the public sphere due to their sensitive nature. This study aims to contribute to the enterprise of documentation as a means to acknowledgement of the injustice. The conversation around social injustice the study stimulates can contribute to charting the way forward. After a silence of two decades some publications on, for instance the *Gukurahundi* massacres, have appeared

recently. However, the sensitive nature of these issues has seen efforts by the authorities to suppress their becoming public. Archbishop Emeritus Henry Karlen of Bulawayo's report 'The way of the cross of a diocese' (1990), for example, which was not published contains important information about the terror of war and the *Gukurahundi* era. The report provides important source material on the chronology of the political events that resulted in the destruction of mission centres and the murder of missionaries during the height of the liberation struggle and also after independence was gained in 1980. This document expresses the church's solidarity with the suffering people. What motivates this study is that those events are still lingering in the collective memory of those who were affected. This bodes no good for the country as a whole.

The point of departure of this study is that there have not been many meaningful efforts to redress the situation, the negative impact of which can still be felt on the levels of politics, culture and socio-economic development and progress. The legacy of that era of political turmoil continues to undermine people's vision and aspirations. Tribalism and corruption in all spheres hinder the development of Matabeleland. Unless the issue of the political violence of the 1980s is addressed with the honesty and fairness it requires, unity, peace and stability will not be achieved. The majority of people in Matabeleland tend to connect their political, cultural and socio-economic misfortunes to this conflict. During the conflict many people from Matabeleland crossed the border to neighbouring South Africa, Botswana or fled to other parts of the world. Even years after that period of extreme turbulence, the lack of employment, education and other necessities of life continue to drive them out of the country.

Employment and educational opportunities are not readily available to the population of the region. There is a strong sense that there is a deliberate agenda to undermine their political, cultural and socio-economic growth and progress. They feel marginalised. Unmarked mass graves silently attest to the turbulent past. The lack of recognition, even denial, of what happened by authorities continues to irk the people. The unexpressed emotions of pain and suffering find their way in other spheres of life. It has cascaded into homes where domestic and gender violence has seen an unprecedented surge. The study is a practical theological reflection on the situation

in order to elucidate the possible contribution of the Church and propose some pastoral solutions to these challenges.

## 1.6 Literature review

The available literature will be perused to construct a theoretical framework for the investigation. Archbishop Emeritus of Bulawayo, Pius Ncube (2004: xiii) comments as follows on the current availability of documentation on the history of Zimbabwe, but also points out that some solid work should still be done:

We are in a time of great suffering in Zimbabwe, but one thing is clear: never before has there been such a wealth of documentation about events of our history as there is today. However, documentation itself is like an unexploited seam of ore until it is mined and processed and refined.

A primary source that is relevant to this study is the report by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) in collaboration with Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) entitled: *Breaking the silence: A report on the disturbances in Matabeleland and Midlands 1980-1988*. This report was published 9 years after the *Gukurahundi* event. It provides evidence of what happened and “outlines the legacy of war that still has to be endured by the living” (CCJP & LRF 1997:209). It highlights the role the Roman Catholic Church played during the political conflict. This work by Church that was done in the light of faith, it can be viewed as an example of practical and pastoral theological praxis. Since it was compiled and published long after the actual event of genocide, it also explores the further role of the Church in the present as it is challenged to deal with the aftermath of that conflict. It also serves an enduring historical memory in present-day Zimbabwe.

Joshua Nkomo’s work, *The story of my life* (1984) also gives insight into the political upheavals. This narrative is much broader and spans the period from before the birth of nationalism through to post-independent Zimbabwe. Nkomo points to the major highlights of the liberation struggle, issues of contestation and conflict among the nationalists and the failure to resolve differences. These differences resulted in fraudulent political processes which caused the first democratic dispensation to fail to deliver the much anticipated nation building, unity and freedom. Ibbo Mandaza, in

his foreword to *The story of my life* (1984: xvi) describes the political processes as follows:

But the end of the fighting, and the start of the task of building a nation, was the time to draw the divided people back together again, to emphasise the work that can only be done in unity ... Instead Zimbabwe's first government, born out of the rivalries of those years in exile and in prison, set out to impose narrow sectarianism. It did not really attempt the task of binding up the nation's wounds.

Herein lie the genesis of the country's problems: the failure to unite the nation at its very beginning as an independent state. Given the magnitude of the divisions that preceded independence and that even played out much louder during the divisive first democratic election, it was of the utmost importance that those differences be resolved. However, according to Horace Campbell (2003), these divisions would later manifest, among others, in a lack of development projects in Matabeleland. Campbell (2003:115) gives the following example: "The ruling party [post-colonial] viewed the matter of water for Matabeleland in ethnic terms (this was a Ndebele project) and did not give the kind of government support to follow up the consultancy reports on the environmental impact of the scheme". However, the project was renamed Matabeleland National Zambezi Water Project from Matabeleland Zambezi Water Project. The addition of 'national' was supposedly a concealment of the perceived notion of ethnicity which evokes tribal feelings.

Mathema's (2013) *Zimbabwe diverse but one* shifts the blame for Zimbabwe's problems to colonialism and Christianity. According to Mathema (2013:27), the former colonial masters and their proponents desired tribal conflicts and used Christianity to undermine the people's traditions and history. I argue that this position is partly unsustainable. There were already people group conflicts before the colonial era although they were not tribal in nature; their ethnicisation is rather a new coinage by colonial proponents and this is what colonialism could be largely blamed for. This eventually culminated in the 1980s conflict. According to Fortune Senamile Nkomo (2013:228) in his book *Joshua Nkomo: Father Zimbabwe*; Joshua Nkomo died with "clasped hands together and lifted up in a clear appeal for unity". This book shows that divisions in the country cannot merely be blamed on the colonialism. On

the one hand there was a history of division before colonialism and on the other hand country has the capacity to transform. However, that transformation has not been forthcoming because of a lack of political and social will. Rather there has been a breakdown of both the social and moral contract. People did not take up their social and moral responsibility towards one another, nor did they work together on nation building.

David Coltart's 2016 work, *The struggle continues: 50 years of tyranny in Zimbabwe*, identifies a plethora of challenges that faced by Zimbabwe, including the exceptionally difficult issue of Matabeleland. Coltart (2016:143) asserts plainly that "action against civilian population of Matabeleland was part of deliberate state policy". Coltart's work is of key importance to this study as it provides further evidence and explanations regarding the particular challenges of Matabeleland. According to Mbe (2013) in his work, *When governments stumble*, the violent farm seizures were a result of the unchallenged 1980s genocide in Matabeleland that went unchecked not only by the international community but also by those in Zimbabwe who were not concerned with what happened there. Mbe (2013:32) formulates it as follows: "The terrorization of Matabeleland was widespread, systematic, and professionally executed over a lengthy period of time". The people of this region were traumatised and the trauma has remained in their memory up to the present day. There is a dire need for redress.

During and after the 1980s conflict, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop's Conference (ZCBC), through its pastoral letters, proposed possible pastoral solutions. At the very beginning of the conflict, the Catholic bishops released a *Pastoral statement: Our way forward* (1982), warning the leaders to avoid "inflammatory and provocative public statements" that could enflame hatred and anger among the people. The Church followed the events as they unfolded and released another pastoral statement the following year, namely *Reconciliation is still possible* (1983). In this statement the concealment of wanton killings, woundings, beatings, burnings and rapings of civilians in Matabeleland and parts of Midlands were condemned. Many years after the conflict the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC) acknowledge the on-going effects of that war through a *Pastoral letter on national healing and reconciliation: God can heal the wounds of the afflicted*. The statement

acknowledges, among other challenges, the existence of tensions of ethnic nature. These pastoral letters are evidence of the role the Church has played and can still play in contributing to solutions.

To further illumine the exploration of this investigation a number of pastoral documents of the Roman Catholic Church can be applied to the context of Matabeleland. In his Encyclical, *Populorum progressio*, Paul VI (1967:1) notes that the people's advancement is central to the Church's missionary activity and therefore a matter of concern. This affirms the role the Church has in addressing questions of human development and progress. Other such documents of the Church as *Lumen gentium*, *Gaudium et spes*, *Redemptoris missio*, *Pacem in terris* to mention but a few, underscore the Church's task to engage with unjust human contexts with the aim to contribute to restoring sanity. In order to lay solid foundation for the Church's role the study explores issues of injustice prevalent in Matabeleland. This will further provide background for a practical and pastoral theological approach to the situation. According to Francis' encyclical, *Evangelii gaudium* (2013:115), people caught up in fighting are deprived of a clear vision of life and their "horizons shrink and reality itself begins to fall apart". Arguably due to the terror of that past conflict, communities in Matabeleland have lost a sense of meaning. This causes them to be less motivated to work toward their own development and progress. *Mater et magistra* (1961:1) states clearly that the Church has the responsibility is to safeguard human dignity which is held in the highest esteem and to contribute to restoring it where it has been lost.

Again Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris laetitia* (2016:1) states: "The Joy and Love experienced by families is also the joy of the Church". Thus the faith of the church finds its true expression in family life. According to *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) (1995: nos. 2204, 2206) the family "is a community of faith, hope and charity; ... the family is the original cell of social life". Therefore the study considers it as the seedbed not just of individual persons but also of the human family. The study shows that the conflict had dire consequences for families and the customs and traditions that held them together. The traditional core values of respect, love, obedience and compassion, taught and upheld in the family life were lost in the violence of war. The culture of *ubuntu* has been eroded. According to

Meredith (2002:67) “[v]illagers were forced to sing songs in the Shona language praising Zanu-PF while dancing on the mass graves of their families and fellow villagers”. This was a desecration of the respect for the dead which denied them the opportunity to mourn. All these forms of indignity at the level of family and community have left gaping wounds that are still in need of healing.

Zimbabwe as a nation is divided although authorities tend to deny this reality. Raftopoulos (2004:6) refers to it as a “veneer of national unity” which “was soon torn asunder in the crisis that developed in Matabeleland and the Midlands in the mid-1980s”. The botched attempt at reconciliation in 1980 frustrated the ideals of nationhood that were envisaged during the liberation struggle. The ZCBC (2009:6) mentions the tribal animosity and hostility between the Ndebele and the Shona. Clifford Mabhena (2014:14) describes the government’s discriminatory policy against Matabeleland as follows: “The state went through the motions of development in a very uncommitted fashion and tended to be satisfied that it had achieved its objectives as long as necessary political structures and controls had been put in place”. Political-ethnic domination of the people of Matabeleland was the focus rather than socio-economic development and progress. The ZCBC (2009:6) states that the “Ndebele are wounded and they do not feel that they have enough solidarity from fellow Zimbabweans even as they struggle with regional development challenges”. This feeling of not being an integrated part of the nation creates serious challenges and pushes any prospects lasting peace and progress further away. It has the potential of generating social unrest and conflict. In the pastoral document, *Gaudium et Spes* (1965:1), the Roman Catholic Church declares that “[t]he joys and hopes and the sorrows and anxieties of people today, especially those who are poor and afflicted, are also the joys and hopes, sorrows and anxieties of the disciples of Christ, there is nothing truly human which does not also affect them”. This statement, seen in the light of the context of Matabeleland, is instructive of the Church’s pastoral approach to the issues here dealt with. *Gaudium et Spes* (1965:4) further suggests that to “carry out this task the Church must continually examine the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the Gospel”. These statements of the Church confirm its commitment to the social welfare of humanity. Fundamentally, they are statements of solidarity with the human family.

Despite serious human rights abuses, according to Heidi Holland (2008:242), there are no visible signs of regret among the authorities. This undoubtedly casts a shadow on the future peace and unity of the country. Instead, responsibility is denied. Attempts to deal with the injustices are criminalised. I myself, for example, was incarcerated in 2011 for holding a memorial service for the 1980s victims. The *Newsday* newspaper (Friday, 15 April 2011) reports: “A Lupane Roman Catholic Church priest, Father Marko Mabutho Mkandla was arrested on Wednesday for allegedly holding a Mass in memory of the victims and survivors of the *Gukurahundi* massacres.” This blatant reaction reveals the authorities’ unwillingness to resolve the issue that has so long kept the people of Matabeleland under psychological bondage. Yet the Church is obligated to continue its pastoral activity in dealing with injustice. If injustice is not opposed, Michael Bennet (2006:77) points out that “past baggage will continue to burden the present living, and a legacy of guilt, shame, resentment and fear will be carried into the future”. It is therefore my contention that the problems of Matabeleland related to the 1980s conflict should be dealt with as a matter of urgency in interest of future peace, national unity and progress. Vima Dasan (2007:281) poses a critical question: “With our own anxiety for self-protection, do we wash off our hands of the intolerable social injustices incurred by the most and powerless sections of our country?” This question resonates with the quest of this study. It challenges pastoral care praxis to be rooted in the context. Pope Francis (2013:33) puts it as follows: “This is in fact a grave responsibility, since certain present realities, unless effectively dealt with, are capable of setting off processes of dehumanization which would then be hard to reverse.” Therefore, injustices require a redress. Ongoing injustice further challenges a practical theological response.

Ethnic rivalry cast its shadow on the early years of an independent Zimbabwe (Meredith 2005:622; see Blair 2003). These are very old problems and it seems that the country is not much closer to a solution. In his work, *Zimbabwe: The past is the future – rethinking land, state and nation in the context of crisis* David Harold-Barry (2004:xv) decries the deepening of Zimbabwean’s socio-political and economic crisis and lament that “no one can claim to have foreseen the extent of the catastrophe we are now”. The challenges faced by the country emanate from the stranglehold of political power which affects socio-economic policies. Post-independence African states have tended to pursue political kingdoms rather than development and nation

building (Meredith 2005:141). The blame for failed socio-economic transformation is often attributed to former colonial powers. This, however, is too simplistic and requires debate. Nkomo (1984:253) puts it as follows: “I refuse to accept that we cannot do better than we have done or to reach for the easy excuse that all our mistakes are simply a colonial inheritance that can conveniently be blamed on the invaders”. In view of Matabeleland, I contend that, as much as communities continue with unresolved memories of pain and suffering political, cultural and socio-economic progress will remain stifled.

In his work, *Conscience be my guide*, Geoffrey Bould (1991: xvii) points out that “in a totalitarian regime, the entire nation is imprisoned and the individual lives in a miasma of doubt and fear”. According to Bennet (2006:77), entire communities of Matabeleland live with the tragic consequences of political violence, which continues to psychologically and mentally weigh down their memory. It would be unrealistic to expect positive growth of any kind in such an environment. Mabhena (2014:1) refers to the situation in the Matabeleland region as a politics of revenge. This investigation explores possible solutions to the situation. The available literature presents possible approaches to the situation. Roland Paris (2004:ix) in his work, *At war's end: Building peace after civil conflict*, suggests:

A more sensible approach to post-conflict peace building would seek, first, to establish a system of domestic institutions that are capable of managing the destabilizing effects of democratization and marketization within peaceful bounds.

The new Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (no.20) Act 2013:98 state the following: “Establishment and composition of National Peace and Reconciliation Commission”. Chapter 12, Part 6 and sections 251 and 252 reflect on the constitution and functions of such a commission respectively. These aim to ensure post-conflict justice, healing and reconciliation. The provisions of the new constitution now permit the interrogation of the situation under review. Desmond Tutu’s (1999) work, *No future without forgiveness*, describes the establishment and work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa (TRC) which dealt with issues of human rights violations during the apartheid era. It deals with a context of not just human woundedness but also a wounded history. Matabeleland is a wounded land,

dotted with unmarked mass graves. At the same time the history of the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe is biased against the involvement of people in Matabeleland; it is a wounded history. Parker's (2001) work *Healing wounded history*, introduces the concept of "healing the land". Land is a pertinent issue in Zimbabwe. For land the liberation struggle was waged. Parker (2001:8) presents a biblical perspective: "Throughout scripture we are taught that there is a direct connection between human story and the land or ground on which this story occurs". There is anger in Matabeleland – a land which is in dire need of healing. Cas Wepener's (2015:11) description of a South African context captures that of a Zimbabwe too that "[m]any people are disillusioned for many reasons. Some people were angry some years ago. Others who were not angry then are angry now". From 1980 to the time of political and economic meltdown beginning 1997, Matabeleland had a lonely voice in its cry, but from 1997 the rest of the Zimbabweans began to feel the pitch of misrule.

Zimbabwe requires an approach and methods that could challenge and change the state of affairs for the better. Kader Asmal (2004: xvii), in honour of Nelson Mandela, articulates the pertinent values in these words: "Our book honours an individual imbued with great ideals of reason, imagination, justice, and freedom, with the depths of moral character formed by the toughest of circumstances". Conciliatory approach is an example of how the focus can be on building up rather than tearing down what little is left of a country. The work of Mark Hay (1998), *Ukubuyisana: Reconciliation in South Africa* reflects on the country's quest for making amends for past ills, which was the reason for the establishment of the TRC.

Efforts to seek justice and reconcile conflict are the mainstay of the Church's mission. This is echoed in the Church's numerous documents. The Second Special Assembly for Africa (2006:14-15) in its document, 'The Church in service to reconciliation, justice and peace', for example focuses on "questions relating to reconciliation, justice and peace". This working document was followed by Pope Benedict XVI's (2006) *Apostolic Exhortation, Africae munus*, also on the theme of reconciliation, justice and peace. This study derives its motivation from the Church's efforts and aims to apply this approach to the context of Matabeleland. The traditional culture of Matabeleland is not alien to the concept of *ukubuyisana* (reconciliation). Godfrey Manunga Sibindi (2003) in his work, 'Catholic evangelization

and the Ndebele culture' locates conflict management and resolution at the centre of traditional culture. These aspects are relevant to this investigation for which reconciliation especially is pivotal.

The work of Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder (2013), *Constant in context: A theology of mission for today*, emphasises that theology be done in context. In their view a church is constantly moving in and reaching out to the context in its mission to proclaim God's Kingdom. For Bevans and Schroeder (2013:369) "justice is a wider concept" that encompasses economic, political, basic human rights and peace issues. According to Kathleen Beckman (2015) such contexts should be approached with sensitivity, healing mercy, and compassion. Where people's hearts are stricken with grief, there is a need for healing. Walter Kasper (2012), in his book, *Mercy: The essence of the Gospel and the key to Christian life*, gives an analysis of key virtues in religion and specifically in the Christian faith. These virtues are justice, mercy and compassion. Kasper (2012:1) identifies the following as the great sufferings that confronts humanity "genocide and mass murder ... the threat of ruthless terrorism, outrageous injustice". All of this casts a shadow on people's vision of God. That vision can only become clear when the person of Jesus of Nazareth comes into view. In this regard Joseph Ratzinger' (2007) work, *Jesus of Nazareth*, reflects on the vivid image of Jesus Christ as Saviour of humanity.

Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator's (2005) work, *From Crisis to Kairos* locates Catholic theology within the context of Africa and the particular challenges of the continent. Although his focus is on HIV/AIDS, refugees and poverty in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania, he gives a general overview of the Church's theology in various contexts. Orobator (2005:13) articulates the hope he has for the continent and the church as follows: "That the church in sub-Saharan Africa constitutes a community capable of influencing and transforming social situations no longer occasions doubt". This suggests a transformative theology in Africa. Benezet Bujo and Juvenal Ilunga's (2003) work, *African Theology*, gives an overview of the beginnings of African Theology in the Catholic Church. It is often claimed that this theology sufficiently addresses the challenges of Africa. However, the project is far from being complete. Despite the academic excellence of this African theology, it remains rather theoretical. How it is to be applied to the issues that constantly affect the continent, is

a question. Sergio Bastianel, in his work (2006:14-15), *Morality in social life*, speaks of a God “who from the outset is interested and certainly not indifferent to the fate of peoples, the poor, and the weak”. This study concurs with this understanding and searches for answers in a context of injustice. To this end the numerous documents of the Church on social issues that were applied specifically to various African contexts, will be perused.

Julian Filochowski and Peter Stanford (2005) in their work, *Opening up: Speaking out in the Church*, argue that in the Church “the poor come first”. The poor in this context include all groups that suffer injustice. Diumuid O’Murchu (2005:149) observes that “when the paradigm shifts, even the Church has to change”. This challenge is taken up by the study. The ideal is the departure from a ‘theology of the desk’ to a theology of ‘the field’, a pastoral ministry inspired by reality. According to Lucien Legrand (2001:168) in his work, *The Bible on culture*, faith in Jesus can be rooted in the “multiplicity of world cultures”. He describes inculturation as “the term that theologians have coined to denote contextualisation of Christian faith and life in the various cultural environments” (Legrand 2001:168). The relationship of culture and religion is a focus of this study.

In 1987 Pope John Paul II’s encyclical, *Sollicitudo rei socialis* pointed out that issues raised in the *Populorum progressio* had not yet been dealt with effectively. The Church had not adequately addressed the human conditions of need. The survey found that many people were still “deprived of hope due to the fact that ... their situation has noticeably worsened” (John Paul II 1987:13). Recently Pope Francis published *Evangelii gaudium* in which he proposes a new approach which is sensitive to prevailing needs. In order to create a new society, injustice must be opposed. For Gustavo Gutierrez (1988:81) “through the struggle against misery, injustice, and exploitation the goal is the creation of a new humanity”. This struggle is not carried out by arms of war and violence. A creative pastoral ministry of care can awaken Christians and communities at large to combat the evils of injustice. In contemporary Matabeleland political, cultural and socio-economic neglect require practical theological innovations and new pastoral approaches to address the prevailing need. The study aims to contribute to that.

Karl Peschke's (2010:1) book, *Christian ethics, moral theology in the light of Vatican II*, is an overview of the moral responsibility "in the different spheres and situations of human life". It covers a broad spectrum of issues, including that of relations and behaviour. As a theological moral guide, this work sheds light, among others, on contexts of social injustice. The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (CSDC) (2004) provides a holistic overview of the Church's social teaching particularly on rights and responsibilities. According to the CSDC (2004:no. 372) "the basic goal is to guide economic processes by ensuring that the dignity of human beings and their complete development as person(s) are respected, in the context of the common good". The book is grounded in biblical texts and *the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC). The latter articulates the faith of the Church and articulates what lived faith should entail. As an important source and guide of faith teachings, CCC (1995:nos. 2237 and 2244) categorically states that "political authorities are obliged to respect the fundamental rights of the human person" and the "Church invites them to measure their judgements and decisions against this inspired truth about God and man [sic]". The *General directory for catechesis* (2000:19) further asserts that "it is to foster in pastors and catechists a greater consciousness of the necessity to keep in mind the fields in which the seed is sown and to do so with the perspective of faith and mercy". The transmission of faith should be attentive to the "historical circumstances" of each particular context. This is the point of departure of this study.

## **1.7 Methodology**

This study explores and critically investigates literature sources to gain insight into issues of political, cultural and socio-economic injustice in Matabeleland following the 1980s political-ethnic conflict. The study is a practical theological reflection on praxis. According to Dillen and Mager (2014:302), the "understanding of practical theology and its methods depends largely on the relations one establishes between these terms: science of human related to God (i.e., ecclesial practices), discourse about God's actions in the world ...". The Church's pastoral ministry of care practices aim to reflect 'God's actions' in a particular context and social sphere. Joe Holland's (2005:23) "Roots of the pastoral circle in personal experiences and catholic social teaching" offers a "social-analysis dimension of the pastoral circle". The study

critically examines the historical literature with respect to the context. The merits of social analysis as a method is its pastoral leaning or bias, which is appropriate to this practical theological study that takes seriously the social context of political, cultural and socio-economic injustice. Peter Henriot (2005:39) provides further explanation that the “social analysis step helps the members of the community to see that poverty is not simply a natural phenomenon to be accepted as inevitable, but rather that it is the effect of human decisions taken by identifiable human actors”. Christian faith need not be overly spiritualised in the face of unjust social contexts. According Gustavo Gutiérrez (2005:486), “neither its present nor its future aspects should be related merely to spiritual realities, since their origin and goal have definite historical bearings”. In fact they represent concrete historical realities. Social analysis is an invaluable tool in aiding a theological exploration of the social context. Social analysis is an effective way of discovering the root causes of social injustice.

Generally social science methods “can be seen as *ancillae theologiae*: they assist theology, but in the end theological norms prevail.” They can also “function as a *Fremdprophetie*, a prophetic challenge coming from outside theology” (Dillen and Mager 2014:309). Since social analysis incorporates pastoral theological aspects it suits the aim of this study. It combines Christian theological reflection with social analysis with the aim “to discover a plan of action for the promotion of justice and peace” (Tony Byrne 1988:55). It can therefore be taken as a socio-theological analysis. Through this two-pronged analysis the context will be investigated in its socio-political dimension through a theological lens. According to Dean Brackley (2005:234) “the Holland and Henriot pastoral circle lays out a path for understanding the world and responding to it better”. Hence as way of understanding the context and also engaging it, the study will make a critical historical overview of Zimbabwe, and then seek to apply practical-pastoral theological reflections and praxis.

In this study the pastoral circle/social analysis stands in service of the application of practical pastoral methods to the context. Responses by the Church through the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Conference (ZCBC) include numerous pastoral letters that urge reconciliation, justice and peace by encouraging constructive dialogue. These letters date from before, during and after the conflict. These responses are consistent with the content of other pastoral documents of the Church, in particular

with *Gaudium et spes* (1966:4) which urges the Church to “continually examine the signs of times and interpret them in the light of the Gospel”. Especially significant for the Zimbabwean context is the point made in *Gaudium et spes* (1966:85) that “for though nearly all people have become politically independent they are far from being free of the excessive inequalities or independent in every way they should be, nor are they free of serious internal difficulties”. The objective is to bring the dimension of biblical faith into the context of injustice. An apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii gaudium* (2013:50) acknowledges the inadequacy of “a purely sociological analysis which would aim to embrace all of reality by employing an allegedly neutral and clinical method”. A critical examination of the Church’s ‘social theology’ is crucial for this study in order to find an adequate pastoral care response to the socio-political.

The political-ethnic conflict in Zimbabwe and its consequences have not been sufficiently attended to in the public discourse of the country. In order to appreciate and understand the complex dynamics of the context, as Holland and Henriot (2005:9) put it, we “must allow that reality to speak to us”. A key term in this investigation is social injustice. In order to come to an understanding of its complexity, the following method is proposed by Jon Sobrino (2005:9) “[a]s a way of working for justice, we must reclaim the categories of injustice and justice in order to grasp the truth of the world we live in and to understand faith with Jesus of Nazareth as the starting point”. This study adopts an incarnational and redemptive model as proposed by Christopher Moody in his work, *Eccentric ministry* (1992). He points out that the models and methods that are chosen, will depend on the pastoral context to which they are applied. Incarnational and redemptive models are inspired by Jesus of Nazareth, whether “the helpless baby or hidden Christ; and the suffering Christ of the cross – the victim” (Moody 1992:7). The incarnate and redemptive Christ present an inculturated approach will serve the purposes of this investigation.

The incarnational model is not about an event that took place long ago. It is happening now, where Jesus “can be born today in the stable of my soul” (Sheen, 2009:89). The incarnation unfolds in the daily living experiences of humanity. Jesus truly became human and experienced the social conditions of men and women. This mystery was itself a response to humanity’s need of a God sensitive to its plight. According to Livio Poloniato (1988:47) Jesus Christ incarnate “made for himself a

tunic of the sackcloth of our human nature, sewing it with the needle of the subtle workings of the Holy Spirit and the thread of the faith of the Blessed Virgin". Sheen (1963:41) reminds that Jesus, truly present in the human flesh

has given us an example of human sympathy, for He wept three times: once for human grief, misery, desolation and death, at the tomb of Lazarus, once for a city, a civilization, a decaying culture, a rotting government and corrupt priests, at Jerusalem; finally, for human sin, pride, greed, egotism and all that catalog of capital evils, at Gethsemane.

Zimbabwe, as a country, is to a large extent in denial of the social reality of injustice in the south west region. The pastoral circle as a method of social analysis will be utilised to explore this context or injustice that hinders progress and development. Factors that impede human relations and obstruct positive nation building on a foundation of national reconciliation, justice, peace and fairness will be identified. The denial of and silence with regard to injustice in the country are cause for concern. This study aims to break this silence by encouraging naming the realities and challenges and suggesting constructive responses to it. Sound practical theological reflection can provide insight into the challenges being dealt with here. The mystery of the incarnation serves as the reference point for the practical theological reflection. Frans Wijssen et al (2005:21), explains practical application of the pastoral circle as follows:

The term pastoral circle is widely used in formation programs for social ministry (justice and peace, social teaching of the church), spiritual renewal, pastoral ministry, mission and ecology; the term pastoral circle is more popular in pastoral care, pastoral theology, retreat programs, and religious education.

By means of this circle the study will reflect on the social realities of Matabeleland and bring this into dialogue with a Christian worldview. The primary objective of this study is to investigate how a rooted faith experience as a lived reality, lived faith can affect the existential existence of people. The backdrop of the study is the Roman Catholic Church's involvement in the political and socio-economic struggles of Zimbabwe. The Church commands respect among communities in Matabeleland

and therefore it could make a valuable contribution to justice in the region and to finding solutions to the many problems.

The Roman Catholic Church in Africa has adopted the family as its model for effective evangelisation. Raphael Mabuza Ncube (2014:9) in his book *My faith and my family* articulates that “[t]he African family is strong and it endures because of its rootedness in culture and religion which find their meeting point in what is called *Ubuntu*”. In the context that is investigated families, as primary social structure, have been subject to much political, socio-economic and cultural injustice. This has had a detrimental effect on families, which is therefore one of the aspects that needs pastoral attention. According to pastoral theologian, Howard Clinebell (1966:373), the aim of a family approach is to “enable individuals and families to change basic aspects of their personalities and behaviour patterns to make these more constructive and creative”. Family ministry is an important dimension in the mission activity of the Church when dealing with political, cultural and socio-economic injustice.

Holland (2005:24) relates how his personal social history has been one of the reasons for his interest in the pastoral circle. This is also the case for me. On one occasion I have been incarcerated, held in isolation and brought before the courts on numerous occasions. I have been harassed and received death threats. That was the censure for my criticism of the government on the *Gukurahundi* issue. Verhuel (2016:80-81) who attended one of these court sessions relates it as follows:

I examine the demands that Patrick and Father Mkandla made when they appealed to the police ... Both men articulated that their continued appeals increased their awareness that they were engaging with a violent and politically partisan police force. At the same time, their interactions with police, and later the courts, increased their awareness of – and, in Father Mkandla’s case, access to – Zimbabwe’s extensive human rights networks.

These personal experiences have motivated my academic study and choice for the pastoral circle and social analysis as explorative tools with which to engage the social context. Because of the adverse effects of political violence the values of *ubuntu* are constantly under threat. The terror of politically motivated conflict tore

down the traditional and cultural values of respect, love, justice and peace. In accordance with the Church's mission of engagement, the aim of this study is to identify useful methods which are not contrary to the Gospel in order to place these methods at the service of the gospel (*General Directory for Catechesis*, 1997:112).

According to the Zimbabwean Constitution Amendment (no.20) Act 2013 (Chapter 1 article 3) "the rule of law, fundamental human rights and freedoms, cultural diversity, religious and traditional values, recognition of the inherent dignity and worth of each human being, recognition of the equality of all human beings, gender equality and good governance", are the founding values and principles that should inform the behaviour, attitudes and relationships of citizens. The Constitution makes provision for dealing with instances of injustice. Pertinent are Articles 251 to 253 of the Constitution which provide for an "establishment and composition of National Peace and Reconciliation Commission". Article 252 articulates the purpose of such a commission. It covers a wider spectrum of issues to ensure post-conflict resolution and justice where violation of fundamental rights of people had taken place. The legal framework provided in the nation's Constitution could provide the basis for initiatives to resolve issues of Matabeleland in the interest of progress and growth of the people. However, there seems to be a lack of political will.

The Church has the will to challenge the injustices that stifle development and growth in Matabeleland and elsewhere in the world. One method that could be of use in Zimbabwe is that of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa. This method is particularly useful to this study because its processes are based on the Christian faith. Other methods that will be explored are workshops, liturgical rituals of healing and memorialisation. In these methods the Christian faith and theological reflection are central. According to Wijzen et al (2005:37) there is "great emphasis on attention to the world around us, to 'finding God in all things'. Not simply finding the Divinity in a mystical revelation, but finding God's loving involvement in the practical matters of everyday life". The perspective of the study is that attention to the world is the domain of social analysis, whereas reflection on 'finding God's loving involvement', is a practical and pastoral theological reflection in the context. Byrne (1988:55) elaborates on the function of the model as follows:

The pastoral circle/social analysis method does not solve justice problems. It must be remembered that this method simply helps to discover the causes of social injustice and helps people to make a plan of action.

This method is utilised in order to come to an understanding of the social context. Mathias Sibanda (2015:10) identifies the four steps of the method as “lived experience, critical analysis, theological reflection, and response”. With regard to this investigation the three historical periods, namely the pre-colonial era, the colonial era and the post-colonial era provide the background. In the historical overview, critical analysis functions to identify and analyse those aspects that continue to have a negative bearing on Zimbabwe’s polity. The practical theological reflection will focus on the responses of the Church and how they raise awareness of injustice as the Church carries out its pastoral care activities. The study focuses on the much needed political, cultural and socio-economic development in the region and how that can be brought about. In the second person of the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ, God revealed Godself in the concrete space and reality of humanity.

The model of incarnation cannot be satisfactorily conceived without the Trinity. The trinitarian model serves as an example of communion within the One Godhead reflecting community living. According to Len Kofler (2008), “a person is relational and therefore is part of a larger context of the human family. From this perspective it is necessary to reach out to the doctrine of the Mystery of the Trinity to find the right balance between rights of the group and rights of the individual”. The social analysis/pastoral circle method is appropriate for investigating a context where injustice has not only affected individuals but also communities. It is imperative to integrate all the relevant elements in order to bring about individual and community healing, reconciliation, solidarity and social progress for all. Hence in terms of creating or seeking harmonious human relationships, the reflections on both the Trinity and Incarnation, constitute the central focus of the theological discussion of the study.

## 1.8 Chapter outline

Chapter two provides a critical historical overview of Zimbabwe's three major epochs: the pre-colonial era, the colonial era and the post-colonial era. As it explores these historical periods it aims at identifying those aspects that have important bearings on the contemporary age, particularly on the issue of Matabeleland's political, cultural and socio-economic injustice. An overview on each era aims to identify problematic issues that negatively impact on the desired progress and development of the south western region of Matabeleland. The source and root causes of the problems are identified and discussed, because, in the words of Byrne (1988:55) "it is necessary for those who work for justice and peace to examine justice problems very carefully before they take action to solve the problems ... they should understand the problems they are dealing with". In this chapter it becomes clear that the legacy of political violence and human rights abuses has a long history in Zimbabwe spanning all the three historical periods, namely the pre-colonial era, the colonial era, and the post-independence era. Ironically enough it is in the post-independence era that Matabeleland's political, cultural and socio-economic problems have escalated. The effects of the decimation of the population in Matabeleland, the desecration of cultural values and the stifling of socio-economic prospects of development are explained. This chapter presents the socio-historical and political context. It indicates that much healing is needed in the region. The chapter shows that, despite provisions made in the new Constitution that offers opportunities of redress, the case of Matabeleland remains problematic.

Chapter three explores the role the specifically of the Roman Catholic Church in contexts of social injustice. How the Church deals with social contexts will be explored critically. The key concept of justice as central to the social engagement of the church will be unpacked and its relation to the foundational Southern African concept of *ubuntu* explained. The chapter explores the moral and spiritual role the Church can play in social contexts. This will be done by perusing the body literature available, namely encyclicals, pastoral statements, the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church. According to (Gutierrez 1990), The legitimacy and necessity of the dialogue between theology and social sciences proposed by the Second Vatican Council is no longer a *quaestio*

*disputata* but an acquired pedagogical principle (in Wijsen et al 2005:153). The chapter argues that, inasmuch as the Church played its pastoral role before and during the conflict, it now has the moral duty to address the on-going suffering of the people.

Chapter 4 deals with the practice of a pastoral ministry of care. It reflects on the person of Jesus incarnate as the ultimate model of the church's mission. Jesus' own ministry is seen as providing an example of the ministry of care. The chapter explores and encapsulates two theological concepts, namely the trinity and the incarnation in order to inform the development of an effective inculturated pastoral approach. These two theological concepts are applied to social issues such as communal living, forgiveness, social reconciliation, justice and peaceful relationships among peoples.

## CHAPTER 2

### A CRITICAL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the context that is investigated in this study. It presents a critical overview of the three major historical epochs in Zimbabwe, namely the pre-colonial era, the colonial era and the post-colonial era. According to the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) (2009:2) these “serve as easily identifiable historical periods in which our conflicts have taken place. Each era has its own sources of conflict that can be seen as political, economic, and cultural”. Therefore, in order to explain the present scenario of continued injustice in Zimbabwe with special focus in Matabeleland, a critical review of these three eras is indispensable. Generally, the country has made less than significant progress in terms of democratisation, equality, justice; respect for liberty, reconciliation and peace. Its history bears a testimony to a legacy of injustice. According to Russ Parker (2001:45) “history may be written by the winners but the so-called losers carry their own version of the same story and it colours their outlook on life in general and relationships with the winners (in their story) in particular”. Historical narratives tend to be biased in favour of the victors. However, the history of any nation must be constructive and responsible in order to guard the present and protect the future. Zimbabwean history is conflicted, particularly in relation to the two major regional blocks namely Matabeleland and Mashonaland. I argue that the nation’s history pre-colonial, colonial or post-colonial is anchored in the colonial narratives and many historians, even local ones, do not deviate from that colonial narrative.

In order to understand the dynamics, this chapter critically examines aspects of Zimbabwean history that are ‘wounded’ and need healing. In presenting his book, *Healing wounded history*, Russ Parker (2001:3) explains that it “attempts to offer a theological and practical examination of reconciliation, the healing of group stories and their relationship to and effect upon the land or place where these stories are located”. This precisely helps to define why a re-visit to historical eras in this chapter is critical. History and its memory are important contributors to human relations. History shapes human perspective in the present and in the future. Hence a critical

overview of each of Zimbabwe's major epochs of history. Each era contributes or has contributed in some way to the present situation of suffering. Any development in a given country and context is necessarily linked to its history. This wounded history can be viewed and critiqued within the context of practical theological reflections. Peter J. Casarella (2015:3) picks on Benedict XVI's *Caritas in veritate* and states the "encyclical takes the encounter with the Lord of history as an indispensable condition for the witness of the Christian in society". Thus the church must be able to locate its witness to Christ the 'Lord of history' within the complex situation of human history. The perspective of the ZCBC (2009:2) on the matter is as follows:

What makes the situation complex is the fact that conflicts that existed before colonialism were used by colonial system's divide and rule strategies for the purposes of maintaining power and control, only to have some of the same modes of thinking, strategies and institutions inherited and perpetuated in the post-colonial period.

The narrative of Zimbabwean history is a paradox of joy and pain – joy at having attained independence but pain at having failed to achieve a measure of prosperity for all people. Zimbabwe is a country with a wounded history and broken relationships that need healing. This can be traced throughout the three major historical epochs. The ZCBC (2009:2) expresses the hope that "with healing and reconciliation, our nation will recover and set itself up for political, social, cultural and economic development". However in order for this to happen the historical past of pain and suffering in the land should first be explored, for "healing the land, therefore, brings together the strands of unhealed history and the locations where such stories continue to exert a shaping of the people's living there" (Parker 2001:15). It is important to acknowledge that it is only through justice, truth-telling, forgiveness, reconciliation and peace that a country can forge ahead in progress and development. Therefore, whatever hinders positive development must be explored and interrogated.

A focus of the study is to trace strands of unhealed history that continue to negatively influence the country. Negative elements of historical narratives must be subjected to scrutiny because their "baggage will continue to burden present living, and a legacy

of guilt, shame, resentment and, fear will be carried into the future” (Michael Bennet, 2006:77). This urges examination and reflection. A critical exploration of relevant aspects of Zimbabwean history can provide a basis for practical pastoral ministry as a response to injustice. According to Pope John Paul II in his work, *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995:no. 105) “the Church’s witness must be accompanied by a firm commitment to justice and solidarity by each member of God’s people”. From a practical theological perspective the call is for liberative theology. James H. Cone (1990:1) argues that “Christian theology is a theology of liberation. It is a 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”. To some extent this resonates with Benedict XVI’s reclaim of justice, “the Catholic authority whose reputation is linked most closely to the critique of the theology of liberation actually shares with the theologians of liberation an interest in social justice inspired by Jesus’ preaching...” (*Caritas in veritate*, 2009: no.30). However, the ‘firm commitment’ must be supported a social analysis of the context intended. This chapter, therefore, serves as a basis for such analysis and aims to critically review and reflect on those historical aspects that continue to affect people’s lives, particularly in Matabeleland.

Zimbabwe attained independence from colonial rule after a long and bloody liberation struggle. At the dawn of independence there was a sense of hope. A policy of reconciliation was announced. In respect to the end of colonialism in many African countries, according to AMECEA Pastoral Department (1995:no. 39) “[t]his gave rise to great hopes for political, economic, social and cultural development”. Zimbabwe was not to be outdone; the decorum with which the country purported to chart a new dispensation pointed to a prosperous future. Both the economy and the infrastructure were in fairly good shape. This could have served as a spring board for the country’s future socio-economic prosperity. Human progress and development are very much linked to mission of the church. Of course there is an important distinction as to how far the church could get into that. According to John Paul II (1990:no. 58) in his encyclical, *Redemptoris missio*:

It is not the Church’s mission to work directly on the economic, technical or political levels, or to contribute materially to development. Rather, her

mission consists essentially in offering people an opportunity not to 'have more' but to 'be more', by awakening their consciences through the Gospel.

Nevertheless, this does not suggest that such development falls completely outside the church's scope; it is truly envisioned without exaggerated quest for material acquisitions. Hence the church vouches for political, cultural and socio-economic progress among peoples. Still, John Paul II (1990:no. 59) in his *Redemptoris missio* categorically states that:

Through the Gospel message, the Church offers a force for liberation which promotes development precisely because it leads to conversion of heart and ways of thinking, fosters recognition of each person's dignity, encourages solidarity, commitment and service of one's neighbour, and gives everyone a place in God's plan, which is the building of his Kingdom of peace and justice, beginning already in this life.

Therefore, even as Zimbabwe got independence in 1980 the Church kept a close watch to the unfolding developments to see if these ideals would be achieved. This was not without cause; it had already participated in the liberation of the country by way of its prophetic advocacy against colonial injustices.

However, Zimbabwe, as a nascent state emerging out of a prolonged war of liberation had witnessed bitter rivalry between the fighting elements. It was clear that there was a hangover and a lingering over the unresolved differences between the major parties to that liberation struggle. Hence apart from socio-economic concerns the major task was to resolve the differences and iron out unsavoury relationships born of the conflict and fighting. It was with this background that the policy of reconciliation was not just welcomed but also largely anticipated as a noble process towards a new beginning of nation building. Therefore in view of that conflicted background a due process that would bring about forgiveness, reconciliation and healing, the new state desperately needed. This would provide a solid starting point in terms of political, cultural and socio-economic development and progress. In such circumstances Kaggwa's (2005:208) point is very much applicable that "we know there can be no peace, no harmony, without forgiveness and reconciliation". Unfortunately the policy of reconciliation announced on independence was not

pursued with a political will it required. David Harold-Barry (2004:xv) expresses a sense of hope that had lingered but eventually dashed to nothing when he says: “We thought there was a certain closure about the date 1980-that victory was won and all we had to do was ‘enjoy the fruits’. Events around the turn of the new century have shown how naïve we were”. These words explain the turn of events that have seen Zimbabwe become a pariah of the international community. Raftopoulos (2004:1) identifies the following reasons: “the economic crisis ... the erosion of national legitimacy as a result of the perceived betrayal of a vision of renewal, the emergence of an alternative political movement, and the growing criticisms of the international community”. Within the broader context of the country, the Matabeleland issue looms large. The *Gukurahundi* massacres have severely affected the country’s history and image.

This is the context in which the particular issues of political, cultural and socio-economic inequality in Matabeleland have been experienced since 1980. However, within the broader context of Zimbabwe, Raftopoulos (2004:1) argues that “the origins of our crisis pre-date independence”. This pointer to that distant past impels a critical exploration of those historical aspects that cast a shadow on the country’s prospects of national unity, progress and development. The focus of the chapter is the political policies and cultural and socio-economic realities in Matabeleland, reflected upon in the light of Christian faith in order to stimulate a practical theological conversation. An example of this can be seen in Latin America’s liberation theologies which “showed how theological reflection emerged from an experience-insertion in the reality of life and an analysis of that experience leading to a correlation with scriptures and the tradition of faith” (Amaladoss 2005:193). Carmen Maria Cervantes et al (2014:169) call it a “theological reflection that comes out of and gives light to the praxis of the church in a particular context ... and embraces the reflection on the pastoral action of the people of God, active in their own sociocultural and historical context”. Faith as a living reality is grounded in the social context of humanity.

The mission of the church in any social context can only yield positive results if the church has an understanding of the history of the people. Pope John Paul II in his *Post-Synodal apostolic exhortation ecclesia in Africa* (1995:No. 51) asks:

How could one fail to take into account the anguished history of a land where many nations are still in the grip of famine, war, racial and tribal tensions, political instability and the violation of human rights?

As this study investigates the question of Matabeleland from a practical theological and pastoral perspective, it is particularly important to revisit the 'anguished history of the land'. In Zimbabwe, as is the case elsewhere in Africa, injustices have been allowed or caused to occur without people having had recourse to justice. This has impeded the development and progress of the people in the spheres of politics, culture and socio-economics. Pope John Paul II (1995:no. 68) further argues that: "integral human development-the development of every person and the whole person, especially of the poorest and most neglected in the community-is at the very heart of evangelization". The chapter focuses especially on those aspects of the history of Zimbabwe that have perpetuated ethnic tension and encouraged sectarianism. Hence, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC 2009:4) point out that "in our history, there has not been space created to allow for healthy political debates and contestation. This has caused a lot of frustration and resentment".

## **2.2 The tragedy of history**

Human history attests to various forms of division among groups and nations. Pope Paul VI in his encyclical, *Populorum progressio* (1967:no. 9), notes that "there is also the scandal of glaring inequalities not merely in the enjoyment of possessions but even more in the exercise of power". This scenario is common in Africa and also in post-colonial Africa. Peter Kreeft (2014:47) points out: "If we stop believing in the cause of our equality, we will eventually stop believing in our equality, and we will start treating each other as inferiors instead of equals, like the Nazis, or Brave New World". In fact this was the real danger to which the new Zimbabwe could easily succumb. The Zimbabwean history critically read and analysed within this broader continental context does not paint any different picture. Inequalities on the political, cultural and socio-economic levels are mainly founded on ethnic conflict and nepotism that have often led to bloodshed. Roche (2003:20) points out that to "the human toll of warfare must be added the economic cost and the lost opportunities for economic and social development". This is the fate of many post-colonial states in

Africa. Stanislav Andreski (1968:31) emphasises that for economic progress to become a reality peace and order are required. In the absence of peace and order there is need for timely intervention for the sake of the common good. According to Pope Paul VI's *Populorum progressio* (1967:no. 13) such a "situation of the world demands concerted action based on a clear vision of economic, social, cultural, and spiritual aspects". In the context of Zimbabwe, such intervention is sorely needed. This study, therefore, investigates the potential role of the Church in this respect.

Events in history have had devastating consequences on the African continent and also in Zimbabwe. Meldrum (2004:19) puts it as follows: "Decades of racism had left a legacy that could not be erased by a new name for the country, a new flag or even a new black leader ... The country seemed polarised and looked in old enmities". This statement specifically describes the context of Zimbabwe. In the immediate post-colonial era Zimbabwe plunged into old age rivalries with sentiments of ethnicity. For the most part Zimbabwe is held hostage by the historical legacy of violence and ethnic divisions, not just by racial enmity between white and black people. Problems between the Ndebele and the Shona people have culminated in the political, cultural and socio-economic subjugation and domination of Matabeleland by a Shona-led government. In fact Clifford Mabhena (2014:144) adopts and applies the concept of 'internal colonialism' in the context of Zimbabwe, which refers to "a structured relationship of domination and subordination which is defined along ethnic and /or racial lines, when the relationship is established or maintained to serve the interests of all or part of the dominant group." Consequently there is not much harmony between different ethnic groups in Zimbabwe.

Notably, in the context under review, history has played an important part in engendering political-ethnic tensions between the Ndebele and the Shona. In this case Guest's (2004:8) argument that the "popular culprit for Africa's ills is history" applies in the context of Zimbabwe's south western region of Matabeleland. According to Nkomo (1984:xv) "the settlers themselves fostered bitterness not only between themselves and the black majority, but also between the various African factions struggling for justice in prison or in exile". At the height of the liberation struggle, when the armed wings of the nationalists could have focused on the common enemy, they turned against each other. According to Chung (2006:15)

attempts to unite the armed wings of the nationalist movements were “thwarted ... not only by leaders’ opportunism, but also by ethnic politics and ‘tribalist’ antagonism between Shona and Ndebele-speaking groups.” These unfortunate historical incidences now embedded in the minds of the people have impeded the political, cultural and socio-economic performance of the country. In post-independent Zimbabwe, the defeated Ndebele and their region remain largely marginalised without significant development and progress in all spheres of life. One problem identified by the ZCBC (2009:4) is that “in our history, there has not been space created to allow for healthy political debates and contestation”. ‘Healthy political debates’ can only occur when people accept the historical past and acknowledge how it has shaped their attitudes. The history of this region has to be integrated into the official memoirs of this nation before the ‘anguished history’ of the country can be healed.

A critical overview of the political, cultural and socio-economic situation of Matabeleland shows that events during the three major historical periods, namely the pre-colonial era, the colonial era and, the post-colonial era have been the main source of the country’s challenges. Pope John Paul II in his Post-Synodal Exhortation (2000:38) rhetorically asks: “How could one fail to take into account the anguished history of a land where many nations are still in the grip of famine, war, racial and tribal tensions, political instability and the violation of human rights?” These words reflect a general overview of the African continent’s challenges can apply with easy in the particular context of Zimbabwe. The ZCBC (2009:2) suggests that each of three periods mentioned, “has its own sources of conflict that can be seen as political, economic, and cultural”. Mabhena (2014:137) points to the connection between history and the current polity in Zimbabwe:

The salutary history fact has had a profound impact on the political development of Zimbabwe and has fundamentally shaped the way in which Matabeleland is constituted within the Zimbabwe polity.

The three historical periods are interwoven between there has been an overlap of unpleasant events giving them a particular character of similarity. According to Patricia McCarthy (2003:9) people “wheel and deal their way through history, using violence and injustice when it suits them, sometimes even pretending it’s God’s

plan". Violence and injustice have dominated the political and socio-economic spheres in Zimbabwe for decades. Coltart (2016) calls it "ethnicised politics" and explains that it casts a shadow on the prospects of national unity and cohesion. The ZCBC (2009:6) sums it up as follows: "We have prevented each other from attaining human fulfilment by depriving each other of life, education, shelter, health, information, freedom of speech and association, freedom of conscience, justice and peace". It is a nation that is bent on self-infliction; allowing its past to haunt its present; a past mostly learnt from the historical narratives inherited from the white colonial settlers. The ugly interplay of events unfavourable for justice and peace are particularly notable in Matabeleland since 1980 although due to socio-economic meltdown it now felt across the country.

In his work on European history, David Thompson (1957:16) emphasises that historical study "must expose the interplay between conditions, events, personalities, and ideas as well as the interconnections between events themselves". Thus the purpose of this chapter investigates this 'interplay between conditions and events' whose effects continue to impede proper relationships, development and progress that envisioned at the collapse of colonialism. According to Clifford Mabhena (2014:137) "internal colonialism has largely been shaped by historical and ethnic factors that have come to dominate the political landscape of Zimbabwe before and after independence". Attention needs to be drawn to the Zimbabwe's political history on the struggle for power; the struggle hinged on ethnicity. Mabhena (2014:137) argues that "it would be extremely difficult to understand the social, economic and political dynamics of southern Matabeleland without recognizing the role of ethnic conflict and persecution in the making of this region". However, that the issue of ethnicity is a factor traceable in the historical narratives of the pre-colonial era, the colonial era, specifically during the liberation struggle and also in the post-colonial era. The ethnicised history of the Ndebele-Shona wars and conflicts dates back to the pre-colonial era. To this day the negative felt impact of that history continues unabatedly.

An obstacle to attempting to deal constructively with these political-ethnic challenges has been the denial of the effects of this history. According to Brilliant Mhlanga (2013:12) "it can be gleaned that the social expression of the ethnic has been

criminalised as something against the 'gains' of the liberation struggle". Ethnicity is, however, a part of any person's identity. It cannot be denied and can only be suppressed to the peril of a nation. For Mhlanga (2013:2) ethnicity is "a social variable and natural form of group identity in which belonging is shared in the vein of descent, tradition and culture". He concedes that it "can be a cause for social upheaval, conflict and disintegration, while on the other hand it can also be a source of progress, as people celebrate plurality of ideas and identities in a progressive democracy" (Mhlanga, 2013:2). It appears therefore that Zimbabweans have chosen to allow it to 'be a cause for social upheaval' as if it is not only fashionable to do but an avoidable inevitability. The celebration of 'plurality of ideas and identities' constitutes the core of democracy in which all people are provided with opportunities for progress and growth.

Today the destructive 'politics of revenge' finds channels of expression in the areas of politics, culture and socio-economics in which there is a protracted desire by the Shona to subdue and dominate the Ndebele for the alleged crimes of their ancestors. Pope Francis (2013:no.53) describes it as follows: "As a consequence, masses of people find themselves excluded and marginalized: without work, without possibilities, without any means of escape". The Ndebele are regarded as invaders as much as the white settlers were. According to Basil Davison (1966:309) "since very distant times, in this continent [Africa] ... ethnic and language divisions had fissured into a multitude of separate identities, each of which, rooted in the centuries, had grown and flowered within its own ambience". Thus divisions based on ethnicity have been allowed to characterise human society in a manner that does not advance its common cause of developing and growing together. This diversity and plurality have not served to enrich Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular, but it has become a source of conflict and tension. The CCJP and LRF (1997:27) describe the historical background of the issues of Matabeleland and state that "many would claim that regional antagonisms in Zimbabwe date back to the very arrival of the Ndebele in Matabeleland, in the middle of the nineteenth century" and "that such antagonism ... took perhaps its most virulent form in 5 Brigade's justification of its violence as revenge for the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ndebele raiding". This reiterates the negative impact of the nineteenth century conflicts that occurred between various

groups but in this case the Ndebele-Shona encounters have been given undue emphasis.

Revenge for past conflicts today have taken a form of the subjugation and marginalisation of Matabeleland in the political, cultural and socio-economic spheres. According to Mabhena (2014:137) the consequences are that “the current hegemony of the Shona people in Zimbabwe and their desire to dominate Ndebele communities in the south has contributed significantly to development marginalisation of southern Matabeleland over the past 30 years”. Clearly, history has played a significant role in shaping perspectives and perceptions in understanding the present scenario of Matabeleland’s political, cultural and socio-economic challenges since the 1980 independence.

From a theological perspective on the political and social situation, *Gaudium et Spes* (1966:No. 4) sees the task of the Church in the circumstances to “continually examine the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the Gospel ... So the world in which we live, its expectations, its aspirations, its often dramatic character must be known and understood”. This is an express call for the church to respond to social contexts in which human lives are at stake. Paul VI’s *Populorum Progressio* (1967: No. 30) puts it as follows:

There are certainly situations whose injustice cries to heaven. When whole population destitute of necessities live in a state of dependence barring them from all initiatives and responsibility, and all opportunity to advance culturally and share in social and political life, recourse to violence, as a means to right these wrongs to human dignity, is a grave temptation.

The Church then has the task suggest amicable and conciliatory solutions. Albert Nolan (1991:10) argues that “since not all conflicts are the same, one must be discerning in discovering the nature and the causes of conflict one is endeavouring to overcome”. The political, cultural and socio-economic challenges in current Zimbabwean polity can be traced back to the history of ethnic-political violence.

The irony is when human history and religion are interwoven, yet remains tragic – that religion does not succeed in contributing to the humaneness of humans and

their history, but often affect or contributes to the exact opposite. With regard to Zimbabwe, Masiwa Ragies Gunda (2018:18) points out that “since the colonisation of Zimbabwe towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the British Empire, Christianity has rapidly established itself as the most dominant religion in the country”. The legacy of violence and injustice has not diminished in a country that prides itself to be a Christian nation. According to Gunda (2018:20) there was not sufficient vigilance when independence was gained. Leaders were trusted to do what is best for the country in the hope that their efforts would benefit all. Citizens have been and are still negligent in their responsibility to identify and reject injustice perpetrated by leaders. The social teaching of the Church articulates that “endowed with a rational nature, the human person is responsible for his own choices and able to pursue projects that give meaning to life at the individual and social level” (CSDC 2004:384). In this regard the Church encouraging responsible citizenship. Political leadership often pursues self-interest and opts for violence rather than peace and reconciliation.

Questionable leadership is always a threat to peace and human prosperity. An example is given by Peacock (1958:xii) in his historical narrative is the rise of eighteenth century despotic monarchies in Europe. The self-aggrandisement of those in power had tragic consequences for the welfare of the majority of people. According to Hans Schwartz (2005) the clergy protested against abuses of the French king, but the eventual revolution was a bloody one. Peacock (1958:1) typified French Revolution of 1789 as “one of the great events of human history” that challenged the unjust status quo thereby ushering in enormous changes in European history. An unfortunate scenario existed when the Church was complicit in much of what had gone wrong rather than being part of the solution. The French Revolution “turned against church and clergy” and that led to “a change in the way the church looked at social issues” (Schwartz 2005:172). According to Peter De Rosa (1988:5) even Hitler suggested that he was “only doing ... what the church has done for fifteen hundred years, only more effectively”. De Rosa (1988:435) puts it as follows:

The Catholic Church, with its papacy at its head, has, in the finest Roman tradition, had much dirt thrown at it. It is for the reader to judge how much has stuck and how much fell to the ground. The fact is: the Church of Rome survived as she has survived for nearly two thousand years. She is

arguably stronger today than she has ever been, more revered and respected.

This admits to the fact that in some cases the church has not acted with impartiality expected of it on the political plane and so its image has been tainted. However, that has not deterred its mission and as such has to a greater extent maintained its respectability. Thus in the context of human history characterised by social ills, the church has not relinquished her role on behalf of justice. According to Andreski (1968:16) the fact is that “regardless of continent or race, all the large states of the past have been based on exploitation and oppression, and nearly all of them were despotic”. Post-colonial Africa too has been and continues to be prone to various forms of ‘exploitation and oppression’. As a result post-colonial Africa is held bondage by the same injustices that it purported to fight during its many liberation struggles. It is a case of self-inflicted injustice. According to AMECEA Pastoral Department (1995:no. 41) “Africa is a continent where countless human beings – men and women, children and young people – are lying, as it were, on the edge of the road, sick, injured, disabled, marginalised and abandoned”. Ironically and, quite unfortunate, the perpetrators are, in many instances not to be looked for elsewhere outside but inside: Africa’s own governments and leaders who inherited colonial structures of injustice for self-gain. It is for this reason that the African church has to prophetically engage and challenge the African leadership in the same spirit it did during colonialism.

The church raised its prophetic voice at the time and challenged the injustice. Miroslav Volf (2001:27) puts it as follows: “Instead of slowly withering away or lodging itself quietly into privacy of worshipers’ hearts, [the church] has emerged as an important player on the national and international scenes”. Hence it has heeded to the cry of humanity and responded to the quest for liberation. Throughout history, the human spirit’s quest for freedom has shown an unflinching determination. In the context of Zimbabwe at the very dawn of an independent era, people were eagerly anticipating to break free from the many injustices imposed upon them by the colonial regime. Coutinho’s (2012:25) observation could apply in the context that “[t]he human spirit is waiting to be free and burst forth from the rubble of injustice”. In

the Zimbabwean context, Joshua Nkomo (1984:7) took on a life-long struggle against minority rule a clear sign of an indomitable spirit.

However, it is imperative to consider that historical narratives provide insights from which to map out a better future. These historical narratives should be read with critical minds looking at their sources, their intended purposes and achievements. According to Thomson (1957:16) “a general historical study ... must concern itself with patterns interwoven by the process of historical change”. The effort should go beyond acquiring information. It should venture ‘far beyond the tasks of narrative and description’ (Thomson 1957:16) and come to a deeper reflection on historical complexities. Histories must be read within their given contexts in order to come to a meaningful interpretation. Otherwise simplistic reading of history, particularly history which reflects discords and conflicts between groups or nations, can lead to narrow and serious misinterpretation which can perpetuate the negativity embedded therein. For instance, Garlake and Proctor (1985:79) argue that “most history books support the interests of the people that control the society”. Clearly what is suggested is that history is biased against those not favoured and without power. Therefore, there is nothing sacrosanct about history and hence it must always be subjected to a certain measure of scrutiny. Most likely it excludes the less powerful or the defeated. Subsequently it has a potential to cause social tension between groups and within the societal stratum. An example is that “Matabele history was largely edited out of school textbooks, and Lobengula denigrated as a fool” (Hill 2003:35). For the Ndebele people king Lobengula was a brave leader who resisted colonialism to the end and under great provocation and siege his armies fought to the last drop of their blood. At the same time he had shown his willingness to dialogue to come to a peaceful understanding with Cecil John Rhodes. His resilience and resistance against colonial invasion is hardly recognised in a fair and just manner. Undoubtedly, the exclusion of the Matabele history and the denigration of Lobengula are tantamount to the exclusion of the entire Matabeleland region. Quite naturally, the use of force against Matabeleland immediately after independence has also left its scars (Mhlanga 2013:8). More critically that violence has been and continues to be read in the light of exclusion. Consequently this region is treated as “the other” and pushed to the periphery of the national agenda of development.

History, I reiterate, must be read with a critical mind, conscious of biases and prejudices that could be embedded in it. Again Garlake and Proctor (1985:9) suggest that: “in recent times, there have been two main sorts of political history in Africa – colonial history and nationalist history”. Post-colonial Africa has been greatly influenced by this “nationalist history”. Rob Burrett and Cont Mhlanga (2013:5) describe Bulawayo, the centre of Matabeleland as follows:

It has had a long and proud social history. More than any other town in the country, Bulawayo has attracted people from a wide diversity of backgrounds and ethnicity. It has been an active melting pot from which a common social outlook has emerged. It is not surprising that Bulawayo led the Nation in the visual and performing arts, as well as the founding of political nationalism (both White and Black).

Despite this rich ‘long and proud social history’ and the contribution of the people of Matabeleland in resisting colonialism and their participation in the liberation struggle have not been, again, fairly and justly reflected in the country’s history books. This is perceived as deliberate exclusion and an attempt to obliterate their role. Mhlanga (2013:9) describes the presentation of history after independence, ‘as part of the nationalist pantheon, music and other such as activities were used to capture a definitive state of a tribalised historical continuum in which Shona memory and its narratives were presented as official history’. The impact of this has been the rupture of a nation on the basis of ethnicity. To some extent what ZCBC (2009:4) observe could easily apply here that “[o]ur political history is characterized by the use of state institutions as partisan [even tribal] tools to support the ruling party”. In a sense Zimbabwe is struggling with a divisive and distorted history that rejects the unity of its own people. Nkomo’s (1984:201) correctly remarks that “we had fought and beat the illegal regime in Zimbabwe. But victory had not brought unity”. Zimbabwe has become a tribal state. Therefore, the political, cultural and socio-economic imbalances experienced and felt in Matabeleland are largely explained along the line of ethnic divisions.

Whereas the pre-colonial era had its major problems of conflicts between various people groups, the advent of colonialism exacerbated them. One major challenge with emergence of settler colonial rule was the disregard natural boundaries between

Africans based on common sharing, culture, customs, values, language and so on. According to Meredith (2005:1):

When making out boundaries of their new territories, Europeans frequently resorted to drawing straight lines on the map, taking little or no account of the myriad of traditional monarchies, chiefdoms and other African societies that existed on the ground.

Here lies another source of Africa's problems. In many cases these monarchies, chiefdoms or groups had respected each other's space while in some cases there were mutual hostilities. Either way when European settlers put them together without their mutual agreement and consent it meant a problem had been sown as witnessed in many African soon after their independences. Wars and conflicts ensued, now with a new tag of ethnicity. Meredith (2005:1-2) testifies that "[i]n other cases, Europe's new colonial territories enclosed hundreds of diverse and independent groups, with no common history, culture, language or religion". It was inevitable that tensions between these groups would continue or arise where they were not. Again it meant that minority groups, their languages and cultures would be subjected to pressure from those of the majority groups. The negative effects of colonial powers lumping antagonising groups together have been greatly felt in Africa. Most post-colonial conflicts of ethnic nature tend to dominate African politics. The cultural and socio-economic beneficiaries are the majority ethnic groups. Africa has celebrated independence from the foreign colonial rule, but has largely ignored pre-colonial territorial borders determined by ethnic loyalties. Guest (2004:10) explains this as follows: "African countries have themselves determined not to tamper with colonial borders, for fear that this might spark new conflicts, rather than old ones". It may not be an exaggeration to suggest that Africa's governments' failure to enter into her dialogue on these differences has contributed to many conflicts. The tendency is to speak of Africa in monolithic terms as if the continent is not culturally, linguistically differentiated. This has given rise in some countries like Zimbabwe to consider one particular group as representing the country. Such cannot be without the potential of creating friction and conflict.

In African democracies the principle of the majority rule does not adequately or sufficiently address multi-culturalism, multi-lingual and diverse ethnic groups. There

is the need for a system of governance that is not centralised but is either federal or devolved, following the pattern of geo-ethnic distribution. Mabhena (2014:139) makes reference to ethnicity as defined by United Nations “as referring to membership in a culturally and geographically defined group that may share language, cultural practices, religion and other aspects”. An oversight to consider these differences can be a future source of conflict particularly if governments push different groups over each other showing favour of one group over others. Each group desires to retain its identity through its own political, cultural and socio-economic representation. In a sense it could have been clear to new African states that pre-colonial ethnic rivalries had to be addressed one way or another. European accounts of African history, biased against different African groups, further drove a wedge between these groups. Many ethnic or tribal labels were historians’ construct. Many of the conflicts were purely based on power and control of resources as a survival strategy. Historical constructs served both the colonial agenda and the later nationalist leaders who exploited negative ethnic differences for election purposes. In the immediate aftermath of colonialism some nations “having failed to settle acute internal rivalries, were deep in the toils of civil wars” (Davison 1966:309). This became the major plight of many post-colonial states of Africa. Soon after their independences they were thrown into ethnic turmoil. The outcome has always been political, cultural and, socio-economic retrogression which was a major setback for many post-colonial African states.

The colonial structures of governance that had encouraged racial superiority of the colonial masters were inherited by the new African leadership. This was perpetuated in the form of the ethnic superiority of the majority tribes. This is a flawed and unjust political, cultural and socio-economic inheritance. Racism has now turned tribal. Davison (1966:309) puts it as follows:

Only a handful of these new nations had as yet begun or seemed able to begin, the tremendously difficult task of reshaping and rebuilding their national life in such a way as to overcome, step by step, the deep crises of economic system and political structure they had inherited from the past.

Structures inherited by post-colonial regimes were ethnicised. This inevitably provoked the memory of pre-colonial wars and conflicts. According to Guest (2004:11) a true African renaissance could only see its day “if its aims and objectives are defined by the Africans themselves, if its programmes are designed by themselves and if they take responsibility for the success or failure of their policies”. This echoes the sentiments of Nkomo (1984:212) that “the present task was to create a national army and national police force, and once those national institutions (and without ties to the ruling party) were created, free from foreign interference, they would – I really believed it – start to work on behalf of the people of the nation”. However, this never happened because the post-colonial ruling party has unabatedly continued to use and manipulate state institutions, the army, and police and, even at times the judiciary.

It is therefore important to note in the Zimbabwean context, probably like elsewhere, the crippling factor is the alignment of the institutionalised arms of government to the ruling party. They not only pursue the partisan interests of the ruling party but are loyal to it. Often African leaders have blamed the former colonial regimes for their failures. Colonialism has left its legacy that will forever haunt the continent, yet from that same legacy lessons could be drawn to do things differently. Nkomo (1984:214) pointed out that Zimbabwe at the time was “a nation as rich as any on the continent, well endowed with natural resources, with an infrastructure second to none in Africa”. All of that has turned into a failed country: corrupt and with poor management. Paul VI’s *Populorum progressio* (1990:No. 7) articulates the situation as follows:

While recognising the damage done by a certain type of colonialism and its consequences, one must at the same time acknowledge the qualities of achievement of colonisers who brought their science and technical knowledge and left beneficial results of their presence in some many under-privileged regions.

Since all the new African states were linked together by the same colonial experience, the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity in 1963 was plausible. However, Davison (1966:309) points out that “this move towards systematic unity soon showed itself no more than merely symbolic” and therefore could not realise its objectives. Many of Africa’s initiatives are noble yet they are

never pursuit with the same zeal with which they are theorised. Africa is endowed with able intellectuals with great vision for the continent yet the implementation of any of the espoused vision or ideals fall far below reality. Thus African intellectuals need to transform their knowledge into something tangible. Davison (1966:294) explains it as follows:

In Africa, as in Europe, the driving inspiration was not that all men [sic] should be united by becoming nationals, but that all men [sic] should be united by becoming free. It was the abolition of all those artificial barriers against equality, and therefore against freedom, that racialism and imperialism had imposed.

The post-colonial era saw many African states relapsing into pre-colonial hostilities. Peacock (1958:411) points out how Africa again became the battle ground of outside interests: “Unfortunately for Africans the old rivalry between East and West has extended to Africa, and the Americans and the former colonial powers have competed with both Russian and Chinese influence there”. Guest (2004:9) admits that colonialism “left deep scars”, but argues that “if colonialism was what held Africa, you would expect the continent to have boomed when settlers left”. This was not the case. However colonial structures of injustice often remained intact and black leadership at independence assumed its role in the mould of the former colonial masters. Africa should now take decisive steps to deal with its situation. The pre-colonial era will now be explored in order to assess the impact it has on the present day and why it continues to influence current patterns of thought.

### **2.3 The pre-colonial era**

In order to understand the situation of Matabeleland, those aspects in the various periods of history that continue to shape and influence negative thinking in terms of the Ndebele-Shona relationship should be investigated. Often the pre-colonial Ndebele-Shona ethnic tension is used as a reference point. Historical accounts of this period have irreparably damaged the image of the Ndebele people. Churches were often accomplices in this regard. They contributed to the negative view of the Ndebele people and their state and supported its destruction. Suffice it to say that the language used often provokes hatred and anger. For instance, Mukonori

(2017:234) articulates it as that “the Amandebele invaded Mashonaland in a series of bloody and brutal military campaigns”. The result is that the Ndebele-speaking and Shona-speaking people remain at odds with each other because of the emotive language that characterises the narratives.

In view of what appears to be a deliberate agenda of marginalising Matabeleland by the post-colonial ruling party, whose leadership and major support is pre-dominantly Shona, according to Mabhena (2014:137), such an agenda is motivated by “ethnicity and politics of revenge”. I argue therefore that the memory of the pre-colonial history has had a negative effect on current Ndebele-Shona relations. The ZCBC (2009:3) concur to the fact that “[o]ne of the most significant conflicts is the one that involved the Ndebele raids on Shona groups”. This indisputable historical fact which reflects not just what was happening between the two groups but a common trend of all groups of the 19<sup>th</sup> century has been allowed, and even at times deliberately promoted to cast its shadow to present. If all peoples of the world could allow their historical pasts to dominate the present, there would be chaos; development and progress would be beyond their reach. According to Teresa Barnes (2004:149) the Zimbabwean history books “all take issue with the portrayal of the Ndebele simply as raiders in perpetuity”. This negative portrayal of the Ndebele has encouraged their experience of alienation. It also justifies the current Shona hegemony. The ZCBC (2009:3) observe that:

The Shona have passed on to their children stories about the raids which involved the confiscation of cattle, food, strong young men and beautiful women by the Ndebele. [They] have over the years, cultivated negative feelings towards Ndebele groups. These feelings include hatred, contempt, suspicion and the desire to retaliate.

This is the source of the continued conflict between the Ndebele and the Shona. It is important to have a balanced view of history since historical narratives can be distorted representations of the realities of history. According to Stiff (2000:283) after the white settlers conquest of the Ndebele in 1893, the “Mashona and white cattle raiders grabbed the chance presented by the subjugation of Matabele military power and rustled great numbers for themselves”. The Matabele felt betrayed by this white-Shona connivance which left them economically impoverished and added to their

loss of political power and land. However, there is a lack of adequate pre-colonial historical natives. Bhila (1992:640) calls it an era marked by a “scarcity of record”. Davison (1966:9) concurs and points out that with regard to the pre-colonial era Africa “much remains to be discovered. Much remains to be agreed”. Due to illiteracy the people could not record their own history. Hence pre-colonial history is largely a product of the European writers who at that time were pursuing the agenda of partitioning of Africa. Sam Mavuru et al (2008:35) admit that for “information on the Rozvi [one of the Shona dynasties] we rely on oral tradition and on writings of the Portuguese and other travellers”. Hence there is a need for a critical analysis of the existing historical narratives from that era.

Colonial powers constructed historical narratives that either encouraged or discouraged certain behaviours in order to serve their purposes. The intention of Cecil John Rhodes who challenged the young people in England to “make your country for all the world a source of light, a centre of peace ... She must found colonies as fast and as far as she is able ... men [sic] seizing any piece of fruitful waste ground she can set her foot on” (Tindall 1968:137) was clear: the extension of British imperialism. The agenda disregarded the indigenous people and their systems of governance. These were to be replaced. For Rhodes this “would lead to the establishment of orderly government and the spread of civilisation” (Tindall 1968:137). Davison (1966:9) explains that Europeans were motivated by the “happy conviction” of “bringing civilisation to people against who the Gates of Eden had closed.” He calls it “the seductively agreeable belief so clear to nineteenth-century Europe that all in Africa was savage chaos before the coming of the Europeans” (Davison 1966:9). According to Davison (1966:9) this belief does not, however, prevail “among historians concerned with Africa”. Those ‘concerned with Africa’ would not accept the constructed historical uncritically. For example, “contrary to popular misconceptions, Shaka was not a senseless killer who randomly went about destroying life and property” (Prew et al 1993:40). Such misconceptions recorded in history books have had a negative effects on the minds of many Africans whose perception of self and of one another was distorted. This bolstered feelings animosity and anger against one another. Davison (1966) does, however, admit to rivalry being a common phenomenon among Africans also in the pre-colonial era.

The Ndebele people emerged from the social upheavals of *umfecane*. They fled the tumultuous situation south of the Limpopo and crossed the river in search of a home. The ZCBC (2009:9) describe it as follows:

Pre-Colonial ethnic conflicts around control of resources and demarcation of territories are deep sources of conflict in our history. One of the most significant conflicts is the one that involves the Ndebele raids on Shona groups ... The Shona have, over the years, cultivated negative feelings towards Ndebele groups.

There had been wars and conflicts among the groups later known collectively as the Shona. Wars and conflicts between the Shona and the Ndebele group have, however, been overly emphasised and these narratives have become entrenched in the collective memory of these groups. Beach (1980:xii) points out “that the Shona people have never been united under one rule at any point in history ... before the twentieth century”. Even the name Shona “was apparently first used by the Ndebele and others” (Beach 1980:18). Until the advent of colonialism there were “various dynasties that stood in sharp contrast to the compact, well-documented history of the recently-arrived Ndebele” (Beach 1980:xii). In a sense the Ndebele did not encounter the collective Shona people as they are known today. Beach (1984:52) points out that:

The term ‘Shona’ first came into use, at first as a term used by the Ndebele about the Rozvi and gradually adopted by the Shona-speakers themselves. Prior to this different sections of them had called themselves ‘Karanga’ ‘Kalanga’, ‘Zezuru’, etc. but they seem to have had no universal name for themselves.

Looking things from this perspective, it is logically incorrect to suggest that the Ndebele raided the Shona in a collective sense because that collectivism was non-existent. For instance it is most unlikely that Mzilikazi’s or his successor, Lobhengula’s armies ever reached Harare, which at the time of the latter was already occupied by the settler colonial regime. It would suggest that certain sections or ethnic groups that constitute what is known as Shona today never met or knew the Ndebele and their regiments. Such groups fighting the Ndebele people have no basis whatsoever to do so. From the perspective of Coltart (2016:6) “on crossing the

Limpopo, Mzilikazi squeezed out disparate weak and smaller tribes and in 1840 established his Mthwakazi kingdom". However, most importantly, as Coltart (2016:6) suggests that "using his considerable statesmanship, Mzilikazi was able to meld the many tribes he conquered with his people into an ethnically diverse but centralised kingdom". This is an important point which suggests that Ndebele is not a tribe but a people nation; an amalgamation of various tribes with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. To hold to view that the Ndebele fought tribal wars may not be sustainable. However, in the context of social upheavals it was only necessary to build a strong nation people for security and defence. Therefore, according to Nyathi (2001:71) "the Ndebele used their military might to defend their way" and not for callous or sadistic reasons as some historians suggest.

Mzilikazi constituted the different tribes a formidable nation that proved a serious hurdle to the agenda of colonialism. Therefore, to stress the tribalism within that formation could have been naught and without any solid foundation. Thus the Ndebele nation is formed out of quest for protection, for survival and prosperity of a larger group. According to Prew et al (1993:39) "these social upheavals ... or *Difaqane (Umfecane)* resulted in extensive damage to both society and the environment as well as, great suffering for ordinary men, women and children". Mzilikazi, the founder king of the Ndebele people nation, and his people were fleeing the wrath of Shaka Zulu and later Shaka's successor, Dingani and the Boers. They were therefore in search of a home rather than intent on the destruction of other peoples. Prew et al (1993) point out that "this long period of travelling and fighting would have developed the Ndebele's sense of group loyalty and increased their desire to find a home". Thus the Ndebele people nation should be understood against the background of social upheavals that led to groups of people becoming militant as a survival strategy because of the hostile environment and conditions of the era. Narratives that make Mzilikazi and his people out to be blood thirsty represent a distortion of history. These have contributed to the tension in Ndebele-Shona relationships and have impeded efforts at reconciliation.

What could be established, even then, is that the Ndebele was constituted closer to modern states. The king had an unpronounced social contract with his subjects and hence allegiance. His concern was the welfare of the people. According to Pathisa

Nyathi (2017:87-88), “in geographical terms the Ndebele state was fairly compact but was surrounded by a more expansive tributary state which served as some kind of buffer zone where communities were friendly to the Ndebele and owed allegiance to the Ndebele monarch”. In some respects the expansion of the Ndebele or Mthwakazi kingdom was not achieved by means of hostile action. In fact Mzilikazi’s quest for peace is seen in his realization that “missionaries could help him in his relations with other whites” (Prew et al 1993:53). In a sense he was seeking ways to avoid white aggression against his state by asking for the help of the church. Nyathi (2017:88) further suggests that there was an amicable “exchange of services and the tributary state enjoyed protection, but otherwise they were allowed to continue with cultural practices including their languages. Those assimilated within the core state assumed Ndebele identity”. Such positive descriptions of events can contribute to leading Zimbabwe to become a united nation; a nation that can have a legitimate claim to nationhood. The excesses that there were and that should be acknowledged, should be evaluated in context.

Owing to the on-going social upheavals of that time, the Matabele nation was militant as a defence strategy. Garlake and Proctor (1985:72-73) indicate that powerful groups who “gained control of cattle, iron production, gold mining and trade ... exploited the rest of the people in new ways”. For instance, the Changamire state (of the Shona) had been attacked and weakened by hordes of groups, the Mpanga, Sotho, the Ngwana, Maseko and the Ngoni led by Zwangendaba (Beach 1980:265). Sam Mavuru et al (2008:64) point out that “when Mzilikazi arrived [in what is now Matabeleland] he found the people already devastated politically”. This state of affairs was favourable to the new arrivals, the Ndebele because “when the Ndebele arrived, there was still no recognised Changamire, and each Rozvi house had to make its own decision as to what to do” (Beach 1980:266). It would be therefore naïve to suggest that the Ndebele destroyed Changamire’s kingdom. There was no kingdom left. The Rozvi were subdued without resistance. Various groups of the Rozvi people “voluntarily submitted to Mzilikazi” (Prew et al, 1993:32-33). Nevertheless, it is a fact that the Ndebele did attack this Shona group, though, as Garlake and Proctor (1985:130) point out, when the “Ndebele invaded in 1838, they found the Rozvi state broken and defeated”. Also they point out that for “the next 15 years, the Rozvi continued to raid the Ndebele”. The Rozvi though broken and

weakened, did attempt to resist, but to no avail. Mavuru et al (2008:41) describe a disintegrating Rozvi state at the time of Ndebele arrival with its people “in a desperate bid to survive [having] ... lost touch with central government and at times disobeyed laws”. The formidable and united Ndebele had the advantage and subdued the Rozvi state with ease. Tindall (1968:146) points out that even Rhodes was careful not to enter Matabeleland prematurely to avoid “a head-on collision with the Matabele warriors”. There was awareness that the Ndebele kingdom would resist the encroachment. Hence in dealing with the Ndebele kingdom, the colonial proponents had to be careful since this nation was a force to be reckoned with.

Thus the Ndebele exploited the fragmentation they found among the Shona groups at that time. However, these separate groups, in view of the hostile social environment of the time were in search for protection. This explains the voluntary submission to the Ndebele. According to Beach (1980:267-268) by 1854, fourteen years before Lobengula ascended to power, the Rozvi state “had definitely come to an end ... by which time the Rozvi who had remained in their old homes formed part of the new Ndebele state ... became Ndebele speakers and thoroughly identified themselves with the Ndebele”. Garlake and Proctor (1985:77) further suggest that this was the case because a “powerful ruler gave protection and safety to everyone in the community. People were proud of being members of a powerful community”, which King Mzilikazi and his people were at that time. Those groups that remained independent of the new Ndebele state “paid tribute to the Ndebele state in return for protection by the regiments and freedom from raiding. It was a sign of loyalty to the Ndebele state, not a form of exploitation”, (Garlake and Proctor 1985:162). According to Mavuru et al (2008:65-66) “Shona neighbours who submitted and paid a small tribute were exempted from being raided and attacks concentrated on those who resisted or who invited retaliation by themselves raiding the Ndebele”. Paying tribute to a state was necessary for the state to survive since it had to contend with many challenges that threatened its existence. From the outset the nascent Ndebele State faced military threats to its very existence. Militarisation of the state was thus in response to the perceived threats (Nyathi 2017:93). The state could not have ignored such threats.

Another significant factor is that, at the time the Ndebele arrived in what is now Matabeleland in Zimbabwe there were no clearly marked boundaries. The groups were migratory. Stiff (2000:282) affirms this point that “there were no international boundaries, no demarcated tribal boundaries and no fences. It was colonialism – the Scramble for Africa – that brought international boundaries to the continent.” There were vast territories of unoccupied land and the combined tribal population of Mashonaland and Matabeleland in 1890 was about 500 000 (Stiff 2000:282). This was a small population compared to the more than thirteen million people today. There was not unified country as we know it today, but rather smaller territories in which the tribes lived. The contention that the Ndebele raided the Shona, however, serves largely to foment the so-called ethnic hostilities. Raids were a common phenomenon and not unique to a specific group. In the 1840s, for example, Shona groups “began to raid the Ndebele herds and villages” although each time they tried they were repulsed (Beach 1980:267). It means groups enjoyed territorial integrity probably with natural boundaries as rivers. It is often asserted that the Ndebele raided Shona cattle. This cannot be dismissed off-hand. According to Tindall (1968:161), Chief Bere and Headman Gomalla stole Lobengula’s cattle. Gomalle returned them whereas Bere did not. The latter and his family were killed for the transgression. Cattle were the mainstay of economy and were key asset of the state. According to Mavuru et al (2008:65) “it has been established that the extent of the Ndebele raids have been exaggerated especially by the early missionaries”. For instance Prew et al (1993:56) argue that the Rozvi herds of cattle were “severely depleted by earlier Nguni raids. They needed cattle from the Ndebele, who were prepared to loan cattle in exchange for Rozvi labour”. What this reflects is not just a conciliatory relationship but also an amicable trade deal. Of course the Ndebele were preceded by other warring groups that dealt a heavy blow to the Rozvi state and as the cattle were the mainstay of economy and obviously the marauding groups looted cattle. Whether the Ndebele came to a depleted and powerless Rozvi state and looted their cattle, remains debatable. According to Davison (1966:262) “Zwandendaba crossed the Middle Limpopo and fell upon the old Karanga Empire, reducing its chiefly palaces at Zimbabwe, Khami and elsewhere to empty ruins”. There is therefore a need for the reduction of exaggerated claims on the Ndebele-Shona hostilities.

The perspective of the study is that, though there were wars and hostilities between the Ndebele state and some Shona groups, these should be interpreted and understood against the background of the era. Davison (1966:265) points out that “Mzilikazi [founder of the Ndebele nation] went no further, but settled in the ravaged lands of the Karanga”. The suggestion is that the Ndebele did not extend their influence further than what is now known as Matabeleland. Mavuru et al (2008:65) emphasise “that Mzilikazi did not pursue a consistently violent policy towards the Shona”. However, he did exercise a level of violence “in order to destroy them as political units so as to obtain recruits for his army and women to produce children.” As such this policy had nothing to do with tribalism. The problem was not tribal or ethnic hatred. The prevalent social upheavals compelled that did occur were in aid of constructing one strong nation that would be able to defend itself against its adversaries. In that sense Mzilikazi was a nation builder who encountered a people who were already devastated politically and had the ability to weld them into a new nation. Throughout history dynasties rose and fell. According to Mavuru et al (2008:35-36) various Shona dynasties fought one another and the conquered groups were “absorbed and subdued ... and made to pay tribute”. Various groups and nations were established through warfare. Before the arrival of the Ndebele, the Monomotapa rule, according to had been crushed by the Portuguese (Davison 1966:171). From the foregoing section there is no evidence of the Ndebele state destroying Shona chiefdoms.

### **2.3.1 Exacerbated rivalry**

Renditions of pre-colonial history are largely colonial constructs that aimed to justify the invasion of African states. The subsequent inability of the continent to deal effectively with its issues is compounded by a history documented by European historians (Guest 2004:8). Partitioning was based on the principle of creating ‘spheres of influence’ that would bring ‘orderly government’ and ‘civilisation’ to Africa (Tindall 1968:136-137). Historians played a significant role in crafting and constructing an image of Africa that would justify the partitioning of the continent and the destruction of African kingdoms. Conflict escalated since “kingdoms that had been historically antagonistic to one another ... were linked into the same colony” (Meredith 2005:2). The rivalry among kingdoms was given a tribal slant, thereby

bringing in an ethnic dimension to the matter. These groups of different ancestry, background and culture now designated as tribal had often co-existed peacefully. The Ndebele, for instance, cannot be seen as a tribe as already pointed out above. The tribalization of African states was a ploy to create divisions that would expedite the colonisation of Africa without major resistance. The so-called tribes were to view each other in the negative light and through distorted history become even more hostile towards each other. Fragmented in smaller groups could only weaken their resistance against colonialism. Davison (1966:311-312) points out that the idea of “tribalism” has the connotation of people of “a lower level of organization or intelligence”. The preconceived views of wars and conflicts among Africans led to the idea of tribal hatred. An example is the Rwandan genocide of 1994. Here too historical narratives played a critical role in the conflict. From the historical accounts that the Hutu politicians had imbibed, Meredith (2005:486) explains it as follows:

They had portrayed the Tutsi minority as an ‘enemy’ seeking to reimpose their rule over Rwanda, that they were invaders who had overrun Rwanda in the pre-colonial era and enslaved the Hutu-an alien group, therefore, that had no legitimate status in the country.

It is clear that such negative and antagonistic portrayals could result in permanent hatred between the Hutu and Tutsi if nothing is done to correct and reconstruct more positive images. It is unfortunate that many African leaders with self-serving interest have not helped but continue to use ethnic trump cards at election periods. Meredith (2005:486) shows how these conceptions were “incorporated into the history books and seized on by Hutu politicians for their own propaganda purposes”. The consequences of such historical accounts were dire for Rwanda and indeed for Africa. These types of historical narratives encourage ethnic divisions that have devastating consequences. Closer to the context that is the focus of this study, is the perception that “King Lobengula of the Ndebele tribe ... gave away all the land in Zimbabwe to these white men” (Madenyika 2006:3). Taken out of context such a perception has the potential to incite feelings anger among the Shona people of having been betrayed by the Ndebele people. The Ndebele could be labelled as having sold out the country and having aided the success of the colonial agenda. Yet Tindall (1968:146) points out that “the occupation of Mashonaland had not been

Lobengula's expectation when he had granted the Rudd Concession". Attention has already drawn above how the Ndebele state resisted colonialism that even led to its total destruction. Yet the unquenchable quest for power by leaders from the majority tribes drives them to raise ethnic consciousness as a ladder to assume power. According to Gordon Dames (2017:1; see Adhiambo 2012) "African leaders have been architects of their own misfortunes". In the majority cases, liberation movements that assumed governments after the demise of colonialism, failed to stir their countries away from the vices of colonialism. On the contrary many tended even sharpen and perfect the systems they purported to fight. Africa seemingly is finding it to deal with her own diversity so that there are constant conflicts. Hence Ambassador Wendy Sherman (2016) this failure to resolve ancient conflict has impeded groups' or nations' focus on the core issues of progress. The writing, presentation and reading of history, particularly political history, requires a critical stance and a sense of balance. Care has to be taken of what an account of "history" could inspire peoples towards the common good.

Zimbabwean history and the portrayal of the pre-colonial period must be read in hindsight as part of the colonial project. History was then by and large a construct by those sympathetic to the objectives of the Berlin conference – the partitioning and colonisation of Africa. Those in Africa who resisted colonial encroachment the most received the worst labelling by the historians of the time. Even the missionaries' impartiality can be questioned. For instance, Gunda (2018:72) points out that "the Anglo-Ndebele war of 1893 was basically incited by Christian missionaries, with Fr Prestage of the Roman Catholic Church and Rev. Shimmin of the Methodist Church the leading supporters". This impacted negatively on the mission of the church and forestalled the spread of Christianity in Matabeleland. In a sense the church at that time betrayed its own mission. During the liberation struggle there was a revived hostility towards missionaries in Matabeleland. Christianity was largely viewed as a partner to colonialism, part of an oppressive system with a disregard for the local communities. Unfortunately even when the church strove against colonialism through the provision of important services as schools and hospitals, the attitudes of the people took time to change.

A similar dynamic plays out today when churches seek popular support by associating itself with powerful or majority ethnic groups at the expense of minority groups. Even today, there is a danger that missionaries who do not understand the local history of the people cannot respond appropriately to the 'joys and sorrows' of the people. These churches further their own interests by supporting those powerful groups that subdue minorities. In this sense the church once again becomes a partner to oppression. On the other hand it is also possible that churches can be used by those groups that seek to promote their own identity over other groups under the pretext of faith. The church therefore, needs to be wary not to be used as a vehicle of oppression.

Though churches have had their role in the colonial agenda and other forms of oppression, in the majority of instances church, in the name of the gospel, have continued to oppose injustice. An Anglican, Bishop Knight-Bruce, remarked about the Anglo-Ndebele war (Zvobgo 1996:9):

I entirely and emphatically repudiate any share in the sentiment that 'the sword' is a necessary factor in the Christianising of these savage nations, or that the only road for the preaching of Christianity is cleared by destroying their power; and I here distinctly assert that no letter written or speech made urging on a war with the Matabele has ever had any sympathy from me.

Despite his usage of a derogative term savage, there is a sense that not all missionaries subscribed to the imperial objectives. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that history could be exploited for propaganda purposes. Here again lies a major challenge for post-colonial Africa. Garlake and Proctor (1985:9) distinguish between two main sorts of political history in Africa, namely colonial history and nationalist history. While the former favoured colonial regimes, the latter has some leanings toward the nationalist movements that assumed power in the post-colonial Africa. The tragedy of the nationalist history has been the exclusion of other critical players in the liberation struggles. Within the Zimbabwean context the situation has been exacerbated because this history has been ethnicised.

### **2.3.2 Ethnicity: A source of conflict**

The ethnic factor has become a source of problems. The portrayal is that, while Europeans fight wars for political and economic reasons, Africans fight wars for ethnic or tribal reasons. Ethnicity is seen as a curse and belonging to a particular ethnic group becomes an issue. In Zimbabwe being from Matabeleland or Mashonaland now has a negative tribal connotation. It no longer denotes the positive identity of a people, their language and culture. However, should these names be abolished because they seem to bear tribal connotations, this would mean a lack of appreciation of plurality, cultures and languages. According to Mhlanga (2013:2), ethnicity is a “social variable and natural form of group identity in which belonging is shared in the vein of descent, tradition and culture”. This social construct should convey a sense of unity and group loyalty. However it has been heavily manipulated and abused. Various tribes or ethnic groups were not identified as one because of their common descent, tradition and culture but by conditions of political, social and economic needs. Angela Cheater (1986:164) suggests that “common identity may allow claims on resources” and a shared vision of belonging. In this respect “identity” should not be presumed to be in opposition to other identities so that it should be abolished in order to maintain peace and unity.

Identity can be a “cause for social upheaval; conflict and disintegration, while on the other hand, it can also be a source of progress, as people celebrate plurality of ideas and identities in a progressive democracy” (Mhlanga 2013:2). In Zimbabwe the concept has been a source of conflict and disintegration. There has been a lack of appreciation of ‘plurality of ideas and identities’. This is due to the absence of “progressive democracy”. Shona hegemony has undermined beauty of ethnic plurality. Angela Cheater’s (1986:164) points out that the articulation of ethnic distinctiveness “is most likely to occur among people locked into political conflict and competition over scarce moral or material resources”. In that case “ethnic boundaries may provide a means of excluding the claims of others” (Cheater 1986:164). Internal rivalries based on ethnic identities leave indelible scars on the social fibre. They also often assume an ethnic dimension because of the pre-colonial ethnic hostilities reported in a specific way in the history books. Their negative impact on the political, cultural and socio-economic development is clear. I argue that ancient wars and

conflicts between various people groups were not motivated by tribal or ethnic identities but rather by the desire to control resources and land. It is therefore and inaccurate rendition of history to attribute this to tribal hatred.

Within Zimbabwe the ethnicisation of the Ndebele-Shona pre-colonial wars and conflicts is a tragic misconception which has had dire consequences for the political, cultural and socio-economic spheres. From this I deduce that Matabeleland has been deliberately marginalised. CCJP and LRF (1997:27) point to the insight of some historians that “the opposition of the Shona to Ndebele is, in fact, of very recent origin and most significantly the product of competition for followers and leadership positions among the nationalist parties”. This view is much more plausible. While pre-colonial wars and invasions between various Shona groups and the Ndebele group are a fact, they should not be interpreted outside of their historical context in which tribal or ethnic identities were not the central issue. The way in which narratives of pre-colonial conflict were represented by the European settlers was for the benefit of the latter’s agenda. Tindall (1968:160) reveals that “the settlers in the adjacent territory [Mashonaland] would always feel insecure as long as the Matabele kingdom survives”. This felt insecurity by the white settlers became a primary motivating factor to creating strategies for eliminating the Matabele kingdom. However, they had to obtain the support of the Shona people groups. Those strategies had to be morally justified. According to Tindall (1968:160), Lobengula’s raids in Mashonaland provided justification for the settlers to attack the Matabele kingdom who “felt it [their] duty to protect the Shona who lived under their rule”. This was a premeditated plan to break the Matabele kingdom. Tindall (1968:165) describes it as follows: “Lobengula’s tripe misfortune to be king of a most militant people, to rule an area which, more than Khama’s or Lewanika’s was an object of European desire, and thirdly, to stand in the way of Rhodes’ ambition”. Hence the plan to destroy Lobengula’s kingdom was inevitable. The annihilation of the Ndebele state did, however, not serve Shona interests. It served colonial interests and was a triumph of the colonial project. However, for the settler colonialists to seek to incorporate the Shona in their advance against the Ndebele state was to worsen the feelings of the so-called tribal hostilities.

### 2.3.3 Treaties and concessions

Treaties and concessions that were entered into between the European sojourners on expedition and the local people were a further travesty justice. The former came as mineral seekers or hunters and purportedly sought permission from indigenous communities. In process they cheated blacks through false treaties and concessions whose contents and terms were not honestly explained to African rulers. They became a source of misunderstanding between different groups. Through these “official” and “legal” means white settlers dispossessed black people their political and economic power. They were manipulative means to colonise Africa “with its consent”. It is important to note their negative effect in terms of Ndebele-Shona relationship. The Ndebele were accused of having sold out the country. Their denigration along those lines constantly creates friction and a sense of mistrust and betrayal up to this day.

The Joshua Nkomo National Foundation (JNNF) (2003:6-7) cites the two most important agreements, namely the Moffat Treaty (1836) which “basically established friendship between the Cape Government which was British, and Mzilikazi” and the Rudd Concession (1888). The Moffat Treaty was facilitated by a missionary, Robert Moffat. This indicates that the church had a role in the colonisation of Africa. It accompanied and partnered exponents of colonialism. In most cases its attitudes and prejudices against black Africans resembles that of the ordinary Europeans seeking to exploit Africa’s natural resources. Admittedly, with time the church’s role changed as it awakened “black consciousness”. However, the damage had already been done. A reproach against the Ndebele is that their king, Lobengula, sold out the country by signing the Rudd Concession. Madenyika (2006:3) puts it as follows: “Lobengula gave his permission, but in doing so, he was asked to sign a piece of paper which as it came about gave away all the land in Zimbabwe”. The suggestion is that the Mthwakazi or Ndebele covered the entire territory now known as Zimbabwe.

A critical review of this allegation is an assessment if the Ndebele state or kingdom covered the entire territory of what is now Zimbabwe because at the time it did not exist as known today. Historical narratives continue to generate emotions of ethnic hatred. Following the developments that ensued after the signing of the Rudd

Concession it is clear Lobengula did not sign away his own land let alone that which did not belong to his people. It is known that the concession did not stipulate on the permanent settlement of the European hunters and gold seekers. Nonetheless this negative perception of 'signing away the country' has been driven and fostered by some Shona elements. However, there is no consensus among historians that the Mthwakazi kingdom stretched beyond what is known today as Matabeleland. At the same time the truth of the matter is that the settler colonialists used the concession to make claims across the territory that would be known as Rhodesia and later Zimbabwe. According to the JNNF (2003:7) "Lobengula, aware that he had been tricked, revoked the Treaty" and sought engagement with Queen Victoria. However, his attempt was thwarted. Coltart (2016) points to the insincerity of white settlers as they manipulated the Rudd Concession which allowed the British to prospect over all the territory under Lobengula's control. Rhodes' emissary had given the assurance to Lobengula that the Europeans did not intend to settle in the area or procure land (Coltart 2016:6). However, that agreement was violated. The settlers unabatedly pursued their goals of colonialism and the conquest of the Ndebele state. Coltart (2016:6) puts it as follows:

Rhodes, in a cunning volte-face used that agreement, the Rudd Concession, and considerable deception to obtain a Royal Charter signed by Queen Victoria in October 1889, enabling his British South Africa Company to occupy Mashonaland, a region well beyond the borders of Lobengula's hegemony.

Well aware of its treacherous scheme of duping Lobengula, the move to Mashonaland seemed strategic. There was no resistance. Hill (2003:42) points that "within weeks the BSAC had established a presence all over Mashonaland and began building surprisingly good relations with the local inhabitants". This 'building of surprisingly good relations' was a strategy to win Mashonaland inhabitants over against the Ndebele, thereby creating the conditions of perpetual enmity between the two groups. Rhodes was careful not to enter Matabeleland prematurely to avoid "a head-on collision with the Matabele warriors" but on the other hand appointed himself "to protect the Shona who lived under his rule" (Tindall 1968:146). Such an action aggravated Ndebele-Shona ethnic alienation as the BSAC assumed a saviour

role. According to Coltart (2016:6), Lobengula protested against the violation of the agreement, but to no avail. According to Hill (2003:40) “Lobengula had the foresight to send two of his headmen to England as well, to determine what kind of country he was dealing with, and they even met privately with Queen Victoria” but the “emissaries learned nothing Rhodes did not want them to”. It was clear, however, that Lobengula’s dealings with the settlers were done in good faith.

With respect to the signing of the treaties, Lobengula did not sell out his the people. Such claims simply aggravate Ndebele-Shona ethnic tension. Treaties were also signed and relations established between the settlers and Shona chiefs. According to Stiff (2000:281) “it was believed, erroneously, that he [Lobengula] was not only king of the Matabele, but also the Paramount Chief of the Mashona people”. However, Hill (2003:38) shows that “for their part in what became known as the Moffat Treaty, the British recognised all Mashonaland as being part of the Matabele kingdom”. If Mashonaland was part of the Matabele kingdom, would the king then raid his own people? The fact is that Shona chiefdoms paid tribute to the Ndebele kingdom. Thus Garlake and Proctor (1985:162) point out that “the middleveld was not part of the heart of the Ndebele state. The chiefs of this area ruled fairly independently”. This argument seems more plausible. Should those chiefs fail to pay tribute, they would incur raids.

This ethnic slur is ironic, given Lobengula’s prolonged struggle against colonialism. It also negates the substantial Ndebele contribution to the liberation struggle. After the independence of 1980 “the new leaders were on a mission of ‘culturing’ the Ndebele as the ‘other’ and to violently teach them to accept their position as the subaltern” (Mhlanga 2013:9). This has informed the notion of the Ndebele as second class citizens – a factor which has disadvantaged the region politically, culturally and socio-economically. The Ndebele legacy of unparalleled colonial resistance has been unjustly excluded from the national history books. According to Stiff (2000:281), Lobengula after having been tricked into signing the treaty “attempted to repudiate the concession, as he had done so successfully on a ‘might is right basis’ with other concession hunters who did not have the muscle to enforce their rights”. Though the occupation of Mashonaland had not been what Lobengula had expected when he had granted the Rudd Concession, as the events unfolded, it was a strategy for

dispossessing the Matabele of their land and cattle, the mainstay of their economy. Madenyika (2006:11) points out that the Ndebele people were the first to be victimised. Lobengula having realised that he was tricked into signing the Rudd Concession, he tried to repudiate it, but without success.

Historical evidence suggests that the use of treaties for various reasons between Europeans and African rulers and chiefs of the pre-colonial era was common. Lobengula was not the first to sign treaties or concessions. According Davison (1966:171) Mavura, ruler of Monomotapa “duly signed a treaty which gave the Portuguese a free run in looking for minerals, if they could find any; in mining and exporting them”. Davison (1966:280) points that the treaties “were signed with one or other European powers by chiefs who could seldom or never have understood the intentions”. For instance, Chief Mutasa in Mutare “expressed his desire for friendly relations with its (Pioneer Column) representatives” and he granted the “exclusive mineral and commercial rights to the company in return for help against outside attack and assistance I education and the spread of Christianity” (Tindall 1968:151-152). These treaties, on the face value, were a reflection of the willingness to work together in harmony. They were also a sign of acknowledgement by the white settlers of the inhabitants of the land and their authority over that land. However, it is true that the leaders were manipulated. They turned out to be little more than a ploy to legitimise the settlers’ occupation of land in order to exploit the resources.

The pre-colonial era has had much influence in shaping the collective psyche of both the Ndebele and the Shona. It is a controversial era yet its historical narratives cannot be wholly trusted. It is a period that witnessed the rise and fall of many states and dynasties. Prew et al (1993:38) sums up the events of these social upheavals as follows:

The result of the struggles for supremacy among the northern Nguni groups which occurred at the beginning of the nineteenth century was a series of fierce wars, increased violence, massive displacement of people and forced migration, all fuelled by the expansion of the European activities from the Cape and Delagoa Bay.

Fierce wars and conflicts shook the entire southern region of Africa and as a result generated much animosity that has endured for more than a century. Although the Ndebele were not responsible for the demise of the Changamire dynasty, they have been wrongfully accused. Hence, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (2009:3) admits that the “Shona have passed on to their children stories about raids which involved the confiscation of cattle, food, strong young men and beautiful women by the Ndebele”. While this cannot be refuted outright, it must be read in the context of that era. The Ndebele-Shona relations were not constantly hostile. Mavuru et al (2008:65-66) describe this as follows:

It must be stressed, however, that Mzilikazi did not pursue a consistently violent policy towards the Shona and those who submitted and paid a small tribute were exempted from being raided and attacks concentrated on those who resisted or who invited retaliation by themselves raiding the Ndebele.

Nevertheless, pre-colonial wars and conflicts between these two people groups did encourage narratives that fostered continued rivalry. In the interest of peace, harmony, unity and progress, it is important to reiterate positive points since exaggerated negative views can only further encourage divisions and hatred. The Mthwakazi state as established by Mzilikazi was not, however, a tribal state. According to Coltart (2016:6), Mzilikazi merged the many tribes he conquered with his own people and established an ethnically diverse but centralised kingdom. Even Mzilikazi’s successor, Lobengula, is described as “a fine person, reasonable in his handling of their affairs and fair in his dealing with them” (Gelfand 1968:38).

It is imperative for the sake of the common good and for the sake of peace and harmony for the generations to come, that the Ndebele and the Shona find each other. It has been established that the Europeans by all intents and by whatever means the occupation of Zimbabwe was a forgone conclusion. Hill (2003:44) testifies to this when he suggests that “the truth is that if the Pioneer Column had not laid claim to Rhodesia, someone else would have, and the eventual outcome would have been much the same”. Now that the Ndebele state had been annihilated and the subsequent rebellion of 1896 put off by crushing defeat of both the Ndebele and the Shona, the settler colonial regime was firmly established. However, the effects of the

pre-colonial conflicts between the two groups compounded by the settler colonialists remained to be felt. It appears the Ndebele and the Shona do not even learn anything of reconciliation and forgiveness even in the broader context of a world that believes in these values. The Christian faith acclaimed as having the majority adherents in Zimbabwe seem to be making no significant impact. Europeans have fought bitter wars of gigantic proportion yet they live today as allies, respecting one another. They today send aid to Zimbabwe – a country that does not do what it takes to forge its own unity and peace. Nevertheless, a critical reflection on the excesses of the established colonial regime is essential here. This is particularly so because they could have allowed Matabeleland and Mashonaland regions to find each other.

## **2.4 The colonial era**

With the defeat and disappearance of the Ndebele state, the objectives of colonialism were achieved. 'Christian-European civilisation' was brought to the region. Because the Ndebele state posed a hindrance to the colonial project a military victory over the Ndebele offered Rhodes many advantages (Prew et al 1993:103). Hill (2003:44) gives the following example: "When the defeated Matabele fled, some 125 000 cattle were rounded up and shared as agreed." This was a massive and disempowering loss that left the Ndebele without any economic base to lean on. Dispossessed of their economic mainstay; their cattle and land they were broken and dejected. This impact could not have been less in Mashonaland because soon they learnt that the Europeans did not mean their welfare when recruited them against the Ndebele. At the back of the colonisers' mind, according to Horace Campbell (2003:92) was that "the decimation of the peoples of Africa in the colonial expansion was based on this ideation system on the belief that Africans were not real human beings; they were part of the fauna". With this ill perception the new colonial regime would structure the society and implement policies tandem with their belief system of the blacks. Hence racial discrimination and all sorts of injustice against blacks became a norm.

The new regime displayed no interest in the common good. It assumed the authority of governance, focused on the accumulation of wealth and turned a blind eye to the lack of justice, fairness, equality, love and respect. Himes (2013:102) explains it as follows: "A good government rules for the sake of the common good, while a bad

government seeks a restricted, selfish version of the good that benefits only those who rule". This provided the impetus for the black majority towards a quest for liberation. The settler colonial regime pursued its self-aggrandising agenda while it ignored the pain it had caused to the black majority. Prew et al (1993) describe the advantages of such an attitude:

A quick war and expropriation of the Ndebele cattle and land would save the BSAC from bankruptcy, increase the value of the BSAC and make available large amounts of finance for developing Rhodesia so that agriculture and mining could flourish.

Ultimately, the destruction of the Ndebele state was not for the defence and protection of the Shona but for the economic benefit of the white colonial settlers. Sooner or later the Ndebele and the Shona would find each other in the rise of nationalism. This expropriation, a brazen act of injustice was deeply felt not just by the Ndebele but by the entire black population. At the same time such acts of insensitivity were felt by the church and lately there would be a paradigm shift of thought against these excesses. According to Alexander Kanengoni (2004:47) the story of pain began with the Rudd Concession and puts in the following words: "Lobengula signed away the land and mineral rights of all Matabeleland, Mashonaland and other adjoining territories". However, Kanengoni (2004:48) concedes that "the bottom line is that the country was occupied on a premise of deception and lies". The settler colonial administration was an establishment by force. Ndebele regiments who fought had to fight against superior weapons and they were wiped out. Mass graves and sites of major battles along the Harare-Bulawayo road and other parts of Matabeleland bear incontrovertible evidence of resistance to the colonial regime. The Ndebele history against colonialism lies buried there without recognition. It remains a question why the black government has failed to recognise such places of importance that could unite the spirit of the country and boost the economy if they become tourist sites. These sites are a reminder of the brutal force meted out against the indigenous people by the settler colonialists. Their triumph reduced black people to a status of less than human. The injustice was so blatant that some white people began to exert pressure for improving the conditions of the black people.) Rhodes and Jameson was cautioned by Selous "that, given the rate at

which the country was being carved up by white settlers, there would soon be nothing left for either the Shona or the Matabele, and that war would be inevitable” (Hill 2003:44). This subjection of black people to particularly economic poverty, soon led to the rise of nationalism. The CSDC (2004:100) explains it as follows:

It is impossible to promote the dignity of persons without showing concern for the family, groups, associations, local territorial realities; in short, for that aggregate of economic, social, cultural, sports-oriented, recreational, professional and political expressions to which people spontaneously give life and which make it possible for them to achieve effective social growth.

Black inhabitants of the land were denied of the means of production. The 1896 rebellion was the first war after the settler colonial regime had been established. This rebellion by both Matabeleland and Mashonaland would contribute to cooperation and moving towards a united nation. The conditions of injustice created a spirit of nationalism. Shutte (2001:183) points out that “the fundamental reason for government and its ultimate goal is to promote the common good of the people”. However, this did not reflect in the way the colonial regime conducted the affairs of governance. Theirs was an anti-black system.

Colonial regimes did not adhere to basic human values when colonising Zimbabwe and other parts of in Africa. This led to a common sentiment of revulsion with regard to the colonial establishment. The expropriation of lands is a major reason for the 1896 uprising by the Ndebele and Shona was largely precipitated by” (Sachikonye 2001:2). From 1897, the settler regime exerted such pressure on the black people that they had to adopt new means of resistance. This led to their overcoming differences and to unite with the common aim to reject to dismantle colonial rule. In this regard it is also important to point out exceptional behaviour among some white people. For instance, Bishop Knight-Bruce “clearly rebuked the missionaries who had advocated for the war” (Gunda 2018:73). Such behaviour gives credit to the role of the church as a vanguard of justice and peace. However, on the whole it must be admitted that the church, through its missionaries did paint a very negative impression of the Ndebele state and its people. Accordingly Pathisa Nyathi (2001:71) bluntly points out that “[w]hite missionaries were in the forefront of painting a negative image of the Ndebele state. They had a mission to accomplish, as their name

suggests". This negative portrayal of the Ndebele state, even after demise, has remained etched in the minds of many people; courtesy to the distorted historical narratives. On the other hand the missionaries' seemingly hostile attitude towards the Ndebele state and its people impacted negatively in the reception of the message they preached. Hence the Ndebele did not receive Christianity with pomp and enthusiasm witnessed elsewhere in the country.

The brutalities of the settler colonial government became a shared experience across the regional divide. Sachikonye (2011:28) points out that the motivating factor for violence during and after the colonial takeover was "a compulsive scramble for resources of political power and economic benefit, and by extension, defence of these resources and privileges once they have been appropriated". The black population lacked political and economic power. This generated the desire for emancipation which led to the rise of nationalism. In spite of the fact that the church had participated to a certain degree in the colonisation project, it became an ally of the oppressed black people. Missionaries provided education and raised awareness with regard to the evils of the colonial regime. JNNF (2003:7) point out that both Matabeleland and Mashonaland inhabitants "were heavily exploited and ill-treated by the settlers. Their land and cattle were taken away from them, their villages destroyed and they were sent into forced labour in the fields and the mines". According to Nkomo (1984:7) the settler colonial regime "had subdued the combined resistance of the Shona- and the Ndebele-speaking peoples". In this context the spirit of nationalism was generated.

Matabeleland was opened to white settlement. Settlers came from Mashonaland and South Africa. They marked out farms and registered gold claims (Tindall 1968:167). Bulawayo became a thriving European town with a white population in excess of 2000 people. This new development went against the common aspirations of the local people who felt subdued and subordinated in their own land. The uneasiness was not only about political and economic power. According to Augustine Shutte's (2001:4) the matter was "also a cultural one, a conflict of ideas about what is important and how to live, and what will bring us happiness". The Matabele were already alienated. Shona anger was aroused by the occupation of their traditional land (Hill 2003:43). These blatant actions of injustice against both the Ndebele and

the Shona peoples generated a common feeling among them that surpassed their age-old rivalry. However this was again thwarted by the colonial powers. Tindall (1968:167) explains that “though openly submissive, the Matabele naturally disliked their new position of subservience; especially irksome was the labour in the mines and the control exercised by the police, many of whom were the despised Shona”. Bringing the Shona-speaking into a position of authority over the Matabele labourers was to again alienate these two groups.

The alienation remains to this day because the new government did nothing to bring about change. On the contrary the current government reinforces it. It is a government that has lost touch with social realities of the people. Hence the post-colonial government did not change the oppressive rule of the colonial system in Matabeleland. Police stations in the region of Matabeleland are mostly run by Shona-speaking police officers. They are not in touch with the surrounding communities. This scenario has prevailed in post-colonial Zimbabwe and has fostered a spirit of rebellion.

The instigation of tension between the ethnic groups by the colonial powers led to “an uprising as a result of cattle raids, forced labour, and the abuse of the local girls and women by the settler men”. This was viewed as an attempt to confront “the evil menace that had invaded, defiled, and adulterated the Ndebele way of life” (Madenyika 2006:12). The abuse of Ndebele girls and women was replicated in the *Gukurahundi* era. The indignity and injustice of this requires urgent attention. The valour of those women, who, even when the country was in the throes of colonialism, stood up to the powers and emerged as heroines, should be recognised and celebrated today. For instance, Clarke and Nyathi (2016:8) attribute that specific insurrection to the inspiration of King Lobengula’s senior wife and Queen Regent, Lozikeyi Dlodlo. It is important to recognise this female figure in the struggle for the emancipation of the black African people from the claws of colonialism. However, for many decades people contended with harsh colonial rule.

In the era of colonial rule the Ndebele and the Shona together suffered the burden of colonialism, but were still resentful of each other. The country now had borders, was called Rhodesia after the mastermind of colonial project Cecil John Rhodes, who

was acclaimed for his achievements in England. With regard to actions by powerful people with no regard for others and their humanity, Himes (2013:103) states:

There is a clear limit to the legitimate authority of a ruler. A ruler cannot act arbitrarily or selfishly but is to provide laws that are in accord with the natural law and serve the common good. A ruler who consistently and intentionally acts otherwise loses legitimacy.

The abuses of the system of racial segregation, oppression and exploitation were met with resistance over a long period of time. Nkomo (1984:xiii) reflects on the situation as follows: “When I became a man, I understood that I could not be free while my country and its people were subject to a government in which they had no say”. The spirit of nationalism was born in the then Rhodesia. Independence was attained 87 years after the demise of the Ndebele state. The greatly expanded territory was called Zimbabwe. Here the Ndebele and the Shona would have to become one people. However, an uncritical focus on pre-colonial hostilities as presented by the colonial narratives would jeopardise a common nationhood.

#### **2.4.1 The cradle of nationalism**

In order to meaningfully pursue the question of Matabeleland, though within the wider context of Zimbabwe, it is imperative to take a critical introspection of nationalism that culminated in the liberation struggle. The ideal is an overview analysis of the period with the view of pointing out sources of potential conflict that remain a threat to justice and peace. For Peter Lwaminda (2001:249) “it would be an illusion to be satisfied with a pastoral response oriented more towards the consequences of injustice than to the causes producing it”. Hence the rise of nationalism in Zimbabwe offers important insights into the problems being dealt with in this thesis. Of particular importance in its rise and development which resulted in the liberation war, the figure Joshua Nkomo accounts for essential points of consideration. However, there is no intention to provide a detailed rendition of nationalism and its subsequent liberation struggle. Ideally the intended goal is to pick on those issues of divisive nature within Zimbabwean polity as a way of establishing sources of the challenges facing Matabeleland. The emergence of nationalism signalled the beginning of an end to the colonial era. Ironically, it also brought about

new challenges of internal nature that could slightly relate to the pre-colonial era and the advent of colonialism.

This realisation is of no less importance to the church if it is to effect pastoral methods helpful to pastoral ministry and care. With regard to the internal challenges of Africa, Lwaminda (2001:249) points to the *Instrumentum Laboris* that distinguishes “between the external and internal factors of injustice in Africa” and opts “to stress causes internal to Africa so as to state clearly that Christians are equally responsible for what happens in society”. In the circumstances the need is for a Christian that takes into cognisance of the prevalence of injustice in the continent. According to James H. Cone (2005:475) “to be Christian a theology must take seriously the task of liberation ... Since a theology cannot be separated from the community it represents, a black theology uses black experience, black history, and black culture as its source”. However, this study also pleads for a theology that remains a unified discipline. All peoples of the world turn to the one God. There is no African God, European, Asian, or American God. Indeed there are merely theological perspectives according to social and cultural traditions of a particular people. I prefer to use a term such as “theology in Africa” rather than “African theology”.

For the purposes of a quick grasp of the issues relating to the Ndebele-Shona “ethnic” tension during the liberation struggle and in the immediate post-colonial era, the name of Joshua Nkomo is critical. This tension is to be viewed in the light of its overbearing negative impact on the political, cultural and socio-economic development in Matabeleland. Nationalism arose as a counter to the injustice of the minority regime that denied the majority blacks opportunities of progress and growth. According to Meldrum (2004:31-32) “Nkomo forged the African nationalist movement in the country and won international attention for his outspoken opposition to Ian Smith’s Regime”. Yet he later became a symbol of contradiction – one supposed to be an acclaimed icon of the liberation struggle, but at the same time looked upon with contempt by the post-colonial ruling party (Meredith 2002:70). Blair (2003:29) points out that the “remorseless political logic dictated that Nkomo and Zapu must be swept away and their stronghold in Matabeleland, the home of the Ndebele, subdued”. This constitutes the core of this thesis; the political, cultural and socio-

economic subjugation of Matabeleland. However, it is essential to pick up how this played out even at a crucial moment of the liberation struggle.

The country's journey as a modern independent state began with the rise of nationalism which resulted in the direct confrontation of the white minority regime. There were quite a good number of the blacks who were involved in the formation of nationalist movements that through a protracted liberation struggle helped in the liberation of the country from colonial claws. However, among them and in the lead was the exalted Joshua Nkomo who symbolised the people's struggle against the injustice of racial rule. Nkomo (1984:7) called the struggle against minority rule "the problem of my life". He became a leading figure at the birth of nationalism and a father figure in the region of Matabeleland. The motivating factor to the struggle was simple: wealth was in the hands of the few, while the majority suffered poverty (Tafara 2004:43). However, there was need to bring this awareness to the majority. Hence efforts were made to make people aware of the purpose of the liberation struggle. The emphasis was on everything bad that had happened in the country was due to the coming of the white people. The structural injustices of the settler colonial regime had to be changed.

With the emphasis on the social injustice, nationalism adopted a revolutionary stance. The aim was to overturn the system and bring about a new order in which justice, fairness and equality would reign, rather than just being a rebellion. This epitomised the central argument in the birth of nationalism. Scholz (2004:23) distinguishes as follows between "rebellion" and "revolution": "Rebellion is the overthrow of a government, whereas a revolution is the overthrow of a social order in favour of a new system of social structures and values."

The post-colonial government, however, maintained many structures of injustice against its own people, and particularly against the people of the south western region of the country. Given this scenario it could be concluded the revolution that the post-colonial ruling party claimed to represent was betrayed and there remains nothing revolutionary about it as long as it has retained the same oppressive system used by the settler colonial regime against black people. The nationalist project, from a critical point of view was a failure in terms of delivering a united nation. An overview in the manner in which election campaigns were carried out and their

subsequent results produced a country that is divided along ethnic lines. It turned out to be an election of competition for power, control and subjugation of perceived enemies. Stiff (2000:17) explains it as follows:

Robert Mugabe and his Mashona-based ZANU-PF had virtually swept the board. Joshua Nkomo, the father of Zimbabwe nationalism and once revered by the whole black population, had been rejected by all but his Ndebele ethnic group.

This sums up one of the country's main challenges. At the centre of it all is the figure of Joshua Nkomo, who became the first public victim of the new regime. He was a national figure, hailing from Matabeleland, acclaimed as Father Zimbabwe. However, due to tribal politics championed by the post-colonial ruling party, he was reduced to a so-called "tribal leader of the Ndebele". Ultimately his exclusion was the exclusion of the entire Matabeleland and part of Midlands. There was a failure on the part of post-colonial ruling party to recognise the reality that the struggle had been fought and won on two separate fronts; the eastern and western fronts. It was essential, for the sake of justice and peace, that a solid and sincere alliance between the two parties that represented two major blocks in the country be formed. None of the two parties had played a lesser role in the liberation struggle. The vibrancy of their support bases gave a clear testimony to that. Hence a consolidated government of national unity was not the choice of a winning party; it was mandated by the people as shown in their voting pattern whether by design or otherwise. Therefore, the strength of the nascent nation lay in the emphasis of reconciliation and national cohesion. Between the two major contestants there was no loser in that plebiscite; both of them won overwhelmingly in the blocks they represented. Hence an alliance was a given reality not a designed one and in it lay the future peace and progress of a new nation.

Nationalism was a response to the myriads of political, social and economic injustices that resulted from the settler colonial regime's unjust rule over the black indigenous people. Nkomo (1984:214) explains it as follows:

The nation had been divided, first by the foolish refusal of the ruling minority to share the fruit of development with those who had made it possible, and who outnumbered them at least twenty-five to one.

The inequalities in all sectors of life based on racial discrimination were unacceptable. For years the black majority observed the white minority rule with revulsion. Nkomo (1984:16) describes his own process of coming to awareness as follows: "I understood almost without being told that they [Europeans or *Amakhiwa*] had taken something from us. Later I discovered that what they had taken was our country". The fundamental issues of political, social and economic practices of inequality and unfairness encouraged by racial discrimination were unacceptable and hence the demands for equality and fairness. Therefore the nationalist project was not an ethnic one but a collective responds by the people of Zimbabwe across the regional divide. Edward Daly (2011:127) articulates the emotion as follows: "It is difficult to remain detached, when day by day, neighbours and acquaintances are suffering and sights and sounds and smells of conflict are all too present". It was a reality of pain and suffering and something had to be done to alleviate the damage of racial discrimination and inequalities in all sectors of political, cultural and socio-economic advancement. Madenyika (2006:23) calls it "a new struggle" which ensued "not about land per se, but was rather a struggle for equality and power over means and ownership of production and the rightful sharing of all proceeds derived from the sweat of labour". Quite unobjectionable the anchor of the liberation struggle lay in addressing the issues of inequality that could be addressed by equitable distribution of means of production, and indeed, land could not be a side issue. It was not primarily about race, nor was it about the Ndebele or Shona. And indeed to reduce the liberation struggle to these was double injustice.

The initial stage of nationalism revolved around malpractices in the field of labour. In this trade unions were pivotal. However, according to Nkomo (1984:44) the settler regime was wary of this development, so "there was no way in which African trade unions could be recognised or registered". However, gradually a political consciousness developed which led to a strong sense of nationalism. According to Madenyika (2006:23) the "result was that the movement was taken over and transformed into the new and extreme philosophy of African nationalism". Ironically, it was the white people's education through the missionaries that aroused black consciousness and the demands for emancipation. Missionaries provided education to blacks that informed and enlightened learners on their rights and obligations. Davison (1966:276) attests to this as follows: "Early Catholic endeavours ... did

much to promote the emergence of new Christian-educated elite. This was to play a part of some importance even before 1900 in the formation of anti-colonial trends of thought". The church takes credit here for its pivotal and positive role it played. Madenyika (2006:22) points to the positive role of non-British missionaries:

As more and more missionaries from European countries other than Britain came to the country, they began to expose the evils of British people in Africa, and lost black consciousness and nationalism began to take shape through the black labour movements.

This response of the church was laudable and it would redeem its image tainted at the advent of colonialism. It would appear the church was taking its prophetic role across Africa to deal with colonial injustice. In the context of South Africa, the church took a more elaborate role towards the emancipation of the black majority. Archbishop Desmond Tutu became almost the face and voice of the church in the struggle against apartheid. McGlory Speckman (2001:2) articulates a role the church can play as follows: "The Church can prepare people to full participation in production and distribution of economic goods and services, and effective management of economic surplus". Although this is not the primary role of the church, it is plausible inasmuch as it does not pretend to assume the role of governments, but rather complement it.

The colonial regime did not understand the impact of the education provided by the missionaries. In order to keep administration to a minimum, education was left to the missionaries and economic activity to commercial companies (Meredith 2005:6). Through education the minds of learners were opened to the realities of political, cultural and socio-economic ills of the colonial regime. In this way missionary education became a catalyst for the rise of nationalism. It also highlighted the role of the church when it comes to political, cultural and socio-economic injustice, including the specific injustice of the situation in Matabeleland. Hastings (1989:164) emphasises that "oppression is not limited to colonialism and it may be difficult, but as necessary, to speak prophetically in Zimbabwe or the Mozambique of the 1980s as it ever was in the years of white rule". The emphasis is the consistence required of the church in respect to dealing with injustice irrespective skin colour or era. Oppression is an injustice during and after colonialism. It must be confronted. It

cannot be of lesser evil when practiced by black governments upon their own people.

Among the early nationalists were “sons of priests and ministers of religion, teachers, hotel waiters, domestic workers and farm labourers” (Madenyika 2006:26). Nkomo’s (1984:7) himself was born of Christian parents. He became one of the leaders of nationalism in the then Rhodesia. Meredith’s (2005:10) states that “the spread of primary education ... created new expectations ... a new generation was emerging, ambitious and disgruntled”. In the mould of educated blacks there arose awareness to the injustice of colonial regime and the quest for self-rule by the black majority gained momentum. This quest for emancipation from the claws of colonialism created a bond of unity across the ethnic divide. The quest became particularly stronger after the United Nations Charter. Article 1 of that Charter declares (Peacock 1958:431):

That all peoples should enjoy an equal right to self-determination and it extended the aims of the organisation to the development not only of political concord but cultural and economic co-operation as well.

The Charter spurred African efforts on the cause for liberation from the colonial shackles. Of course the only major limit to that charter is an emphasis that the United Nation does not interfere in the sovereignty of individual states. There is no guarantee that states would treat citizens with respect and fairness. Hence, where states abuse their own citizens the organisation cannot “interfere in the internal affairs of member states except to enforce measures already approved by the Security Council” (Peacock 1958:431). This respect for the integrity of each state has been manipulated and abused by many post-independent African states. Zimbabwe has not been an exception. The 1980s atrocities in Matabeleland went unchecked.

Notwithstanding this reality, nationalism eventually led to majority rule becoming a reality in the country. The first order of business was to dismantle the settler colonial regime and provide a sense of unity inspired by the common cause for justice and freedom. This spirit in the then Rhodesia galvanised the Ndebele and the Shona for a considerable time. The ethnic rift was not the primary focus, but rather to find ways of dealing with the excesses of the settler minority regime. Stiff (2000:285) evaluates

the situation as follows: “Standing at this point in time and peering into the future, it is clear that even in the early days of Rhodesian authorities had never intended to provide free land to every succeeding Matabele or Shona generation”. In a nutshell the regime was by all intents and purposes determined to hold back land which was the primary source of economic activity and empowerment for the African people. However, the test of any new regime would be its consistence with the aspirations of indigenous people and its manner of governance.

If the ultimate goal of government is to promote the common good of the people and to govern with humanness, the colonial regimes in Africa failed miserably. The CSDC (2004:92) put it as follows: “The responsibility for attaining the common good, besides falling to individual persons, belongs also to the State, since the common good is the reason that the political authority exists”. From a theological perspective the principle of the common good is based on the principle of the *imago Dei*. According to the CSDC (2004:61), this principle highlights that “being in the image of God, the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone”. The policies of the settler colonial regime and its governance contradicted the principle not just of the common good but its very foundation: the dignity of the human persons, basically undermining the values of equality, dignity and fairness based on race. According to Davison (1966:294) the objective of all liberation struggles is “the abolition of all those artificial barriers against equality, and therefore against freedom, that racialism and imperialism had imposed”. The founding spirit of nationalism was therefore that of banishing “those artificial barriers”. Indeed, the cause was noble. Ethnicity was no factor.

The Roman Catholic Church played a crucial role in the birth of that spirit of nationalism and the momentum of the liberation struggle. Bishop Donal Lamont submitted documents to Trocaire about violence by Rhodesian security forces (see Maye 2010:30). In the political process of the then Rhodesia, the Church engaged directly with the conditions of injustice. The settler regime did not take kindly to the “meddling of the church in politics”. David Kaulemu (2006:vii) describes it as follows: “The colonial settlers, for example, invited the Jesuits and the Dominicans to accompany them, yet the government they established did not want the missionaries to genuinely bring the good news to Africans”. However ambiguous the church or

religion's role at the inception of the colonial era, later it began to take a clear and decisive stand against the settler colonial regime. Kaulemu (2006: viii) mentions some examples:

The moral leadership in standing for economic justice, good governance, peace and development have been demonstrated ... the consciousness based on the Gospel values of the need for the church to stand with the poor and marginalised has been growing.

It is critically important to stress here that where issues of social justice are concerned, religion or the church has an indispensable role to play. Hastings (1989:156) puts it as follows: "When it comes to substantive issues of freedom and justice, there is an absolute inseparability between the church's mission and political matters". The church's role became markedly significant in the wake of nationalism on the entire African continent. According to Davison (1966:293), there emerged "a better understanding of the world undermined not only the colonial regime itself, but also the authority of all those Africans who stood for traditional methods." This "understanding" created and promoted by the church was fundamental in bringing about positive results in terms of democratisation and respect for human dignity based on the concept of the *imago Dei* upon which the fundamentals of humanity are founded. Himes (2013:104) points out that "politics involved moral responsibility; people were to be directed by right reason in making appropriate choices for building up of communal life". In keeping with this consciousness was an important thing in the context of pursuing the struggle for the liberation of the oppressed.

#### **2.4.2 The betrayal of national unity**

Among many challenges Zimbabwe faces today is lack of unity. Part of the problem can be located as emerging from the period of the liberation struggle. This seems to present a paradox because the moment required a unity of purpose to effectively defeat the minority regime. The manner in which the political processes were unfolding during the liberation struggle reflected the re-emerging of the pre-colonial Ndebele-Shona division. Chung (2006:249) explains it as follows:

Unmindful of such sentiments, many in ZANU led by Edson Zvogbo, believed that ZANU would be able to win virtually all seats in the areas

dominated by the Shona ethnic group, which comprised 80 per cent of the population.

These were not just unfortunate sentiments but dangerous too. They reflected the desire to allow and promote the dominance of the Shona ethnic group over others. Such tribal leanings at a crucial time when elections were approaching, already determined how the campaign itself would be carried out along ethnic lines. However, Mukonori (2017:241) refuses to see Chung's point by pointing out that "[t]he reality on the ground regarding politics had to do with (the ground) coverage". In view of the events of tribal divisions reflected in the skirmishes between guerrilla movements, this point is hard to accept it does not appreciate the dynamics at play. Consequently this would undermine the unity of the western and eastern regions of the country, and indeed subsequently national unity and harmony. This ethnic factor became entrenched within Zimbabwe's polity and would play out in every election campaign even within opposition movements later in the years after independence. For instance, at the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change, Gibson Sibanda had "impeccable credentials" to lead, but ethnicity became a hurdle because he was Ndebele. Coltart (2016:266) testifies to this development as follows:

The fear was that this [his being Ndebele] would count against him in a country that was predominately Shona ... a consensus emerged that the election would be hard enough to win and it would be easier to mobilise Ndebele support for Tsvangirai than Shona support for Sibanda.

The backdrop of this was the seed of division sown during the liberation struggle and intensified during the 1980 plebiscite. As the liberation struggle gathered momentum, troublesome developments occurred. Some nationalists displayed an insatiable quest for power. Nationalist movements opposed one another, notably ZAPU and ZANU and their military wings, ZIPRA and ZANLA respectively. According to Nkomo (1984:161), the "geographical split had grave political consequences", that further encouraged the Ndebele-Shona division. ZAPU and its ZIPRA military force had their base in Zambia while ZANU and its ZANLA military force had theirs in Mozambique. The recruitment pattern of these two armies was regional: ZIPRA in Matabeleland and parts of Midlands and ZANLA in Mashonaland. These were later developments that came with the split of ZAPU in 1963 which saw the formation of ZANU. ZANU,

which led by the Shona aligned itself with the majority Shona people and effectively became a Shona party. This could be seen as the emerging ethnic-political patronage; a searing sore in the Zimbabwean polity. Nkomo (1984:162) further elaborates on this pattern:

The extra danger was that the Rhodesian side of the Zambia and Botswana borders is inhabited by people most of whom are SiNdebele-speaking. Zipra operated in and drew its recruits from these people. But those people living along the Mozambique border are mostly Shona-speaking. So Zanla increasingly became a Shona-speaking army and Zipra a SiNdebele-speaking army. Thus the military realities reinforced the tribalistic tendencies which the Zanu leaders were openly fostering.

This sums up the source of the challenges of ethnic nature that characterised the liberation struggle. Given the geographical realities, such a pattern of recruitments was inevitable. What was needed was a unity of purpose by the top leadership of the political parties. Such a unity could have been born had the leaders recognised one another as participants in same struggle with similar objectives of people's emancipation from the throes of colonial injustice. However, negative ethnic-political loyalties were fostered and cast a shadow over the ideals of the liberation struggle. Davidson (1966:309) describes the plurality of the African continent as follows:

Since very distant times, in this continent of most ancient human settlement, ethnic and language divisions had fissured into multitude of separate identities, each of which, rooted in the centuries, had flowered within its own ambience.

It is saddening that Africa has in many cases failed to appreciate her own reality of plurality of cultures, languages, customs and religions. This diversity has been turned into a source of conflict, contrary to its potential as a source of enrichment. Hence in the context of Zimbabwe there was a return to the pre-colonial idea of territorial boundaries and revival of so called ethnic hostilities. The constant skirmishes between the ZIPRA and ZANLA forces in and outside the country further escalated the problem. However, the leadership tried to force unity without addressing the underlying challenges. Later in the post-independence era the effects of these divisions were felt greatly in Matabeleland and parts of Midlands. According

to Mabhena (2014:1), this has had a profound impact on the political development of Zimbabwe and has shaped the way in which Matabeleland is constituted in Zimbabwean polity. It also had significant political, cultural and socio-economic implications for the region in the post-independent era.

Another problem was that the nationalist movements adopted different strategies. ZAPU was more amenable to dialogue rather than outright war. ZANU was not keen on talks but wanted revolution. This further fuelled divisions. According to Coltart (2016:62), ZANU “were organising a flat out for war” while ZAPU preferred dialogue and considered arms to be the last resort. Incidences that reflected serious fissures between the nationalist movements played out openly between the movements’ military wings. Nevertheless, there were attempts to amalgamate ZAPU and ZANLA into a single military force. The two armies were brought together in what became known as Zimbabwe People’ Army (ZIPA) in Tanzania and Mozambique. In view of the unpleasant political contestations between ZAPU and ZANU and their guerrilla wings, this step was a noble development towards cohesion; the cohesion that would translate a positive even on the ordinary supporters of these movements. As such, conciliation could have been taken with a sense bold resolve in the interest political processes that would favour nation building in the colonial aftermath. Chung (2006:15) describes the efforts to unify the two guerrilla forces “across the nationalist divide ... but such attempts kept being thwarted, not only by leaders’ opportunism, but also by ethnic politics and tribalism antagonism between Shona-and Ndebele-speaking groups”. From this point of view, it is clear that the leaders themselves lacked the necessary determination to forge unity. Coltart (1984:66) describes the situation:

Within months the relationship between ZIPRA and ZANLA had broken down and fighting erupted between the two forces. Totally outnumbered, ZIPRA guerrillas fled Mozambique and many made their way to Zambia through Rhodesia and Botswana.

The attempt to unify the ZIPRA and ZANLA was “fatally undermined when ZIPRA guerrillas were massacred by ZANLA colleagues at the Mgagao and Morogoro camps in Tanzania” (Chung 2006:15). It is important that this sounded a warning that there were more serious problems that could have taken serious by the political

leadership. These developments further drove a wedge not just between the military wings but even deepened and widened the rift between the political leadership of ZAPU and ZANLA. Apparently no stern measures were adopted to quell the skirmishes. However, the idea of a combined military force has had the support of frontline states. According to Nkomo (1984:159), the frontline states supported the Zimbabwean liberation struggle and “considered that the nationalist cause would be better served by a unified army command, responding to political leadership”. Unfortunately this idea was rejected mostly by ZANU leadership and in the process the noble ideals of national unity and peace were forfeited. Ibbo Mandaza (1984:xii) explains the deadlock as follows:

The impasse-between ZANU PF and PF ZAPU which had already cost the country so much in loss of innocent lives and threatened to immerse Zimbabwe in the kind of civil war that Angola and Mozambique were experiencing during that period and many years after.

With this stand-off between these two nationalist movements, the country was poised for a major political crisis in the post-colonial era. A precedent had been set and the country would be plunged in a plethora of challenges. These challenges would impact the political, cultural and socio-economic development of the country negatively. More specifically, the post-colonial state would be plagued by problems of disunity and lack of a national shared vision. John Paul II (1995:no. 3) in his encyclical, *Evangelium vitae*, puts it as follows:

Therefore every threat to human dignity and life must necessarily be felt in the Church’s very heart; it cannot but affect her at the core of her faith in the Redemptive Incarnation of the Son of God, and engage her in her mission of proclaiming the Gospel of life in all the world and to every creature.

A legacy of politic-ethnic contestation would be felt in every aspect of life in Zimbabwe. At the formation ZANU it was clear that ethnicity would be a huge determinant factor in Zimbabwe’s polity. However, Nkomo was aware of it but chose a bigger picture of national politics than regional one despite the overwhelming support he had among his own people in Matabeleland. The Lancaster House conference talks provided the last opportunity for the nationalist movements to make

up their minds for the benefit of the country's peace and form an alliance even before the first democratic elections. ZANU leadership apart from its intention to ride on the majority Shona exhibited signs of dictatorship and total disregard for human value. Nyarota (2006:104) describes such an instance as follows:

Clear signs began to emerge of Mugabe's ruthless and vindictive quest for power and survival. The inhuman punishment meted out to so-called dissidents who were arrested on his instructions and detained under appalling conditions in northern Mozambique's remote Cabo Delgado province was a pointer long before the post-independence *Gukurahundi* massacres to the future leader of Zimbabwe's callousness.

This kind of callous disregard for the value of human dignity would project itself in the aftermath of colonial minority regime. The insatiable quest for power and political survival by some nationalist leaders became a major hurdle towards a fuller realisation of democracy but the ordinary citizens lacked an inkling of what their leaders were pursuing. They naively held onto the belief that their interests would be a priority of their leaders. They tended toward hero-worship.

The expectation was that the British that came to monitor the cease-fire and eventually preside over the 1980 elections would be impartial and thereby help the parties to achieve unity. However, they chose to be divisive. A remark by Carrington is a case in point: "Well, the Shona are the majority tribe, his [Mugabe's] guerrillas were the only ones doing any fighting because Nkomo's guerrillas were sitting in Zambia ... not doing anything very much" (Nyarota 2006:120). Such remarks could only ignite and exacerbate the conflict. They got in the way of the peace process. ZANU was left with the impression that it was the only party that could liberate the country. The contribution of ZAPU and its ZIPRA guerrilla army was pushed aside.

It was perilous that the idea of unity was not cherished by both parties. According to Chung (2006:249), though ZAPU "believed it would be advantageous for the two parties to remain united throughout the election ... many in ZANU, led by Edson Zvogbo, believed that ZANU would be able to win virtually all the seats in the areas dominated by the Shona ethnic group which comprised 80 per cent of the population". Nkomo (1984:208) points to the strategic differences between ZIPRA and ZANLA:

Zipra and Zanla were very different armies, Zipra based in Zambia and operating into Rhodesia across the Zambezi, was organised purely as a fighting force under strict military discipline and political control. Zanla, on the other hand, had combined military action with political indoctrination.

With these differences it was incontrovertible the country was heading for difficult times. ZANU had shifted significantly from fighting the settler colonial regime to fighting ZAPU for political power and the rule of an independent Zimbabwe. The Lancaster House Conference had already indicated that the settler colonial regime was capitulating and its defeat was eminent. An alliance between the two major forces was the one noble thing they could do for a dawning era of a new Zimbabwe. Within the ZANLA ranks, at a higher command, Tongogara, according to Coltart (2016:107), “openly expressed a desire at Lancaster House that ZAPU and ZANU contest elections as one political party and that he always worked closely with ZIPRA commanders”. Unfortunately it would appear that there were no peace-brokers to bring ZAPU and ZANU together and envisaged goals of the liberation struggle were fast slipping away in the continued fighting between the two parties.

In light of the developments it was given that the major flaw of those talks was that “significantly, there was no discussion whatsoever about the need for a truth telling ... the issue of a truth, justice and reconciliation commission or process was not even part of the agenda” (Coltart 2016:106). The omission of these processes was not good enough because there was need for all involved in the conflict of war to reach out to each other in a manner that would promote peace, respect and unity. Nonetheless, the conversation did obtain some modicum level of peaceful settlement and stopped the bloody war in which thousands of people had lost their lives. Thus the Lancaster House talks ushered in a new phase of transition to peace. It laid down the ground rules for the first democratic elections. However, a critical reflection on such an important process would be carried out in the absence of truth-telling and reconciliation. The differences between ZANU and ZANU, and indeed which differences had cascaded down to their military wings, were a worrying factor. Hence Nkomo (1984:202) points out that the seeds of unrest were being sown:

Even before the cease-fire, when all energies should have concentrated on defeating the Smith regime, Zanu was building up its political organisation in eastern Zimbabwe, along the Mozambique border.

It is clear that ZANU was moving ahead of time and had already projected the minority regime's capitulation. Combining military action with political indoctrination was strategic in building up a strong support base that would pay dividends at election time. Of course political indoctrination, and even more seriously involving military elements, was itself a bad development in the context of the desire for democracy. This preoccupation by ZANU was to impact adversely on the talks as the party concentrated on positioning itself in exclusionist form to push for its solitary victory. Consequently, the Lancaster House talks concluded, without any reconciliatory deal between the two protagonists of the liberation struggle, ZANU and ZANU. Initially they had been promises for the unity between ZAPU and ZANU in the course of the talks. Meldrum (2004:32) attests to this claim that "they formed an uneasy coalition, the Patriotic Front, but Mugabe went back on an agreement that the two would stand in elections together".

Despite the reservations exacerbated by insufficient desire for the crucial process of reconciliation, the talks ended with an agreement for elections. On the ground signs and signals were rather bleak political-ethnic violence was on the increase. In fact Nkomo (1984:217) claims that "Zanu had been set up on the back of tribal feelings, stirred up in the first place by Shona-speaking exiles who exploited it as a way of attacking my own leadership". These indications pointed to a deep seated ethnic rivalry between the Ndebele and the Shona, but it is also obvious that the major roots of it were coming from outside. The easy conclusion to that is that this ethnic enmity was generated by the desire for exploitation rather than post it to the pre-colonial era. Meldrum (2004:32) describes the stand-off between Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe as "nearly as bitter as their relationship with Ian Smith". This was a disturbing scenario because the two leaders needed each other. They were equally important to the liberation struggle. Neither of them could be pushed to the periphery, even in the aftermath of the war, without creating problems for the country. Meldrum (2004:31) points out that "the differences between the two leaders highlighted important divisions in the country: Nkomo was from the Ndebele people

... Mugabe is from the majority ethnic group, the Shona". Hence the future peace of an independent Zimbabwe depended very much on the unity of these two men because they each wielded indisputable influence over their own people. In a nutshell they represented the two major blocks of the country namely Matabeleland and Mashonaland respectively.

It meant that the country was being set on a course to self-destruction when the nationalist movements were bent on seeking advantage over each other than dwell on what could unite the country already torn apart and ravaged by war. For Nkomo (1984:217) "everything rested on the calculation of advantage between those groups". These unscrupulous strategies projected ahead of the Lancaster House talks and the first democratic elections would have a lasting effect on the conduct of the election campaign and its outcome: an ethnic-regional divided country. How applicable, then are words of Gandhi (1998:4) that "it is in the unfolding of this troubled and troubling relationship that we might discern the ambivalent prehistory of the postcolonial condition". Thus the inability by ZAPU and ZANU to strike a cordial code of the desire to work together was indeed a worrying factor for anybody who cared about the necessity for reconciliation. In the context of that lack of cordiality Nkomo (1984:200) laments: "The national campaign of reconciliation that I dreamed of remained a dream". Reconciliation was crucial to obtain a positive outcome of the liberation struggle.

Independence gained in a fragmented society would not serve the political, cultural and socio-economic development of the country. Nkomo (1984:201) reflects on the development as follows: "We had fought and beaten the illegal regime in Zimbabwe. But victory had not brought unity". Therefore, the defeat of the settler colonial regime would not deliver a united nation because the envisaged reconciliation process was sabotaged by political opportunism. Within the context of an ethnicised election the population "was poised to vote ethnically", (Chung 2006:252). Apparently the outcome of the election was already predetermined by ethnic demography: the majority ethnic group would win. Sachikonye (2011:29) points out how ZANU "consciously recruited Shona intellectuals ... to buttress this [tribal] image". Clearly it was no longer a struggle against colonial injustice but paradoxically a fight for yet another form of domination and exclusion. Probably in view of these negative

developments, according to Todd (2007:35), Joshua Nkomo “warned against a forced or manipulated ‘unity’, and said the existence of many political parties, races and languages should not cloud the fact that Zimbabweans were one nation”. Hence the “buttressing” of one ethnic picture was certainly at odds with national unity. It was, therefore, least expected outcome of the people’s struggle that people would come out of it bitter enemies on the basis of ethnicity. The conclusion to the Lancaster House talks opened a period of election campaigns by contesting parties, but more attention was on ZAPU and ZANU that both came out of those adopted added to their names Patriotic Front (PF) supposed to have been the name of their alliance. Henceforth they became known PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF. Of course it foretelling that the Lancaster House talks had gotten under way while incidences of violence were rife in some sections in the country. Lord Soames and his personnel who had come from Britain to preside over the situation were aware of the events and yet they decided to remain quiet. Stiff (2000:24) explains it as follows:

Soames chose to ignore continuing reports of massive intimidation of the rural populace by ZANU-PF and those ZANLA guerrillas who had not reported to assembly points. This was more significant when he refused to consider barring ZANU-PF from the election process.

This offers a glimpse on the conditions under which the election campaigns got under way. Quite surprisingly the talks did not achieve peace between leaders among whom some of them are avowed Christians. The rare opportunity for dialogue was squandered by a political leadership that lacked humility and a clear vision of the common good. Contested under such grave conditions, it could have been clear that the results would not truly reflect people’s free will and choice. Political violence was more intense in Mashonaland because of the perceived strong influence of PF-ZAPU. ZANU PF intensified its terror campaign (Stiff 2000:22):

Tribesmen were being subjected to comprehensive intimidation by ZANLA. Intimidation was particularly intense in Mashonaland East, Victoria [now Masvingo] and Manicaland Provinces, the heartland of ZANU-PF.

What should be borne in mind is that ZAPU, before the formation of ZANU, was the only major nationalist movement known across the country. Its split on grassroots

level had not effectively diminished its popularity in the eastern region. Many of the leaders came from that region which dispelled the perception that it was a tribal party. The intensity of ZANU-PF's terror campaign should be seen in that light. On the one hand ZANU-PF had not made any meaningful in-roads in Matabeleland. There it remained largely unknown. Brutal methods were adopted even in Mashonaland in order to ensure the party's victory. According to Stiff (2000:17), "the newly enfranchised and savagely intimidated black electorate ... voted overwhelmingly for their tribal roots". David Blair (2003:32) concurs that the voting pattern followed regional and ethnic lines that inevitably and effectively divided Matabeleland and Mashonaland. It was an election that was contested along ethnic-political lines. There was a grave loss of the common vision of freedom and political, cultural, and socio-economic equality that could have united the people across ethnic divide and led to development and progress in all spheres of life. Justice and fairness had drifted further away and a form of domination was established. Joshua Nkomo articulated it as follows: "We cannot blame colonialism and imperialism for this tragedy ... we are enveloped in the politics of hate. The amount of hate that is being preached in this country is frightful" (Todd 2007:164). However atrocious the effects of colonialism, it cannot be blamed for every ill in Africa or Zimbabwe. If colonial injustice has remained after decades of African independence, it can be attributed to African leaders' inability to deal with problems. Europe has had its worst wars, more catastrophic than Africa has ever seen, but today consists of an alliance of former enemies. Guest (2004:9) admits that "it is easy to find colonial roots for modern problems but the problem is that the legacy of colonialism remained, even after colonists had gone". The ZCBC (2009:5) explains the magnitude of the problem as follows:

In Zimbabwe, intolerance, mistrust, lack of respect for other cultural groups were deepened by divide and rule tactics of the colonial systems" and those "tactics have been re-invented in the post-colonial context where political parties and factions have been ethnicised or tribalised.

An election coerced by violence and intimidation cannot deliver credible results. When the results were announced in favour of ZANU-PF, Nkomo and his followers accepted it because they "felt there was nothing for it but to swallow the result and

trust the alleged victors would use their triumph generously and in good faith” (Stiff 2000:17). In his own words Nkomo (2001:207) describes it as a “doubtful election” that further “led to a false start” for a new nation rocked by divisions and unreconciled differences. There is no way to rationalise and attempt to explain away this reality. Nkomo pointed out that “what Zimbabwe fought for was peace, progress, love, respect, justice, equality, not the opposite” (Todd 2007:164). However, the election outcome seemed to dictate something diametrically opposed to these espoused values of human progress and prosperity. It is in this context that Zimbabwe attained its independence. A new era past colonialism had finally arrived. The war ceased and finally people were free, but not without some anxiety as to what the future would hold.

## **2.5 Post-colonial era**

The year 1980 was very important in the charting of a new direction in the history of Zimbabwe. Like the rest of other African states before it Zimbabwe got its independence against all odds and naturally it enjoyed its own moment of honeymoon. Like any new nation freed from colonial rule it thought it would be destined for an era of unprecedented progress (Meredith 2005:142). It was a historic moment for a country that had suffered the injustice of colonial rule. However, the price for independence was high. The country had been ravaged by a bloody war. The people were worn out and wanted peace. As the war ground to a halt there was a sigh of collective relief. Expectations that the ideals of the liberation struggle would be pursued were high. Beyond the Independence euphoria lay the task of rebuilding a nation that according to Eppel (2004:43) had more than a century of unresolved conflicts behind it. These include racism rooted in colonialism, as well as other conflicts which predated and were intentionally exacerbated by colonialism”. Serious fissures needed attention and the commitment to be resolved.

At the end of the war with the independence celebrations, there was a genuine sense of optimism. This was heightened by the pronouncement of a reconciliation policy and the establishment of a government of national unity. In his encyclical, *Splendor of truth*, John Paul II (1993:No. 31) points out that “people today have a particular strong sense of freedom”. The new Zimbabwe was set for a new dispensation guided by the much lauded principles of democracy in which freedom,

equality, respect for human dignity and rights would be foundational. Raftopoulos (2004:2) describes it as follows:

At independence in 1980, the new government embarked on a vision of 'national reconciliation' that, in economic terms, sought to combine a continuity of existing production structures with policies to improve the conditions of the majority of the population neglected during the colonial years.

People were looking forward to prosperity and the end of poverty and suffering. However, it is not easy to purge a country of the residual elements of colonial injustice. Like many other African states post-independence, Zimbabwe would not successfully manage the economy to the benefit of all the people. Emmanuel Ngara (2006:32) puts it as follows:

The disappointing thing about Africa is that deep levels of disillusionment and dismay soon followed the mood of optimism which enveloped the people when political freedom and independence came.

The rapid decline of Zimbabwean politics and socio-economic situation is common knowledge. Already six years into post-colonialism, Joshua Nkomo referred to the fact that "one of the worst evils we see today is corruption. The country bleeds today because of corruption" (Todd 2007:164). On the one hand there is a general consensus that, for the first fifteen years, the country had accomplished some major developments. This, however, was one-sided because in the years immediately after independence Matabeleland was plunged into a situation of disproportionate political violence and destruction. The sense is that the region was side-lined from the very beginning.

The fact of the matter is that a few years of independence a new Zimbabwe began to experience a sharp decline of its economy. Some six years into independence, Joshua Nkomo stated: "There is something radically wrong with our country today and we are moving, fast moving towards destruction" (Todd 2007:164). These words, said thirty-three years ago, were prophetic. Unabated political and socio-economic decline soon plunged the country into a crisis. Systemic or endemic corruption has virtually crippled the economy. The common pattern of many post-

colonial African states of failed politics and economies is a factor that requires introspection. African leaders do not seem to be able to learn from one another's failures (see Guest 2004:13).

Post-colonial rulers assumed power when the country's economy was fairly strong. The currency was almost on a par with the British pound. Now, however, it is completely eroded by inflation. Ngara (2006:32) makes the following comparison:

The promises of an independent Kenya, Nigeria, Zimbabwe or Mozambique did not lead the people of these countries and others to the promised land of milk and honey, but sooner or later gave birth to new forms of oppression, economic hardship and despair.

Faced with an economic meltdown that seemed unstoppable, the post-colonial ruling party resorted to a political strategy of violence to retain power. Since independence elections have almost always been accompanied by disproportionate violence. Ngara (2006:33) sheds light on the source of such challenges:

From the outset that fighting for political freedom from colonial rule is in many ways easier than leading an independent country to economic development. Those who took up arms to fight for political independence evidently did not fully realize this truth.

From a theological perspective it is lack of servant-leadership and a self-service attitude informed by a sense of greed that is the problem. In the context of socio-economic failure the violence has had a double effect on Matabeleland because of the unresolved issues of conflict between the Ndebele and the Shona that predates the colonial era. These conflicts were intensified during the liberation struggle. Like many African states, Zimbabwe failed to depart from violence as a way settling differences. For McCarthy (2003:9) "society and life itself have programmed us to violence, so that we can't imagine or take seriously the reality that we are called to live in complete peace with all people". Since independence Zimbabwe, at different times, has compromised the lives of its own citizens through various forms of aggression.

From a theological and ecclesial perspective, there was the expectation that an independent Zimbabwe would focus on the common good. The ZCBC (2011:4)

defines the common good as “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and easily”. While much was awaited and promised on the day of celebrations, even at that occasion cracks could be discerned. At the euphoric celebration Nkomo (1984:215), the founder of Zimbabwean nationalism, was overlooked and humiliated. Though he had lost the election, he represented the entire Matabeleland and parts of Midlands where he won all the seats. According to Vincent Ndllovu (1991:175) the country did not have a good start. That “symbolic humiliation” of Joshua Nkomo soon cascaded down to the constituency he and his party represented. Nkomo (1984:214) explains that “African leadership had been split by the period of forced exile or imprisonment and the conspiracies that festered in it”. This split as already attested to above, influenced the voting pattern. Joshua Nkomo’s role either for or against the unity of the country was critical because he did represent a constituency that idolised him; the course of action he would take would be similarly its course. A brief reflection on this iconic figure could cast more light in comprehending the damaging developments that ensued in 1980s.

## **2.6 Joshua Nkomo: A contradictory symbol**

The history of nationalism in Zimbabwe is incomplete without attention to the iconic figure of Joshua Nkomo. However, he was a contradictory figure. On the one hand he is seen as the Father Zimbabwe, yet at the same time, for some political reasons, he is also seen as “a cobra in the house” whose head should be destroyed (Christina Lamb 2006:124). Nkomo, initially part of the government of national unity, was ousted along with his party. With the loss of representation and the political violence in Matabeleland, that group of the population was alienated. With the signing of the peace agreement, Nkomo assumed the position of the country’s second vice-president. Though this brought an end to political violence, but “a rift had been created that would never be healed” (Hill 2003:57). Despite the coming together of the political leaders there was no further attempt to heal the wound of division among the people. Meldrum (2004:31) explains the difference between Nkomo and Mugabe as symbolic of the divisions in the country that cost the nation its unity.

Joshua Nkomo was the embodiment of the aspirations of the people of Matabeleland. He was well acquainted with the pre-colonial history and did not deem

it a threat to the unity of the people of Zimbabwe. He did not allow himself to be drawn into the murky issue of tribal rivalry. He regarded himself as a national rather than an ethnic leader (Hill 2003:85). Therefore according to Nkomo (1984:7), “in the old, pre-colonial days the territories of each of the peoples in the land were defined only by custom: their vagueness led to raids and counter-raids in search of cattle, food or women”. He understood those precolonial conflicts as meaningful only within their given time and context. The present could not be dictated by the “vagueness” of that ancient time. His view on national unity was as follows (Nkomo 1984:7): “There was no reason why all of us should not unite and develop an unquestionable sense of national identity”. This quest for national unity signified a spirit for the common good. This makes his capitulation to join hands with the post-colonial ruling party understandable.

Given the difficult situation created by the settler colonial regime, it was not easy to maintain a vision of a united Matabeleland and Mashonaland, even within a single political party. Geoffrey Nyarota (2006:126) describes how some “broke away from the party to launch ZANU, while ZAPU became essentially ethnic-based Ndebele organisation”. However, given that the ZAPU leadership consisted of more Shonas than Ndebele, the idea that Nkomo was an Ndebele leader was simply not true (Hill 2003:85). Nkomo cannot be reduced to an ethnic group. According to Meldrum (2004:67) “Nkomo possessed the character of national leader and Nelson Mandela honoured him by calling him: Madiba, meaning revered elder leader”. The circumstances could have driven him into rebellion but for the love of people he chose peace. Seeking dialogue and peace under difficult conditions, Nkomo epitomised the value of *ubuntu* in the damning face of vilification. The historical accounts by those clearly aligned to ZANU-PF and its ZANLA military force undermine the role played by Joshua Nkomo’s party and its military wing. According to Mukonori (2017:236) “ZIPRA did not have nearly as much success during war as ZANLA, in terms of how they captured and held ground”. For anyone who lived in the areas operated by ZIPRA the claims is not in the least closer to the truth and it reflects the observer does not know the areas covered by this guerrilla force or simply lack of appreciate.

From a theological perspective this was reminiscent of Jesus' "modelling the power of truth and nonviolence" (Rynne 2014:63). The two men at the apex of Zimbabwe's political conflict, Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo differed also with regard to religion. Mugabe was an avowed Christian, a Catholic, Nkomo was not. In spite of his religious persuasion Mugabe pursued a path of violence. What Christianity stands for as exemplified in the life and actions of Jesus is the opposite. Jesus, at the time of his trial and crucifixion reveals that a "kingdom of God stood over against the world that used violence and embedded violence into its political structures" (Rynne 2014:62). Nkomo, though not outspokenly Christian, was more focused on peace-making.

The journalists and political commentators described Nkomo in 1979 as "essentially de-tribalised, and his appeal is national or it is nothing at all" (Nkomo 2013:18). ZAPU had been a single nationalist movement with popular support country wide. Incidences of ethnic violence during the liberation struggle and in the post-independent era have their roots elsewhere. Nkomo (1984:xiii) explains that "by their prolonged resistance, the settlers themselves fostered bitterness not only between themselves and the black majority, but also between the various African factions struggling for justice in prison or in exile". This reflects statement Nkomo's understanding of how the war against colonialism had also affected nationalists' relationships. Indeed, this ability to grasp the dynamics of their conflict is shown in the way he handled it; always ready to dialogue. Nkomo (1984:7) had a vision for national unity and a national identity. This resonates with the spirit of the liberation struggle which was to create a nation of one people united by the desire for equity and fairness in politics, culture and socio-economic. This vision is compatible with the church's mission to establish God's kingdom in which justice, peace, respect for humanity and progress prevail. These were the efforts toward a peaceful Zimbabwe. Opportunities to reconcile the nation were available but largely ignored. To abandon the policy of reconciliation culminating in the sacking of PF-ZAPU from the government of national unity was uncharacteristically a bad option. Parker (2001:75) puts it as follows: "Refusal of reconciliation means that we continue to choose the role of enemy and struggle with the powers of wrath and anger". In the context under review it meant the new state lost its nationhood.

## 2.7. The loss of nationhood

In order to understand and appreciate Zimbabwe's political, cultural and socio-economic situation led to a loss of nationhood even before the nation could be established. The values of the liberation struggle of fairness, justice and peace were not put into practice in spite of pronouncements of reconciliation. At the independence celebrations Robert Mugabe sounded conciliatory: "If yesterday I fought you as an enemy, today you have become a friend and ally with the same national interests, loyalty, rights and duties as myself" (Raftopoulos 2004b:x). These words pronounced at the very cradle of the post-colonial era were meant to give birth to a new nation united in its common vision of equality, freedom and prosperity. A nation that knows God does not want to lose direction. Kreeft (2014:47) puts it as follows: "We will also all be unified by our common love of God, far more unified than we ever were on earth. Our differences will no longer divide us by war, misunderstanding, hate, scorn, lovelessness, and selfishness". Hence in the context of a new state emerging out of a devastating conflict of the war of liberation, the theme of reconciliation was a major component towards nation building. However, Sachikonye (2004:5) points out that "although the theme of reconciliation featured in the first major national broadcast ... it was not translated into a coherent policy or project afterwards". The enduring legacy of conflict showed its face. It would have required much courage, dedication and commitment to dismantle it.

The nationalist movements had failed to deal with their differences before 1980. Their differences had a long history and were deeply ingrained in the minds of their followers, particularly their armed wings. Dealing with this could have been a number one priority as an urgent point on the agenda of the new government. However, Harold-Barry (2004:259) points out that "those who inherited the leadership of the new Zimbabwe – both black and white – were unable to disentangle themselves from the tired old battle". More pronounced and visible were the fissures between the major nationalist movements, PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF and their guerrilla wings ZIPRA and ZANLA respectively. CCJP and LRF (1997:3) describe the task of the leadership at the dawn of its independence as follows:

It was faced with the task of uniting a country which had been subjected to 90 years of increasingly repressive, racist rule. It was obvious that

integrating a community that had serious divisions within itself would be no easy task.

Initially the leadership of the newly independent state made an effort towards reconciliation. The much lauded policy of reconciliation epitomised the desire to put the conflict behind them and pursue the socio-economic program for a prosperous Zimbabwe. However, as Sachikonye (2004:1) comments: "With the benefit of hindsight, it is now clear that the policy did not amount to more than well-calculated rhetoric on the part of the new administration to allay fears that the white population might have had at the time". Here must be added other perceived enemies such as PF-ZAPU, its leadership and its support base in Matabeleland and parts of Midlands.

The two regions, Matabeleland and parts of Midlands were the first to be victimised, after which white-owned land was seized. The policy of reconciliation was deception. For Harold-Barry (2004:257) it was "clear that independence was sadly not a new beginning". The new government did not dismantle the structures of injustice that had served the white minority rule. These structures were rather consolidated. The conflict of the historical past would continue to influence the present. Fay Chung (2004:240) points out that the nationalist movements, particularly ZAPU and ZANU were united behind the liberation, but they did not always have similar interests. Coming to independence with these divisions the government failed to meet the aspirations of the majority of people who were tired of war and were yearning for peace. Francesco Pierli (2003:5) puts it as follows:

After the era of colonialism, the excitement and pride of independence, the transition period of dictators and autocratic regimes, now the dawn of democratisation is beckoning. The people long for the re-appropriation of their continent, of their own countries and their own lands; they want leaders elected by them and accountable to them at regular times through fair, free and peaceful elections.

These were the desires and aspiration that carried the collective spirit of the ordinary people during the liberation struggle. However, at the very dawn of post-colonial era, signs pointed to the opposite. In view of the serious issues of conflict and antagonism, the past could not merely be erased. Parker (2001:41) points out that

the shaping influence of wounded memories not only on the individual but also on communities, places, peoples and tribes.

A lack of collective reflection on the historical past betrayed the country's ideals of progress and prosperity. Holland (2008:105) points the way forward as follows: "However painful our disappointments, we learn to come to terms with the loss of our dreams and defeat of our plans through compromise and emotional maturity". The euphoria of independence blinded the new nation to the issues that demanded attention if a healthy nation was to be developed. Parker (2001:49) reminds of how "unhealed history can exert a powerful influence in people's lives in the present, and until we learn to heal history, we will go on repeating it into the future". It is even more serious when history is distorted or falsified because it cannot create peace but rather anger and division. The excesses and misdemeanours of history cannot be wished away. However, Robert Mugabe was of the opinion that "if we dig up history, then we wreck the nation ... and we tear our people apart into factions, into tribes" (Meredith 2002:73-74). The country's selective denial of some events of its history is not healthy for the whole of society. While the heroes of the liberation struggle may be remembered, the victims of the post-colonial violence may not. However, revisiting its history could offer the country the opportunity to reshape and reconstruct itself. For Meldrum (2004:65) "the maturity of Zimbabwe would eventually be measured by how frankly it would accept the wrongs of what happened". Much of what happened in history has a bearing on the progress and development of the country.

The three eras of Zimbabwean history, namely pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial, have all seen conflict and dissention. Therefore it is necessary critically review them. The common legacy of political violence and subjugation of those perceived as weak should be broken. Samukele Hadebe (2009) speaks of Matabeleland and its people as having been "subdued and marginalised". Mabhena (2014) prefers the expression: "internal colonialism" as an explanation for the lack of political, cultural and socio-economic growth and progress in Matabeleland. The ZCBC (2009:6) notes with concern that the people of Matabeleland "are wounded and they do not feel that they have enough solidarity from fellow Zimbabweans even as they struggle with regional development challenges". In other parts of the country,

however, there has been substantial progress and development. In the present there is not much evidence of progress and development anywhere in the country. The historical past should be engaged with critically. The ZCBC (2009:3) concur that, “for reconciliation to take place we will need to ask pertinent questions. For example, what are these stories? For what purpose have these stories been told over the years? How useful are these stories?” These questions asked of history are crucial because history can poison human minds. Asking these questions may help to reduce those exaggerated historical aspects in an effort eliminate its negative impact in Zimbabwean society.

The people of Zimbabwe remain alienated without a sense of common nationhood. A theological reflection and praxis based on the values of truth, justice, forgiveness, reconciliation, peace and unity can point the way to a better future for all. In his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013:No. 59), Pope Francis makes the following point that is relevant to this context:

Today in many places we hear a call for greater security. But until exclusion and inequality in society and between peoples is reversed, it will be impossible to eliminate violence. The poor and the poorer peoples are accused of violence, yet without equal opportunities the different forms of aggression and conflict will find a fertile terrain for growth and eventually explode.

In the broader global context, and particularly applicable to the context of Zimbabwe, the rise of seemingly insignificant pressure groups and regional political parties signals the emergence of people’s consciousness. It is necessary that the concerns of these groups are addressed to ensure a better future for all. There is a growing sense of agitation among the people of the Matabeleland region manifests in general public spaces. It usually erupts in the form of violent clashes with the police. The ZCBC (2009:3) admit that such “feelings may explain continued rivalry of the groups that has been shown during the liberation struggles and in sport, cultural and political activities” and, I might add, work places and churches.

I argue that the emphasis on the precolonial “ethnic” conflict, has in the post-colonial period, particularly with the role played by the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade, alienated Matabeleland in a significant way. The region perpetually sees itself as not being part of, not

belonging. Mabhena (2014:137) strongly suggests that “the hegemony of the Shona people in Zimbabwe has been largely influenced by ethnicity and the quest to dominate Matabeleland politically, socially and economically”. The issue of economic development has long been viewed from an ethnic perspective. For instance, Campbell (2003:115) points out that the government boasting “of building one dam per district was in stark contrast to the silence over the question of providing water for the peoples of south western Zimbabwe under the Matabeleland Zambezi Water Project”. The post-colonial ruling party has viewed the matter in ethnic terms and there has not been commitment to the project. A discussion around the felt sense of loss nationhood cannot be complete without specifically touching the most emotive issue of the *Gukurahundi* era and its enduring effects. Of course there are already detailed accounts of this infamous episode in the history of post-colonial Zimbabwe. Its impact has had a combination of far reaching effects on the political, cultural and socio-economic progress of Matabeleland.

### **2.7.1 *Gukurahundi*: The final straw**

The people of Zimbabwe have come a long way in their struggle against colonialism and its excesses. In that protracted journey differences emerged. Up until Independence, there seemed to have been a certain level of tolerance and signs of putting those differences aside. Nurnberger 2007:44) explains the consequences of intolerance as follows: “Life as it is understood in Africa is life in community ... Nothing is considered to be so devastating for life in its fullness than secret enmities, grudges, open conflict or insubordination under the communal good”. The *Gukurahundi* era saw this kind of devastation in Matabeleland and parts of Midlands. This caused irreparable divisions. There could be many events in the history of the Zimbabwe that account for the rupture of the country, but the early 1980s political violence in Matabeleland and parts Midlands effected the final blow. The 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade commonly referred to as *Gukurahundi* should be seen in the light of unhealed divisions and unreconciled differences between the two major nationalist parties PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF. On the main its period here named as the *Gukurahundi* era reflects a long history of contestation which has been perceived in terms of ethnicity: the Ndebele-speaking and the Shona-speaking peoples. One important aspect about the *Gukurahundi* era is its deliberate creation by the post-colonial ruling party. Fidelis

Mukonori (2017:232) reminds us “that this disaster was man-made, there are still bodies buried under the ruin, and many are ashamed of what unearthing them will reveal”. This could account for the continued denial by the authorities. They are covering up their complicity. Despite these denials the issue has refused to go and constantly beckon us to the division between PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF. However, the nature of these catastrophic differences requires that there could have been a dialogue in an effort to settle them. Admittedly, whatever differences these parties had prior to the period in question, they did not amount to the disaster effected by the *Gukurahundi*; this was a final straw that sealed the rift between Matabeleland and Mashonaland. If at all there is any desire for a united Zimbabwe in future, it lies on the unpacking of this dark period in the history of modern Zimbabwe. The ZCBC (2009:4) admits that “[w]e all pretended that we could start in a new Zimbabwe without dealing with our past or defining collectively what future we desired for our nation”. Of course the statement does not specifically refer to the *Gukurahundi* issue but rather embraces all aspects of conflict in the history of Zimbabwe that should have been addressed at independence in 1980. Nonetheless, Mukonori (2017:233) accedes that “[i]f this event (*Gukurahundi*) is allowed to be forgotten, we are in danger of allowing ourselves to spin the same cycle again”. These reflections on the country’s current challenges spur practical theological application and praxis.

In order to fully appreciate and understand the breadth and depth of Zimbabwean context with respect to the question of Matabeleland it a critical review of the *Gukurahundi* era is necessary. The era combines both the operations of the *Gukurahundi* era and those of the so-called dissidents, though the latter occurred less extensively and were more sporadic. *Gukurahundi* committed crimes of inhumanity against the population. In the words of Nkomo (1984:235) the *Gukurahundi* army was deployed “for hunting down the so-called dissidents, gangsters who were said to be motivated by loyalty to Joshua Nkomo. In reality they were out to terrorise the people”. Mukonori (2017:232) concedes “the government suppression to be so savagely unforgiving ...” and his opinion is that “there has been reluctance to more openly discuss it in the decades since”. Although there been attempts to conceal the matter voices of concern emerged. Quite significantly was the Roman Catholic Church’s response in Bulawayo, the capital and centre of Matabeleland. Then bishop of Bulawayo, Henry Karlen stated that “people were

being terrorised and butchered and their property destroyed” (Todd 2007:49). This was a prophetic role played by the Church that expressed concern and solidarity with the people’s plight. This was in tandem with Jesus Christ’s words in Matthew (10:26-27): “Therefore do not be afraid of them. Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known. What I say to you in the dark, speak in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops”. This was Jesus’ instruction to his followers to be prophetic in the face of injustice in their mission.

Missions in rural Matabeleland, through workers, priests, doctors and the laity, became involved and brought to light what had happened there. The media were barred from exposing the true state of affairs (Davis 2013). In collaboration with others, the Church compiled a detailed report that was published ten years after the unity accord. The report is entitled *Breaking the silence, building true peace: A report on the disturbances in Matabeleland and Midlands 1983 to 1988*. This document offers extensive information on the events that followed the operations of the *Gukurahundi*. It further explains the role of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP): to educate people with regard to human rights, to research, record and report incidences of violence. *Gaudium et spes* (1966:No. 62) states that theologians are “called upon to examine, according to their own methods and requirements, more suitable ways of putting their teaching to their contemporaries”. Looking at functions of the CCJP the conclusion is that its role is theological because it is not just a social organisation but an organ of the Church carrying out and fulfilling its mandate on social concerns of the people.

It is essential to understand that the CCJP functions under the auspices of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in Rome. This council issued the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church (CSDC) which contains the social teaching of the Church. Hence according to the CSDC (2004:xviii-xix):

The Church cannot fail to make her voice heard concerning the ‘new things’ (*re novae*) typical of modern age, because it belongs to her to invite all people to do all they can to bring about an authentic civilisation oriented ever more towards integral human development in solidarity.

The actions of the Church in the context of the *Gukurahundi* era were informed and inspired by its own teaching. People's social circumstances matter to the Church. In Zimbabwe the bishops were, in the words of Coutinho (2012:25) "thinking of the many victims of injustice, those who have been physically, mentally, and emotionally abused". As the atrocities intensified the CCJP & LRF (1997:5) lament that "one of the most tragic effects of events in the 1980s is that it served to harden 'ethnic' differences in Zimbabwe, resulting in what could be referred to as 'quasi-nationalism'". The actions of the *Gukurahundi* split the people along ethnic lines. This consolidated ethnic hatred. The post-colonial ruling party betrayed its social contract with the people of Matabeleland. People were decimated and impoverished. The CCJP & LRF (1997:59) report as follows:

One of the most tragic impact of 5 Brigade on Matabeleland, was the resulting perception among those who suffered that they had become victims of an 'ethnic' and political war... They came to see it as a war fought not against dissidents but against the Ndebele and Zapu ... [this] hardened ethnic differences ... Such attacks struck at the root of people's most cherished social and political identity.

This sums up the tragic nature of the operation of the *Gukurahundi* army. It descended indiscriminately on the unarmed citizens and killed thousands of people. While Mukonori (2017:232-233) claims some authority in revealing "the truth" on the subject that the "Zimbabwean National Army slaughtered thousands of dissidents" it constitutes a grave misinformation for two reasons. First, the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade was not a National Army and its command was outside the command structures of the latter (see Nkomo, 1984:235). Secondly, there were no 'thousands of dissidents' roaming Matabeleland and parts of Midlands. There were fewer than 700 disgruntled individuals who constituted smaller groups inadequately armed and without central command and could neither stage any fight nor resistance against the *Gukurahundi* army. Their role was no more than being catalysts for the genocide. Yet this army's operation was orderly and systematic reflecting that it was well planned directly targeting civilians. Its execution was devastatingly effective. The effects thereof endure to this day and are felt even by those born long after. The *Gukurahundi* stories are part of the conversations of every family in Matabeleland.

While there were intermittent incidents of violence committed by the so-called dissidents against civilians, Eppel (2004:44) argues that “beyond any doubt, the greatest burden of guilt for atrocities in the 1980s lies with the Zimbabwean government forces in particular the notorious 5 Brigade or ‘*Gukurahundi*’ Brigade”. The lingering effects of those events are enduring and felt by all families. It was not just an attack on civilians on the premise of their held political orientation, but also on their cultural values. According to Villa-Vicencio (2004:v), Zimbabwe relapsed into “coercive rule entrenched by colonialism”, and “patterns of coercion and authoritarianism ... intensified to the point of crisis”. Although this is felt across the country, in Matabeleland it was felt more intensely. The fear among the people has become entrenched. The methods were designed to inflict intense bodily and psychological harm (see Eppel 2004:47). The forces moved from village to village, from homestead to homestead. No household or family was left unscathed. Blair (2003:30) describes it as follows: “Entire families were burnt to death in huts, villages razed to ground, inhabitants shot, beaten and tortured”. Some who survived were able to flee. Some never returned and to this day their whereabouts remain unknown.

Many people continue to live with an unhealed psychological wound. They have not found closure. The most divisive element of the operation was the ethnic factor which includes language and cultural customs. The Shona language spoken by the army was at the time completely unknown in rural Matabeleland. Many were killed for their inability to speak it. Language became a strategic tool to instil fear. The use of the Shona language and its imposition on the victims during the operation became associated with cruelty, fear and murder. The result is that anyone speaking this language in Matabeleland is looked upon with suspicion.

Another strategy was the *pungwes* or all night rallies during which different methods were used to inflict pain on the victims. There was singing throughout the night while torture, beatings, rape, maiming and killings were perpetrated. Jocelyn Alexander et al (2000:222) described how these rallies would “follow a similar pattern of forced singing, dancing and sloganeering”. At the same time political indoctrination took place. People were taught about ZANU-PF and asked to recant their support of PF-Zapu. PF-ZAPU local leaders were humiliated and executed in front of their

supporters. People were forced to denounce them and their party. Meredith (2002:67) relates how, after the massacre “villagers were then forced to sing songs in the Shona language praising ZANU-PF while dancing on the mass graves of their families and fellow villagers killed and buried minutes earlier”. The CCJP & LRF (1997:120, 124) describe some bizarre practices such as that women and girls would have sticks forced into their genitals, their bodies would be burnt, or they would be given to the tormentor as his wife. The CCJP and LRF (1997:124) provide ample evidence of widespread incidences of sexual abuse such as rape, genital mutilation and forced sex with animals. Mbe (2013:29) describes it as follows:

The violence was indiscriminate. Victims included pregnant women, children, and even babies. The atrocities were mostly committed in the open, so that all the villagers could see the horror and be terribly afraid.

Cultural ways and norms were desecrated: how people express their respect for the dead, the graves of the dead and how they grieve. Ndebele traditional culture was treated with utter disrespect. Meredith (2004:56) relates the story of a young girl whose father and brothers “were pushed into their hut, the door was locked and it was set on fire. She and the other women were ordered to keep singing”. This kind of cruelty demonstrates a lamentable loss of *ubuntu*.

In these and other ways the people of Matabeleland were made to feel unwanted, less human, inferior, and objects of contempt. According to Blair (2003:32) the “encouragement given to soldiers to rape Ndebele women [in order to] create Shona babies” was another very infraction against the Ndebele people. Whether this was an order by the authorities or not, it left people deeply wounded. The resultant impression was that the aim was to exterminate the Ndebele as an ethnic group (see ZCBC 2009:6). The dominance of the Shona and subjugation of the Ndebele was established and relationships between the two groups fractured. Unless a concerted effort of healing, reconciliation and restorative justice is undertaken, the future peace and unity of the country looks rather bleak. In the aftermath of great pain and suffering there is no nationhood to speak of.

It is interesting to note that, while these events were taking place, no comprehensive reports were written, no journalists were investigating. Everything was shrouded in

mystery. Hill (2003:77) describes it as follows: “While violent incidents were repeated all across Matabeleland ... the press neither reported them nor as much as questioned why a third of the country had been sealed off”. Matabeleland and parts of Midlands were cordoned off by the declaration of a curfew. No journalists or reporters were allowed in. This underscores that the operations were deliberate and carried under orders of the post-colonial ruling party. Later it also became clear how Matabeleland was excluded from the gains of independence, of the political, cultural and socio-economic growth happening elsewhere in the country. The people were alienated and treated as the other. They did not feel belonging or as though they were part of the rest of the country. This can be seen also in the way in which Joshua Nkomo was treated as leader (see Hill 2003:85).

The intentionality of the *Gukurahundi* campaign was exposed even further at the end when a very small group of dissidents surrendered after amnesty was offered. Meldrum (2004:64) puts it as follows: “It was unbelievable that this small band had for years eluded the army and set in motion the massive bloodshed of the Matabeleland massacres”. The dissidents were used as an excuse to wreak havoc in the region. They were obviously not a great danger to the government or the army. Hill (2003:82) interprets the situation as follows: “The earliest accounts could not be independently verified, but offered evidence that the Fifth Brigade was trained or ordered to specifically target civilians”. Another noteworthy point is that the training of the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade began long before the dissidents were a factor. Pope Benedict XVI (2010:51) explains the dynamics of such destructive power in history as follows: “History has sufficiently demonstrated how destructive majorities can be, for in systems such as Nazism and Marxism, all of which also stood against truth in particular”. It can therefore be concluded that the intention of the post-colonial ruling party was to obliterate the minority Ndebele people. This calls for a sincere dialogue around this issue.

For Martin Rupiya (2004:93) the military in Zimbabwe was central to the consolidation of peace and stability. However, violence cannot achieve consolidation, let alone justice peace and stability. Violence just serves to silence, create fear and repress people. Pope Benedict XVI (2010:51) summarises the central message of the Gospel of John as that “the truth comes to rule, not through

violence, but rather through its own power". Accordingly it "requires criteria for verification and falsification. It must always be accompanied by tolerance". For the sake of present and future peace, justice must be sought and the country healed of its still festering wounds. This should not be selective justice. McCarthy (2001:101) points out that "violence can never be a source of security for any people. It gives the illusion of safety but always leads to increased violence in all areas of life". All this points to fact that violence is far removed from being a tool to establishing peaceful relationships between peoples, communities, societies and nations. Indeed, in the context of Matabeleland this is evident. The *Gukurahundi* suppressed and oppressed the people for some time, but today there is a call for accountability.

The magnitude of these events in the modern history of Zimbabwe remains unparalleled. Its injustice cries for public acknowledgement, healing, forgiveness and reconciliation. The failure to heal the wounds will mean that the horror and bitterness will be passed on from one generation to the next. Nowadays the story of *Gukurahundi* is told on social media and the younger generation is reacting with a sense of anger. Time will not heal the wounds by itself. Something constructive has to be done.

The *Gukurahundi* atrocities are not the only issue of concern in the Zimbabwean history of political violence. Political violence has continued unabated whenever a threat against the post-independent ruling party is perceived particularly during elections campaigns. Since the so-called Unity Accord which put an end to the "moment of madness" as the *Gukurahundi* era is also known, there has been witness of terror perpetrated against supporters of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), human rights activists and other civic groups demonstrating for change. The ZCBC has, as a response, developed a tradition of issuing pastoral statements whenever there were issues of national interest. For instance, the ZCBC (2004), in view of the 2005 elections stated that "an electoral process that aspires to be technically free and fair must be based on moral integrity that alone makes freedom and fairness a reality". However, it always states categorically that the Church does not favour particular political opinions and, that its focus is the kingdom of God. This serves as a way of maintaining not its impartiality but its moral integrity and authority. For example it is clearly stated that "the Church looks beyond the parties and derives

its ethos from the eternal Kingdom of God, a kingdom of love, truth, justice, freedom and peace” (ZCBC 2004:3). In this way the church in Zimbabwe puts itself in a position whereby it retains a certain modicum of respectability and moral authority. The enduring challenges the country continues to face have the Roman Catholic Church comments as follows: “The evolving trends in our country are worrying and, if not corrected, can lead to our loss of nationhood, the disintegration of our society and to the forming of degenerate militias with opposing loyalties” (ZCBC 2011:3). In fact that nationhood was forfeited in the very early stages of Zimbabwe’s Independence through sectarianism and divisive conflicts.

The most serious obstacle to solving the country’s problems, particularly the emotive issue of Matabeleland, is the continuing denial. Heide Holland (2008:241) interviewed Robert Mugabe with regard to the genocide and asked him: “Do you worry about repercussions in the international justice system in respect of Gukurahundi?” Mugabe dismissed the question as irrelevant. Holland (2008:242) report: “The question itself did not disconcert him because he simply justified his actions. He clearly feels *Gukurahundi* was legitimate on the grounds that he was aggrieved”. Maybe the authorities are buying time, hoping that with time the issue will disappear. However, memories such as these are not easily erased. It could be naïve to imagine that the genocide committed against the civilians will simply drift silently into the closed annals of history. It must be borne in mind that “[m]any of the wounds caused by this bloody period have scarred over, but I believe that for healing to occur, the people must know how *Gukurahundi* came to be and they must learn from it so that that they do not forget their history” (Mukonori, 2017:233). However, the powers that are have all but pretended that the passage of time will erase that part of history.

The period of terror in the country’s history ended with the signing of the Unity Accord on 22 December 1987. The Unity Accord put a stop to the massacres. It was the beginning of process that was intended to bring peace. It will be briefly evaluated. Quite admissible, the Unity Accord is a significant part in the context of the enormous of a humanitarian crisis born of the devastating political violence. By whatever means possible the massacres had to be brought to a halt. However, it will

be revealed that the Unity Accord's major limitation was that it did not go beyond a mere political settlement between PF-Zapu and Zanu-PF.

## **2.8 The Unity Accord: Capitulation**

The much acclaimed unity accord between PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF signed on the 22 of December 1987 brought an end to the *Gukurahundi* era. With respect to the massacres that were ravaging Matabeleland the pact was historic. It reconciled the two political parties and somehow achieved a measure of peace. In the context of suffering and pain it brought relief. Pope Benedict XVI (2011:no. 19) emphasises the necessity of reconciliation in politics:

Reconciliation is a pre-political concept and a pre-political reality, and for this reason it is for the greatest importance for the task of politics itself. Unless the power of reconciliation is created in people's hearts, political commitment to peace lacks its inner premise.

If the policy of reconciliation was announced at the dawn of independence, the genocide could have been avoided. However, irreparable damage on the political, cultural and socio-economic had been done already. Unfortunately the unity accord did not reach out to those who were suffering the effects of political violence.

Three major aspects of this pact reflect its limitations. The first is stated by Meldrum (2003:4) as follows: "Mugabe was a cold, calculating manipulator who did not care how many lives would be lost so long as he consolidated his power". The process was tainted by a lack of sincerity on the part of ZANU-PF. PF-ZAPU and its leadership was aware that Zanu-PF was pushing to gain control and dictate the terms. The result was that, in order "to avoid further violence and repression, Nkomo capitulated" (Meredith 2002:72). The deal was therefore heavily in favour of the post-colonial ruling party. Nkomo had realised that any attempt to negotiate further would be catastrophic for the people of Matabeleland: the army would not be withdrawn. Under these conditions "this merger could only be seen as a hostile takeover" (Meldrum 2003:64). The deal that was made was far removed from the concerns of the victim survivors. They were offered nothing. The dissidents and the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade who were the cause of the violence and atrocities were in actual fact the major beneficiaries of the agreement. They were offered amnesty and granted immunity

respectively (see Meredith 2002:73). The victim survivors were left in the cold. The pact can be seen as little more than capitulation.

For a theological conversation within the given context of injustice, a detail leading to this political agreement and its finalisation should be considered. In the words of Jorge Mario Bergoglio (2013:136), “we are all called to constructive political activity”. It is therefore necessary to critically explore whether the political process leading to the Unity Accord was constructive and was beneficial to the people in the long run. According to Catherine Buckle (2002:8), Joshua Nkomo left the country after an attempt was made on his life, “declaring he would not become another Jonas Savimbi, the Angolan rebel who led his Unita movement in a 27-year guerrilla war against the MPLA government”. While in exile already in 1983 Nkomo (1984:252) appealed to Robert Mugabe to call for a national conference of all the country’s interest groups, to begin the process of reconciliation. This did not materialise. Mugabe ignored Nkomo’s appeal. However, Joshua Nkomo is credited for his magnanimity of spirit, refusing to be drawn into a mode of retaliation as often happened elsewhere in Africa. Buckle (2002:8) points out that Nkomo, committed to peace, returned “to sign a unity accord with Mugabe in 1987, ending a bloody civil war which had raged in Matabeleland and Midlands”. This was an opportunity for the country’s leadership to re-consider reconciliation as the best way forward. The process that constituted an attempt to resolve differences was praiseworthy. Nkomo (2013:203) had previously declared: “Our task is to guard the independence of Zimbabwe and see that what we fought for is utilized. Zimbabwe is a sovereign state, but we have not yet achieved nationhood”. However, despite his eloquence of speech and desire for unity, the pact did not go beyond a mere political settlement. The people who were most grievously harmed did not benefit much. Prospects for peace had remained slim. The process was dragging out, the post-colonial ruling party showing signs of unwillingness. According to Nkomo (2013:213), a minister warned: “Let me assure the nation that the policy of reconciliation towards ZAPU has been withdrawn. Nkomo should take note – in the next few days you will be seeing fire”. Apart from being politically irresponsible, this statement lacked foresight with regard to its practical implications. It exacerbated the political tension. At stake in this context were the ordinary people’s lives, those who were living in fear, uncertain of their future. Reconciliation and peace seemed impossible to achieve.

The Catholic Church had closely monitored the developments and kept encouraging peace. Talks resumed in October 1985 (Nkomo 2013:213) with a positive outcome only achieved in 1987. Senamile Fortune Nkomo (2013:217) points out that “the ramification of the accord was perhaps the most significant political event in 1988, especially for the population of Matabeleland and the Midlands”. Indeed on a political level it was a success and brought an end to the massacres. However, it was insufficient because it did not go further than uniting political leaders. There was no constructive effort to deal with the suffering and pain that had been caused. The CCJP and LRF (1997:209) put it as follows:

The harsh reality is that the unity accord did not bring any meaningful reconciliation among the common people of Zimbabwe; it largely brought about accommodation of interests between political leaders. But there is still deep rooted fear, anger and distrust at grassroots of society. It brought superficial peace but has not dealt with innermost emotions.

This describes the major flaw of the unity accord, namely that it failed to address the real issues. There was no attempt to publicly acknowledge the massacres. There was no apology. On the contrary, the post-colonial government still justified its actions (see Holland 2008:241). The people in the affected areas were not guaranteed that there would be no repetition of such atrocities in the future. According to Villa-Vicencio (2004:vi) “there are no easy solutions to the Zimbabwean conflict. The steps required to move beyond the present impasse require careful thought”. Uncertainty and mistrust prevailed. With such an approach, justice and peace were not achieved. Pope Benedict XVI (2005:No. 28) describes the focus of justice in politics as follows:

Justice is both the aim and the intrinsic criterion of all politics. Politics is more than a mere mechanism for defining rules of public life: its origin and its goal are found in justice, which by its very nature has to do with ethics.

It was therefore compelling to begin a sincere process to achieve justice. In the context of the continued legacy of Gukurahundi, the Church played a pertinent role. Pope Benedict XVI (2011:No.12), in his *Africae munus*, points out that “in Africa as elsewhere in the world the spirit of dialogue, peace and reconciliation is far from

dwelling in the hearts of everyone". African history reflects the continent's woundedness. Reconciliation is sorely needed.

With regard to the unity pact, numerous efforts were made to reconcile the nationalist movements. However, they all collapsed before anything could be achieved. Coming to the 1987 unity accord, there were many hurdles to overcome. The main challenge was the inequality between of dialoguing parties. This fact alone meant that the result would not be a just and fair pact. Villa-Vicencio (2004:vi) describe what such a process should entail:

There will no doubt be conceptual and political compromises made in the process of any settlement of the crisis. Above all there will need to be deep listening, careful thought and courageous action.

However, continued hostilities on the ground pressured Joshua Nkomo and his party to surrender and join hands with Zanu-PF. According to Blair (2003:34), the process achieved the dissolution of Zapu and the domination of Matabeleland. Nothing tangible could be further expected. The effects of the violence on the lives of people would not be dealt with. The agreement to unite was achieved, but the unity accord went no further than politics. It did not include any mention of the victim-survivors who should have mattered most. To this day these people have not achieved closure. The Church's perspective is articulated by the ZCBC (2009:11) who expressed the desire for an "all-inclusive, holistic and clearly defined national process underpinned by strong political will and desire to reconcile and heal the nation". Thus lack of inclusiveness in all aspects of social progress has held Zimbabwe to its self-bondage; the blame which cannot be apportioned to some distant enemy.

Since the 1987 unity accord failed to reach out to those affected by the *Gukurahundi* era, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) became the envy of the people in Matabeleland (Ilif 2005:87):

The publicity conveyed a powerful sense of acknowledgement to victims, whose suffering had been denied for many years, while invoking a strong sanction against perpetrators who sought amnesty against legal sanction.

A central aspect of the TRC was its application of the Christian religious concepts of reconciliation, forgiveness and truth. Whether it was by design or otherwise, that the commission was led by a bishop, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, created an important impression of trust. The role of theology was clear. For Desmond Tutu (1999:82) “it meant that theological and religious insights and perspectives would inform much of what we did and how we did it”. Therefore the relevance of theological reflection and praxis, even in such high level political process, is unquestionable. A measure of harmony was created notwithstanding the limitations. Hamber (2000) does caution that, “when evaluating the work of the TRC, one must be cognisant of the inevitable shortfall of any legal or institutional response to the pain and psychological suffering engendered by a mass atrocity”. In view of the magnitude of the issues involved in the post-apartheid period, the process did make an enormous impact and contributed to unity in the South African context. On the whole the Commission did achieve a measure of success, not only political, but for the people on grassroots level.

Without dealing constructively with the aftermath problems of the massacres and other related issues of political, cultural and socio-economic nature it is unrealistic to expect that lasting peace could be established in Zimbabwe. Pope John XXII (1963:No. 1) in his encyclical, *Pacem in terris* describes what peace entails: “Peace on earth, which all men [sic] of every era have most eagerly yearned for, can be firmly established only if the order laid down by God be dutifully observed”. Peace cannot be fully realised in the context of deceit and manipulation as happened with the policy of reconciliation and the process of leading to the unity accord. A lack of sincerity, openness, fairness, truth and justice undermined the integrity of those processes. In the social teaching of the Church, justice and peace are primordial principles of human progress and development.

Having explored the unity accord, there is clear evidence that it did not go further than purporting to rectify a political standoff between the major nationalist movements. On face value it appeared to bring closure with regard to the *Gukurahundi* era. However, with regard to those complicit in the abuse, the unity accord placed a permanent seal on the issue. There was no official documentation on the massacres, save what the CCJP recorded. The insensitivity surrounding the

effects caused by that political violence has instituted collective feelings of anger and hatred against the perpetrator post-colonial government. People's lives were turned upside-down and that has remained as it is. A major aspect was the plunder of the economy in Matabeleland. Political violence has had debilitating impact on the economic performance and growth. It is important therefore to consider the role of political violence on the economy.

## **2.9 The economic factor**

One of the major crises in Zimbabwe today is an economic one. The country's economy has failed and life is very difficult for the majority ordinary people. Notably, in respect to the question of Matabeleland's socio-economic underdevelopment is that it is linked to political violence that ensued in the 1980s. This lack of socio-economic development in the region has been largely perceived as a deliberate exclusion by the post-colonial government. With hindsight to the developments that accompanied those events, it is easy to come to the similar conclusion. The destruction of property, people's livelihood, the murder of families' bread-winners and the brain-drain as Matabeleland's intellectuals escaped the country had negative implications on the regional economy but not less on the politics and culture of the people. For ten years into the independent Zimbabwe "there hadn't been a single major project in Matabeleland" (Holland 2008:116). This was in sharp contrast to the robust activities of economic growth in Mashonaland. Obviously this bias by the post-colonial government has actually exacerbated the notion of exclusion. For the rest of the country the serious economic challenges began in the late 1990s with the paying out of gratuities to war veterans and the expropriation of land from white farmers. Coltart (2016:248) explains the outcome of this as follows:

The payouts to war veterans, combined with rumours of land acquisitions and the word that Treasury was printing money, precipitated what is known in Zimbabwe as 'Black Friday', 14 November 1997, when the Zimbabwe dollar crashed losing 73 per cent of its value, eroding in a stroke much of the real value of the payments to veterans.

Inflation shot up. This eroded the country's currency which crashed in 2008. However, the economic problems of Matabeleland are not as recent as the 1990s. It is also important to notice that even the land issue does have some political

dynamics that have had an impact in the communities of this south western region. “This programme shifted a large chunk of former commercial farm land from white farmers to black ‘farmers’ for both settlement and commercial farming”. In many cases it turned out that the beneficiaries of this programme in Matabeleland were people from Mashonaland. This created conflict with local communities who believed there had to be prioritised. However, since the process itself was fraught with irregularities and confusion that it allowed a lot of unjust acts by the authorities to disadvantage the local communities. Basically, “in this history has been the desire and quest by the ruling, Shona –dominated ZANU PF to construct, under the auspices of ‘development’, a system for the political domination and control of Matabeleland” (Mabhena 2014:137). The impact of such behaviour can hardly be disassociated with undermining the progress and development of the local inhabitants. However, all these events date back to the beginning of independence in 1980.

The imbalances of economic growth require no detailed elaboration; they are too glaring to escape the attention. Hence the uniqueness of the situation has caught the Catholic bishops’ attention (ZCBC 2009). Whether on a regional or national level, the post-colonial government like in some other African states has failed the people. According to Ngara (2004:33) “what African states show is that the governments have failed to create wealth for the people in whose name they are supposed to rule”. The people of Matabeleland have been greatly side-lined. In the management of African politics, culture, and the economy, many African succumb to corruption, nepotism and tribalism. These three aspects continue to undermine positive growth. Often companies or businesses are run down by incompetent labour hired on no other basis blood relations, tribe or bribery. Nkomo (1984:247) points out that the younger generation “too often see in their governments the signs of corruption, of nepotism, of tribalism, sapping the legitimate authority of the state”. In light of this statement and critically considering the socio-economic injustice prevalent in Matabeleland it can be concluded that similar practices are at play in Zimbabwe.

In the colonial era, Bulawayo, due to its close proximity to South Africa, Zimbabwe’s biggest trading partner, was an industrial hub. However, since 1980, many industries were relocated to Harare and Bulawayo has been de-industrialised. This is often

closely linked to other trends such as the failure of government departments, parastatals and companies that were operating from Bulawayo or other areas in Matabeleland, to recognise and employ the local people. This has further contributed to negative ethnic relationships. Meldrum (2004:62) sums it up as follows:

The mood of the country was deeply divided. In Harare and throughout Mashonaland many people were still praising Mugabe government for bringing independence to the nation. They pointed to undeniable improvements in education and health as proof that the government was devoted to improving the lives of the people.

The post-colonial government has centralised the economy of Zimbabwe in the eastern region neglecting the south west. It has created a situation in which people from Mashonaland have better access to economy possibilities. Virtually all growth points in Matabeleland have Shona owned businesses. These developments have not lessened ethnic animosity. This could be viewed as a new form of colonialism and it is bound to exacerbate anger and hatred.

The ZCBC (2009:6) encourages the acknowledgement and recognition of “the various cultural animosities which have impacted on our politics, economics, Church and other gatherings and social activities”. Such a situation is potentially explosive, namely that political and economic growth possibilities are not open to all, but only to a particular group by virtue of their being the majority. Meldrum (2004:65) points out that “it was hard to reconcile the horrors perpetrated on the people of Matabeleland with positive developments in health and education throughout the rest of the country”. This has created a large economic gap between Matabeleland and Mashonaland. The gap has become a source of bitterness and a sense of being deliberately marginalised. As a response, pressure groups now want to defend Matabeleland against infiltrators from other regions. At times there are public clashes at places of employment where young people protest the importation of workers from Mashonaland. This has the potential for great conflict. The people still remember the similar scenario during the *Gukurahundi* era. At the height of massacres the city of Bulawayo came ‘under occupation’. The police officers had been “imported” from Harare so that the police force Bulawayo was now predominantly Shona-speaking, while the population spoke Ndebele (see Meldrum 2004:62). This happened across

Matabeleland, even at rural police stations. The impression was that the region was being policed by a government that did not trust the local people. Such pressure on the people of Matabeleland gets in the way of peace and reconciliation. It undermines the principles of justice, equality and subsidiarity.

For a country that requires peace, such inequalities cannot but threaten the future. Many young people and families from Matabeleland cross into neighbouring Botswana and South Africa to try and make a living. Zimbabwe depends on its neighbours and other countries to accommodate a large part of its population. The crossing of borders began in the 1980s when people escaped the *Gukurahundi* inferno. With the many human rights violations particularly around election times, crossing the borders has increased. A lack of employment opportunities has exacerbated the problem. Many leave the country as economic refugees. The ZCBC (2009:6) explains it as follows:

Zimbabweans have prevented each other from attaining human fulfilment by depriving each other life, education, shelter, health, information, freedom of speech and association, freedom of conscience, justice and peace.

Some have been empowered to lay more claims to the country's wealth than others. These challenges must be faced with courage and truth. Space should be created for dialogue in order to also meet the demands of justice. It is in such instances that the role of the church is to act in defence of the marginalised and oppressed and to articulate clearly the need of healing and reconciliation (ZCBC 2009:6). Hay (1998:15) puts it as follows:

Reconciliation is necessary when there has been a breach; an alienation, violence, disruption or disordering of the human relationship to God (the Transcendent), others, creation and, ultimately, oneself. Reconciliation is about transforming dehumanising situations and their personal and social consequences.

A more prosperous future can only come from a peaceful settlement in which the needs of others are recognised and aspirations are dealt with in a spirit of justice and equality. The economy of the Zimbabwe has been plundered by a corrupt leadership

leaving many people with but minimal means of survival. This exerted enormous pressure on the scarce resources as people scramble for survival.

Developments in the farming industry from 2000 onwards have contributed to great economic challenges. Land expropriation has disadvantaged countless farm workers and deprived them of their livelihood. This does not discount the fact of imbalances created by the colonial system, but the manner in which the process was carried out was detrimental to the country and the population. Human beings, particularly the white farmers, were exposed to conditions of terror. The economy of the country was virtually destroyed. The farm invasions have impacted heavily on people's relationships, especially the relationships between black and the white communities. Those white people who have been courageous enough to remain in the country have been pushed away. According to Duduzile Tafara (2004:43), the sentiment was the white settlers "had stolen our land and our task was to win it back". Land invasions ensued in a manner that was extremely violent. There was a disproportionate destruction of farm properties and equipment. White people were victimised, some killed in cold blood. The well-intentioned desire to rectify the imbalances of land ownership ended in unacceptable human behaviour. The story of land acquisition is a paradox and can be described, according to Kanengoni (2004:47) as "an anguished story of people who walked away from each other because they were no longer friends: the story of a long journey of a people and the strong relationship they have with their land." Friendship between black and white people was lost – another serious division in the country. In this way the farm invasions further added to the fragmentation of the Zimbabwean society. The economy of the country was thrown into limbo. As a result of this thousands of farm workers lost their employment and were driven into poverty. Production on the farms ground to a halt. To this day Zimbabwe is unable to produce its own food and has to import maize at great cost. This is a country which has always had an agricultural basis. The burden of these economic challenges added to the already heavy economic burden felt in Matabeleland.

## **2.10 History and the power of memory**

A critical challenge with regard to Zimbabwe's polity is the denial of history and memory, particularly the very negative parts of history. However, there is a *selective*

acknowledgement of history and memory. Holland (2008:242) points out that the creation of Heroes' Acre was an indication that history and memory are important. Heroes' Acre was created to remember "those whose deaths should not have occurred". Other aspects of history are rather forgotten. The post-colonial government has since the demise of colonialism opted to "remember the dead of the 'War of Liberation' (1973-1980), but not the dead of 'Gukurahundi', the civil war in Matabele land after Independence (1982-1987)" (Wemter 2003:37). However, this is not the best strategy for solving the country's problems. Guest (2004) describes history as a "culprit" because of its strong influence. John Dawson (2001: xi) refers to "the memory of wounded history" which then requires healing. The evidence is abundant that Zimbabweans treasure collective memory of its own history particularly the events of the pre-colonial era, of the colonial era which culminated in the liberation struggle. The national day of independence, the heroes day, defence forces day are all indications of cherished memories of history. Yet on one hand the authorities deny the atrocious act committed against the population in the post-independence era. It is necessary to explore the role of memory and history to help the Church to construct strategies of pastoral ministry of care that are relevant for healing. A wounded historical past and memory can create an internal bondage if not resolved.

At the dawn of Zimbabwean independence, critical introspection of its history could have delivered the country from its past bondage if the necessary processes have been followed. Admittedly the country has a long history of political violence that has ruptured it. It is critically important to reiterate Bennet (2006:77) who claims as follows:

As long as society fails to look at its past, acknowledge failure, honestly and humbly seek healing and forgiveness ... Past baggage will continue to burden the present living, and a legacy of guilt, shame, resentment and fear will be carried into the future.

This is a reminder that memory of the past events is powerful and can be ignored only at society's own peril. The past has a tendency to project itself into the present and the future. It will impose itself on the present until it is dealt with and atoned for. The influence of history on the present cannot be underestimated because

“unhealed history cannot be un-lived” (Parker 2001:45). Like the case of Native and Black Americans “issues of unacknowledged history and unhealed memories were powerful contributory factors in engendering present-day conflicts, prejudices and bitternesses” (Parker 2001:47). This sheds light on the fact that history does not remain in the past. It constantly influences the present and remains a self-imposing heritage for future generations. To deal effectively with history requires taking sufficient account of the power of memory. Critical points missed by the unity accord are *history* and the *power of memory*. Robert Mugabe’s idea that digging up history will “tear our people apart into factions, into tribes” can only be regarded as unfortunate, probably because it comes from one complicit of the crimes against humanity (Meredith 2002:73-74). Injured and unhealed history can be torturous. Healing is essential for the welfare of people. The challenges Zimbabwe faces today emanate from unhealed history and the power those difficult memories still exert on their lives. History, its memory and the effects it has had on people’s lives, will have to be dealt with in a constructive way for the country to be able to move forward and the people to be healed. Only then can national unity be forged.

History and memory are an integral part of being alive and active. History serves to remind people of their life’s journey. It instructs as to the past. The past dwells in the present and influences human behaviour. Humanity remains indebted to the memory of history. Dealing with human contexts of the past is always an attempt to shed light to the present so that the undesirable aspects of the past do not negatively influence the present. Christian faith itself treasures the memory of salvation history found in the bible. Theological reflection is based on certain aspects God’s historical actions or Jesus Christ’s historicity as human and his ministry. The past is not dead and it has to be interacted with. In order to understand the issues of Matabeleland it is necessary to interact and dialogue with this context so severely affected by history. Nkomo (1984:245) admits that “our history has made us what we are, and the recent period of that history was distorted first by the influence of remote empires, then for ninety years by direct colonial rule. It is up to us to do better now”. This provides further insight into the importance of history and the human ability to make better choices. Enslavement of history can be avoided if it is dealt with properly. However, this can only be if it is acknowledged, which government authorities tend to refuse to do. Pope Benedict XVI (2011:No. 9), however, is not forgetful of Africa’s history:

Africa's memory is painfully scarred as a result of fratricidal conflicts between ethnic groups, the slave trade and colonization. Today too, the continent has to cope with rivalries and with new forms of enslavement and colonization.

According to Jankelevitch (2005:14) "the role of memory is to enrich experience and not retard the action; on the trampoline of memories, the actions leap higher and energetically". In order to deal effectively with the past, history and memory should be given public space. Parker (2001:45) points out that "history, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again". There is no denial on the importance of history. However, if history is read and taught in an irresponsible and uncritical manner, harm can be done. This can also have an effect in the future. Writing and reading history have to be done with caution. Questions such as the purpose of the stories, their usefulness and their effect on the psyche of people, are relevant when history is scrutinized (ZCBC 2009:3).

The legacy of violence filters down from generation to generation through history books and oral transmission. According to Mark Hay (1998:51) "international experience has shown that addressing human rights violations is a necessary step in the process of reconciliation and nation building". A major hurdle is denial by the authorities and their maintaining the status quo. They often do so because of the fear that dredging up past misdeeds will compromise the tenuous peace in the present (see Meredith 2002:73-74). However, since history 'cannot be unlived' and "unhealed history exerts powerful influence on people's lives", denial is not a viable option. Desmond Tutu's (1999:28) description of the South African experience confirms that denial will not have a positive outcome:

Our common experience in fact is the opposite – that the past, far from disappearing or lying down and being quiet, has an embarrassing and persistent way of returning and haunting us unless it has in fact been dealt with adequately.

The power and impact of memory should neither be underestimated nor ignored. The reason for the denial of post-colonial ruling party can be its complicity in the tragic events. The power of memory and festering unhealed wounds call for the

courage to do what has to be done. If not, the effects will “continue to clog the relationship between the Ndebele and the Shona and these will never get cleaned up and animosity will never drain away until forgiveness enters the relationships in some political form” (Petersen 2001:7). The only way to healing and reconciliation is to courageously confront the past in a spirit of justice, forgiveness and reconciliation.

## **2.11 The Church in the context**

In the social context being dealt with, Zimbabwe is a conflicted nation. The nature of the tension and conflict is political. It is often questioned whether people of faith should concern themselves with politics. Religion, as part and parcel of human existence from time immemorial plays an important role against whatever is in conflict with human progress and prosperity. This way it keeps itself relevant. According to Albert Nolan (1976:8) the “type of religion that emphasises a supernatural world in such a way that one does not need to be concerned about the future of this world and all its peoples, offers a form of escape that makes it all the more difficult to solve our problems”. The point of emphasis is that religion, and this case, Christian faith must and should always find the concrete reality of human existence as its place operation and expression. However, history offers evidence of the church’s constructive involvement in various social and political contexts. Kusumalayam (2008:282) points out that “the Roman Catholic Church opposed human rights until the 19<sup>th</sup> century [but] has emerged as one of the champions of human rights human rights-advocacy towards the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century.” In order to explore the contribution that faith communities and particularly in this case, the Roman Catholic Church, can play, I will now briefly focus on the role of the church and the guiding principles of its pastoral ministry of care. John Paul II in his encyclical, *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (1988: no. 47) articulates the role of the Church in difficult contexts as follows:

In the context of the sad experiences of recent years and of the mainly negative picture of the present moment, the Church must strongly affirm the possibility of overcoming the obstacles which, by excess or by defect, stand in the way of development.

One of the key aspects of the Church’s social teaching is that it draws from history. In its social engagement, history provides the opportunity for analysis and

discernment from which an informed and genuine action can proceed. This creates a platform for a theological dialogue. According to Amaladoss (2005:204), “such dialogical theology would normally be mutually prophetic, especial when religions tend to justify existing unjust structures”. Some aspects of history require a prophetic voice. Injustice should be challenged. Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical, *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (1988:No. 1), describes aim and the process as follows:

The Church seeks to lead people to respond, with support also of rational reflection (social analysis) and human sciences, to their vocation as responsible builders of earthly society.

In the words of Sobrino (2005:9), the aim of this chapter is to understand reality, which will enable pastoral ministry to take on the burden of reality and take responsibility for reality. Pope John Paul II (1988:No. 4) emphasises “the multiplication and complexity of the phenomena in the midst of which we live”. This is applicable also to the history of Zimbabwe. It is indeed an interwoven complex matter which is subject to a variety of interpretations. Nonetheless, this observation should not keep one from a keen and critical enquiry. *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (1988:No. 7) notes how the *Populorum progressio* understands the duty of the Church:

It is the duty of the Church, as ‘an expert in humanity’, to ‘scrutinise signs of the times and to interpret them in the light of the Gospel; the awareness, equally profound, of her mission of service’ a mission distinct from the function of the State, even she is concerned with people’s concrete situation; the reference to the notorious inequalities in the situations of those same people.

This chapter provided an overview of the historical backdrop to the theme. It functions both as a basis for the claim that injustice prevails in the context that is investigated and as a foundation for a practical pastoral theological reflection that aims to empower a pastoral ministry of care in that context. The effects of history are still felt in the present. Clare Short, reflecting on the Zimbabwean crisis, puts it as follows (Holland 2008:104):

All we can do now in watching the tragedy that is still unfolding in Zimbabwe is reflect on what happened ... We need to capture all the details and interpretations of what happened and write it all down so that we can consider and perhaps understand the events more clearly with hindsight, and so that if we have failed to stop a tragedy or prevented it from happening in the first place, we can at least learn from it.

The problem of the country is facing its history. This history has to be understood so that the appropriate lessons can be learnt from it. The social analysis of the events as they continue to unfold in Zimbabwe reflects a historical rot that has been allowed to fester and dictate the present. Collective introspection could rid the nation of its unnecessary political, cultural and socio-economic ills. Elias Opongo and Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator (2006:15) put it as follows:

As human beings with a capacity to feel we do not simply register impression from reality that unfolds before and around us; we are engaged in mind, thought and action in following the trajectory and probing the meaning of our ordinary experiences ... We are constantly engaged in the process of social analysis, even if implicitly rather than explicitly.

The “impression from the reality” of events in Zimbabwe, compels “thought and action” and pushes for a historical-social analysis. In order to accomplish this task, the focus is on the historical narratives that have been constructed and continue to be proffered.

The *CSDC* (2004:No. 96) makes a special reference to the *Gaudium et spes* that: “presents the face of a Church that cherishes a feeling of deep solidarity with the human race and its history”. The role of the church can only be played within a particular context. This is always a context with a history. It is history that requires a critical overview in order for the pastoral ministry of care be to inculturated or contextualised in its actions. Human history at times reveals that even Christian believers sometimes get entangled in the unjust practices of the world and find themselves on the wrong side of their calling to be “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” (Mt 5:13, 14). Some “wheel and deal their way through history, using violence and injustice when it suits them, sometimes even pretending it’s

God's plan" (McCarthy 2003:9). With hindsight to the major epochs of Zimbabwean history it is important to acknowledge that the Church response to instances of injustice has lacked consistence. The Church was in alliance with the advancement of colonialism. This was the case also with regard to the missionaries' attitude towards the Ndebele state. According to Nyathi (2001:71), "the missionaries, arrogant as they were, believed their ways were the correct ones" and the "Ndebele savages had to be civilised". This view is embedded in the history books and represents a conviction that is still pervasive. The Church's unexpressed conversion can be seen in its later challenge of colonial injustice and the excesses of the *Gukurahundi* era. Its institutions of health and learning and other social development programmes also bear testimony to solidarity with the people.

Even during the colonial era the Church equipped indigenous people by providing education. Mukonori describes the role of the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR) and the CCJP during the liberation struggle. He outlines the goals of CCJP as: to "bring harmony, peace, understanding and love to the people of Rhodesia, to inform them of their rights and duties as citizens, and remind them to act in good conscience towards each other" (Mukonori 2017:52). This role the CCJP played even during the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade genocide up until the so-called Unity Accord in 1987. After the black government took over the role of the CCJP diminished. It is now visible mostly around election time. After the 1980s violence in Matabeleland was over the CCJP and the Church reported on the massacre, citing the existence of pain and suffering. In the past, according to Mukonori (2017:52), the CCJP "had to investigate any and all instances of violence and injustice and make them known to the world through globally distributed publications". However this role has now declined. The church is no longer actively involved in exposing present injustices especially in Matabeleland. It should become more visible in the context of political, cultural and socio-economic injustice resulting from the legacy of violence. In the context of Zimbabwe the majority of the political leadership are Christians, those entrusted with the mandate to bring justice and peace. If Christians act against their mandate, it is harmful to the mission of the Church as it mutes the Church's prophetic voice.

In order to come to an appropriate pastoral response to any given situation, the church first has to come to grips with the actual context. Paul Bernier (2015:xviii) emphasises that the “church exists in history and being grounded in history gives man [sic] hope of remaining in touch with reality”. Despite everything that harms integrity of the church, there is also evidence of its positive contribution to the common good (see McCarthy 2003:31). The Church’s founding principles in engaging any social context are that of the *imago Dei*, freedom, equality of all people. Values include equality, the common good, justice and peace. In light of these principles its solidarity with the human family rejects and challenges any establishment or action individual or corporate that is disrespectful and degrading to human beings. That is the point of departure of this study.

The relational scope of the *imago Dei* is expressed in the *imago Trinitatis*, in the image of the Trinity. This emphasises that humans are made in the likeness of a trinitarian God. According to Steven Bevans (2014:253) “we have to begin with an understanding that God, in God’s deepest self, is in practice and that this ‘intra-trinitarian’ practice is known only by the practices of the Trinity in the world’s history”. This has an important bearing when searching for harmonious relations among people created in the image of the relational God. The pastoral dimension to this is that the Holy Spirit “commits itself to healing and reconciling what has been broken by selfishness and sin as self-conscious, free-willed humans by living as a ‘secret presence’ among all cultures and religions” (Bevans (2014:255). Such an understanding can contribute much to the practice of pastoral ministry of care.

The pastoral constitution of the Church, *Gaudium et spes* (1966:13) clearly defines its *locus standi* in the social context in the “joy and hope, the sorrow and anxiety of men [sic] of our time, especially of the poor and those who are in any way suffering”. It locates itself within such contexts and in the history of humanity. Bernier (2015:xviii) finds that a “theology of ministry is first and foremost a study of history”. The church should act in human history if it is to retain its relevance. It acquaints itself with human context in order to ground its pastoral ministry of care more effectively. Opongo and Orobator (2007:42) explain what such a ministry entails:

Effective pastoral action – the link of faith and justice – requires adequate social knowledge in order to respond effectively to situations of injustice in

today's world, and to people's related spiritual hunger. We must strive to understand the social reality in all its complexity. Evangelization and ministry that include action on behalf of justice, need to be 'contextualized'.

This acquaintance with history and contexts offers important insights that further empower the church to more fully grasp the situation and its complexities. Accordingly Parker (2001:40) "such illumination offers the chance, not to change the past, but to change the way people respond to the past". The critical exposure and interrogation of historical contexts is an important component in carrying out practical theological research with a view to finding theological solutions to social problems.

Zimbabwe's major challenges can be traced back to its history. History has played a significant role in shaping the minds, views and relationships of the people. This background is of particular importance for the Church to understand if it is to provide an effective pastoral ministry of care. With reference to *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, Massaro (2000:174) articulates the Church's role with regard to authentic human development as follows:

The church has something to say today ... about the nature, condition, requirements and aims of authentic development, and also obstacles which are in its way.

As the Church wades and weaves through in human history, it encounters experiences that inform its own moral and spiritual conduct, theological discourse and pastoral actions. Walter Kasper (2015:62) points out that "whatever happens in a particular place and at a particular point of time in history belongs simultaneously in the complete story of God's dealings with humankind". Since human beings, though created in the image and likeness of God, are also social beings, their development is of interest to the church (Peschke 2010:555). Pope Paul VI's explains that it is up to Christian communities understand their own context in the light of the gospel message (Mejia 2005:155):

Christian communities should analyse objectively the situation in their own country, to throw light on it using the immutable words of the Gospel, to

draw ideas, norms for judgement and action plans for further action in the social teachings of the Church as it developed through the years.

The Roman Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Bulawayo, the heart of Matabeleland, exercises a pastoral ministry of care through various Mission centres across the region. In the unpublished report, 'The way of the cross of a diocese', Archbishop Henry Karlen (1990) states in his foreword that the "Diocese of Bulawayo suffered more than any other diocese in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe". He pays tribute to the dead and the living, "missionaries, priests, brothers, sisters and lay missionaries, who persevered on lonely Missions in spite of great danger and anguish" (Karlen, 1990). The report attests to the huge sacrifices that people who served the Church had made, especially in the thick of the war of liberation. It bears testimony to true Christian sacrifice during the prolonged years of war and violence. Davis (2013:58), a missionary doctor who spent her whole life in the district of Lupane in Matabeleland, elaborates on the dangerous circumstances and conditions of war as follows:

Catholic missions suffered terribly during the War of Independence 1966-1980. Atrocities were committed by both the minority governments, the so-called 'security forces' and the guerrillas of the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA).

Yet even in the heat things, the Church's personnel in mission stations remained at their post. Davis (2013:57) describes it as follows: "In the insanity of war Satan is let loose, and many churches, convents, schools and hospitals were destroyed, all in the name, as we saw it, of getting rid of what the 'whites had brought to the country'". These white missionaries who were attacked at their workplace in the remote areas were serving black, not of white, communities. Karlen (1990) explains the theology that sustained them as follows: "We had to go the Way of the cross. Yet, we learnt to believe in the theology of the dying grain and that gave us strength to start anew and to carry on". Here was the Church in the midst of an uncompromising situation of war, determined to remain focused on its mission. Karlen's report covers the two periods of suffering, during the liberation struggle and during the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade massacres. In this report Karlen (1990:2) articulates the Church's solidarity with people in the following words:

Missionaries share the life of the ordinary people. They also share in the suffering of the ordinary people in this country ... missionaries cannot remain aloof, be an outsider, a by-stander. As much as he tries to keep the war away from him [sic], from his mission-station, from his work of preaching and of serving-he is inevitably drawn into the conflict one way or another.

The image of the dying grain explains the hopelessness of the situation. However, it also describes a Church in a real social context. The Church's response to the context was articulated and enacted by the late Archbishop Henry Karlen who was the driving force behind the report, 'The way of the cross of a diocese'. This report catalogued the painful events of the liberation struggle that had a specific impact on the Church from 1976 to 1988 with the death of three missionaries and a religious brother. The report is a reflection of the Church's solidarity with the people of Matabeleland in trying times. It presents a theological reflection and praxis in the context of volatile situations of war and conflicts. In spite of it all, the missionaries remained and braved the circumstances as an act of love for the ordinary people they served. The end remarks of 'The way of the cross of a diocese' (1990) are as follows:

Looking back to the past we are grateful today and ask the Lord to give all those who reported to the police the real grace of conversion and to grant all people, especially here in Matabeleland an understanding heart so that all who come back will find a home in society again.

The Church suffered mostly at the hands of the dissidents. Later these dissidents were given amnesty by the government. They were never prosecuted for the murders. Yet for all its suffering and pain the Church did not get any recognition from the authorities. Of course this is understandable in view of its criticism of the post-colonial government. In the true spirit of the gospel the Church even stretched out a hand of reconciliation to the dissidents. Furthermore Karlen (1990) expresses a theological hope when he says:

Just as the day of the tragic happening, the day of fear and death gave way to signs of resurrection, so we hope that the past history will give way to a peaceful development and final unity in the country of Zimbabwe.

Karlen's words express the hopes of people of Matabeleland to have peace and see development. These words, written two years after the cessation of the massacres, have to this day not come to fruition. However, later in 2007, the City Council of Bulawayo granted Karlen a prestigious Civic Honour "as gesture of gratitude for his distinctive role in exposing the massacres of 20 000 civilians ... and in helping the victims of the government's military campaign" (Mkandla 2010:21). The Church had been able to identify with the victims of political violence, determined also to improve their lives. The Church did not just serve the people's spiritual needs, but also brought about infrastructural development such as hospitals and schools.

To this day there are glaring and painful traces left of the tragedies of violence and war. St Paul's mission hospital remains abandoned. Two women, Dr Johanna Decker and Sr Ploner CPS lost their lives. Davis (2013:57) recalls it as follows: "We as white missionaries were caught in the middle. We had come out to serve everybody, both black and white, but since blacks were the majority we ministered much more to them ... Many missionary priests and sisters and white people were murdered for no other reason than that they were whites". The tragedies of the liberation struggle and the *Gukurahundi* era in Matabeleland remain etched onto the collective memory of the people. However, the Church in the context of it all remained committed to the cause justice and peace. It has left its own traces of the *Gukurahundi* era.

As a pledge for peace, Karlen dedicated a Marian shrine at Empandeni mission in 1985. After the Unity Accord he dedicated a parish at Entumbane Township in Bulawayo where Zipra and Zanla skirmishes took place and in which many people had died. The parish was named Our Lady Queen of Peace. A huge drawing of Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe shaking hands is displayed there. *The Zimbabwean* (6-12/12/2007), an independent newspaper, gave the two former Archbishops of Bulawayo, Karlen and his predecessor Pius Ncube "credit for bringing the killings to the attention of the international community". Such was their pastoral role in the context of social upheavals. They were sensitive to the plight of the people.

In the context of post-independent Africa, the Church has also become largely African. The majority of the leaders are black. Hastings (1989:165) puts it as follows:

“They are no longer missionaries from afar, endeavouring to protect a colonized people; they are that people, its rightful leaders demanding justice in the name of their brethren”. The challenge Hastings is putting before the African church is to assume its prophetic role and question instituted structures of evil. Colonial Africa witnessed the critical role of the church. In many respects, independent Africa has remained at crossroads plagued by variety forms of injustice. Ngara (2004:33) points out that “independence has been achieved, but genuine freedom has remained strangely illusive before the people’s eyes”. Today more than ever, Africa needs the church to strengthen, re-emphasise and prioritise its prophetic role. The many challenges the African continent faces have their source in the leadership. Many African states rushed into independence without first attending to the past. Montville (2001:55) describes the consequences as follows: “Until persons, institutions, citizens and leaders do something about their negative past, their present and future relations are likely to be corrupted by undercurrents of abiding hostility”. This very much applicable in the context of Zimbabwe which suggests much needs to be done.

The Zimbabwean church should locate itself squarely in the context and contribute to the rebuilding of the nation. Pastoral programmes can be created in the interest of promoting peace and human wholeness. For Masaro (2000:9) “the story of the Church’s involvement in social justice is the story of growth, much as a small seed sprout from its modest beginnings to become a living and full-flowering organism”. Social justice relates to the welfare and social well-being of human society where all members of the society or community enjoy equality in all aspects of development. Bennet (2006:45) describes it as follows:

Social justice or right relationship between members of society requires that an environment is created in society which promotes the flourishing of economic activity, public debate, media freedom and social harmony.

The situation in post-independent Matabeleland is a betrayal of social justice, and therefore harms the core values of human coexistence of justice and peace. The common good, fundamental rights of persons, their dignity, the fair distribution of economic goods and development were betrayed.

From a practical theological perspective, Cas Wepener (2015:26) asks about the South African context: “Where do citizens of South Africa currently find themselves with regard to the transition from apartheid to democracy?” This question is pertinent to every African country that finds itself in that transition, often still exposed to the unjust conditions of the colonial past.

The simple question asked in practical theology methodology when probing the situation at hand, is: “Why is this going on?” (Osmer 2011:2). This question is pertinent for church leaders with an urge to explore the difficult terrain of injustice that remains a sore in the post-colonial Africa. This task of practical theology should underpin the church’s pastoral approach. There must be an effort to comprehend the social context. Osmer’s (2011:3) view is a key here because according to him “virtually all practical theologians today give at least some attention to the descriptive-empirical, interpretive, normative, and pragmatic tasks of practical theology – which represent a reflective equilibrium in our field”. This is essential not just in understanding the context but also it helps to appreciate issues that require prioritising. With regard to social injustice Bennet (2006:48) states the following:

It is not enough just to recognize the structural injustice that exists, we should be committed to a process that leads to a more equitable distribution of resources and to the productive use of these resources.

After almost four decades its independence, Zimbabwe is still struggling to establish itself as a full democratic state. Its poor record regarding human rights shows that it is a context in need of solutions. Input from various contributors will be needed and a dialogical process can work toward delivering the country from the vicious circle of political violence. There can be no way forward without an inclusive process to deliberate on the challenges the country is facing. The church is yet again taking a leading role in articulating its concern and the need for solutions. Walter Kasper (2015:5) articulates it as follows:

In the face of the vicious circle of evil, there can be hope of a new beginning only if we can hope in a gracious, merciful, and simultaneously all-powerful God, who alone can establish a new beginning, who alone can give us the courage to hope against all hope, and who can grant us the strength for a new beginning.

The first challenge is to bring an end to the incidences of inhumanity and restore the sense of *ubuntu*. For Albert Nolan (1988:88) “*ubuntu* is the most important concept that transforms those who were treated as objects of the society into subjects of society”. The victims of abuse in any given situation have the right to reclaim their human value. In an attempt to intervene on their behalf, no cost should be deemed too high, because human value is incomparable.

Lessons from history, both in Zimbabwe and in other contexts, contribute to insights that lead to action. Reflecting on the history of Zimbabwe, the lesson learnt is that it would have been ideal when, at Independence, the focus would have been on aspects such as forgiveness, reconciliation and nation building. This would have united the nation and promoted justice and fairness. There are also lessons to be learnt from contexts such as Europe. Thomas Norris (2007:23) describes the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin wall:

The West moved forward with vigour when after the fall of the communist Wall dividing Europe in 1989, new horizons opened up for travel, trade and exchange of the spiritual goods of education and learning. The most public expression of this is the expanding European Union, now encompassing the nations from to the Atlantic.

It is unfortunate that Africa in general has not learnt the benefits of reconciliation and unity. Like Africa, many European countries and else were colonised by the British and other powerful states. They fought wars of such devastation as Africa has never known. The Ndebele-Shona conflicts are not comparable to the Chinese or Russian revolution or to the First and Second World War, to name but a few. The progress that was achieved after those wars and conflicts, however, is astounding. These are the challenges Africa faces.

A glimmer of hope appeared in 1963 when “thirty-two African governments agreed to form an Organization of African Unity with joint organs for economic planning, political consultation, and military defence” (Davison 1966:309). Africa was no longer waiting for solutions from the outside. However, it is ironic that at the very occasion of the launch of the OAU in Addis Ababa Zimbabwe’s divisions began to show (Nkomo 1984). Zimbabwean nationalists had the opportunity to plead their case for

liberation to garner African support as a solid united front. There, at the very moment when the entire continent was seeking unity, ethnic divisions emerged. At the height of the political violence of the 1980s in Zimbabwe, the world and the OAU were silent. The question is: is this yet another political matter where politicians root for support for themselves, or is the organisation concerned for the people of the continent.

## **2.12 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have critically explored Zimbabwean history spanning the three major periods namely: the pre-colonial era, the colonial era and the post-colonial era. The objective was to identify those aspects that continue to influence the relationship between the two major regions of Matabeleland and Mashonaland. While the Shona lived in loose chiefdoms, they were easily repulsed by the military Ndebele state. European colonial settlers fuelled the tension between Shona groups and the Ndebele state. To this day any conflict between Ndebele-speaking and Shona-speaking people is viewed in light of historical hostilities that were recorded in the history books in such a way as to picture it as an 'ethnic' stand-off. The validity of such a picture can however, be questioned.

The colonial period begins with final defeat and total destruction of the Ndebele state in 1893. It ushers in a period of pain and suffering for the black indigenous people who were dispossessed of their land and cattle. This reduced them to poverty. The purported protection of the Shona by the settler colonial regime quickly turned out to be a hoax. The recruitment of the some Shona men to aid the Europeans in dismantling the Ndebele state heightened the tension between the groups. As the struggle progressed, the rift between the Ndebele-speaking and the Shona-speaking widened. The rift between the people is ethnicised.

The post-colonial era contributes further to ethnicising the rift between the two groups. Matabeleland is excluded from the gains of the liberation struggle. The post-colonial ruling party employs various strategies to broaden and consolidate its power. In Matabeleland many people lost their lives. Of their economic base nothing remained. Matabeleland remained impoverished and did not benefit from independence. The post-colonial ruling party continues to exercise exclusionist

approach with respect to political, cultural and socio-economic development in Matabeleland.

Finally the chapter touched on the role of the church in social contexts. In spite of its failure at the beginnings of the colonial era to remain impartial and fair, in the later years the church became an instrument of justice and peace. The church assisted in the liberation struggle, provided education and played a prophetic role in denouncing injustice. The following chapter presents a theological reflection on the quest for justice in the context of Matabeleland, and indeed in the broader context of Zimbabwe.

## CHAPTER 3

### A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

#### 3.1 Approach to theology

Whereas the preceding chapter focused on historical, social, economic and political aspects, this chapter presents a theological reflection and investigates the role of Christian churches, and specifically the Roman Catholic Church in the context of Zimbabwe, and specifically the Matabeleland region. It must be pointed out that “theological work has been [and continues to be] shaped by the historical locations of those who do theology, whether or not the theologian is aware of it” (Veeneman, 2018:10). This could account for an inculturated or contextualised theology giving it both spiritual and social relevance. According to Kofler (2008:14), “theology can guide us in the contemporary discourse on human rights ... it can provide us with a solid basis on this important issue on which the future of civilisation depends”. Practical theology provides appropriate methods of reflection on the context. Spirituality, faith and religion are part of being human. Religious institutions are part of human society. Such provide a faith or theological perspective on whatever social issues are encountered. The church has played “a critical role in the social, economic and political life of Zimbabwe for many decades” (Muchena 2004:257). The meaning of theology and its mode of engagement within this society will be explored. Of paramount importance is the focus on Jesus incarnate. Kreeft (2014:215) explains it as follows:

But, as Damascene says, by the mystery of the incarnation are made known at once the goodness, the wisdom, the injustice, and the power or might of God – His goodness, for He did not despise the weakness of His handiwork; His justice, since, on man’s [sic] defeat, He caused the tyrant to be overcome by none other than man [sic].

Jesus engages with the practical realities of humanity’s social contexts. Doing Christ-centred theology will be a theology that engages fully with the social context, where concepts such as justice, love and mercy come into play (Byrne 1988). A theological discourse in conversation with a context of injustice has to be grounded in faith as a living reality.

The term “theology” (*theologia*) was used by the early Greek Fathers “in correlation to *oikonomia*: the former referring to the inner mysteries of the Godhead, the latter to God’s plan for the world manifest in the Christ event” (Hill 2011:1011). Theology therefore relates to the world. The world and its affairs matter to God. In the Greek language *theos* refers God and *logos* word, knowledge or study. Together they denote “our word *on* God and *about* God”. From this view-point believers’ word on God or about God is articulated in their own specific circumstances and life experiences. ‘Our word on God’ is also about concrete circumstances in relation to God – humanity’s own word about its relationship to God and its life in God’s presence.

Paul Mikat points to the fact that Christian believers are also citizens of a specific country and therefore have a relationship also with the state. He puts it as follows (Mikat 1975:227): “Church and state being composed of the same members, the relationship between them must be regulated in accordance with historical evolution and the concrete situation at a given time”. Theology as reflection on lived faith in concrete contexts is not an exclusive domain of experts and academics. Given its sphere in both worlds, theological reflection can be seen as mediating between God and the world. Thus theology is rooted in the practical sphere of human social existence. From an African perspective Orobator (2008:11) puts it as follows: “Doing theology is not an isolated enterprise, particularly in Africa where doing theology is a community event.” Faith and religion are essentially communal, also and especially in an African context. Since theology operates in a given context it is a contextual subject, done within the sphere of existential humanity. According to Francis in his encyclical, *Lumen fidei* (2013:no. 4): “faith is born of an encounter with the living God who calls us and reveals his love, a love which precedes us upon which we can lean for security and for building our lives”. Thus theology, as an act of faith, is brought to bear on the existential reality of human beings. From a perspective of faith God is acknowledged as the creator of the world and everything in it. Nihal Abeyasingha (2003:2) emphasises the *action* and *event* character of the relationship between God and the world:

God in revealing himself has done so in an event – we are related to the event of the incarnate Christ, who died, rose again and is exalted. We can

only be connected to it through history and through actual experience of the insight of God.

This study deals with socio-political issues from a theological perspective. Theology and especially practical theology, is rooted in the daily living experiences of human beings. For Cyprian Vagaggini (2003:19) “theology states and clarifies the goal of the Christian journey”. It is a method through which people make sense of God’s presence in the context of the world. It mediates between human knowledge of God and human existential space. For John Henry Newman (1959:395) “theology begins, as its name denotes, not with any sensible facts, phenomena, or results, not with nature at all, but with the Author of nature with the one invisible, unapproachable Cause and Source of all things”. However, theology should not be understood as a mere theoretical conceptualisation of God without consideration also of human experience. Newman (1955:217) explains it as follows:

Theology enables us to join issue with others; it suggests ideas; it opens views; it maps out for us lines of thought; it verifies negatively; it determines what differences of opinions are hopeless; and when and how far conclusions are probable; but for genuine proof in concrete matters, we require an *organon* more delicate, versatile, and elastic than verbal argumentation.

This study relates social and political realities to authentic Christian living inspired by biblical values. Jacques Dupuis (2001:no. 258) explains the role of Scripture as follows: “The basis fact which theological teaching must take into account is that Sacred Scripture is the starting point, the permanent foundation, and life-giving and animating principle of all theology”. Sacred Scripture understood as the word of God, in doing theology is en-fleshed and brought to bear in the human social sphere. According to Louis Brusatti (1993:215) “the word spoken in Jesus becomes flesh again in the person of the poet-preacher” where it finds theological interpretation. By nature, theology should be dialogical as it seeks not just to understand God but also to conjoin the divine and the natural realm of humanity. Fundamentally, therefore, theology is a correlation of the “divine” and the natural. It assumes an understanding of the transcendent and in its practical mode attempts to transmit this into the social sphere of the world.

The Roman Catholic Church, as part of the body of Christ, draws its mandate from Jesus Christ's own mission of the redemption and salvation of the world. Dupuis (2001:xxxiii) emphasises that "Catholic theology must be taught [and practised] in the light of faith and under the guidance of the Church's teaching authority ... solidly anchored in the word of God, which ought to be, as it were, the soul of all theology". According to the gospel of John (3:17), "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him". An understanding of this of God enables a practical theological praxis as human liberation as seen in the light of Christ incarnate. Edward Gratsch (2007:217), concurring with Thomas Aquinas, suggests that "it is only knowing something of God and something of man [sic] that we can appreciate the splendour of the union of the two in the incarnate word". It relates faith to human beings' social context and aims to conform it to the message of God. Faith in God is foundational to the understanding and doing of theology (Switzer 2010:46) which explores into the being of God and relates it to the world. Gratsch (2007:xxiii) explains Aquinas' theology of *faith seeking understanding* as employing both reason and revelation to study God and the world. Reflection on the Trinitarian nature of God brings idea of communion or a "community God" to the fore. Such an understanding of God has implications for human relations within a given social sphere. Guthrie (2007:1266) explains it as follows:

Christian theology is a form of theology that seeks to understand the world and human life in light of faith in the creative, reconciling, and renewing purposes of God revealed in the history of ancient Israel and in Jesus, as that history is interpreted in the Bible and further interpreted in the past and present thought of Christian church.

The person of Jesus brings an important perspective to the theological enterprise, namely the mystery of the incarnation. This points the dynamics and adaptable character of Christian theology. Noel Woodbridge (2014:95) points out that "theological reflection regardless of the number of steps – is concerned with explaining a practical situation, understanding the situation through dialogue." I contend that practical theology in its essence is an incarnated or inculturated theology that seeks to understand social contexts and that is informed by the

context. Karl Rahner (1975:1687) explains theology as “the conscious and methodical explanation and explication of the divine revelation received and grasped in faith” – living faith in the existential context. This focuses on the practical dimension of the theological conversation. According to Hill (2011:1019) “it concerns itself with practices informed by theory on the social, political, cultural and pastoral level on the basis of personal involvement in and commitment to ethical goals not exclusive to any one religious tradition”.

Because of its specific focus, the discipline of practical theology also utilizes methods of the social sciences to engage and interrogate social contexts. Opongo and Orobator (2006:12) identify the model of social analysis, for example, as useful “to raise some questions that express concern over why things happen the way they do, the factors behind and possible solutions”. This provides a method for encountering the human space of existence in all its facets. It is anchored in the daily experiences of people’s lives. Social analysis is used in this study to explore the context under scrutiny.

### **3.2 Theology and context**

Theology does not occur in a vacuum, but is done in social contexts. In its praxis, theology takes account of the exigencies of human reality. However, the emphasis is that it is also more than engaging with social realities and contexts. According to Kasper (2013:157), the church “is not a kind of social or charitable agency; as the body of Christ, it is the sacrament of the continuing effective presence of Christ in the world”. Though the church cannot be seen from a purely social perspective, it is truly and genuinely concerned with humanity and with what is at stake in people’s lives. As such theology cannot be pushed to the margins of human society as only an expression of faith in God creator of the world. For Orobator (2008:10) it is “impossible to separate talking about God from the practice of faith”. Faith and religion are an integral part of daily living and experience. The Trinity, itself a communion, extends that community to the world. God cannot possibly be excluded from God’s own creation. Theology creates a nexus between God and creation. Doing theology is an act of faith. According to Cone (2005:474), “unless theology can become ‘ghetto theology’, a theology which speaks to black people, the gospel message has no promise of life with the black man [sic] – it is a lifeless message”. In

line with this idea of the 'ghetto theology', Pope Francis (2013:no.24) puts it as follows: "An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed, in people's daily lives; it bridges distances, it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others". With such an attitude Christian life can bear witness to Jesus Christ as the perfect model of love and righteousness.

In its practical dimension, theology should be inculturated to reach the heart of political, cultural and socio-economic arena of particular social contexts or peoples. Hill (2011:1019) points out that, "one instance of practical theology is pastoral theology dealing with church ministry in the concrete circumstances of actual life". Action taken by the Roman Catholic Church in this regard is described by Fernando Domingues (2000:15) as follows:

The strong impulse of the Second Vatican Council in this direction was a decisive factor; it invited the whole Church to encourage a kind of theological investigation, which in every great socio-cultural region would submit to a new examination of facts and words of Revelation as contained in the Scriptures and explained by the Fathers and the Magisterium' (cf. AG 22).

This examination of the social context is done according to a 'see, judge, act' method. This method is compatible with the task of a theologian and a pastor because the bearer of the good news should engage critically with the living reality of the recipient community in a dialogical manner with a sense of pastoral charity. A theological praxis, according Hill (2011:1018) "is not mere practice; it is not mere implementation of what has already been worked out in theory ... [it is rather] the dialectical relationship between theory and concrete practical life". An example of practical theological practice is given by Jon Sobrino (2005:10) who describes the pastor, Oscar Romero, as one who "allowed himself to be deeply affected by reality; he reacted to it with love for his people, with prophetic lucidity, and with utopian hope; he took responsibility, unto death, for reality; he let reality carry him". This reflects a very practical approach; an embodiment of doing practical theology. It roots the church in very reality of experiences and circumstances of daily of people.

The critical historical overview in the preceding chapter presents a reality that requires a pastoral ministry of care that has been adequately informed by social analysis. Sobrino (2005:10), proponent of the model of the pastoral circle, puts it as follows: “Whatever details we need to focus on in the pastoral circle, the most important thing is to let ourselves be affected by what is most real in reality”. The previous chapter provided a critical analysis of the reality of a context that requires the doing of a practical theology with models and methods appropriate to it. In such a politically, culturally and socio-economically polluted environment, the temptation is to leave these challenges to economists and politicians. However, Francis, in his encyclical, *Laudato si*, (2015:93) points out that, “whether believers or not, we are agreed that the earth is essentially shared inheritance, whose fruits are meant to benefit everyone”. Anything contrary to this understanding evokes serious concerns with respect to justice and peace and cannot just be left to “others”. It is inherent to the calling of the faith community.

Critical to theologising is to bring the subject to bear on the realities and circumstances of believers who live in the world. According to Francis in his encyclical, *Lumen fidei* (2013:no. 36) “theology is impossible without faith; it is part of the very process of faith, which seeks an ever deeper understanding of God’s self-disclosure culminating in Christ”. Theologians are adherents of faith with academic competence in questions of faith. Ganoczy (2000:688) puts it as follows: “They communicate the teaching of Jesus personally, that is, in the context of specific categories of thought and interpretation that are linked with their persons and their audience”. Theology then is that which connects God and the recipients of God’s word and life. It is both relational and conversational. Theologians interpret and ground the faith of believers in their social context, even as citizens of a country. Their faith must find connection with their social realities. In view of this, Mathew Bomki Laghai (2011:85) describes the function of the state as follows: “The State has as function to create a pattern of life for its citizens; it is a community that strives first for the well-being of its members where justice is the supreme virtue”. It is therefore incumbent on the state to create conducive environment for the thriving of citizens. In this way the state provides the framework in which theology can be done. The co-existence of state and faith is a practical reality. These two entities can co-exist in a harmonious manner with the same goals. Georg Langemeyer (2000:356)

explains that the “conviction regarding the dignity of every human person shows itself concretely, for example, in the provisions of the law and in the prophetic sayings intended for the poor and the oppressed”. There is a practical dimension to addressing forms of injustice that is grounded in and supported by Scripture. Langemeyer (2000:356-357) puts it as follows: “The gospel and theology promote the consciousness of the dignity of the human person ... being created in the image of God ... and offer a framework for human rights and that ground the dignity of the human person”. Theological reflection in this sense is not only a theoretical and spiritual enterprise, but is also a reflection on praxis. It considers actual human contexts and conditions.

In the context of State failure and where human worth is at stake, *Gaudium et spes* (1966:no. 9) points to the “need to establish a political, social and economic order at the service of man [sic] to assert and develop the dignity proper to individuals and societies”. Because the context investigated in this study is, in practice, diametrically opposed to the “supreme virtue” of justice and lacks any vestige of *ubuntu*, a theological alternative for the amelioration of this particular reality is called for. According to Benezet Bujo (1992:9) “it is essential, in fact, that the impact of a truly inculturated Christianity should be made plainly manifest to the African who has been and still is prey to injustice, disease and other social evils”. It is the task of theological praxis to interpret faith within the socio-cultural contexts of human existence. The Christian message should weave into such contexts without being apologetic. Claude Ozankom (2003:95) emphasises that “the Good News of God, Father and friend of humankind, becomes a source of life and freedom and contributes to the promotion and respects of the identity of men and women of the continent”. From a theological perspective, according to Henri Nouwen (1979:40), teaching in such contexts is about “offering of channels through which people can discover themselves; clarify their own experiences and find niches in which the Word of God can take firm hold”. This clarifies the work and purpose of theology so that people are able to make sense of their faith in their daily living.

Experiences are the basis upon which the doing of theology should be firmly established. For Peter Kreeft (2014:2) “good theology is not the knowledge of theology but knowledge of God”, and I add that this knowledge is of no use unless it

is applied to all the various existential spheres of humanity. Indeed, God is the primordial source of theology and therefore any theological discourse must be rooted first and foremost in actual encounter with God. The knowledge of God as key to proper theological reflections reveals his intended goodness towards humanity. It means a good theologian stands between two poles of service; of God and of humans. This is a theological emphasis on the dedication to the betterment of humanity. That will necessarily be to the honour of God. Soulen and Woodhead (2006:3) concur with Irenaeus that “the glory of God is a human being fully alive, and the life of humanity is the vision of God”. A theological perspective is needed where there is transgression against justice and human dignity, progress and development.

The value of theological reflection is to be appreciated it both theoretical and praxis. In both aspects “it seeks truth as an end in itself and also a means to a life of acts that both lead to and stem from salvation” (Kreeft 2014:2). Quite notably here is its point as a link with ‘life of acts’. This important in this case it is further revealed as a concrete subject concerned with the practicality of lived faith. Central to theology is preaching. In this case there is a real encounter with the people of God eager to hear his word. However, from a practical dimension theological activity is preaching. Thus the ministry of preaching is a constitutive aspect of theology. In this case “preaching means more than handing over a tradition; it is rather the careful sensitive articulation of what is happening in the community” (Nouwen 1979:39). Theological discourse and conversation are an integral part of the dynamic of complex human existence. Soulen and Woodhead (2006:1) state that “Christian theology has a vital role to play in diagnosing and addressing the manifold ways in which human dignity is threatened in contemporary culture and society”. Kasper (2013:181) points out that the church (or religion) “has no specific competence for the technical questions of economic or social policies”. However, in the context of overwhelming human tragedy, competence and technicality should defer to humane alternatives such as theological conversations. According to the Synod of bishops, *Justice in the world* (1971:no. 6, 36) “the Gospel message contains a demand for justice in the world. This is why the Church has the right, indeed the duty, to proclaim justice on the social, national, and international level and to denounce instances of injustice”. The denunciation of social evils is part of the church’s prophetic role. Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder (2004:281) choose a model of mission as prophetic dialogue.

This underlies a practical pastoral ministry and care. According to Sergio Bastianel (2010:17) “the critical nature of the problem of justice, within individual nations and on an international level, has captured significant attention because of the serious consequences that impact the lives of many people”. The social analysis of the context that is investigated in this study undoubtedly ‘has captured significant attention’. Social, political and economic life is constituted by relationships. However, in the context of political, cultural and socio-economic inequalities the question of fairness and justice arises. Kasper (2013:181) puts it as follows:

It would, of course, be totally wrong to think that economic and social order deals with only with technical factual issues. It deals with people as well as with the design and culture of human life, communal existence, and in many cases, human survival.

Everything that is done in this world by individuals and states should be in service of humanity in a manner that does not violate the principles of human dignity, equality, justice and peace. For Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson (2015:339) “it is fundamentally the issue of ultimate goals of humanity that should underline the concerns of governments, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals alike”. This awareness of the wellbeing of humanity at the centre of any activity is the point of departure of theological reflection. Hence Kasper (2013:181) rejects “the currently prevalent economization of the social sphere” because it “constitutes a diminishment and, even an ‘amputation’ of the human person”. While Shutte (2001:5) argues for the benefits of science and technology but he is wary that this can lead to people seeing themselves as parts of the greater machine, without an inherent freedom and dignity. Shutte (2001:181) advocates for humanising systems of governance as follows: “Justice is a primary condition for the existence of the body politic, but friendship is its very life-giving form”. From a theological perspective, Albert Nolan (1991:179) emphasises that “we cannot work for unity and harmony at the cost of love, truth and justice”. These three values are the heart of Christian faith and so foundational for any theological perspective. True human relationships can only be authenticated when they measure up to their standards. Hence the goal of any theology reflection and praxis is the realisation of love, truth and justice among humans.

In the context of Zimbabwe the drive for unity and harmony without “love, truth and justice” has not produced the necessary results. There can be no success of any process meant to bolster human relationships without these fundamental values taken into account. Along with other disciplines of human understanding “theology can give us valuable insight into the nature of human personality and the dignity of life” (Kofler 2008:13).

The 1987 Unity Accord was an attempt at a political solution. However it lacked depth and a sensitivity with regard to people, their culture and the problem of socio-economic inequalities. This is an example of people becoming part of the political machine. Kasper (2013:181) spells out the social consequence of this: “When that happens, society loses its soul and becomes a soulless system”. Such a theological perspective not taking love, truth and justice as its core business cannot hope to improve the dehumanising conditions of human life. A theology worth its purpose is actually a call to humanness that expresses itself in love and respect, and encourages human solidarity. Turkson (2015:335) points out that “going beyond the duty of helping the poor, the principle of solidarity reflects a broader conviction that the human person is necessarily a social being: what Africans would express as *summus ergo sum*”. Kusumalayam (2008:292) emphasises that “human persons have a moral claim to be treated as participating members of society, since it is through such participation that one can fulfil or actualize his/her personhood”. This was denied to the people of Matabeleland after Independence and for many of them the euphoria of independence was no more than a political transfer of power from the white minority regime to a black regime. The Unity Accord of 1987 did not achieve much other than a political settlement.

Since theology focuses on the God-human relationship, love as the abiding force is indispensable. Josef Pieper (1989:138) points out that “the highest forms of applied goodness are indeed always effortless because they essentially flow from love”. Love, therefore, is what spurs all theological efforts of conversation. Pope Benedict XVI, in his encyclical, *Caritas veritate* (2009:no. 2, 6) expressly characterised love as “the chief path and principle of the church’s social teaching”. Within the Catholic theological framework, love is regarded as one of the three theological virtues. Therefore all theological discourses must be imbued with the spirit of love. It is an

undying virtue upon which all virtues of Christian faith should be firmly established and anchored. Pope John Paul II in his encyclical, *Dives in misericordia* (1980:no. 12) puts it as follows:

The experience of the past and of our own time demonstrates that justice alone is not enough, but it can even lead to negation and destruction of itself, if that deeper power, which is love, is not allowed to shape human life in its various dimensions.

While justice is sought in any social context, it must be characterised by a sense of love in order to humanise it and give it life. Inasmuch as God is love, all theology must put love at its centre of discourse and conversation. Pope Benedict XVI (2005) in his encyclical, *Deus caritas est* reiterates the centrality of love. He made love, not justice, the point of departure for the social doctrine of the Church. The fundamental aspect of pastoral ministry and care, too, is the theological virtue of love. Nouwen (1971:70) makes an important point that “pastoral care means much more than pastoral worries. It means a careful and critical contemplation of the human condition”. In defining pastoral thus, he projects it as primarily focused on the person away from just being a fulfilment of duty. There is a sense in which the centrality of love must be its driving force. It can be viewed as a theology of really loving in the most concrete sense of the word.

With regard to serving humanity in Southern Africa, Bernard Connor (1991:226) refers to a growing concern and urges the Church “to counter the many ways in which people in Southern Africa were being steadily dehumanized”. This same concern embodies a transference value in which it can easily apply in the context of Zimbabwe in general and more particularly in Matabeleland. The Church should allow itself to be affected by the world. This is reminiscent of Pope John XXIII’s call to the Church to open its windows to the world to allow its own refreshment. In essence it was an invitation to it to step out into the world and to allow itself to be driven by its reality as a sign of solidarity with humanity in its existential space. This “*aggionamento* is necessary if the church is to stay alive” to the present realities of social concerns (Bernier 2015:208). In the context of this study, *aggionamento* could be seen as the Church’s desire for a practical theology of availability. Hill (2011:1019) calls theology a “critical negativity”. It knows and opposes what is

undesirable while it does not claim to have definitive knowledge of what is positively desirable for the fulfilment of humanity. The critical review of history in the preceding chapter reflects this. The aim was to identify and expose those “undesirables” opposed to human flourishing. In such a context a practical-pastoral theological conversation is motivated by the desire to see the suffering and the oppressed liberated. Nouwen (1979:39) describes the pastoral task as “not merely the skilful use of conversational techniques to manipulate people into the Kingdom of God, but a deep human encounter” which touches “the solid core of life”. The ideal therefore is an interactive theological approach which enables an encounter with actual social sphere of humanity. Hence the usefulness of a practical dimension of theology in the context under study is not questionable.

### **3.3 Practical theology: A model of engagement**

Practical theology, a theology of practice, a lived religion, has the task of linking faith and the existential sphere of human beings. In order to fulfil this task, the human sciences often provide useful methods for social analysis. Annemie Dillen and Robert Mager (2014:301) describe it as follows:

Practical theology seeks to hold different poles together: theory and practice, tradition and experience, reality and ideal, description and prescription, written text and text of life, theology and other disciplines, religious community and society.

Practical theology is therefore a discipline that combines religion and life, faith and human reality. In essence it presents itself as both a model and method of engagement. According to Jennings (2007:864), theology and human sciences converge on “the common subject matter of human nature and transformation” where both focus not only on “the existence or nature of God but [also on] the nature and possible transformation of human existence”. In practical theology this dialogical engagement culminates in an analysis of social contexts in order to explore the first question of Richard Osmer’s (2011) methodological model: What is going on?

The context that this study explores has been critically examined and is now brought into dialogue with the milieu of faith, theology and faith community. Mills (2007:865) argues that for both Protestant and Catholic “pastoral theology” as it is called in

some contexts and “practical theology” as it is called in others. It pertains among other things to the tasks of ministry. A theological praxis for a specific context has to be developed. Burck and Hunter (2007:867) suggest that “pastoral theology emphasizes the understanding of concrete human experience and problems with the explicit intent of developing practical principles and methods of ministry”. From this perspective the concreteness of the social context matters most in terms of practical and pastoral theology. Burck and Hunter (2007:867) narrow down the broad field of practical or pastoral theology to focus on *care*. It then becomes a *practical theology of care* applied to a specific concrete context.

Tim Dakin (1996:204) sees “practical Christian knowledge” as “the goal of practical theology”. In my view this necessarily means the application of knowledge in the reality of everyday life. Practical theological reflection provides the theories, models and methods for practical engagement in existential social contexts. It provides theological sources for grounding, interpreting, and guiding those activities that constitute “the pastoral life of the church” (Kinast 2007:873). Gerben Heitink (1999:6) sees practical theology as an empirically oriented theological theory which mediates between Christian faith and the praxis of society. Johann-Albrecht Meylahn (2014:1) describes the shift from theoretical theology as timeless context less truth to a practical theology. This “conversation between what can broadly be termed Text and context, moved from the margins of theology to the centre, as the hermeneutical reflection and conversation became the essence of theology” (Meylahn 2014:1). Practical theology does not impose its theories on practice, but rather dialogues in its encounter with socio-cultural contexts. For Wolfteich (2014:4) “practical theology attends closely to context and culture”. Thus it provides an entry point into the social context in which the church has to carry out its mission. Social and cultural contexts are subject to constant change and therefore the church ministry requires flexibility and adaptability. John Klaasen (2014:5) makes the connection between practical theology and the context as follows:

Practical theology has emerged in the last three decades as important theology to address the continuous changing social environment. Practical theology attempts to answer the question: How do Christians make sense in an ever-increasing secular society? One way of answering

the question is to say that practical theology draws on practical reason to answer the more fundamental question: what is going on? Practical reasoning helps with the analyses.

This provides a glimpse into the dynamism of practical theology and its suitability in a given social context. The practical theological question of “what is going on” in the context has been worked out in the previous chapters. The interpretation as to “why this is going on”, (Osmer 2011) and from a theological perspective, the question “what should be going on” are now asked: why injustice and what can be to be done? This requires critical discernment and therefore the “see-judge-act” method is useful. The enquiry as to what is happening and why it is happening requires judgement, discernment.

Finally the question is what actions are required. Noel Woodbridge (2014) developed a similar EDNA model for doing practical theology, namely exploratory, descriptive, normative, and action. Woodbridge’s approach to practical theology has its basis in the Bible. The model is useful also for Catholic practical theologians who add the dimension of traditions and the magisterium of the Church to the investigation. Within Catholic circles practical and pastoral theology are interchangeable (Veling 2005:xi). He calls practical theology “applied systematic theology”. According to Bernard Lee (2005:xi), practical theology operates strategically in all traditional branches of theology such as Christology, ecclesiology and others. It is anchored in the practical existential social sphere of humanity. Its aim is to connect faith and reality. Veling (2005:3) describes it as “seeking to reclaim a certain integration of theology into the weave and fabric of human living, in which theology becomes a ‘practice’ or a way of life”. From this perspective practical theology is intimately linked to or animates pastoral ministry and care – everything is its subject-matter (Veling 2005:4). Practical theology can be seen as a kind of all-round theology en-livens theologies and relates them to the existential contexts of human beings. According to Osmer (2008:102), “practical theology begins with episodes, situations, or contexts that call for interpretation”. These episodes or experiences and situations are part of the fabric of the context. They provide an indication of what ‘ought to be done’. With regard to the action required of the situation, Pope Francis (2013:17) articulates the challenge as follows:

Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it.

From this perspective the goal is to ground Christian faith in the reality human suffering through committed theological reflection. Kinast (2007:873) describes theological reflection as “a group process that begins with an actual, pastoral situation; correlates theological resources with their situation; aims at an informed course of action, ‘praxis’, as a result”. This correlates with the view of Pope Francis that theological theory in itself is not sufficient, but should lead to a theological praxis.

According to Kinast (2007:873), “pastoral care is sought out rather than pastoral care being fit into a predetermined theological framework”. This points to the sensitivity and flexibility needed in pastoral ministry and care in order to respond effectively to the needs on grassroots level. This is how the solidarity as articulated in the *Gaudium et spes* (1966:no. 1) is put into practice. The aim is that human “joy and hope, sorrow and anxiety find an echo” in the Christian community. All social contexts require this, also the context that is investigated in this study.

In the South African context Desmond Tutu’s practical theology bears witness to how theology can and should touch the lives of the people and can effect change (Schwarz 2005:503). The work of Archbishop Tutu with regard to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa is relevant to this study where the reality of a painful and destructive history requires a concerted effort at a constructive response in a new dispensation. The Commission was largely Christian and Tutu, a Christian leader, was the face of it. According to Chapman (2002:260), the hearings often had a liturgical character rather than that of judicial proceeding. In my view that was practical pastoral theological ministering informed by a social analysis of events and how they determined the fabric of the context. The aim of practical theology is not only a social but also a theological analysis of the situation in which the church operates. With such an understanding an appropriate response and affection action can be planned. The form the TRC took was more a kind of pastoral care ministry, not in the church, however, but in the social context. This contributed to the healing of the social psyche of the nation (Hay 1998:59).

With regard to the context of post-independence Zimbabwe, such practical pastoral theological insights can be gained from a socio-theological analysis and reflection on the situation and possible pastoral solutions. Tim Dakin (1996:205) contends that “practical theology takes seriously the ‘thisness’ of life: the concrete ‘when?’ and ‘where?’ of human experience and reflection which requires thick description”. The context requires such an approach which enables a dialogue or conversation because of its complexity. But the insights revealed in the critical historical overview offer adequate background to the context helpful to practical theological reflections. Through the model of pastoral circle or social analysis, the doing of practical theology leads to “effective pastoral action – the linking of faith and justice” and this “requires adequate social knowledge” (Opongo and Orobator 2006:20).

Looking at the historical involvement of the Church in the various social contexts across the globe it is given that practical theology has enriched and continues to do so. The context being dealt with does not present a particularly unique scenario that cannot be attended by the Church. According to Wolfteich (2014:2), “practical theology entails critical thinking about what we do and how we live out our faith”. One of the major challenges faced by the church in general in Zimbabwe is lack of application of faith in the actual realities of life and it is here that practical theology becomes an indispensable tool. The church, therefore, has an important role to play to bring about transformation. Though peace and justice have been elusive, the gospel message can and should have a strong voice in such a context. Opongo and Orobator (2006:21) suggest ministries that include “action on behalf of justice need to be contextualized”. The Letter of James (2:14-17) articulates it as “faith revealed in doing”. For a specifically Catholic perspective, practical theologian, Claire Wolfteich (2014:2) explains it as follows:

Practical theology entails a reading of the signs of the times in light of the Gospel – a move that involves serious engagement with and discerning interpretation of contemporary experience and practice; deep remembering and critical analysis of the tradition; imaginative theology envisioning of future practice; and hopeful and prophetic reading to the ongoing life of the faith community.

The context of injustice as elucidated in the previous chapter requires this 'reading of the signs of the times in light of the Gospel'. For Klaasen (2014:5) "a critically engaged practical reason approach suggests that practical theology addresses the social environment by analysing current particular experiences and making sense of these through the application of tools such as reason and experience". Practical reason is a critical engagement with the community, its experience and tradition. Through a designed pastoral programme the church has an opportunity to reach out and engage individuals and corporates in groups, communities and society at large.

Practical theology therefore is interplay of theory and praxis, of contemplation and action. Practical theology is central to church leadership and pastoral practices in a specific context. Jaison (2010:1-2) portrays practical theology not just as academic discipline but also as the "philosophical and practical underpinnings of problem-based and context-oriented learning". Practical theology is therefore an appropriate approach for investigating a social context in dire need of justice and the church's pastoral ministry and care. Jaison (2010:5) describes it as follows:

The doing of theology that is first informed by the real situation of the people and then allowing us, by careful hermeneutical process, to reflect theologically on those situations and problems and then return to the situation to gently and carefully transform.

The value of this three-pronged approach, similar to the see-judge-act method, is that it is appropriate to engaging a troubled social context. In any given situation the employment of practical theology can be a defining moment of transformation. There no doubt that the Zimbabwean context needs to be transformed to be more friendlier and allow inclusive progress and development for all citizens regardless of their ethnic identities, place of origin, and political or ideological affiliation.

The Church is challenged to assess its approach to pastoral ministry and care, the way in which it grapples with the reality of human pain and injustice. In such a context healing, reconciliation, justice and peace are urgently called for. However, in all its endeavours it must be rooted in Jesus Christ who is the source and cause of the church in the world. From a missiological perspective which is also in tandem with practical theology "[t]he Church's mission, indeed her missionary nature and her

very existence, have as their immediate point of reference and their first source the mission of Jesus Christ” (Adam Wolanin 1995:37). Thus Jesus Christ is at the centre of every church activity. Proper and relevant theology can only emanate from a deep understanding of Christ and the role he commissioned the church or his followers to fulfil. It must, in its reflection and praxis take after Jesus attitude and mission in the world. For Maddox (1991:164) “the goal of practical theology then becomes the development of a ‘public’ account of proper action in the world”. It is a sensitive and practical response to instances of inhumanity that impede the wellbeing of people and their progress and development. It is a theology of solidarity. *Gaudium et spes* (1966:13) explicitly expresses this sense of solidarity when it declares that:

The joy and hope, the sorrow and anxiety of the men [sic] of our time, especially of the poor and of those who are in any way suffering; these Christ’s disciples make their own, and there is nothing human that does not find an echo in their hearts.

Practical theology through its engagement of the social sphere takes into this sense of solidarity with the people of the world and so work is deeply immersed in the real contexts of people’s lives. Claire Wolfeich (2014) points out that the enterprise of practical theology deliberately takes account history. In the pastoral letter of the ZCBC (2009) entitled ‘National healing and reconciliation: God can heal the wounds of the afflicted’ the doing of theology from a practical perspective is reflected. Also from a Roman Catholic perspective Kathleen Cahalan and Bryan Froehle (2014:27) put it as follows:

The intersection of practice and theology has always been integral to Catholic self-understanding ... and offers concrete insights and methods to address challenges of pluralism, secularism, and globalization, issues definitively opened at the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965).

The Council inspires a theological praxis that aims to come to grips with the realities of human existence. This entails a paradigm shift from a theoretical and intellectual theology. Kinast (2007:873) describes the shift as follows: “Vatican II broadened the pastoral focus from clergy to the church and adopted an open, reciprocal attitude toward modern society”, which in practical terms means the immersion of the church in the world affairs. This broadened perspective acts as a motivation and catalyst for

the church's involvement on matters that touch human life. Hill (2011:1019) describes it as follows:

Practical theology concerns itself with practice informed by theory on social, political, cultural and pastoral level on the basis of personal involvement in and commitment to ethical goals not exclusive to any one religious tradition ... On the instance of practical theology is pastoral theology dealing with church ministry in the concrete circumstances of actual life.

This dynamic provides for an informed and enriched pastoral care. There is also a broadened perspective on the classic term of pastoral in reference to the work of shepherding, namely "the pastor's oversight of the people of God" (Burck and Hunter 2007:867). Viktor Schurr (1975:1171-1172) emphasises that "the 'shepherd' cannot be simply and totally distinguished from the flock". Pastoral care in the contemporary world goes beyond the cure of souls. It is aimed at the whole person, body and soul. John Waliggo (1999:5) articulates it as follows:

Priestly ministry is a ministry that should be one exercised in very midst of the people, one that is concerned not only with their 'spiritual' welfare but integrally or holistically with them as human beings, as persons, 'body, soul and mind; people with rights and responsibilities in this world.

At the heart of the Church's openness to the world are the reflections of the Second Vatican Council which, in essence, adapted the Church to the modern world. Vatican II has proven to be an enduring oasis for the Church's social contract. Pope John Paul II (1988:No. 7) acknowledges that *Populorum progressio* "presents itself as an application to the Council's teaching in social matters to specific problems of development and the underdevelopment of peoples". The review of these sources gives a practical impetus to this study as a genuine engagement of the Church in the social sphere. According to Bradford Hinze (2014:236), the shift in the Church's approach can be seen in "the Council's dialogical vision of the church which included dialogue *ad extra* with 'the people of our time' about their 'joys and hopes, grief and anguish', especially with the poor or afflicted with whom the followers of Christ have special solidarity" (*Gaudium et spes* 1). The encyclicals or social documents were written for the global world. They emanated from the dialogical processes. Their

insights can be applied to all manner of local situations and circumstances of which the Zimbabwean context is no exception.

### **3.4 A social practical theological overview**

A social and practical theological analysis requires dialogue between the disciplines in order to come to a practical theological engagement with the social contexts and their concrete realities. Hinze (2014:237) puts it as follows: “The first thing you’ve got to do in a community is listen, not talk, and learn to eat, sleep, breathe only one thing: the problems and aspirations of the community”. This is a crucial dimension in the doing of practical theology. Indeed the situation described in the previous chapter requires this kind of attentiveness. It assumes that the human condition is part of human reality. The emphasis of practical theology is therefore on practice rather than abstract academic discourse. Dillen and Mager (2014:304) put it as follows: “Practical theology can refer to practices, but also to experiences, phenomena, and situations. It mainly focused on actions, on what people can do. But these action involve motives, intentions, meanings, and thus experiences”. The context that is being investigated in this study requires practical engagement not only by professional theologians but by the community of believers. Switzer (2010:46) points out that theology is not the exclusive domain of theologians and academics, thus: “Although a professional theologian makes a career of doing theology (usually in colleges and universities), all believers spend a certain amount of time theologizing whenever we ponder the great questions of life’s meaning within the context of faith”. This view purports a practical dimension of theology that engages the vicissitudes of practical life. South African practical theologian, Gordon Dames (2017:3) puts it as follows:

The broadening scope of practical theology places issues such as the role of religion in the public sphere and relation between politics and religion and the economy and religion on the agenda of practical theologians.

In a sense it becomes a vehicle of liberation for those caught in the woes and throes of human life. Theology emerges from the ordinary social environment and articulates a response to the concrete reality of existence. Coleen Griffith (2014:53) puts it as follows: “Christian spiritual practices are intentionally activities engaged in by Christians who seek a more meaningful faith-filled way of living in their concrete

circumstances". The actual conditions and circumstances of daily living become the *locus standee* of theological study and praxis. In fact Griffith (2014:52) emphatically argues that, "divorced from the realm of practice, one cannot speak as a practical theologian". This emphasises the fact that the actual sphere of doing practical theology is the concrete reality of human existence and its conditions of experience. North American Catholic systematic theologian, Terence Tilley (2014:90), describes the movement of theology as follows: "Rather than moving from faith to life (theory to practice), it moves from life to faith, then back to life". This mirrors the see-judge-act model in which the context is prior.

A theology in praxis plays a vital role in the mission of the Church not just as a method of research and study, but as a practical application of faith and the actions that are required. While it cannot depart from its academic field, from theory, it is deeply rooted in praxis in real life situations. In the context of Zimbabwe's 'wounded history' that continues to hold the nation hostage to its conflicted past, as described in the preceding chapters, there can be no hope lost. The historical narratives can be explored in the light of Jesus' own journey of suffering, death and final resurrection as healer and liberator of humanity. Michael Casey (2004:44) points out that it "is no romantic escape into golden sunsets and solitary meditation, but a life-and-death struggle, the outcome of which is not immediately clear to the principal protagonist". In an attempt to create means by which the woundedness of a people can be ameliorated, the difficulty is the utter complexity of the issues involved. Schwarz (2005:476) points out that "to be Christian, a theology must take seriously the task of liberation" must be taken into account. This can be actualised through a theology unafraid of touching the reality as it presents itself not as thought of or imagined. Here lie the strength of practical theology.

An important point of consideration, nonetheless, is that a theological praxis should not neglect its theoretical underpinnings, lest it become superficial. The depths of theological reflection are needed. Klaasen (2014:1) puts it as follows:

Not only did practical theology become important for the church to interpret the increasing gap between modernity and post modernity or between universalism and particularity, the gap between autonomous

individual and the communitarian persons, but also how rationality is used in practical theology.

The most laudable event which gave the Roman Catholic Church the impetus to open up to the world, the Second Vatican Council, was understood as the *aggiornamento* – a moment which opened the Church to the world and allowed “fresh air” in. Bernier (2015:209) puts it as follows: “The church is not only in the world, its membership is from the world, that community of people who have responded to the word of God”. Bernier (2015:208) also points out that “*Gaudium et spes* is notable for reversing hundreds of years of flight from the world, from seeing the world as the place of evil”. That was a paradigm shift in the Church’s approach to its mission in the world. It was a turning point that immersed the Church into world as integral to it, in the words of Jesus’ commission in Mark 16:15: “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature”. Quite clearly, the church’s mission is *into the whole world* with its varying social contexts, circumstances, situations and conditions. Pope Francis (2013:30) describes such a church:

A Church which ‘goes forth’ is a Church whose doors are open. Going out to others to reach the fringes of humanity does not mean rushing out aimlessly into the world. Often it is better simply to slow down, to put aside our eagerness in order to see and listen to others, to stop rushing from one thing to another and to remain with someone who has faltered along the way.

This statement expresses an approach embodied in practical theology; an openness to the reality of life experiences accompanied by the desire to reach out to the anonymous people of the world. The readiness to pay attention to the context prior any action by the Church or theologians should constitute the norm of pastoral practice. What is proposed is church that goes to meet people in whatever conditions they find themselves prepared to listen. In the final analysis its mission is improved. In preaching the word of God, it is critically important to realise that people are eager to listen because they have been listened to before and there is a conviction the preacher will respond and meet their aspiration and concerns. Admittedly people: “have a lasting desire to an insight into their own condition, and the condition of their world, such that they can be free to follow Christ: that is to live their lives just as

authentically as He lived His” (Nouwen 1971:29). It is a given fact that the end desire of any practical theological endeavour is an access into the conditions of people with a subsequent return of their ears.

In order, therefore, to realise levels of success in the pastoral area, to begin at the level of study and coming to grips with the nature and the history of the targeted community. Research and reflection in this case precede every pastoral action. A practical pastoral theological approach would be appropriate for this kind of task. According to Guthrie (2007:1166), “theological reflection always involves a mutually informative dialogue between its normative sources and human experience in a particular political, economic, cultural, and historical environment”. It is a context which requires the “reading of signs” as a prerequisite for social engagement. Hill (2011:1011) describes theology as follows:

Theology no longer traces an objective dynamism from the cosmos to its Transcendent Cause but turns to the subject and the immanence of thought in an avowed anthropological emphasis; the latter in turn has tended towards a radical historicity and a focus upon praxis.

Because faith has a public and political dimension Christians, according to Milburn Thompson (2010:70), “are required to be active as citizens”. When the lay faithful engage through their faith a given social context they are involved in the construction of practical theology that would eventually aid in pastoral ministry and care. This way of theologizing from the grassroots level can give impetus to the church’s pastoral ministry and care. People on grassroots level, according to the *CSDC* (2004:4), “are capable of bringing peace where there is conflict, of building and nurturing fraternal relationships where there is hatred, of seeking justice where there prevails exploitation”. They are well suited to construct a practical pastoral theology that responds to their political, cultural and socio-political needs. The church is urged not to avoid the challenges, but to engage meaningfully in the social sphere in the interest of the wellbeing of humanity.

If the world is the theatre of social drama in which the existential issues of humanity play out, it is a world that cannot be left to chance. According to Osmer (2011:2), “the church needs leaders who can look closely at their own context and ask what is

going on, as well as engage the social sciences to understand why certain events and patterns are occurring". For this, reflective practice at the level of pastoral and ecclesial leadership is needed. The context that is investigated in this study is undoubtedly in need of such a theological praxis, a conscientious practical pastoral ministry and care. For the purposes of such reflection, Osmer (2011:3) has developed in the field of practical theology, a model which focuses on the descriptive-empirical, the interpretive, the normative, and the pragmatic tasks. With regard to the church's mission in the world, Osmer's (2011:5) practical theological approach serves both the church's identity and its relevance. It contributes to building up the church and reflects on the church's contribution to the common good.

When reflecting on the common good and what would be normative for living a good life together, Himes (2013:2) points out the following: "Politics has to do with how we ought to live together, how we should organise and govern our common life". From the perspective of spirituality Boniface's (2011:57) points to the need for a "political spirituality" because there is a high price to pay if good people do not also involve themselves in politics". The Church, along with others, is according to Leonardo Boff (1985:27) engaged in "the common search for the common good, the promotion of justice and rights, the denunciation of corruption and violence to human dignity". In the Roman Catholic Church, this social role is very much emphasised among the laity whose day-to-day life is an encounter with the harsh realities of the social realm. Himes (2013:4-5) puts it as follows: "The simple reason for Christianity's engagement with politics is that politics matters ... because the spiritual and the political meet in the human person, and the church must defend the dignity of the person". For Bernier (2015:221) the dichotomy between life and religion should be eliminated. Therefore Bernier (2015:209) emphasises that the "Church is not only in the world; its membership is from the world, that community of people who have responded to the word of God". Therefore, to be concerned and get involved in the daily routines of life with people is not an option for the church in general but a mandate given by Jesus Christ himself whose earthly life was deeply involved with people.

Views such as these motivate this study as it envisages a practical pastoral theological response to the context that is investigated. Ramon Macias-Alatorre

(1995:120) points out what people all over the world know, but often refuse to acknowledge: “The wide-spread social injustice, inequalities and imbalances that keep the majority of the world population in poverty, constitute one of the burning problems of the world today”. While these words are applicable to the general situation of the world, they can be applied specifically also to the Zimbabwean context, even with a particular emphasis on the issues of Matabeleland. There is a compelling need to pay more attention to challenges faced by this region.

### **3.5 Catholic social teaching as a theological praxis**

There is large body of literature on the social engagement of the Roman Catholic Church. This can be described as practical theological discourse. Out of the Church’s traditional practice in the social context grew the “see, judge, act” model (see Holland 2005:27). In Latin America liberation theology exemplifies a more radical prophetic-theological response to the social context at the time Latin America was facing serious challenges of injustice. Jon Sobrino (2005:12) describes the struggle that humanity is “divided between the oppressor and the oppressed”. Through its social teaching the Church has shown the courage to reach out to the social realm of humanity (see Dees 2016:55). To further explicate this point there is need to shed more light on what this suggests for the church in general and for every Christian believer who witnesses to the love of God in the context of pain and suffering in the world. Dees (2016:55) puts it as follows: “Before we say anything about what we believe and ask others to assent to those teachings, we need to show them the most fundamental of our beliefs – that God loves them and we do too”. This must be seen and understood in the light of what the Church expresses in its social teachings.

The Roman Catholic Church has a long history of engaging with social contexts of injustice. The events of the Industrial Revolution in Europe witnessed a surge in the abuse of workers that prompted the response of the Church. Pope Leo XIII defended by exposing the unjust working conditions to which they were exposed in the first social encyclical, *Rerum novarum* in 1891. Since then the encyclical has remained a guide for how the Church is to take up its social role. Faith and justice became interwoven. Sobrino (2005:14) puts it follows:

Clearly the faith-justice correlation is theologically, christologically, and ecclesiologically globalizing, and above all a two way correlation: faith enlightens and empowers justice: justice enlightens and empowers faith.

The social involvement of the Church is not a political ideology, but is rather about the light and power of the gospel actively working in the social reality. Merrienboer (1993:176) puts it as follows: “The social gospel can in no way be compared to an ideological stance because it does not offer a blue-print for a particular social or economic system”. Faith is linked to justice and justice is linked to faith. This is inspired by Christ’s teaching particularly on the love of neighbour which is derived from the love of God for all of God’s creation. The Congregation of the Clergy (1997:No. 18) articulates the human dignity aspect of justice as follows:

The Church, in her analysis of the soil of the world, is acutely conscious of everything that injures the dignity of the human. She is aware that all human rights spring from this dignity, the constant object of Christian concern and commitment.

This consciousness, this concern and commitment are the foundation upon which Catholic social teaching is built. Maryann Cusimano Love (2015:159) argues that, as such, the Church “does not stand on the sidelines where sovereign states are unable or unwilling to protect human life and dignity and the common good”. The Church also does not interfere with social institutions of human governance. Yet while government institutions enjoy autonomy, they have to be taken to task when in breach of principles of common interest. According to Patrick Callahan (2015:130-131) these “limits also concern ends or purposes: governments must promote justice and the common good”. Essentially, the Church through her social teaching has the overall dignity, welfare and safety of all of humankind in focus.

Practical theology plays its part with respect to rooting faith in the existential realities of humanity. Catholic practical theologian, Claire Wolfeich (2014:331), points to the traditions of Catholic social teaching and social action in which examples of practical theology can be identified and studied. The social teaching of the Church is a practical and theological way of dealing with social issues. I will proceed by critically examining the social teaching of the Church. Particular attention will be paid to the papal encyclicals. Pope John Paul II in his encyclical, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*

(1988:No. 5), *Gaudium et spes*, declares the Church's solidarity with the human family. It begins by noting the situation of poverty and underdevelopment in which millions of human beings live. Before *Gaudium et spes* the Church was also involved in the social affairs of humanity, but this document represents the most elaborate vision of the Church with respect to the social sphere. Walter Kasper (2013:186) traces this particular kind of involvement of the church back to "the emergence of social problems and scandalous injustices, caused by industrial revolution in the nineteenth century". Since that time the Catholic Church has been developing its social teaching. The Church, from a universal perspective, identifies social challenges that are a hindrance to human progress and development and confronts them. According to *Gaudium et spes* (1966:No. 8) it is people's "business to establish a more serviceable political, social and economic order, an order more helpful to individuals and groups in vindicating and maintaining their dignity". These insights should be embraced with a sense of commitment and dedication in every context of human rights abuses. They truly express the Church's express concern for the about the establishment an order favourable to the progress and development of peoples. This concern should not just be viewed and understood from a purely mundane perspective but must be seen as a quest for a practical theological reflection about contexts of injustice.

The felt sense of human suffering and pain invokes the Church's response. Pope John Paul II (1988:No. 6) puts it as follows: "Before this vast panorama of pain and suffering the council wished to suggest horizons of joy and hope". Whereas the papal encyclicals deal with global issues, the bishops' conferences issue pastoral statements in local contexts as a method of pastoral response to situations that threaten justice, peace, and the development and progress of peoples. These constitute the Church's practical response to social challenges. Bastianel (2010:23) puts it as follows:

The intervention of the ecclesiastical Magisterium in the social sphere is always driven by real-life problems, where at issue are values, human rights and duties, with problems and positive possibilities affirmed or contradicted, due to cultures of relationships and economic, social and political structures in differentiated historical circumstances.

This “intervention” of the church in the social sphere reflects the church’s commitment to social engagement.

This study is particularly interested in the pastoral statements issued by the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop’s Conference (ZCBC) which express the Church’s engagement in this particular context. As the country was been suffering because of the political and socio-economic meltdown, the ZCBC was consistent in issuing pastoral statements of concern, stating its desire for normalcy in the country. Due to the unrelenting situation of political insanity and socio-economic free-fall many Zimbabweans have taken refuge in diaspora. Pieter Frederik Janse van Vuuren (2012:1) describes it as follows: “Zimbabwe has gone through a major economic crisis that has resulted in many Zimbabweans leaving in search of greener pastures”. To this scenario the ZCBC has responded expressed grave concern as this has devastating consequences for family stability and the general welfare of the people.

The social teachings of the Church constitute a theological praxis. The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) functions as a kind of pastoral ministry and care with a special focus on the social conditions of people. The CCJP is rooted in principles of the Social Teachings of the Church (STC). The Social Teaching of the Church originated in 1891 with the publication of Leo XIII’s encyclical, *Rerum novarum*. This became the major reference on social matters with respect to the Church’s social pastoral ministry. This 1891 encyclical focused on the condition of workers at the dawn of industrialisation in Europe. Thereafter numerous other encyclicals that dealt with social questions, followed. According to Jack Trisolini (2011:18-19), “the Church’s social teaching begins to be formulated in local church statements and documents and then gradually finds its way into universal church’s teaching in the form of encyclical”. These “local church statements” are responses to the real issues affecting particular communities. Their formulations are based on the concrete experiences. According to Trisolini (2011:16), some regard the social encyclicals as “practical or praxis theology”, whereas others see them as “strategic theology”. There is a great deal of theological reflection in the formulation of the encyclicals. Trisolini (2011:17) describes the social teaching of the Church as “a rich heritage of ethical reflections and insights on the social, economic and political questions of our contemporary world”. However, it must be borne in mind that these

reflections and insights are rooted in the scriptures and tradition of the Church which enrich them with sound theological and spiritual footing.

At the centre of the social encyclicals and the body literature of the social teaching of the church is the concern about the inalienable right to life, the intrinsic value of human dignity. The core of the social teaching of the Church is the principle of the *Imago Dei*. Human dignity and the inalienable right to life are universal concepts. According to John Zizioulas (1997:15) “the Church is not simply an institution” but rather “a mode of existence, a new way of being” that is bound other human beings, to the world and to the being of God. Thus its activity even in the social sphere is not mundane but rather inspired by faith in God. Since the Social Teaching of the Church is based on the divine origin of humanity, it is inspired by Sacred Scripture and guided by the Church Magisterium and its traditions. Pope Benedict XVI (2011:26) points to the teachings of Irenaeus who already anchored the dignity of human beings, body and soul, in divine creation, in the image of Christ and in the Spirit’s permanent work of sanctification. Pope Benedict XVI (2011:361) also comments as follows on similar trends in the teachings of Thomas Aquinas:

It is not surprising that the doctrine on the dignity of the person, fundamental for the recognition of the inviolability of human rights, developed in schools of thought that accepted the legacy of St Thomas Aquinas, who had a very lofty conception of the human creature.

Therefore the idea of human dignity is solidly established as the central subject of the Social Teaching of the Church from its inception. According to Soulen and Woodhead (2006:1) “Christian theology has a vital role to play in diagnosing and addressing the manifold ways in which human dignity is threatened in contemporary culture and society”. Therefore, the quest for justice, peace, freedom, love, forgiveness, reconciliation, solidarity is intimately linked to the inviolable dignity of human persons both individual and communal. The belief in human dignity and the moral equality of persons are foundational for a sound view of justice (Himes 2017:2). These ideas have inspired the social teaching of the Church. For the purpose of the salvation and redemption of humanity, God gave God’s only Son who became one among the human race that it might be saved and not condemned (John 3:16). Soulen and Woodhead (2006:2) argue that this was not “a merely

secular development; the Roman Catholic Church has been notable for the ways in which it accorded the concept of human dignity a central place in its social teachings for several decades". The major thrust of the Social Teachings of the Church is the establishment and promotion of justice and peace in the world. Pope Paul VI in his message, 'For the observance of a Day of Peace' (1968) emphasises that peace is not a matter of pacifism but rather a necessary struggle:

It may not favour cowardice of those who fear. It may be their duty to give their life for the service of their own country, their own brothers (and sisters), it does not mark a base and slothful concept of life, but it proclaims the highest and most universal values of life, truth, justice, freedom, love.

As a furtherance to the ideal and advocacy for justice and peace, the Pope established the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace as a ministry. For Merrienboer (1993:176) "preaching the social gospel is a service which can enable People of God to become builders of a more just and peaceful society". In contexts of severe injustice this action becomes more radical and prophetic. It requires courage and a commitment to the truth.

The CCJP deals with local communities, listens to their concerns, examines events and incidences and then compiles and processes the information. This is, I contend, doing practical theology. The commission's task has a theological basis. The caveat from practical theology in this regard is articulated by Terry Veling (2005:7-8) as follows: "Practical theology is suspicious of any theology that is too solid, too well-built, too built-up". The aim is therefore an incarnated theology that is responsive, flexible and adaptable to social contexts. The aim of practical theology correlates with the formulation of Vatican II which aligns itself "with the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor and afflicted in any way" (*Gaudium et spes* 1966:no. 1). The social teaching of the Church, its encyclicals and pastoral letters, constitute a practical theological praxis that could enrich pastoral ministry and care. Paul VI (1968) declares that the Church, of necessity, defends peace in the face of the various dangers that are always present. This includes the danger of violence that are prevalent in some contexts where people are drawn to it by desperation because they do not have their right to life and

human dignity recognized and respected. The Church with its commitment to bring *good news* to the oppressed, collated and synthesised the relevant material in this context in order to present its social teaching in the form of the *Compendium of the social doctrine of the Church* (2004). According to Sodano (2004: XVIII) this work “also shows the value of Catholic social doctrine as an instrument of evangelisation (cf. *Centesimus annus*, 54), because it places the human person and society in relationship with the light of the Gospel”. This document is an invaluable instrument in the practice of prophetic pastoral ministry and care.

A critical point of consideration is the centrality of Jesus in the Church’s approach to social and societal issues. The *CSDC* (2004:no. 1) states that “the Church continues to speak to all peoples and all nations, for it is only in the name of Christ that salvation is given to men and women”. At the heart of the *Compendium* (2004:no. 160) are “the principles of: the dignity of the human person ... the foundation of all the other principles and content of the Church’s social doctrine; the common good; subsidiarity and solidarity”. According to the *Compendium* (2004:no. 160) “these principles ... are born of the encounter of the Gospel message and of its demands summarised in the supreme commandment of love of God and neighbour in justice with the problems emanating from the life of society”.

The social teaching of the Church is therefore at the very core of its ministry. It is a socio-theological praxis that could be called a social gospel. It resonates with the tenets of the Catholic faith as expressed in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC). The CCC (1995:23) is a comprehensive rendition of Catholic faith with the Sacred Scripture, the living tradition of the Church and the authentic Magisterium as its sources. Other sources include the spiritual heritage of the Fathers, Doctors and saints of the Church. With regard to the social dimension, there is no ambiguity when it comes to the dignity of persons and the demand for social justice. Accordingly the CCC (1995:no. 2236) declares that “those in authority should practice distributive justice wisely, taking account of the needs and contribution of each, with a view to harmony and peace”. However, such views should not just remain within the closet of Church’s offices but must be brought out through the practical teaching and preaching of pastors and those involved in the pastoral ministry and care of the people. Those in political leadership positions must know and be challenged by the

Church's unwavering stance with regard to the fundamentals of human life and rights. In the same vein the CCC (1995:no. 2237) reiterates that:

Political authorities are obliged to respect the fundamental rights of the human person. They will dispense justice humanely by respecting the rights of everyone, especially families and the disadvantaged.

Of course to bring the political leaders into acknowledging these fundamentals, may, in some instances incur resistance and on the extreme, some backlash. Notwithstanding these reactions, it must be understood within the context of the very nature of the prophetic role of the Church. These aspects constitute the core of the social teaching of the Church and of Catholic faith. Thus the *Compendium of the social doctrine of the Church* is anchored also in this major deposit of Catholic faith and therefore should not be read apart from this source. This study considers it as an important source for practical theological reflection on the moral and pastoral task of the Church.

Another important aspect to consider is that the Church has a long history of struggle in the area of advocacy for fair conditions of human living. Pope Leo XIII's encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, on the condition of workers published in 1891 was a milestone with regard to the official formulation of the church's social thought. Pope Leo XIII (1891:no. 2) begins this encyclical with the following formulation:

We have addressed you in the interest of the Church and of the common weal, and have issued letters bearing on political, human liberty, the Christian constitution of the State, and like matters, so have thought it expedient how to speak of the working classes.

This encyclical laid a solid foundation for the social teaching of the Church. The document with its biblical references provides a rich theological basis for a practical and socio-theological conversation. Dupuis (2001:864) points out that Pope Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931) resonates with the work of Pope Leo XIII:

It shows, in connection with social justice, the relationship which exists between the virtues of justice and charity: charity supposes that the demands of justice be respected, but it goes beyond them; the observance of justice does not by itself fulfil the Christian ideal.

This is so because *Rerum novarum* (1891:no. 63) extols charity above all virtues. It declares that justice must be guarded and guided by the virtue of love. Pope Benedict XVI in his Apostolic exhortation, *Africae munus* (2011:no. 29) concurs that “it is love which brings or restores peace to human heart and establishes it in our midst”. When the Church places love and peace in this central position, it suggests that its approach is not confrontational but rather gentle, considerate and respectful.

There has been and there still is consistency on the Church’s social thought and teaching. On the seventieth anniversary of the *Rerum Novarum*, Pope John XXIII’s *Mater et magistra* (1961: no.6) pays tribute to *Rerum Novarum* that had “been received with such universal approbation ... The norms and recommendations contained therein were so momentous that their memory will never fall into oblivion”. What is praiseworthy about *Rerum Novarum*, according to *Mater et magistra* (1961:6), is that Pope Leo XIII “made his own the problems of the weak and harassed people, their complaints and aspirations, had devoted himself especially to the defense and restoration of their rights”. Pope John XXII (1961:5) emphasises that “the divine Redeemer shows ... care not only by his words but also by actions of his life, as when, to alleviate the hunger of the crowds”. In his purposeful pursuit of social thought, Pope John XXIII published the encyclical, *Pacem in terris* (1963), where he “lifts up a moral order that should prevail between humans; persons and states; and states; and in the world community”. This preferential option for those on the margins of human society is characteristic of the Church’s social teaching. In his introduction in the *Gaudium et spes* (1966:8), Angelo Scola explains that, “interpreting and practising the teaching of *Gaudium et spes* is constituted by an anthropology with Christocentric intentions”. This places human persons in the heart of the Church’s social thought and teaching from the perspective of Christian faith.

When Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council, he stated that he intended the council to be pastoral. It should “enable the church to contribute more effectively towards solving the problems of the modern age” (see Tanner 2005:3). The pastoral dimension and nature of the *Gaudium et spes* is undoubtedly forceful and impressive. According to Tanner (2005:40) “*Gaudium et spes* begins rather ‘from below’, with us as human beings, fragile yet called to share divine life ... directed by the holy Spirit in our pilgrimage towards the Father’s kingdom”. The goal

of the social engagement of the Church is that the creation of God's kingdom in men and women should live justice and peace. In this way the common good can be served and solidarity achieved. Pope Francis, in *Lumen fidei* (2013:No. 51) puts it as follows: "Precisely because it is linked to love (*cf. Gal 5, 6*), the light of faith is concretely placed at the service of justice, law and peace". At the heart of the Second Vatican Council is the service of the human solidarity (*ubuntu* in the language of the southern African context), justice, peace, freedom culminating in progress and development. Tanner (2005:40) puts it as follows:

Thus from the beginning the decree seeks to enter directly into our human condition, not just in an abstract or universal way, but rather personally and individually, to get into the skins, so to speak, of people everywhere, to empathize with us.

This "doing of theology" in practice is required for the Church's vocation of pastoral ministry and care to be effective and real in the real world. It is the "mission incarnate", a theological praxis whose chief goal is the liberation and salvation of people.

Following *Gaudium et spes*, Pope Paul VI issued an encyclical, *Populorum progressio* (On the development of peoples) in 1990. Like the preceding encyclicals it is an unequivocal statement on social justice with respect to human development. *Populorum progressio* (1990:11) articulates it as follows:

True to the teaching and example of her divine Founder, who cited the preaching of the Gospel to the poor as a sign of his mission, the Church has never failed to foster the human progress of the nations to which she brings faith in Christ.

This task of the Church should never be carried out with lukewarm hearts. It should be accomplished without fear and with the passion for the liberation of the poor, the marginalised and the weak who suffer under the powerful, often abused and treated with disdain. In the contemporary times, despite all kinds of development in the field of technology, less attention is often paid to rural communities. In such contexts a lack of development and progress is often a painful reality. This requires a better balance to be brought about. Infrastructural development in those communities

should be prioritised. Here too the Church has played a role and should still play a role. *Populorum progressio* (1990:11) further explains it as follows:

Her missionaries have built not only churches, but also hostels and hospitals, schools and universities. Teaching the local populations the means of deriving the best advantage from their natural resources, missionaries have often protected them from the greed of foreigners.

In this way the Church is utterly relevance with respect to the tangible social progress of people. “Protecting them from the greed of foreigners” was and still is a prophetic role of social justice. The example and role model for doing pastoral ministry and care is the incarnate Jesus who made his theological reflection concrete in the reality of the conditions and circumstances in which human beings find themselves (see Swan 2006:67). Theological reflection based on the mystery of the incarnation becomes a *contextualised* discourse. The historical Jesus touched the social contexts and experienced its woes and throes. Dennis Murphy (2000:521) puts it as follows:

Since human existence depends on life in society, a number of ‘readers’, theologians and others, preoccupied with practical problems of social life, have turned their attention in particular to Jesus. While observing, or even experiencing themselves, the evils of human societies, they have recourse to the ‘praxis’ that Jesus followed to find there an example that can be applied to our age.

In its social teaching, the Church points to the person of Jesus who fed the hungry, who healed the sick, who forgave the sinners and had compassion and mercy to those suffering. Claire Wolfeich (2014:12) brings practical theology, the social teaching of the Catholic Church and human reality together as follows: “Practical theology lives in Catholic Social teaching, which, since the publication of *Rerum novarum* (On Capital Labor) in 1891, has brought a critical faith perspective to contemporary economic, political, social, and cultural issues”. According to Wolfeich (2014:12), it turned to pastoral concerns again in the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). She sees the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world (*Gaudium et spes*) as “a preeminent work of practical theology”. *Gaudium et spes* emphasises the pastoral dimension of the work of the Church in the world.

Although practical theology has not always been explicitly used as such in Catholic circles, it has always flourished in a practical way in the Church's pastoral concerns mostly articulated in its pastoral letters. Many social documents of the Church could be viewed as practical responses to the social context. For instance *Gaudium et spes* "is constituted by an anthropology with Christocentric intentions", an anthropology which "sought an appropriate foundation for the dignity of the human person as the effective basis for an approach to what were considered the most urgent problems". This document, according to Cahalan (2014:36), was "meant to broaden the idea of 'pastoral' beyond its traditional association with ordained ministers, thus embracing the call of the entire people of God to witness and so transform the world". The broadening of this vision beyond "traditional" view of the ordained as the epicentre of all pastoral ministry was itself a step into a practical pastoral theology that would subsequently inform pastoral care and ministry.

The social teaching of the Church can be summarised as the God cares about humanity and its condition. Humanity is bound together in this loving care of God. There is nothing that pertains to humanity that does not concern God. Himes (2013:35) describes it as follows: "Politics matters to Yahweh, and the purpose of politics is to oversee and promote the good of the community". Closer to home, Pope John Paul II in the *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995:38) poses a pertinent question:

How could we fail to take into account the anguished history of a land where many nations are still in the grip of famine, war, racial and tribal tensions, political instability and the violation of human rights? This is all a challenge to evangelization.

This general overview of the situation and conditions prevalent in Africa are therefore also applicable to the context of Zimbabwe. The call is to be sensitive to the plight of human being. The mission of the Church should include taking account of social conditions. The preamble of the pastoral constitution of the Church, *Gaudium et spes* (1966:13) puts it as follows:

The joy and the hope, the sorrow and anxiety of the men [sic] of our time, especially of the poor and those who are in any way suffering; these Christ's disciples make their own, there is nothing human that does not find an echo in their hearts.

Such is the vision of solidarity of the Church, from a moral and spiritual perspective, with “human family” on issues that affect its welfare. Anything that impinges on the development and progress of people, calls for the Church’s response. *Mater et magistra* (1989:5) reiterates that the Church “is also solicitous for requirements of people in their daily lives, not merely those relating to food and sustenance, but also to their comfort and advancement in various kinds of goods and in varying circumstances of time”. In light of the gospel, in light of the principle of the *Imago Dei*, the social teaching of the Church articulates unambiguously its position with respect to justice. The *Compendium Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCCC) (2006:124) unequivocally states that “society ensures social justice when it respects the dignity and rights of the person as the proper end of society itself ... when it provides the conditions that allow associations and individuals to obtain what is their due”. Central to the social approach of the Church is *justice* as the key aspect of its social gospel.

Foundational to the idea of justice is the understanding of the human person as the creation of God in God’s own image and likeness. This is rooted in Scripture, in the Genesis story of creation. The *Compendium Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2005:115) puts it as follows: “The dignity of the human person is rooted in his or her creation in the image and likeness of God”. This is foundational and it nourishes all doctrines that pertain to the human person. According to the encyclical, *Populorum Progressio* (1990:8) the Church aims to contribute to the “great cause of peoples in development”. The Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace was established to consider human affairs from a socio-theological perspective. The task of the Commission is articulated as follows in the *Populorum Progressio* (1990:8):

Bringing to the whole of God’s people full knowledge of the part expected of them at the present time, so as to further the progress of poorer peoples, to encourage social justice among nations, to offer to less developed nations the means whereby they can further their own progress.

This reflects the mandate of Jesus to proclaim the good news to the poor (Luke 4:18-19). *Gaudium et spes* as the pastoral constitution of the Church in the modern world, is seen by the majority of historians and theologians as expression of the Church’s

changed attitude to the contemporary world since the time of the Second Vatican Council (see Scola 2004:7). It describes the approach of the Church to the plethora of challenges that require a pastoral response. Scola (2004:8) puts it as follows:

The pastoral dimension which the council – attentive to the so-called signs of the times-sees as the way to present Jesus Christ to the human family, is perceived by the Conciliar Fathers as giving expression to the essence of the salvific mission of the Church: ‘God ... wants everyone to be saved and reach full knowledge of the truth’ (1 Tim 2:4).

The document presents the richness of the Church in its pastoral vision as it strives to be “attentive to the ... signs of the times”. This deliberate immersion of the Church into the social sphere is the doing of a practical theology which subsequently informs and enriches the practice of pastoral ministry of care. One particular characteristic of the social teaching of the Church is that it does not pretend to know the answers to all social problems. Pope John Paul II articulates it as follows in his encyclical letter, *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (On the Social Concern of the Church) (1988:no. 41):

The Church does not propose economic and political systems or programmes, nor does she show preference for one or the other, provided that human dignity is properly respected and promoted, and provided she herself is allowed the room she needs to exercise ministry in the world.

The Church does not aspire to substitute secular institutions of governance and their political and socio-economic policies. Its motivation is not a mundane agenda but a practical theological perspective on a lived Christian faith. Trisolini (2011:10) attests to the fact that the social teaching of the Church is not “an ideology, but the accurate formulation of the results of a careful reflection on the complex realities of human existence in society and in the international order, in the light of faith and of the Church’s tradition”. What is regarded as careful reflection encompasses those models of doing practical theology which include the ‘see, judge act’ method. Pope John Paul II puts it as follows in his encyclical, *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (1988:no. 41):

In today’s difficult situation, a more exact awareness and wider diffusion of the ‘set of principles for reflection, criteria for judgement and directives for action’ proposed by the Church’s teaching would be of great help in

promoting both the correct definition of the problems being faced and the best solution to them.

It is not surprising, therefore, according to Trisolini (2011:16) that the “Catholic social teaching is always ‘a posteriori (based upon actual observation) reflection on social issues as they arise and for this reason always gives impression of being late on arrival”. The social teaching of the Church is the culmination of a variety of methods of research. Because it is faith-based, the pastoral circle model is well suited to the task. The processes are such that the Church’s response is at times delayed, depending on the complexity of the issues involved. In doing the research, the analysis of and reflection on the data is a complex process. It is, however, a necessary process if the Church’s response is to be meaningful. Mejia (2005:148) puts it as follows:

The pastoral circle proposes a process of analysis of social situations and structures as well as theological on them; this corresponds very well to the short description of the ‘evangelical discernment’ of the sociocultural and ecclesial situations.

Church documents that come into being after sometimes prolonged processes of discernment are product of the deliberations. The papal encyclicals grapple with social contexts from a faith perspective. All of the social major papal encyclicals deal with the question of injustice that is detrimental to human progress and development. The formulation of this in what Himes (2017:2) sees as the founding social encyclical, *Rerum novarum*, is applicable to all, namely that the “belief in human dignity and the moral equality of persons is to be foundational for a sound view of justice”. Humanity is often its own enemy. Pope Francis (2013:no. 2) describes it as follows: “The great danger in today’s world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience”. Humanity at times tramples upon its own value systems. Human dignity is compromised because of the misuse of freedom. Though the Church highly esteems liberty, freedom should not be abused to the detriment of others. Dupuis (2001:860) puts it as follows: “Human liberty necessarily stands in need of light and strength to direct its actions towards good and to restrain them from evil.”

The quest for progress and development in all aspects of life derives from the people's awareness of their dignity and freedom. This motivates them to pursue good rather than evil, based on the value of justice, and in southern Africa, on *ubuntu*. "Reclaiming the category of justice" further requires a prophetic approach. Merrienboer (1993:178) describes it as follows:

The first key to understand the social gospel is to realize that it represents an element of continuity, flowing from the teaching of the gospel regarding the love of each human being, the defence of the poor and the oppressed, the denunciation of injustice and greed, the spiritual destiny of humanity and its universal dignity, the loving service of all brothers and sisters.

It imposes upon all of us a moral responsibility of goodness and charity. Here humanity is charged with its own defence and care. In this charge morality and justice are inextricably linked and stand in service of human relationships.

### **3.6 Justice: A quest for morality**

The social teaching of the Roman Catholic Church fundamentally deals with the questions of justice and morality. According to Bastianel (2010:23), the encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis* explicitly states that "the social teaching of the Church legitimately claims to be a fruit of the reflections in moral theology". The aim of the social teaching of the Church is to protect and defend the sanctity of life, human dignity and Christian morality. These aspects are interwoven. Poloniato (1988:60) emphasises the centrality of justice as follows: "Those who hunger and thirst for justice render to each person his [sic] proper due. In fulfilment of the law, they love God and their brothers and sisters, and in justice they grieve about sin they have committed". Justice is at the centre of Christian morality and is a fulfilment of the law of love. According to Peschke (2013:40), "Christian ethics therefore searches for the ultimate purpose and meaning of human life and of history in God's will and decrees". When dealing with issues of injustice, the deficiency is in the area of morality. It is a question of relationships because "social, political and economic life is a reality constituted by relationships" (Bastianel 2010:17). Morality and conscience go together. Bernhard Haring (1975:982) describes it as follows:

The good or morality only comes fully into view when there is a genuine experience of conscience. This occurs when the human person, endowed with reason, and free, becomes aware of the claim of the good, the liberating and the joyous character of goodness for its own sake, a claim made by what ought to be even apart from prevailing custom or sanction.

Much of human behaviour depends on the interior disposition of human beings. If there is lack of “genuine experience of conscience”, the outcome of actions is in the negative. Even in the context of a political order which contributes to human progress and development, this sense of “genuine experience of conscience” finds its proper expression in the practice of justice (Long 2015:178). It is the conscientious practice of fairness that strengthens human relationships and solidarity.

In the context of Zimbabwe, the question of morality and social relationships require dialogue. Political, cultural and socio-economic processes of engagement are not practiced on the basis of equity and fairness. To this the insights of the Church can be applied. Bastianel (2010:23) puts it as follows:

The intervention of the ecclesial Magisterium in the social sphere is always driven by real-life problems, where at issue are values, human rights and duties, with problems and positive possibilities affirmed or contradicted, due to culture of relationships and economic, social and political structures, in differentiated historical circumstances.

For justice to become a social reality, moral behaviour towards one’s neighbour is a prerequisite. According to Pope Benedict XVI (2005:no. 28a), “politics is more than a mere mechanism for defining the rules of public life: its origin and its goal are found in justice, which by its very nature has to do with ethics”. Hence politics without a sense of morality; devoid of the sense of the right and wrong can be a threat to the common good. Humanity cannot operate and fully to happiness and peace without being guided by the rules tandem with their state of being as persons endowed with sense of goodness. The requirements for justice and peace are but natural pillars of coexistence. Hence Catholic moral theology can provide the necessary insights for reflection on how justice can prevail in practice. For Peter Phan (2011:xiii) “a renewed moral theology ... must be biblically based, focus on the baptismal

vocation, center on Christ as the model of Christian life, promote the virtue of love, and foster service to humanity and the world". The promotion of the 'virtue of love', even love for enemy, is central to Christian morality. According to Christopher Owczarek (2002:9), "if we, as Christians, want to be faithful to the Gospel, we cannot avoid coming to terms with Jesus' teaching on the love of enemies". Though it is not a small challenge, in a context of much pain, anger and conflict, it could be the only attitude that could pave the way for forgiveness and reconciliation. Patricia Lamoureux and Paul Wadell (2011:xv) see Christian morality "as a call to faithful discipleship". Discipleship is lived in all the contexts of social life. In both communities and with regard to state citizenship, people have responsibilities that go beyond that of the individual and the family. Lamoureux and Wadell (2011:9) describe it as follows: "To be a disciple is to be in union with Jesus and through Jesus with God, a union that is reciprocal and oriented toward community". It is in this broader context of the human family that morality is lived and justice sought and practiced.

With regard to Christian oriented morality, "justice and eventual redress should be sought through to the God-ordained legal system (cf. *De Specialibus Legibus*, IV)" (see Owczarek 2002:51). Every human endeavour should take cognizance of the Ten Commandments of which God is the centre. According to Peschke (2013:119) "Holy Scriptures are of the firm persuasion that God has a very well-defined plan for this world and above all for mankind [sic]". This requires that humanity in its self-governance would do well to pay attention to the special laws of God. In the book of Proverbs (8:15) God declares that "by me kings reign, and lawgivers establish justice". Accordingly, "the state and its authorities have the same final end as their subjects, i.e. the glory of God and the cooperation in his universal plan of creation and salvation" (Peschke 2010:648). This indicates the limits of state power and that its function is to remain within the limits of moral law and the demands of social justice. According to the pastoral constitution, *Gaudium et spes* (1966:no. 74): "nothing is better for establishing a truly human political life than to foster a deep sense of justice". At the very least, this is a view of a morality in the social dimension that would foster progress and development for all. Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (1988:no. 41), puts it as follows:

The Church does not propose economic and political systems or programmes, nor does she show preference for one or the other, provided that human dignity is properly respected and promoted, and provided she herself is allowed the room she needs to exercise her ministry in the world.

The question of Matabeleland apart, from the issues that require technical solutions, revolves to a large extent around the issues of human worth, justice and peace. The central argument of this study is that the violation of human rights is also the violation of the moral order. The consequence is an infringement on justice and peace. Human development and progress are inextricably linked with justice and peace. Questions regarding the meaning and value of life are asked. Walter Kasper (2013:3) puts it as follows:

When the question of meaning is no longer asked, they [human beings] feel that implies, in the final analysis, the abdication of the person as a human being and the loss of his or true dignity ... No longer to pose at all the question about meaning means giving up the hope that there will be once again be justice.

In order to evaluate the political, cultural and socio-economic situation in the context of Matabeleland, questions of human dignity, justice and morality necessarily arise. Theological reflection on the problem will have a moral dimension. According to *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (1988:no. 35), "it is clear that the obstacles to development ... have a moral character". Development and morality therefore should be seen together as the constitutive elements of any attempt to deal with questions of social injustice.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has critically explored the value of practical theology as a "conversation about the relationship between God and the real lives of 'ordinary' human beings" (Barilett 2018:420) as a method of social engagement. The social encyclicals of the Roman Catholic Church and other social documents of the Church represent a longstanding practical theological reflection on various social contexts. Fundamental to such engagement and reflection are the values of human life and dignity. These values are based on the principle of the *imago Dei*. Other gospel values include

living together in peace, as well as justice, equality, solidarity. The aim is the common good. The chapter reveals various levels of how the Church, through practical theological reflection can engage social contexts that are conflicted and seek to redeem them.

By and large the chapter has revealed the Church's resourcefulness if it intends to deal with societal challenges. However, the most important aspect is how it should apply itself in such a manner that it can bring about transformation of human society, not just at a collective level but even at individual level. Fundamentally is the enabling the link between faith and reality, the lack of which often results many find it difficult to fully express their faith in the face of challenges. The following chapter is an attempt to try and find ways of grounding that faith to allow it to speak to, and to remain relevant.

The ZCBC notes with concern the need for a solution in Zimbabwe (ZCBC 2009:11):

For national reconciliation and healing to take place effectively, it is necessary that the entire nation participates in a comprehensive, all-inclusive, holistic and clearly defined national process underpinned by strong political will and desire to reconcile and heal the nation.

Pius Ncube (2006:5) puts it as follows:

The Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops in 1994 stressed that one of the great challenges facing the church in Africa today is to enable our Christians to link their faith with what is happening in their lives.

These two quotations put together explain the mammoth task that is placed before those concerned about unfavourable conditions that continue to plague Africa and its many states. However, more specifically the church in general must begin to seek for ways of dealing with the challenges in a more prophetic manner. The Zimbabwean Catholic bishops have articulated in all-encompassing vision that calls for action, particularly within Zimbabwe. There is, therefore, at least from the Church a compelling case to begin to consider serious theological reflections that could aid pastoral ministry of care.

## CHAPTER 4

### PASTORAL MINISTRY OF CARE

#### 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented a theological reflection on social practice in a given problematic context in order to gain insights for a pastoral ministry of care in response to social need and injustice. In accordance with the shepherding image derived from Scripture, such pastoral ministry of care represents the faith communities' concern for people who are in trouble or distress (see Mills 2007:836). Of course this ministry if it has to address broader communities beyond the confines of the Roman Catholic Church congregations has at certain times to adopt ecumenical approach. According to Sheen (1963:41) "[i]f we start [as we must] at the bottom of the ladder, having compassion on all men [sic], nothing that happens to others is foreign to us. Their grief is our grief, their poverty our poverty". While the Church's missionary approach should not neglect mission *ad intra*, mission *ad gentes* is imperative in dealing with social problems such as articulated in the preceding pages. This chapter, therefore, aims to integrate insights gained from the social analysis with the results of the practical theological reflection and apply this to the particular context of injustice that is being investigated.

In the realization and protection of such ... moral claim[s] the creative communion of the triune God is reflected when it is guided by interdependence, solidarity, mutuality, dialogue, radical equality, and inclusivity, rather than subordination, exclusion or even exploitation.

(Kusumalayam 2008:292)

In this particular context with its many challenges as explored in the first chapters, there is a need to review different options in order to find solutions. The emphasis in this chapter is on the lived faith after the perfect example of Christ and Triune God as providing model of harmonious living. The church in general has a mammoth task in helping to shape a nation in which justice and peace could prevail. Njoroge wa Nguni's (2002:246) puts it as follows:

The post-independence project of nation-building, the task of localising the Church in Africa, the challenge of building solidarity among African nations ... the task of facing environmental issues, etc. are challenges that call for a search for a new theological paradigm.

The Church should have an understanding of the political realities prevalent in the country, but of course its main focus is on providing a pastoral ministry of care. The Church also has a role to educate people with regard to issues of justice. According to the Archbishop Emeritus Pius Ncube of Bulawayo (2006:5), "individual Christians must be just in their own lives and must confront issues of injustice in society". So the first charge is with the Christians themselves in their daily living. The teaching of the Church must be made available to them so they can be helped to understand the structural injustice that besieges the country. There must be a way of equipping them with the skills necessary to deal with conflict in a manner that reflects their faith in Jesus Christ their Lord and Saviour. Barilett (2018:420) explains this as follows:

This is a purposeful serious conversation because it is about helping people to find methods and resources which will enable genuine encounter with God in the midst of the reality of everyday living, and further, to reflect on real life and those divine encounters so as to enable wiser living.

The pastoral task of the Church must not only be left to pastors and Church officials. The aim is a *lived faith* that is shared by all members of the faith communities. It is only then that the Church, corporately through its faithful followers, can become an effective instrument of grace and source of hope. Faith lived in love and justice can contribute to the positive development of all people. According to Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate* (no. 1) charity and truth are "the principal driving force behind the authentic development of every person and all of humanity". These values must not just be known, but should be applied in the actual life of people and their daily experiences.

The challenge to bring about integral transformation that focuses on justice, development, and peace is particularly great in southern Africa (Luna 2005:49). This includes the context of Zimbabwe which is, given the circumstances prevailing in the country and particularly in the south western region, in need of a pastoral ministry of

care as an alternative to what is going on at present. The Catholic bishops have already stated: “We envision National Healing and Reconciliation as a home grown inclusive process that will lay the foundations for a peaceful and cohesive Zimbabwean society”. This broad-based vision and approach require a programme in which all can participate. The Church should also come up with its own strategies and methods based on a pastoral ministry of care to complement such joint programmes that also could be initiated in other sections of society. Mills (2007:836) understands pastoral care broadly as care for society and communities, as well as for individuals and families who seek spiritual guidance. Such a broad kind of engagement is needed in the context that is being investigated.

Ample evidence has been provided in previous chapters of the Roman Catholic Church’s engagement with social realities as an instrument of social justice, peace, solidarity and love. This encounter is motivated by a pastoral concern and the intention is to establish effective methods of intervention. What is now required is to apply those practical theological reflections and adapt them to the context. This should always reflect the person of Jesus, otherwise pastoral ministry of care will not adequately and authentically serve its purpose. The incarnational model which has been identified as appropriate to this particular investigation will now be unpacked further. Pope John Paul II in his work, *Novo millennio ineunte* (2000:no. 29), puts it as follows:

In the local Churches specific features of a detailed pastoral plan can be identified – goals and methods, formation and enrichment of the people involved, the search for the necessary resources – which will enable the proclamation of Christ to reach people, mould communities, and have a deep and incisive influence in bringing Gospel values to bear in African society and culture.

At the heart of any pastoral action is the person of Christ, the model of pastoring. According to Martin Smith (1995:xi) “it is the work of Jesus to gather everything together, and ultimately nothing is left out or behind”. This should be the spirit reflected in a pastoral ministry of care. I argue that a pastoral ministry of care is essentially about bringing the good news of the gospel to contexts that need a different perspective.

In pastoral practice the word that became flesh should be experienced as an indwelling presence and reality. This should permeate the Church's ministry to people. According to Brusatti (1993:215) "the pastoral word or word finally spoken, concerns itself with experience, significant human experience interpreted theologically. A pastoral presence is therefore necessary for pastoral reflection to be authentic. Admittedly, bringing the good news of Christ to social contexts of injustice is a daunting task that requires meticulous planning for pastoral action. Smith (1995: xi) points out that, because Jesus has gone to the Father, his followers are the one who will continue his work and do works even greater than his. Their words and actions should be like his: have an enduring power and bear fruit. Changing contexts require an openness of heart and mind in order to remain relevant. In the act of preaching the spiritual and human stories are synthesised through language to create new meaning. Imaginative language invites participation – to "the word more deeply" (Brusatti 1993:215). Therefore a pastoral ministry of care must be holistic and create conditions for active participation. An authentic encounter with the incarnate Jesus Christ has the power to transform lives. Faith should manifest in life, action, praxis, and ethical life (Pathil and Veliath 2005:43). Pastoral practice aims to illumine lives and enliven people, to instil in them a sense of hope even in the circumstances where everything seems gloomy.

Jesus Christ's own person and work draws our attention to God's presence and saving power. God is potentially present in all that God created and in all people who are made in God's image. Jesus Christ's own practices provide insights for designing pastoral care model and methods in present-day contexts. Bevan (2014:264) points out the inclusive characteristic of Jesus' ministry which revolved around the marginalised and sinful people of his time. To some extent one could argue that the victim (the marginalised) and the offender (the powerful) are taken into account equally. God is the one who takes the first step in the reconciliation of victim and perpetrator. God opens the heart of the victim to the possibility of forgiveness (Bevan 2014:267). Renowned Catholic theologian, Edward Schillebeeckx (1990), sees how, in the passion and death of the incarnate Christ, "vulnerability and defenselessness are more capable of powerfully disarming evil than the brute force in the world could ever accomplish". The incarnational model takes its guidelines from the concrete ministry of Jesus who, in his humanity, encountered the real world and the social

contexts of injustice that in his day were rather similar to what marginalised human being still experience today. For Wadell (2005:519), justice is not only a cardinal virtue. It is also a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel and the mission of the Church (see *Justice in the World* 6). This chapter advocates for a conciliatory ministry that could lead to healing, reconciliation and harmony with the demand for justice as the main priority.

In order to secure justice, reconciliation and peace in the Zimbabwean context, specifically in Matabeleland it is important that pastoral approaches centre on Christ's incarnational practice of ministry. John Haught (2007:34) explains it as follows: "Christians understand their faith as a response to the divine mystery that presents itself in the person, life, words, actions, death and resurrection of Jesus". Hence, at the centre of pastoral ministry and care, is what *Caritas in veritate's* (CV) formulates as the "affirmation of the unity of truth and love in the person of Jesus Christ as the revelation of the Trinitarian God" (see Schindler 2015:73). It is incumbent upon the church to present to the world and its various social contexts the human face of Jesus Christ. The church sees its task as being a willing instrument in the hands of Christ by means of which Christ can reach all people and touch them with love (see Ryan 2001:8). Roberto Goizueta (2015:55) locates the origin of human freedom and social justice in God "who, in the person of Jesus Christ, loved us first and promises to be with always (CV, no. 78)". This promise is a particular sense among others fulfilled in the Church's presence through its pastoral ministry and care.

In order to draw insights from Jesus' earthly ministry for designing methods for a practical pastoral ministry of care, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is useful. The Congregation for the Clergy (1997:no. 14) focuses on nurturing in those involved in pastoral ministry, aware of "the necessity to keep in mind the field in which the seed is sown, and to do so with the perspective of faith and mercy". This kind of sensitivity to the context would include an inculturated approach that is familiar with and speaks the language of the context and culture, the circumstances and conditions of need. The incarnational model takes its example of the inculturated Word of God that became flesh and partook in humanness in order to bring light to the world. Poloniato (1988:47) puts it as follows: "Christ is the dazzling bright sun

who covered himself with a cloud [human flesh] in order to be seen". Thus pastoral ministry of care must take after Christ's own attitude and work.

The proximity of the church to communities and families enables it to show solidarity with the people in all the fortunes and misfortunes of life. According to the CCC (1995:No. 309), in some way or another, the Christian message provides an answer to the question of evil. Preceding chapters examined the legacy of injustice across the three historical eras of Zimbabwean history. The incarnational model has been identified as useful for designing a pastoral response in context. This chapter then specifically focuses on the concrete person of Christ and his ministry. Pope Benedict XVI, in the encyclical, *Caritas in veritate*, explains the notion of truth in Christ. This notion inspires a response of deep faith and the commitment to transform a divided world sorely lacking charity and justice (see Finn 2015:ix). The Church then forges its pastoral ministry and care activity according to Jesus' own actions. Soulen and Woodhead (2006:58) put it as follows:

A church bound by the gospel of Christ, the one who accepted the ultimate indignity of dying the death of the Godforsaken sinner, of the one who was cut off from the source of all dignity, has to relate its message in those situations where human dignity has been abused and violated.

Christ incarnate provides points of departure for both a model and method of care. To follow the example of Jesus the Church is to create pastoral methods of healing, forgiveness and reconciliation while at the same time advocating for political, cultural and socio-economic equilibrium. From papal teachings, Finn (2015:ix) notes that Jesus Christ is indeed the very face of the social progress that our world needs so badly. Therefore, suffering, pain, and poverty caused by acts of injustice do have a biblical theological meaning. Robert Schroeder (2008:18) points out that throughout human history, there has always been suffering: "sickness and war, hatred and oppression, poverty and death – all have been among us from the start of human life". Schroeder (2008:18) lists some few examples from the Old Testament. Human problems such as for example murder (Gen 4:8), jealousy (Gen 37:20-28) and slavery (Israel in Egypt) urge practical pastoral theological to search for methods in their pastoral ministry of care that can facilitate finding solutions. Tirelessly the fire and the spirit to fight evil and injustice should be nurtured in order to "change the

world so it will be a better place to live” (see Singgih 2005:175). A powerful way to do this is to reflect on Christ incarnate and model the church’s pastoral ministry of care after him. It is critically important that whatever activity by the faith communities whether in the form of liturgical or para-liturgical services or workshops are all done with proper reflection on person of Jesus and his teachings. Thus pastoral activity should reflect the truth of Christ’s actions of mercy and compassion – the compassion he felt for the crowd that remained with him (Mk 8:2-3).

## **4.2 The incarnation: God’s presence in the world**

At the centre of a practical pastoral ministry of care as a response to a context of political, cultural and socio-economic injustice, I reflect on that mystery of the Christian faith that is the incarnation. According to Gerhard Ludwig Muller (2000:377) the “incarnation refers both to the act by which the Word of God assumes human nature and to the abiding state that results from the word having assumed human nature”. From the beginning of the story of Jesus this baby is portrayed as the answer to the outrage of evil (Smith 1995:4). The wound at his side becomes the source of healing for everything that evil has ruined. In the incarnation of Jesus Christ, God is truly present in the world of humanity’s fate. Haught (2007:40) puts it as follows:

What is revealed in the incarnation, passion, and crucifixion of Jesus is the paradoxically illuminating image of a vulnerable, suffering God, who out of love for the world, renounces any claims to ‘control’ the course of events, and who gives the divine selfhood over to the entire universe as its silent but faithful font of renewal.

What it means is that in the incarnate Christ, God is concretely in fraternity with humanity in its existential social conditions of life. Jesus Christ in the concreteness of human history; is God’s present of peace to a world of conflict. According to Antony Tambasco (2005:711), “while the teaching of Jesus in the Synoptics never directly links *eirene* (peace) with the proclamation of the reign of God, nevertheless the early Church understood peace as both the present effect and future goal of the reign of God”. The primary purpose of Jesus’ mission is therefore the proclamation of God’s kingdom which should be enacted on earth as a concrete reality in which humanity is reconciled with itself and God. Pauline Chakkalikal (2018:150) emphasises Jesus’ concreteness in history. He was truly is truly present in the concrete reality of life

circumstances. This is articulated too in the different style of the Gospel of John (1:14) “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us”. In view of this, the fundamental occupation must be a pastoral ministry and care that embraces Christ’s example of ministry. Henry Jose (2018:xv) explains it as follows:

It is the Church’s desire to serve this single end: that each person may be able to find Christ, in order that Christ may walk with each person the path of life, with the power of the truth about man [sic] and the world that is contained in the mystery of the incarnation and the Redemption and with the power of the love that is radiated by that truth.

The mystery of the incarnation in dialogue with the concrete context that is being investigated presents the beginning of a model of interactive ministry that seeks reconciliation. Christ’s in-dwelling as the word become flesh among humans, was expression of God’s pure love for humanity and the world God created. Henceforth, everything that happens, the splendour and misery of humanity, should be viewed in light of that loving action of God in Christ. According to Antonio Magnante (1997:133), “first he comes into the world (cf. Jn 1:9), then to his own domain-Israel (cf. Jn 1:11), and finally, he pitches his tent in our midst (cf. Jn 1:14). Right from the beginning, he is, ‘one like us in all things, but sin’ (cf. Phil 2:7; Heb 2:17; 4:15)”. In McCarthy’s words, Jesus Christ incarnate ‘wheels and deals’ in human history in all its complexity with the sole mission of extricating humanity from its dungeon of pain and misery.

The issues besieging the region of Matabeleland and other similar contexts must be seen from this perspective. Magnante (1997:133) explains it as follows: “Jesus sets out from Nazareth in order to meet, to speak to, to be with, men and women [I would add, children and young people], but especially to reveal God’s love and compassion”. In the context of human misery and pain, solidarity begins with dialogue with the victims of circumstances. In the context that is being investigated an approach based on Jesus’ ministry can be the starting point for designing an effective pastoral model and method. The Apostle Paul’s encounter with Jesus on his way to Damascus enlightened and inspired his subsequent missionary activity (Schonborn 2004:11). As was the case with Paul: so the Church to should shape its pastoral care according to the example of Jesus’ ministry.

Magnante (1997:131) views Jesus' suffering not as something on its own, but in the light of his resurrection. Resurrection, in turn, should be seen in light of the mystery of Christ incarnate and his mission. In his own suffering, as a person Jesus "manifests the great love of God for humanity" (Magnante 1997:132). Of all theological models proposing solutions to social contexts of need, Jesus is the embodiment of a truly authentic pastoral ministry of care. Pope Francis in his *Laudato si* (2015:no. 96) puts it as follows:

In talking with his disciples, Jesus would invite them to recognize the paternal relationship God had with all his creatures. With moving tenderness he would remind them that each one of them is important in God's eyes: 'are five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God' (Lk 12:6). 'Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them' (Mt 6:26).

This is a powerful message of a pastoring and caring God that can be expropriated for the context that is being investigated in this study. In the Gospel of John (10:10b) Jesus calls himself a good shepherd who brought abundant life for the sheep. According to Lorna Gold (2015:195), "the core of the gospel message did not relate primarily to a series of moral directives, but to the revelation of God's love as a father who is very near to his children". This love can be seen in God-with-us, in the incarnate Jesus. Hill (2011) explains Schillebeeckx's category of "constant experience" as that God is revealed "as the source sustaining humanity in the face of human failure and global suffering". The case of Matabeleland is such a context of suffering and failure which can look to God as "the source sustaining humanity". Pastoral activity in the region that is grounded in Christ's ministry among the poor and the dejected could yield a positive outcome and be such a sustaining source.

### **4.3 Christ's interface with humanness**

One of the fundamental aspects of the mystery of the incarnation is what it does to our own humanness or *ubuntu*. *Gaudium et spes* declares the Church's solidarity with humanity – an aspect that was learnt from Jesus himself. Pathil and Veliath (2005:216-217) see "Christ as the prototype of the new humanity and the new creation". An encounter with him is transformative. The mission of the church should

be viewed from this perspective of the transformation of humanity and the. Swan (2006:49) puts it as follows:

Those who lived with Jesus encountered an extraordinary and unique man but someone much like themselves, who shared their complexities and contradictions, the satisfactions and disappointments, the joys and sorrows of being human.

Christ incarnate interfaces with the humanness of people and is the perfect model of what humanity should be, not just collectively but individually as well. Wilfred Harrington (2010:7) puts it as follows: “In the human Jesus we meet God”. In the context of pain and suffering as depicted in the context of Matabeleland and similar contexts, Christ’s invitation in the gospel of Matthew (11:28-29) can be particularly comforting: “Come to me , all you who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves”. The human traits of kindness, love, compassion, respect, forgiveness are truly manifest in Jesus’ encounter with people. The proverbial Ndebele-Zulu axiom, *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* underpins the ideal of humanness (*ubuntu*) and is perfectly fulfilled in the person of Jesus.

The idea of *ubuntu* can find theological meaning in the trinitarian concept of God. Here in the One God are three persons who “share everything except their personhood which is constituted through their relationships” (Kofler, 2008:14). The three persons in their individuality are never in opposition in their communion in the Godhead. Kofler (2008:13) applies it to humans in the following way: The distinctiveness of the divine persons does not interfere with the unity of the One God. Similarly, the uniqueness of the individual must not interfere with the unity of the community. The practical implications are evident. Jesus incarnate in his individual capacity declares his unity with the Father: “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). Later Jesus offers a prayer for their unity not only among his disciples but also with himself and the Father thus: “Holy Father , keep them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one just as we are” (John 17:11).

Humanness constitutes the goodness of a person in relation to others. The question of the rich young man who asks Jesus in Matthew (19:16): “Teacher, what good

must I do to have eternal life?” points to humanness. According to *Veritatis splendor* (1993:No. 8) “the young man senses that there is a connection between moral good and the fulfilment of his destiny”. This, seeking to do good in order to fulfilment one’s destiny of being fully human is what is lacking in the generally contemptuous context of Zimbabwe. There is no sense of moral good and this, in turn, accounts for the absence of *ubuntu*, all of which causes the multitude of social tragedies and loss of human life. Shutte (2001:2) explains *ubuntu* as follows: “It embodies an understanding of what it is to be human and what is necessary for human beings to grow and find fulfilment”. This is an important realisation especially in the context where humans deliberately intend excluding each. According to Kofler (2008:13) “our development occurs in a group ... The human person can only survive and flourish in a network of healthy relationships”. Hence of *ubuntu* is an integral concept that fosters human fraternity beyond race, ethnicity, status, creed, sex, age or colour. Langemeyer (2000:152) calls it “the Creatureliness of the human person, because of its origin in the creative will of God, is an abiding property of human and also Christian existence”. It is therefore, my contention that human beings can, through their will and reasoning capacity, indeed by virtue of their Christian calling, transcend certain limitations of their creatureliness. South African practical theologian, Ian Nell (2017:2) emphasises the ambivalence of the notion of *ubuntu*:

A critical investigation of the concept using alternative heuristic devices will reveal that the notion is indeed ambivalent and is therefore also open to misuse and can easily contribute to the exclusion of certain groups, specifically women, in social activities.

Studies have shown that the concept is not without its pitfalls (see Dreyer et al 2017). However, I focus on the intended meaning of the term and the value it represents. For Shutte (2001:9, 10) *ubuntu* “embodies an insight that is universal” and need not be held ransom by many of the old customs of injustice. I contend that the problem lies not necessarily with the concept *per se* but rather in how it has sometimes been applied by flawed human beings. No one, individually or collectively, could be taken advantage of and treated as less than human. Being a person (*umuntu*) is basic and applicable to all human beings. Shutte (2001:9) emphasises the positive side as that the concept of *ubuntu* can provide a key to

overcoming the great divisions in the world today. However, *ubuntu* finds expression within particular cultures and contexts. Culture is an authentic expression of people's common humanity. Every culture has a dark and dangerous side, but also contains universal insights and values (Shutte 2001:10). The "dark and dangerous side" simply expresses the frailty of human nature. *Ubuntu*, like humanity in general can also be redeemed in the humanness of Jesus, the mystery of the incarnation. Abraham Vettuvail (2018:ix) puts it as follows: "An encounter with the human face of Jesus in the Gospels cannot but impel one to become human, in the real sense of human". In the context of violence and hostilities of any kind that is rampant in families, communities and societies, it can be useful to revisit the value of *ubuntu*. Also in the context of Zimbabwe, with particular reference to Matabeleland, *ubuntu* of which people have been robbed should be restored.

As an inculturating restorative measure *ubuntu* should interface with person and humanness of Jesus. For Schonborn (2004:11) any "Christology must always take its starting point from the identity of Jesus Christ as the eternal Son: he has always been the incarnate Son of the Father" (Mt 16:16). However, it is in the humanity of Jesus that the true and full humanity of persons is realised. According to Kurien Kunnumparam (2018:3) the underlying factor is first and foremost "Christian believers are called to be truly human". I contend that in the fullness of our humanity is the fullness of human joy and peace. According to Joseph Mattam (2018:15) "the basic vocation of every follower of Jesus is to grow unto his likeness". Growing unto his likeness is about coming to full humanity with all the positive attributes that are reflected in the humanness of Jesus.

George Therukaattil (2018), however, reminds that Jesus' life taken at face value was not an enviable one. Hence Therukaattil (2018:139) puts it as follows: "The humanity of Jesus is not an ideal, but a truly human life; its human significance constitutes the key to knowing the true God". In this respect in him we encounter both our fulfilled humanity and knowledge of God. God in his mission to redeem the world is revealed in the humanity of Jesus Christ. Therukaattil (2018:139) explains it as follows: "God becoming truly and fully human in the person of Jesus of Nazareth is God's evocative and provocative parable for us to become truly and fully human". Becoming 'truly and fully human' in accordance with 'God's evocative and

provocative parable' has an important effect in shaping imperfect human perspectives of the world in its concrete realities. According to Benny Koottanal (2018:xii) "knowing Jesus ... is to encounter him as revelation of what we humans are and what we can become". We can become more humane: respectful, loving, compassionate, kind, considerate and forgiving. Since human beings are God's creation in God's own likeness and image, an encounter with Christ brings them back to their origin.

Christ being fully human interfaces with human nature. However, the key aspect to human nature is its finitude, its mortality, its corruptibility. According to Antony Mookenthottam (2018:170), the being human "includes also evil, as well as a courteous, obliging, kind, benevolent behaviour or disposition which befits a person". Despite the many good things in the nature of human beings, evil often dominates the human mind and heart – hence the need for conversion. The Apostle Paul admits to human frailty when he says: "We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold into slavery to sin" (Romans (7:14). According to McCarthy (2001:9), "society and life itself have programmed us to violence so that we can't even imagine or take seriously the reality that we are called to live in complete peace with all people". However, God wants every person to be fully human (Mookenthottam 2018:168). It is for human beings that "the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). The implication is that in and through Jesus the sinful proclivities of human nature are redeemed. Hence in the context evil, outside and apart from Jesus Christ, the search for meaning and fulfilment can be desperate. *Gaudium et spes* (1966:no. 22) points out that "by His incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every human". This encounter between Christ and humanity has the potential to rectify the anomalies that are rife in the world and also in Christian communities today. The CCC (1995:no. 309) puts it as follows:

Only Christian faith as a whole constitutes the answer to this question (of evil): the goodness of creation, the drama of sin and the patient love of God who comes to meet man [sic] by his covenants, the redemptive incarnation of his Son, his gift of the Spirit, his gathering of the Church,

the power of the sacraments and his call to a blessed life to which free creatures are invited to consent in advance, but from which, by a terrible mystery, they can also turn away in advance.

There are possibilities and solutions to the plight of human beings, irrespective of their social context of need. The interface of Christ with our frail human nature provides a source of hope, even in the context of Matabeleland as explored in this study. The Church, in facilitating pastoral care activities, becomes the vehicle for such an encounter. Hence Henry Jose (2018:xv) argues that “the Church, therefore sees, its fundamental task in enabling that union of God and humans to be brought about at all levels of human life and renewed continually”. The Church too has a long and blighted history, fraught with practices of injustice. However, the Church which consists of people who are easily tempted by power, also, has conversion experiences and returns again and again to God and to its mission. Julian Filochowski (2005:163) puts it as follows:

Church identity has been moulded through the lived and shared experience of bread-breaking, justice-seeking ecclesial communities and networks in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas, all of the committed to transforming the misery of cruelty of their world.

In all these contexts the mission of the Church has been and remains a facilitator of encounter between Christ incarnate and humanity. This is also the case in the context of Matabeleland, Zimbabwe.

The most profound aspects of humanity, including humanness, human solidarity, love, respect and humility, promote progress and development, particularly when it interfaces with Christ. The true face of the human-and-divine transcends everything that hinders peaceful co-existence. *Ubuntu*, though a universal value, expresses itself in particular cultures. It promotes human worth and value, irrespective of tribe, race, status, gender, age or nationality. It is at the very root of personhood. For Joseph Moller (1975:1215), people are not simply at the mercy of their urges and instincts. They are able to refuse evil and injustice. It is the spirit that is “the principle of this refusal”. Person is seen here with Max Muller and Alois Harder’s (1975:1207) not as: “‘essence’ or ‘nature’ but the actual reality of a spiritual being, an undivided whole existing independently and not interchangeable with any other”. Yet even with

this uniqueness of individuality, a person cannot be totally individualistic. The “other” matters, for it is only with the otherness of others that people realise their potential fully. According to Alexander Sand (1975:1217), in the Old Testament a person stands before God not as an independently sovereign being but as a creature, immersed in the culture of common humanity. Culture is closely related to *ubuntu*. Leahy (2005:289) explains culture as follows:

The authenticity of each human culture, the soundness of its underlying ethos, and hence the validity of its moral bearings, can be measured to an extent by its commitment to the human cause and by its capacity to promote human dignity at every level and in every circumstance.

Humanity flourishes within a culture which has the “capacity to promote human dignity”, not a culture of violence sustained by a legacy of impunity in which recourse to justice is non-existent. According to Peter Kanyandogo (2001:95) it must be noted that “culture and history are essential for the realisation of the humanity of a given people and for their survival and well-being”. The attempt to annihilate Zapu supporters in Zimbabwe was meant to erase the history and role of the people of Matabeleland. However, it impacted negatively on the Ndebele culture and history and strengthened the people’s sense of exclusion. Veiling (2005:159) points to the inevitability of culture that, “for all its shadow and light, is essential and intimate to humanity”. A desecration of people’s human traditional cultures communicates a high level of disrespect. This can irreparably damage relations.

It is evident that the legacy of violence has left an indelible mark on Zimbabwean polity and has created conditions that are not conducive to progress and growth. Alatorre (1995:121) points out that: “an analysis of the mechanisms of society today, leads us to the discovery of the truth that the conditions of misery that prevail today are the result of unjust social structures”. This is also true in the context that is investigated in this study. It accounts for the lack of development in the region of Matabeleland. In such a context reflection on the dialogical and prophetic ministry of Jesus Christ is relevant and can lead to valuable insights with regard to the way forward in a flawed and broken world.

#### **4.4 Jesus' ministry**

Reflection on the mystery of the incarnation offers an important example on how to ground pastoral ministry and care. The Theological-Historical Commission for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 (1997:56) explains the relationship between the story of Jesus and the incarnate Christ of the proclamation as follows: "The primary core of every proclamation of Christ is the narration of the story of Jesus, which is the principal source of Christian experience in all times and places". A key aspect to understanding a pastoral ministry of care is that it is part of the broader mission of the Church and that it is modelled after the actions of Jesus himself. In the view of this document (Theological-Historical Commission 1997:56) there is no ministry outside "the story of Jesus of Nazareth – his actions, his words, his attitudes, his teaching, his witness, his death, his resurrection – it is the definitive salvation that God offers to every human person". Any pastoral theological method or practice that fails to align itself to the person of Jesus lacks essence and substance. According to Bevans and Schroder (2004:348), pastoral practice can be viewed as "participation in the life and mission of the Trinity; mission as continuation of the mission of Jesus to preach, serve and witness to the justice of God's 'already' but 'not yet' reign; and mission as the proclamation of Christ as the world's only savior". Jesus can be seen as the model or example for pastoral action. From his actions a method can be derived. Jose Pagola (2012:261) explains that those taking up the ministry "will share his [Jesus'] experience of God; they will learn from him to accept God's coming; with his guidance they will share the task of proclaiming the arrival of God's reign to everyone". Doing theology and living one's faith happen in the daily routines of life. However, Hans Urs von Balthasar (1992:26) points out that "in modern times, theology and sanctity have become divorced, to the great harm of both". This does not detract from the fact that the mission of the Church can only be fulfilled in the world. Roy Williamson (1996:2) puts it as follows:

This is the world in which God has chosen to place his Church. His purpose is not that the Church should withdraw from the world, nor that it should conform to the world but that it should, with the help of his Holy Spirit, share in his mission to the world.

The world is the actual context of Jesus' mission and ministry and for the church. It cannot be otherwise. Pope Francis finds that "a church that limits itself to minister parish work and that lives closed in its own community accomplishes the same thing that an isolated person would ... or it deteriorates like a walled in apartment where mold and humidity grow" (Gaeta 2013:52). Christ exemplified the mission of the church as that of reaching out to people in their diverse circumstances and situations. In difficult contexts such as the focus of this study, a practical pastoral programme of action that is dialogical in nature is needed. First of all it should be acknowledged that, after all the political violence that has cost the people so much in all aspects of life, the people of Matabeleland have never been truly engaged. As a response to this, the Church's pastoral ministry of care should be dialogical, for instance through programmes and workshops. The people should get the opportunity to speak. Bevans (2014:260) puts it as follows:

First and foremost, the practice of mission today has to be rooted in a commitment to dialogue – not just as a practice ... but as fundamental stance out of which any missionary practice needs to be done.

Another side of the Church's response could be to teach people about Jesus, the person who, like them, suffered injustice at the hands of religious leaders and political authorities. However, Jesus was not only a victim. He was a healer. According to Casey (2004:1), in Jesus "humanity and divinity coincide in a single person so that the actions of Jesus are simultaneously the actions of a human being and the actions of God". The humanity of Jesus basically is both the foundation of our humanness and actions with respect to establishing God's reign. In a context such as Matabeleland, where there has been fragmentation of family and community especially due to the 1980s political violence that dispersed people, communion has to be emphasised. For Bevans (2014:260) communion is central because God is and does communion, relationship, dialogue. This then directs the actions of a pastoring and caring Church. They should be both *ad intra* and *ad extra*: to facilitate communion, relationship and dialogue among and within victim communities, but at the same time to broaden this to a national or even international level. This aim should be to seek forgiveness and reconciliation. In order to fulfil such a mission, Bevans (2014:253) point out that "we have to begin with an understanding that God,

in God's deepest self, is practice and that this 'intra-trinitarian' practice is known only by practices in the world's history". In such practices the emphasis is on love, communion and solidarity. Carmen Maria Cervantes et al (2014:174) explain it as follows:

The church's pastoral activities are informed by the need for works of charity and advocacy that respond to immediate human needs and provide a voice to those who are denied it by oppression or marginalization, not just across the oceans but next door.

Such a response applies to the context investigated by this study. With such an approach a sense of hope can be revived in the disenfranchised communities of Matabeleland. This kind of pastoral practice is in line with the aims of practical theology whose "goal is to engage concrete lived realities and theories embedded what faith is and how it is lived, in and through practice" (Cahalan and Froehle 2014:43). This practice is a mission with a prophetic dimension.

#### **4.5 Jesus' prophetic mission**

Mission as dialogue embodies another aspect, namely prophecy. Bevans and Schroeder (2004:352) put it as follows: "Jesus' own, mission was characterized by both words and deeds, and each explained the other". More often than not they were words and actions in defence of the poor and the oppressed. His earthly life is "interspersed with acts of mercy and compassion" (Magnate 1997:134). Walter Kasper (2013:158) emphasises that "a church without charity and without mercy would no longer be the church of Jesus Christ". In its practice of ministry the church bears witness to the truth as Jesus' instrument of liberation. Julie Hanlon Rubio (2015:108) explains the task of Catholic social teaching as that it brings the attention of good people to the reality of injustice and calls them to work for a better world. This advocacy is itself prophetic, particularly in many exclusive contexts of injustice. The context of political, cultural and socio-economic injustice in Matabeleland requires such special attention.

Bernard Musondoli (2011:108) points out that "Jesus Christ challenges each and every culture, ethnic group, nation, community and individuals with the words of Mk 8:27 who do you (Africans) say I am?" I contend that in the face of brazen injustice, a

culture of violence and ethnic divisions there us a great need Jesus' prophetic ministry. Jesus stands out as one who mends and reconciles differences in a prophetic way. However, prophetic ministry is not always welcome, especially among the powerful and privileged who do not want to hear a prophetic voice that reminds them of the needs and rights of others. Therefore it requires a strong commitment to speak the truth and do so boldly. Chakkalaka (2018) describes prophetic ministry as that it "entails risks and hardships to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant". This role is expected of all Christian believers because challenging injustice is a witness to truth. The price, however, can be high. In the context of Zimbabwe, Archbishop Emeritus Pius Ncube, speaking against the state's abusive violence against citizens and against its track record of murder, mayhem and genocide, paid the price. He suffered an embarrassing exposure on television in what was presented as his adulterous affair. The ploy was meant to silence him and divert the attention of the gullible population from the real issues that besiege the country. It succeeded. Chakkalaka (2018:152) explains the prophetic mission as follows:

Prophecy at its roots, is perhaps the mission of naming: Naming the evil to be eradicated, Naming the injustice to be righted, Naming the good to be celebrated, Naming the joy to be embraced. Then on top of all this, calling forth what is ideally to be.

Prophetic ministry is the most difficult part of carrying out authentic evangelisation in contexts of conflict, particularly where the state is involved and the authorities are particularly hostile to criticism. This is then often when Jesus' ministry and care are compromised most. Jesus himself said, according to the Gospel of Matthew (5:11-12): "Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you (falsely) because of me ... Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you". Another instance of the rejection of a prophet is Jeremiah (15:10, 15) who cries out: "Woe to me, mother, that you gave me birth! A man of strife and contention to all the land ... know that for you [Lord] I have born insults". Yet even in such contexts Jesus exhorts his disciples not to be afraid.

With regard to the *Gukurahundi* massacre, many human rights activists were harassed, arrested and brought before a court of law. Even in the face of such

danger, the Church should remain true to its mission of advocacy for justice and constantly create conditions for dialogue. The prophetic ministry includes challenging the authorities as well as instituting pastoral programmes of forgiveness, healing and reconciliation. The practice of reconciliation is a “summation of Jesus’ concrete practices of healing, teaching, forgiving, and inclusion” (Bevan 2014:264). A pastoral ministry of care inspired by Jesus’ ministry is a practical method of engagement in order to ameliorate suffering and pain. Walter Kasper (2013:158) points out that charity and mercy “have a specific ecclesial dimension; they belong essentially to the community of the church, its faith, and to the church’s lived unity”. However, the Christian faithful, all the people of God together, are the agents of implementing those actions. Casey (2004:5) points out that those believers who misunderstand Jesus, not only do not understand what divinity means, but also do not understand what it means to be human. They have not given to humanity its rightful place in their spiritual life. Humanity is transformed to become its true self in its encounter with the person of Jesus Christ.

Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, acts in communion with his Father. Therefore Jesus’ actions have a trinitarian aspect. For David Kyeyane (2001:159), this trinitarian aspect “would awaken and develop in African Christians a deep personal and communal commitment to Jesus Christ and gospel values in their personal lives, which in turn would flow over into the renewal of society”. This awakening lie in the way the Church through its pastoral methods inculturate the reality of the person of Christ in the cultural value systems of African Christians. In the Gospel of Matthew (5:48), Jesus exhorts believers to “be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect”. This is a call to live life fully in union with God. The gospel should not only be preached. It should also be lived (Gacambi 2001:127). The challenge is clear: to live a prophetic life, to be a witness to the very life of Jesus lived in absolute union with God the Father. The 1971 General Synod of Bishops was clear about the issue of justice. To not proclaim justice, to not fight for it, is tantamount to not proclaiming the gospel (Mbewe 2011:57). Proclaiming the gospel is not just an individual matter. It is a collective responsibility to fight for justice. According to the General Synod of Bishops (1971:no. 6, 36), the Gospel message contains a demand for justice in the world. It is not only Church’s right, but also its

duty to proclaim justice on the social, national, and international level and denounce instances of injustice.

Such an exalted call may appear to be beyond the reach of ordinary people. However, Casey (2004: vii) explains that “what this central mystery of the incarnation means for us is that human nature of itself is of such dignity that it is possible for God to live and act through it”. This can only become possible when human beings allow themselves to be touched by Christ’s own person individually and collectively. According to Mugambi and Magesa (1989:x), “the faith, the hope and the praxis of love that Christian theology attempts to explicate, and which Christians endeavour to witness to by their life, must have Christ as their foundation and goal.” Without this gaze on the person of Jesus Christ, there can be no authenticity to that witness. Wars and conflicts even in countries, communities that are predominantly Christian, are the result of a lack of a profound encounter with the incarnate Jesus Christ.

#### **4.6 Understanding ethnicity “in Jesus”**

Jesus was a human person, a man born with a particular ethnic identity and in a particular culture. Yet he stood and still stands today as a serving model of reconciliation between peoples of different ethnicities because he valued humans not on the basis of their race, nationality, colour, religion social status or anything as such. Oliana (2014:25) points out that;

evangelising activity should focus on the importance of creating meaningful human relationships inspired by Christ’s loving acceptance of each person as created in the image of God, and thus, in the words of *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, always taking the person as one’s starting-point and always coming back to the relationship of people among themselves and with God in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus incarnate assumed human form and nature even of particular race or ethnicity and yet rose above that to embrace the whole of humanity in its racial and ethnic diversity. His ‘loving acceptance of each person’ serves as a point of reference for the entire human family lessons of love and peace beyond racial or ethnic boundaries. According to Rhiannon Lloyd and Kristine Bresser (2001:13) “God’s glory is so vast that no single people group could reveal it. So God put a special

treasure into every ethnic group, intending that they develop their uniqueness. Each people group becomes one facet of a huge magnificent diamond”, (See Rev. 21:21-26). From an Africa it can be insightful to turn the attention to Jesus’ ethnicity and the way in which he dealt with it.

In the world today ethnic conflict is rampant. Lloyd and Bresser (2001:7) ask: “Is there any answer to all this pain?” They then come to the conclusion that “God has a strategy to use His church to the agents of healing and reconciliation in different nations” (Lloyd and Bresser, 2001:7). However, without a proper gaze on Christ, the church cannot accomplish much. According to Pope Benedict XVI (2007:xi), Jesus was: “a man living on earth who, fully human though he was, at the same time brought God to men [sic], the God with whom as Son he was one”. I contend that Jesus’ ethnic identity made him truly and fully available to his own people and their cultural heritage. Yet he also transcended ethnic and cultural boundaries, without negating them. Aylward Shorter (1998:7) points out that “our culture is part of human identity; our intimate aspect of what it means to be a human being”. Christ incarnate utilised even this human cultural identity to demonstrate its positive aspects, but also to provide an example of how people should approach different cultures.

A culture sensitive approach is described as follows by Shorter (1998:6) “Our first task in approaching another people, another culture; another religion is to take off our shoes, for the place we are approaching is holy”. This is the foundational basis for any authentic inculturation. Valuing other people’s cultural identity and respecting them for who they are, is a way of avoiding ethnic conflict. Jesus, born as a Hebrew man, “transcended the borders of his native faith so as to embrace all other human beings, beyond his own religious borders” (Pushparajan 2018:289). Pope Benedict XVI (2007:12) points out that where Jesus lived in the half-paganized province of Galilee, Israel was living once more: “in the darkness of divine absence; God is silent, seemingly forgetful of the promises to Abraham and David”. Jesus identified with this marginal ethnic group, but took the good news also to others – to all he encountered in his life on earth.

Ethnic division is a major obstacle to establishing sustainable peace in Africa in general. With the political violence that rocked Matabeleland in the 1980s the Ndebele culture and language were at stake. Peter Lwaminda (2001:251) laments

that “the wonderful values of ethnicity have, unfortunately, been turned into ethnocentric arrogance”. While this applies to almost the entire continent of Africa, it applies particularly to the context of Matabeleland. There systematic cultural desecration took place. Ethnicity became as it were a cause for conflict. Lwaminda (2001:251) sees ethnicity as a gift of God. It is the gift of dignity and constitutes a point of reference. However, in the south western region of Matabeleland there was a cultural invasion. The local cultures were treated with contempt by the “majority culture”. The victims have been effectively robbed of their true identity. This must be restored in order for them to heal and regain their dignity and confidence. Without the restoration of people’s cultural identity and values there can be no talk of an inculturated evangelisation. Uninculturated evangelisation loses touch with the intended recipients of the gospel. According to *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995:No. 62), inculturation “seeks to dispose people to receive Jesus Christ in an integral manner. It touches them on the personal, cultural, economic and political levels.” Each particular people group is has deep ties with its culture, traditions and values. This provides a framework for their self-understanding. In the words of Lwaminda (2001:251) the people of the south western Zimbabwe could as well exclaim that: “our cultures once contained and, in many cases still contain, wholesome values that were the mainstay of our honourable life”. *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995:No. 63) explains its stance with regard to ethnicity:

The new evangelization will thus aim at building up the Church as Family, avoiding all ethnocentrism and excessive particularism, trying instead to encourage reconciliation and true communion between different ethnic groups, favouring solidarity.

However, within the broader context of a nation, it is mostly minority ethnic groups that suffer and have the majority culture imposed on them. This causes feelings of alienation among minority groups. Hence the restoration and respect of their cultures could be an important step towards reconciliation and peace. The Pontifical Commission “*Iustitia et Pax*” (1988:12) warns that “tribal oppositions at times endanger if not peace, a least the pursuit of the common good of the society”. To a certain extent this is true in the Zimbabwean context. Ndebele-Shona ethnic tensions date back to pre-colonial times, although this view is debatable. It is, however,

necessary to understand the history of the region in order to understand the social, economic and political dynamics. Pope John Paul II, in his work, *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995:No. 49), points out that the various forms of division can only be healed through honest dialogue. This goes for all of Africa, but applies particularly to the context of Zimbabwe where ethnicity or tribal affiliation is perceived in a negative light. However, Mhlanga (2013:2) sees ethnicity simply as “a social variable and natural form of group identity in which belonging is shared in the vein of descent, tradition and culture”. Nonetheless, it is a question that has to be dealt with in the interest of present and future peace and harmony.

Since Africa is largely home to Christianity, the Church cannot but rise to the challenge of ethnic conflict. Casey (2004:2) points out that “Jesus of Nazareth was a man who lived and died; he belonged to a particular family, was formed in a particular culture”. Yet he interacted with all who came to him, including women, Romans and Samaritans. None of these groups were readily accepted by Israelite males. PCJP (2004: No. 431) calls Jesus “the prototype and foundation of the new humanity”. In his ministry Jesus embraced and had equal regard for non-Israelite people. Yet according to Bennet (2006:44) Jesus, “like the prophets of old was deeply immersed in the struggles, pain, hope and joy of his Israelite people”. He was determined to engage with the struggles of his own people yet without the exclusion of others. Pope Francis, in his Apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii gaudium* (2013:no. 3), emphasises that “no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord”. The mission of the Church is to be the channel of that joy to all people and particularly those living under the bondage of marginalisation and oppression.

By becoming human, Jesus shared in the history of humanity and shared in its identity. The letter to the Hebrews (2:14) puts it as follows: “Now since the children share in blood and flesh, he [Jesus] likewise shared in them, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death; that is the devil”. Jesus came to the “province of humans” in humility and immersed himself within a particular people, their culture, their traditions, and their language as a sign of respect and acceptance. According to Orobator (2008:118), “the origin of inculturation goes back to the debate over the relationship between the Christian message and people’s cultures”. This may suggest that a people without a culture through which their true identity can

be gleaned cannot profitably encounter others or dialogue with the Christian message. This would then be because they have no basis on which to build authentic relationships with others. The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (2004:No. 185) states that “it is impossible to promote the dignity of the person without showing concern for the family, groups, associations, local territories”. In Africa people live in villages and communities that distinguish them as belonging to a common tribe, culture and language not in an exclusionist fashion but as something that naturally serves their common identity. According to Peter Kanyandogo (2001:95):

Culture and history are essential for the realisation of the humanity of a given people and for their survival and well-being. The realisation of a people’s humanity also presupposes that they have material means for ensuring their survival.

Therefore, depriving a people of these essentials is to stifle their growth and reject their being. Such deprivation does not serve justice and peace. It is then part of the task of the Church to come up with pastoral strategies to restore these essential values. The Church in Africa has assumed the model of a family. A common culture and history are shared within a family in a given geographical space and environment. This sharing derives from family units who own land and livestock from which they make a living. According to Orobator (2008:87), it is important to note that “the model of Church as family is not just a theological utopia. It has many pastoral applications and implications ... There is a home and place of belonging for everyone in the extended family of God, from nobody is excluded”. Within these smaller units of families, villages and communities people exercise greater care in sharing their common resources and there is seldom any conflict.

#### **4.7 Addressing political and socio-economic challenges**

The lack of meaningful development in Matabeleland is evidence to marginalisation. This, however, is denied by the Zimbabwean government. For the Church this means that, since the Second Vatican Council, there has been “an increasing awareness that living out this gospel value must include changing the situations which create poverty and injustice” (Merrienboer 1993:181). Pope John XXIII, in his encyclical, *Mater et magistra (On social progress)* (1961) emphasises that “the State,

whose purpose is the realization of the common good in the temporal order, can by no means disregard the economic activity of its citizens". It is my contention that where such "disregard" has occurred the need is for special advocacy and the principle of subsidiarity applied. According to William Cavanaugh (2015:97), this principle "states that social problems should be addressed at the lowest level at which they can be addressed effectively". What is therefore needed is extensive engagement and dialogue regarding the issues. This constitutes the prophetic role of the Church.

At the basis of it all there is need for recognition that the people of Matabeleland, who were part of the resistance against colonialism and were nationalist, deserve as similar political, cultural and socio-economic progress and development. Campbell (2003:272) points out, however, that: "the levels of violence in Matabeleland between 1981 and 1983 permanently alienated a large section of the population from political leadership in Harare". Political leadership could not have been excluded without a negative impact on the cultural and socio-economic development. The major point of contention is the political and socio-economic injustice and inequality with regard to the distribution of economic goods. It is in the circumstances such as where David Schindler (2015:80) sees the place of theology:

Recovery of the place of metaphysics and theology, especially in their integrative capacities in the realization of wisdom and as themselves integrated by love, 'is indispensable if we are to succeed in adequately weighing all the elements involved in the question of development and in the solution of socio-economic problems' (CV, no. 31).

To apply such a reflection to the context of Matabeleland requires a strong commitment to justice. According to Gregory Polan (2005:510), we see "in the Bible, the covenant relationship that the people have with God is the basis of the responsibility of justice that they have towards each other. Human justice is a mirror of divine justice". The Church's ministry should focus on the needs of the poor and the oppressed. In light of the gospels, Merrienboer (1993:179) points out that "God's care extends to even the birds and flowers, indeed all creation, but is even greater for humanity". The message of God's loving care must part of pastoral preaching. Albert Harrill (2005:515) also points out that "from the early Jesus movement, some

early Christian preaching taught concern for the less fortunate in society”, the poor and the marginalised. Inequality in terms of development could be serious source of conflict and get in the way of peace and reconciliation. According to Dale Launderville (2005:709) the view is that “in conflict situations, the well-being (shalom) of an individual or of one group or nation is perceived to be at odds with the well-being of another”. The reason for raising this question of political, cultural and socio-economic injustice in Matabeleland is not to offer technical solutions, but to advocate for justice, peace and reconciliation. According to Bennet (2006:71), the understanding is that: “all people have a right to participate in the economic, political, and cultural life of their nation. It is wrong for any person, group, or political elite to unfairly exclude others from participating matters that affect their lives”. By and large the people of the south western region have been denied full participation. Should they be emancipated, their political, cultural and socio-economic situation can improve. This could lead to solidarity and peace. The principles of solidarity, subsidiarity and common good are realistic and applicable in the context. The *CSDC* (2004:No. 248) describes the relationship between solidarity and economic wellbeing as follows:

The relationship existing between the family and economic life is particularly significant ... The family, therefore, must rightly be seen as an essential agent of economic life, guided not by the market mentality but by the logic of sharing and solidarity among generations.

The exclusion of any people group of people from mainstream of politics and socio-economic development has dire implications for families. Many post-colonial governments have maintained colonial systems that deprive local communities, based on their tribal bias. Minority groups in different regions of particular countries are more often denied access to benefits from their own local resources, employment opportunities, and opportunities for education. If development projects do exist, they are run by outsiders. Government positions are taken up by the majority ethnic group. In such cases there is no equality or subsidiarity. Himes (2013:212) explains the principle of subsidiarity as follows:

Subsidiarity maintains that the state’s role is to help these smaller communities achieve their proper aim whenever they are unable (or

unwilling) to make their distinct contribution to the overall well-being of the person or the larger community.

This principle gives precedence to local management of economies for the benefit of the locals. Hence when the central government fails to recognise this, loots resources and prevents the local people from gaining employment, it operates similar to colonial regimes. In this respect, in the spirit of creating harmony, according to the CSDC (2004:no. 187) subsidiarity relates to “respect and effective promotion of the human person ... safeguarding human rights and the rights of minorities ... making citizens more responsible in actively ‘being a part’ of the political and social reality of their country”. Ultimately the effect of such a practice is participation and sense of solidarity. According to the CSDC (2004:no. 189), participation entails that citizens individually or collectively “whether directly or through representation, contribute to the cultural, economic, political and social life of the civil community to which he/she belongs”. Such practice could lead to greater unity in the country and foster a common vision of the common good.

The Church in practical theological conversation cannot ignore the anthropological dimension of the matter. A practical pastoral ministry of care has a holistic approach to human being. According to Kanyandogo (2001:117), theologising should address “the conditions for the promotion of humanity in its historical, material and cultural aspects”. This, in turn, serves justice and peace. Pope Benedict XVI in his Apostolic exhortation, *Africae munus* (2011:no. 2) foresaw that this would “rekindle our faith and hope, so as to help build a reconciled Africa by pursuing the paths of truth and justice, love and peace (cf. Ps 85:11)”. This is a much needed activity of the Church in the context of Zimbabwe, and also elsewhere in the world where similar conditions of injustice prevail. Wadell (2005:519) suggests that: “justice is not only a cardinal virtue, but is also ‘constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel’ by structuring a world that keeps us from being one”. Thus promoting equal participation in the sphere of political, cultural and socio-economic development enhances the prospect of peace and harmony. Justice is impossible unless all men and women are equally regarded as brothers and sisters, not outsiders or strangers but members of the family of God (Wadell 2005:517). This impels the conversation to consider the most elementary aspect of evangelisation: reconciliation.

## 4.8 Jesus, reconciliation and peace

The aim of the Church's work is to establish God's reign in this world. Upon reflection, a major import that could project the world towards the establishment of God's reign is the love of, first, God himself and the finally, the neighbour. However, "[o]ur capacity to love our neighbour is diminished because we don't do such a good job of loving ourselves" (Catherine Whitmire, 2007:35). This has further usurped humanity's ability to live with broken and unreconciled relationships; a threat to peace and harmony. Nonetheless, the important thing is to realise and accept God's own love for this world and his people. Hence "God loves us, understands our struggles, and calls us to love ourselves for who we are – imperfect but precious instruments of peace" (Whitmire, 2007:34). His desire is a world characterised by peace in the sense of the Hebrew word, *shalom*. At the centre of Jesus' ministry was reconciliation and peace. The way in which he went about it, serves as an example for the Church today. Bevans and Schroeder (2004:390-391) explains the role of the church as follows: "In the midst of unspeakable violence, unbearable pain and indelible scars on people's memory, the church as God's minister of reconciliation proclaims that in Christ and in his community, healing is possible". If the issue of Zimbabwe's legacy of violence is seen in perspective the church's call to practice a ministry of reconciliation and peace is abiding. Chung (2004:239) acknowledges that there was already tension between major players during the liberation struggle. Those differences became more accentuated after the first decade of independence. They resulted in the massacres in Matabeleland. This had adverse consequences for political, cultural and socio-economic development. To this day that brutality has not yet been accounted for. The quest for justice is on a steady rise. However, there have also been other incidences of political violence across the country. The call for reconciliation and peace is coming from a broader base, it is no longer a sectarian issue confined to Matabeleland though it was much worse there.

Himes (2013:331) describes the peace of *shalom* as "a state of abundance wherein all members of the community are able to enter into shared life that is materially adequate, spiritually rich, and relationally satisfying". It is therefore worth reflecting on and to engage efforts of reconciliation and peace. Joy Carol (2002:11) warns that, "if we hang on to old emotional, social, or political wounds, we may continue to re-

injure ourselves and live with a very limited sense of self'. In Christ God desired reconciliation of humanity with God and with itself. Shaj George Kochuthara (2018:337) points out that the "experience of the mercy and forgiveness of God calls us to forgive and to be merciful towards others, whether they are Christians or not". Thus forgiveness, mercy, healing and reconciliation lie at the heart of Christian message that extends to both the offender and the offended. Duffy (2011:830) admits that "reconciliation is a complex biblical term which includes God's invitation and our response to ongoing conversion within a community of faith". Indeed it is at the heart of God's relationship with his people, and crucial in people's relationships with one another. In the context of fractured relationships on whatever basis, reconciliation plays a pivotal role in mending such relationships. Kochuthara (2018:338) points out that "only the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation can heal the wounds of hatred and vengeance". History and daily experiences reveal that Zimbabwe is a fractured nation which is in dire need of reconciliation and peace.

The Church, in carrying out its ministry of reconciliation and peace, can alleviate the burden of trauma and suffering. Duffy (2011:830) points out that "reconciliation to God and the church is worked out in human situation. This complex situation includes both pastoral practice and the particular social context in which Christians find themselves". Its process implies a search for peace and its realisation the establishment of peace. Judith Dwyer (2011:749) puts it as follows: "For a people of faith, peace implies a right relationship with God, which entails forgiveness, reconciliation, and union". Peace is integral to human progress and development and so it must be established. It calls the Church to action where there is no peace or development. Dwyer (2011:752) describes development for a holistic perspective:

Authentic development, a complete and integral development which promotes the good of the whole person, of every human being, and society as a whole, eliminates excessive economic, social, and cultural inequalities, thereby providing a solid foundation upon which humanity can construct a true peace.

According to Swan (2006:49), Jesus presented himself as a person "whose whole disposition was towards mercy, forgiveness and non-violent resolution of conflict, yet who died by capital punishment". Zimbabwe desperately needs reconciliation. It

waged the liberation struggle in a fragmented fashion, characterised by conflicts and divisions between the liberation movements. All attempts and efforts to unite both during the war of independence and in post-independence period were fruitless. This culminated in the massacres of the 1980s, which has caused a seemingly permanent division in the country. Survivor-victims remain traumatised and unable to move on with their lives. In the absence a willingness to deal with these issues by those who were complicit, forgiveness and healing remain a priority. Jankelevitch (2005:106) argues that, “when a crime can neither be justified, nor explained ... when the atrocity has neither mitigating circumstances, nor excuses of any sort ... then there is no longer anything else to do but to forgive”. Nonetheless, there no pretence that forgiveness can heal the deep pain. However, it can ease the burden somewhat.

Reconciliation and peace have become rather elusive due to a lack of political will. In such circumstances the ministry of reconciliation and peace is placed squarely on the church and its prophetic mission. Determination and courage are needed to bring hope to a fairly hopeless situation. Jesus’ ministry is the example of how to focus on healing ministry. His life was given for reconciliation. In the context of hopelessness, John Paul II in his Apostolic letter, *Novo millennio ineunte* (2000:no. 1) describes the Church’s journey as follows:

A new stage of the Church’s journey begins, our hearts ring out with the words of Jesus when one day, after speaking to the crowds from Simon’s boat, he invited the Apostle to ‘put out into the deep’ for a catch: ‘Duc in altum’ (Lk 5:4). Peter and his first companions trusted Christ’s words, and cast the nets. ‘When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish’ (Lk 5:6).

In a context of great hopelessness and discouragement, the Church has an inordinately great task. A major stumbling block is the pervasive attitude that dichotomises the spiritual and the secular, and keeps apart aspects of life in the world. Lobo (2018:243) calls it “an imposed discontinuity between the ‘spiritual’ and the ‘secular’ and a misguided valuing of the former over the latter; uprooting of theology and spirituality from their historical and socio-political soil, and so on”. This tendency of viewing the world thus can only be overcome when Christians realise

that the world and all that is in it are God's creation and need God as well. According to Pope Benedict XVI, in his *Africae Munus* (2011:no. 14), it is necessary "to discern the principal parameters of mission for an Africa that seeks reconciliation, justice and peace. It falls to the particular Churches to translate these parameters into 'resolutions and guidelines for action'". Therefore the basic need is that practical theological reflection will result in pastoral strategies that can enhance the prospects of reconciliation and peace. Wadell (2005:713) puts it as follows: "If the original intention of God was to fashion a universe in which human beings were to live in harmony with one another and the rest of creation, then the strategy of peace is to achieve reconciliation in which that original harmony is restored". The mission of reconciliation must begin with the people of Matabeleland; must be encouraged and take root in the families, Church associations, missions and parishes.

Teaching reconciliation and forgiveness from the grassroots up, could result in healing. Parker (2001:83) points out that "the process of reconciliation most truly begins with the victim: the perpetrator cannot set the pace for his or her own forgiveness". Reconciliation is a very difficult process. It will require time for preparation and laying ground rules, because of the sensitivity of the issues involved. I concur with Lloyd and Bresser (2001:27) that "reconciliation cannot be achieved without the offended first being free to forgive, yet it is very difficult to forgive while the heart is full of pain". The Church, through its ministry of reconciliation and forgiveness could create conditions for making it possible.

Bevans (2014:256) points out that: "Jesus' ministry reveals in his own practice the practice of God. Jesus proclaims God's message of acceptance, forgiveness, reconciling, inclusion, and commitment to justice ('good news to the poor')." This is utterly relevant in a context of political, cultural and socio-economic injustice. In the context that is investigated in this study, however, "the enormity of the misdeeds that we experience today is so great that it overwhelms the human imagination to consider how they can be overcome" (Kaggwa 2005:208). Reconciliation and forgiveness are deeply theological concepts and their truest origin and value is manifest in the person and life of Jesus who reunites God and humanity. According to Wilfrid McGreal (2005:224), "the richness and the surprising newness of God as revealed in Jesus Christ reminds us that our Christian life is not about having the

answer to everything but about our openness to transformation". The real answer lies in submission to Jesus as the source of forgiveness, reconciliation and healing and the pastoral methods need to be oriented to this understanding. Wadell (2005:714) points out that God's intention is the restoration of *shalom*. Therefore the primary mission of the Church is to be a faithful community that mediates that healing, reconciling love to the world. Bevans (2014:255) puts it as follows: "What God does, as we know from history of salvation, is to seek relationship, to draw humanity into communion with Godself and one another". This means that the Church, all its members individually and collectively, has a mandate to fulfil this role and bring people closer to God. For Wadell (2005:519) "salvation is carried forward through human agency because when we act justly we become God's instruments in the re-creation of the world". The Church should be a channel of human wholeness: bringing Christ's reconciliation, forgiveness and healing to bear on the context of suffering and pain. For Charles Rensburg (2005:24), healing is brought about by the participation of the community who love and support the victim-survivors to re-claim their dignity as human beings. The involvement of the community requires certain organisational structures to support the processes that will be undertaken.

#### **4.9 Jesus' commitment to God's reign**

The mystery of the incarnation reflects the face of God who seeks communion with humanity and the entire creation. It must be further stated that Jesus as the second person of the Trinity draws from that unity of the One Godhead. His own person is relational to the One Godhead not seeking his will but of the Father. In the gospel of Matthew (6:33) Jesus exhorts his disciples as follows: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides". In the context of conflicts and divisions, lack of social progress and development, it is only by the proclamation of God's kingdom that these could be banished and human flourishing can become possible. In the encyclical, *Caritas veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI emphasises that Jesus Christ "is indeed the very face of social progress that our world needs so badly" (see Finn 2015:ix). In a sense the world cannot look away from Jesus Christ and still hope for better times to come. Jesus' preaching ministry was shaped by the task to proclaiming the reign of God (Merriënboer 1993:178). This commitment of Jesus to establish God's reign is the same commitment required

of the church, and all Christian believers individually and collectively. Benedict Viviano (1988:29) puts it as follows:

The Kingdom is political, it is social (that is, it includes peace and justice without which there is no true holiness), it is personalistic, giving eternal meaning to the individual person, and it is universal, embracing all men and women and the entire cosmos.

According to *Caritas Internationalis* (2002:3), the social teaching of the Church's vision is "a civilisation of love, a vision of a world which reflects the Reign of God and where justice, peace, truth, freedom and solidarity prevail". This vision should be foundational in the practice of a pastoral ministry of care. It should be an adoption and adaptation of Christ's own commitment to establishing God's reign in the world. Merrienboer (1993:179) puts it as follows: "The preacher's objective is to enhance each Christian's ability to participate in that 'hopeful' prayer, longing and hastening struggle in the context of their given vocation". This recalls Jesus' call in Matthew (6:33) when he urged his followers to "seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides". This remains the call to humanity also in contemporary times.

The theme of establishing God's kingdom reverberates throughout the New Testament. It resonates with the entire mission of Jesus and his commissioning of the apostles. Donald Senior (2011:851) points out that, "in the Synoptic Gospels [the kingdom] remains a central theological symbol through which major dimensions of Jesus' teaching and ministry are to be understood". The commitment is to establishment of God's kingdom. For Smith (1995:209) "there is no ministry in the Church other than Christ's ministry". Jesus, as the second person of the Trinity, shows the world the face of that God who longs for deeper relations in and with humanity. For Stephen Bevans (2014) "mission is trinitarian practice: this is a core understanding that connects missiology and practical theology". As a community of faith, the Church should become a true sacrament of the Triune God. Jeannine Gramick (2005:233) wishes the Church to be more human and pastoral, so that the institution can become more of a conduit of God's love for all creation. Such a "more human" face also needs a passion for pastoral ministry. Only when reflecting on both Jesus' own humanity and his ministry, can humanity's true sense of humanness be

rediscovered. Diarmuid O'Murchu (2005:156) points out that "Jesus was committed to a whole new way of being in the world and relating to it in terms of justice, love, liberation and compassion". Pope Benedict XVI (2011:no. 11) also emphasises *dialogue* as a solution to African problems:

In this anthropological crisis which the African continent is facing, paths of hope will be discovered by fostering dialogue among members of its constituent religious, social, political, economic, cultural and scientific communities.

Thus in order to be fruitful, pastoral ministry has to be dialogical and engage in conversation within a given context. Only then can it appreciate the actual needs. This requires listening according to the "see judge act" model.

Chapter three explored whether the Church has a *locus standi* with regard to social issues. Matters concerning the welfare of humanity evoke a response from the Church. The Church should be willing to enter into a dialogue wherever this is needed. According to Moody (1992:7), "the Church fulfils its nature as the sacrament of God's presence by pointing to his presence and celebrating it in all its human manifestations, individual and corporate". For the Church to respond meaningfully to the plight of the world, it is important to firstly understand the person of Jesus as simultaneously fully human and fully divine, and secondly understand his mission as liberative and salvific. Casey (2004:viii) emphasises that, "by pondering the humanity of Jesus, we can learn to accept ourselves as human and to admit that through God's grace it is possible for us to live and act as he did-to be perfect, as God our Father is perfect". The human person is at the centre of God's work of salvation. Upon reflection the mystery of incarnation is God's own model of engagement with the world; his own model and method of dialoguing with the world and its human family. Jesus' journey to Emmaus in the company of two disappointed believers reflects a God who accompanies God's people in their moment of desperation. George Ayyaneth (2018:159) explains it as follows:

In his very act of incarnation, in his teaching, in his preferential for the poor, downtrodden, oppressed, and neglected, in his choice of death on the cross, and even in his compassionate presence at the glorified state of resurrection [e.g. as a fellow-traveller on the road to Emmaus (Lk

24:13-35) as a cook preparing breakfast for the hungry disciples at the seashore (Jn 21:1-14), as a close friend of doubting Thomas (Jn 20:24-29), etc. shows plainly the human face of Jesus.

The sensitivity which is reflected here shows Christ's truly human heart; open to human needs, and therefore authentically relevant in the context of Zimbabwe and particularly in Matabeleland. Christoph Cardinal Schonborn (2004:214) argues that "without a deepening of the mystery of his human heart, the contemplation of the aspects of Jesus' humanity is incomplete". As such there is no human situation, no matter its gravity, where Christ in his humanity could remain aloof and unfeeling. *Gaudium et spes* (1966:no. 22) expounds even more strongly that "he worked with human hands, he thought with a human mind, acted by human choice, and loved with a human heart". No human situation or condition could be alien to him; his proximity to human contexts of need is testimony to his undying love for human beings. According to Cervantes et al (2014:174), "the local church is being recalled to a real rather than theoretical concern for those on the margins of society". The Church cannot remain unmoved by sensitive issues of humans. Paulo Fernando Carneiro de Andrade (2015:186) puts it as follows:

The most tragic thing in all this is that indifference and refusal to seek out any sense or meaning for experience and human life ultimately produces an existential degradation, associated with an impoverishment of the imaginary and retraction of desire.

This kills any urge for action for the emancipation of those victimised by the situation. In the context that is explored in this study, "indifference" on the part of the authorities is leading to a sense of negativity on the part of the people of Matabeleland. The sooner these issues are addressed, the better for the future of the country. Pope Paul VI in his encyclical, *Octogesima adveniens* (1971:no. 48) articulates a two-pronged approach the Church can follow as it engages in the social sphere:

In the social sphere, the Church has always wished to assume a double function: first to enlighten minds in order to assist them to discover the truth and to find the right path to follow amid the different teachings that

call for their attention; and secondly to take part in action and to spread, with a real care for service and effectiveness, the energies of the Gospel.

The Church's mission is, among other things, also to formulate strategies for engagement in order to respond more meaningfully to social contexts of need. This expresses the Church's sense of commitment to improving the social world of people and promoting the inclusion of those who feel excluded. According to Thomas Groome (2014:281) practical theology "surely intends people to have knowledge ... and yet that is praxis-conscious and so appropriated as to reach beyond itself toward practical wisdom and the know-how to render ministry or service". The focus of the study is to grapple with issues of injustice as explored and examined a living faith perspective in the existential context. In Hinze's (2014:236) view "the truth of the gospel is made manifest not only in scripture and liturgy, but also in the words, deeds, and practices of individuals and communities". Hence reflections upon such practices as pastoral ministry and care can have a bearing on the circumstances and influence positive change. Among these practices, dialogue is of great importance. The application of the Church's social teaching to practice can bring about a paradigm shift. Such application derives from the person and ministry of Jesus, the prophet, healer and reconciler.

Parker (2001:48) points out that preaching the gospel and hoping that people will understand, is not sufficient. Every group of people will receive it in their own context and colour the message with their own meanings. In order for the Church to make sense of the people's experiences they should enter into constructive dialogue with them. Dialogue will involve a great deal of listening to their stories and searching for solutions with them. Believers should understand the implications of their faith in the real existential circumstances of their lives in the communities in which they live. According to Cahalan and Froehle (2014:29), "practice has always been integral to lived Christian faith, a theology developed precisely to define an understanding of faith in which practice takes place". Of Jesus Christ, Pagola (2012:15) states that "probably no one has had such power over human hearts; no one has expressed human concerns and questions as he did; no one has awakened so many hopes". Yet he assigned his followers to do the same. The church in general has the mandate to be and remain a source of hope.

A pastoral ministry of care that is motivated by this conviction becomes liberative in resonance with Christ's ministry. I concur with Pagola (2012) "that Jesus is the best we have in the Church and the best we can offer today to modern society", especially in the face of injustice. Coming to the question of a pastoral care response in the context of political, cultural and socio-economic injustice in Matabeleland, Pope John Paul II's *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (I will give you shepherds) can be fruitfully revisited. In *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (1992:no. 6) he explains:

Despite many contradictions, society is increasingly witnessing a powerful thirst for justice and peace, a more lively sense that humanity must care for creation and respect nature, a more open search for truth, a greater effort to safeguard human dignity, a growing commitment in many sectors of the world population to more specific international solidarity and a new ordering of the world in freedom and justice.

The mission of Jesus that is taken further by the church and all of Jesus' faithful followers requires that a stand be taken against injustice. Through a pastoral ministry of care that is adapted to the context at hand, the church can contribute to peace and reconciliation. This can also be the case in the context of Zimbabwe and countries with circumstances. The ministry of the church is universal.

#### **4.10 Conclusion**

In concluding this chapter, it has become clear that the context investigated in this study requires a pastoral ministry of care that pays close attention to the dynamics of the context. A pastoral ministry of care can take its cue from the person and work of Jesus, the incarnate Christ. This chapter has offered reflections on the various facets of Jesus' ministry of care. It has shown why Christian believers, in their search for solutions, must be linked to the person of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. He is the epitome and epicentre of the entire mission and ministry of the church and a point of reference for all theological reflection.

## CHAPTER 5

### FINDINGS

In the presentation of the findings of this study the particular strands of the investigation will now be woven together: human history and the church; politics and theology; the spiritual and lived reality. The subject at hand has been the issue of injustice in the context of Zimbabwe with special reference to Matabeleland. In this regard the study recognises that many of these political, cultural and socio-economic issues of injustice are a shared concern across the continent of Africa and other regions of the world. The subject, therefore, cannot be dealt with in isolation. The finding is that there are indeed serious issues of injustice that require methods to handle them in a manner that will yield positive results for the common good of the people and for peace to prevail in the country.

Each chapter views the challenges that were identified in the first chapter, from a different perspective. The challenges are to be found on a political, cultural and socio-economic level. The challenges are particularly pressing in the region of Matabeleland. The body of literature that was reviewed reflects an abundance of documented sources that point to the past and prevailing injustice in the region. Suffering among people calls for a pastoral response. In order for an in-depth exploration of the matter, historical narratives are an important component of the investigation.

The second chapter presents a critical historical overview of the context. Three major periods in the history of Zimbabwe are identified as sources of the problems of ethnic-political conflict in Zimbabwe. Firstly, the pre-colonial era is dealt with, however, not in detail. The main objective is to identify those aspects that led to ethnic tension between the Ndebele-speaking and the Shona-speaking peoples. The coming in of the Ndebele people from the south over the Limpopo in the 19<sup>th</sup> century coincided with the social upheaval of *Umfecane* which rocked the entire southern region of Africa. Entering into the territory now known as Zimbabwe, they encountered the fragmented Shona speaking groups, who were not known as Shona at the time. The Ndebele possessed military prowess against which the local Shona and the Kalanga people could not protect themselves. These groups were not able

to fight the newly established state of the Ndebele, but they did launch occasional counter-attacks. The Ndebele carried out raids in the territories inhabited by the Shona groups. The Ndebele state did not, however, have a consistent policy of raiding and looting the Shona groups. Some Shona chiefdoms actually existed peacefully with the Ndebele as tributaries exchanging cattle and human resources. Many Shona people were incorporated into the Ndebele state either by means of coercion or voluntarily. Those who did so voluntarily sought protection from other rivals.

Those aspects that created, promoted and still perpetuate the constant Ndebele-Shona rivalry were investigated in order to gain a greater depth of understanding of the situation today. Only with a deeper understanding will it be possible to devise effective strategies for healing the past and present. The investigation focused on the three major historical periods which, according to the Zimbabwean Catholic bishops, can be seen as the main source of the present-day political-ethnic conflict. The conflict predates the colonial era. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was much social upheaval (*Umfecane*) as the Ndebele used their superior military power to attack and subdue some Shona groups. At first the Shona people were not a unified group but consisted of different chiefdoms that constantly fought each other. When the Ndebele who were fleeing Shaka Zulu in the south, arrived, the weaker groups of Shona people suffered pillage, defeat and raids. The investigation has shown that these cannot be regarded as “tribal wars”. The battles were not fought on the basis of ethnic hatred. The conflict was an attempt to assert power and procure control over resources such as land, livestock and people. These were survival strategies rather than conflict born of ethnic hatred.

The critical review of the existing literature exposed the agenda of the historians who documented the history of the region. In their interpretation of historical events they justified the colonial aims on which European had agreed at the Berlin Conference in 1884. Existing conflicts among indigenous African groups served the interests of the agenda of colonisation. This was also the case with the conflict between the Ndebele and Shona people. The more powerful African kingdoms such as the Ndebele could resist colonial power more effectively than the smaller groups, which made it difficult for the colonisers to reach their goal. Their tactic was one of divide and rule. They

spurred on the division among the groups and named it “tribalism”. In Zimbabwe protection against their historical Ndebele foe was promised to the Shona people. However, once the conquest of the Ndebele was achieved, the Shona people were not protected or rewarded. They became subject to the same ill-treatment as the Ndebele.

Historical narratives written by the agents of colonialism remain the bulk of the available literature. This “history” is taught in schools. The study has shown that Africa everywhere is still to a large extent drinking from a poisoned historical cup. Though “tribalism” was not the reason for historical conflict among peoples, the division that has been propagated by these historical accounts, have succeeded in entrenching “tribalism” as the reason for division and hatred. Africa has learnt to hate itself. This presents a major obstacle to the aim of forgiveness, reconciliation, unity and nation building. Africa needs to heal itself in order to move on. The ancient wars now named “tribal wars of hatred” have cast their long shadow into the present and Africa has become self-imprisoned. Such are the trappings of colonial histories. The 1994 Rwandan genocide, for example, was fuelled by the elite and politicians who manipulated “knowledge of history” for their own political expediency. In this way they too followed a “divide and conquer” strategy by setting their own people against one another. This was a strategy for their enrichment.

The Roman Catholic Church and other Christian denominations have been in Africa since colonial times. The churches have lived through the various eras with the people. They had to negotiate their relationship with the ruling powers. This study focuses particularly on the role of the Roman Catholic Church. The role of the churches was ambiguous. The missionaries often mediated the deceptive concessions that were signed by illiterate African rulers. In this way the missionaries and the role they played, contributed to the annihilation of the Ndebele state.

Ndebele-Shona “tribal” hostilities, mainly a historical construct by colonialists whose strategy was to divide and rule, worked to the advantage of the colonialist agenda. The rise of nationalism was another significant aspect in the formation of the current situation. Both the Shona and the Matabele people had fought the invaders, but they were no military match for the colonial powers and had to accept being colonised. In response to the excesses of colonial rule a revolt was staged. This would lead to the

birth of nationalism. Nationalist aspirations had the potential to bring the two hostile groups together. It is their yearning for “better times” that spurred the rise of nationalism. Ethnicity took a back seat to these aspirations because something greater was at stake. Colonial rule had to go. This could have provided a foundation for building one nation and securing a future.

After churches had initially aided colonial powers, they later saw and criticised the excesses of colonial rule and their exploitation of the indigenous people. In this the Roman Catholic Church particularly played an important role. Through its Commission of Justice and Peace the bishops of the Church supported the nationalist cause. The prophetic voice of the Church was heard much to the disdain of the colonial regime. During this period some missionaries were deported.

However, in the liberation struggle that at first had united people behind a common cause, tribalism soon became a problem and split the liberation movement. Ethnicity was not the sole reason for the split of Zapu into two, Zapu and Zanu, but it became an important catalyst, especially at the first national democratic plebiscite of 1980. The outcome of this important election was also divisive. Political, cultural and socio-economic processes were ethnicised. It was a challenge to integrate the two antagonistic guerrilla movements, Zipra and Zanla into one national army. The unleashing of the whole army, the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade, in Matabeleland was too excessive to be regarded as a “necessary counter-insurgency operation”. It can be seen as ethnic warfare against unarmed Ndebele civilians.

The Church had been closely following the political developments in the country. Just prior to independence the Church issued a statement to welcome the new nation. However, the undertone of fear of imminent violence could also be heard. Up to the deployment of the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade in Matabeleland numerous statements were issued by the Catholic bishops in which expressed their concern and urged for reconciliation and peace. Their voices were not heeded. Throughout the Church remained consistent in its message of justice and peace. At the centre of this was the late Archbishop Henry Karlen of Bulawayo in the heart of Matabeleland.

The signing of the Unity Accord in 1987 was an encouraging step. It brought an end to the extreme atrocities. However, the pact remained a political settlement and not

much else came of it. The victim-survivors of the massacres were left in the cold. There was no attempt at redress for the victims and also no attempt to investigate allegations of government-sponsored violence and torture. This has led to a sense of alienation of the people of Matabeleland. Political, cultural and socio-economic development also did not come to the region. This was experienced as deliberate marginalisation and ethnic domination and was called “internal colonialism”. The call for reconciliation, justice and peace is abiding in the interest of the future common good and peace.

As a theological study, the main question of this investigation is how a theological perspective and the practical work of the Church in the world can contribute positively to the lives of people in their concrete circumstances. Theology is seen in this study as “our word on God and about God”. Human beings seek an understanding of God as the source of their being and the creator of all that is. Theirs is a faith seeking understanding. Doing theology is grounded in Scripture, the fountain of “our word on God and about God”. All of this can remain theoretical if not contextualised in the concrete reality of human existence – how human beings believe that God relates to them in their social reality.

From the point of departure of the three major subdivisions of theology, namely “fundamental, systematic and practical theology”, this study is located in practical theology while remaining in conversation with fundamental and systematic theology. With regard to the investigation of the social context, social analysis, the pastoral circle and the see-act-judge method were utilised. Practical theology as an academic field links theory and practice, faith and context. From this point of view, practical theology provides practical models of engagement in any context of human existence. In this field theological reflection on social issues can find its place. A practical pastoral ministry of care is well located in practical theology. As a socio-practical theological analysis of social space it is in essence dialogical, conversational and relational.

In the particular context that is investigated in this study, the social teaching of the Roman Catholic Church with its a long history of practical involvement, forms the focus of the theological reflection. The role of the church has been prominent not only in this social context, but in a variety of contexts across the globe. With Claire

Wolfteich, this study sees in the church's social teaching and action an example of practical theology. In the immense body literature that articulates the social teaching of the Church, it becomes clear the Church has a special concern of the human wellbeing. Papal encyclicals and other social documents result from social engagement in a given context, an analysis of the situation and theological reflection on the particular context. The letters and documents are one form of pastoral action in response to difficult situations. The invaluable information and guidelines in the documents can be the foundation for further practical responses in contexts of need.

The social teaching of the Church is based on the inalienable value of life and human dignity, which is informed by the principle of the *imago Dei*. The quest for justice and peace as a human right is therefore central to its cause. This, in turn, links to morality and an ethical life. Justice and injustice relate to morality. Therefore, after the critical examination of the historical legacy of violence in the context of Zimbabwe, it was necessary to further explore the meaning of justice and its relationship with morality. I have submitted that these two concepts are central to human relations. Their absence calls for a response.

As a response to injustice a practical pastoral ministry of care was developed. Central to such a ministry is the mystery of incarnation. Reflection on Christ incarnate as God's "self-presencing" on the world stage of human history provides the framework for this practical ministry of care in contexts of injustice and suffering. Pastoral methods in response to difficult contexts can in this way be inspired and guided by Jesus' own ministry, his words and actions in a correspondingly difficult context. The mystery of the incarnation is about how Jesus Christ interfaces with humanity in its humanness. He sheds his light on Christian life and actions throughout the ages. His work is *the* example of a practical pastoral ministry of care.

In the context fraught with social injustice his mission was prophetic. In this regard the Church cannot but emulate Jesus' prophetic action. He too lived in a context where the issue of ethnicity – a central concern of the context investigated in this study – was a challenge. His actions embody respect for and acceptance of all. He is an example of how ethnicity as a constituent of identity should not be negated. It should, on the other hand, also not be elevated to a position where the own group is

seen as superior and therefore entitled to dominate, exploit, exclude or annihilate others.

In a context of dire political and socio-economic challenges, Jesus Christ can be seen and proclaimed as the defender of the poor and the marginalised. Those who follow in his footsteps will find their prophetic voice and engage in pastoral advocacy for the fair and just distribution of economic goods in the interest of solidarity and the common good. The early Jesus movement was known for caring for the less privileged in society. The emphasis was on the care for all, without exclusion.

The most challenging aspect of the case of Zimbabwe is the ongoing conflict. The legacy of violence has destroyed human relations. There is a need to bring about a sense of solidarity among the people. They can either continue to destroy, or they can work together in a concerted effort to create a safe space and wellbeing for all. The thrust of the life, teaching and actions of Jesus Christ can be summarised as reconciliation and peace. Zimbabwe will need a process of reconciliation before it will be at all possible to attain a modicum of peace. A practical pastoral ministry of care with Jesus Christ as example, can contribute to a new direction for the country – that of reconciliation, healing and a peaceful, respectful and inclusive mode of living together.

At the centre of a practical pastoral ministry of care is the commitment of Jesus Christ to establish the reign of God on earth. His mission was to reconcile humanity with God and with itself. God's reign is characterised by peace and love. The church in its pastoral practice aims at making God's reign a reality in this world. In God's kingdom human beings can embrace one another as an embodiment of God's own loving embrace. Such human action points to God's presence and celebrates it in all its human manifestations, individual and corporate. Churches can create pastoral interventions that could effectively respond to the needs of the people.

The healing of Zimbabwe requires the courage to face the uncomfortable truths of history and humanity. Then only can restoration, justice, reconciliation and peace become possible. The country needs equity and equilibrium in all spheres of life – politics, culture and socio-economic realities. The Church as an integral part of

society can, with its practical pastoral ministry of care, contribute toward healing, reconciliation, justice, peace and respect for all.

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