



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Denkleiers • Leading Minds • Dikgopolo tša Dihlalefi

KAIROS CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO THE ZIMBABWEAN CRISIS (2000-2013)

BY

KUDAKWASHE PARADZA

**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of
PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR (PhD)**

**Department of Systematic and Historical Theology
In the Faculty of Theology and Religion**

At the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Supervisor: Prof Vuyani Vellem
Co-Supervisor: Prof Stephan de Beer

2019

Table of Contents

Declarations	vi
Dedication.....	vii
Acknowledgements	viii
Abstract.....	ix
Abbreviations	xi
Glossary of Terms	xii
Key Terms	xiv
Chapter: 1	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background to the Problem	2
1.3 The Research Problem.....	18
1.4 Aim of the Study	19
1.5 Research Questions	19
1.6 Research Objectives	20
1.7 Methodology	20
1.8 Literature Review of the Study	22
1.8.1 An Analysis of Kairos Consciousness	23
1.8.2 Ecclesiology and the Zimbabwean Crisis	29
1.9 Limitations	31
1.10 Scope of the Study.....	32
1.10.1 Chapter One: Introduction.....	32
1.10.2 Chapter Two: Kairos Consciousness and the Ecclesiological Landscape in Zimbabwean.....	33
1.10.3 Chapter Three: Kairos Consciousness and Ecclesial Bodies in Zimbabwe	33
1.10.4 Chapter Four: Zimbabwean Ecclesiology Response to Crisis: A Critical Engagement.....	33
1.10.5 Chapter Five: Kairos Consciousness and Ubuntu	34
1.10.6 Chapter Six: Evaluation, Conclusion and Recommendations.....	34
Chapter 2	35
Kairos Consciousness and the Ecclesiological Landscape in Zimbabwe	35
2.1 Introduction.....	35
2.2 Setting the Scene	35
2.3 The Tenets of Kairos Consciousness.....	40
2.3.1 Liberation	41
2.3.2 Hermeneutics of Liberation.....	43
2.3.3 Discernment	45

2.3.4 Contextuality	47
2.3.5 An Analysis of the Framework	49
2.4. Kairos Consciousness and Ecclesiology	55
2.4.1 Ecclesiology: Historical and Theological Foundation.....	55
2.4.2 Ecclesiological Shifts and divisions	60
2.4.3 The Crisis of Reformation.....	62
2.4.4 Liberation Ecclesiology	65
2.4.5 Western Christian Missionaries in Zimbabwe	68
2.4.7 Kairos Consciousness and Zimbabwean Ecclesiology.....	72
2.5 Interface between Zimbabwean Ecclesiology and Liberation	83
Trajectories	83
2.5.1 Black Consciousness and Ecclesiology	83
2.5.2 New Consciousness Model of Ecclesiology	86
2.5.3 The Zimbabwean Kairos	87
2.5.4 Palestinian Kairos 2009	89
2.5.5 Ecumenical Movements.....	91
2.6 Ecclesiology and Liberation: An Appraisal.....	93
2.7 Conclusion	95
Chapter 3	96
Kairos Consciousness and Ecclesial Bodies in Zimbabwe	96
3.1 Introduction.....	96
3.2 Classification of Kairos Theologies	96
3.3 Christian Bodies in Zimbabwe: An Overview	100
3.3.1 The Zimbabwe Council Churches	101
3.3.2 Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop's Conference (ZCBC).....	104
3.3.3 Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe	106
3.3.4 African Initiated Churches	108
3.3.5 Heads of Christian Denominations (HOCD)	111
3.3.6 Prophetic Ecclesiology in Zimbabwe	113
3.4 Church-State Relations in Zimbabwe.....	115
3.4.1 Church-State: Exploiting Common Grounds	118
3.4.2 Kairos Moment for Ecclesiology in Zimbabwe	120
3.4.3 An Analysis of Three Fears: Okullu Model.....	123
3.5 Ecclesiology and Democratisation Processes in Zimbabwe.....	126
3.5.1 Ecclesiology and Justice	130
3.5.2 The Church and Bridge Building	132
3.5.3 Church and Nation Building	134

3.6	Limitations of the Contemporary Church.....	136
3.7	A Theodicy in Zimbabwean Society	137
3.8	Renaissance of the Prophetic Ecclesiology	140
3.9	Conclusion	143
Chapter 4		145
Zimbabwean Ecclesiology’s Response to Crisis: A Critical Engagement.....		145
4.1	Introduction.....	145
4.2	The Zimbabwean Crisis: An Overview	145
4.2.1	Historical Factors.....	148
4.2.3	Internal Factors.....	151
4.3	Consciousness of the Zimbabwean Ecclesiology.....	153
4.4	Land Revolution in Zimbabwe.....	156
4.4.1	The Framework of National Struggle: Chimurenga	157
4.4.2	The Third Chimurenga: Struggle Continues	158
4.4.3	Christian Response to the Land Reform	159
4.4.4	Limitations of the Land Reform.....	161
4.4.5	Christian Views on the Way Forward.....	163
4.5	Political Violence in Zimbabwe.....	165
4.5.1	Political Landscape	165
4.5.2	Media and violence	168
4.5.3	The Church’s Response to Violence.....	172
4.6	Critical Pastoral Letters and Discussion Documents.....	173
4.7	Murambatsvina (Operation Clean-up).....	175
4.7.1	Crisis of Conscience	177
4.8	Economic Meltdown in Zimbabwe	178
4.8.1	Impact of the Crisis on Marginalised Groups	179
4.8.2	Preferential Option for the Marginalised	181
4.9	The Dynamics of External Interference.....	182
4.10	Ecumenical Responses: A Critique	183
4.11	Conclusion	185
Chapter 5		186
Kairos Consciousness and Ubuntu.....		186
5.1	Introduction.....	186
5.2	Kairos Consciousness and Principles of Ubuntu	186
5.2.1	Dare Concept: “Consultative Discussion”	191
5.2.2	Eurocentric Ecclesiology and Ubuntu	195
5.2.3	Ecclesiology Role in Fostering Ubuntu	197

5.3 Ubuntu Consciousness towards Humanness.....	199
5.3.1 Kairos Consciousness, Ubuntu and the Marginalised Groups	201
5.4 Kairos Agenda, Ubuntu and Poverty.....	206
5.4.1 Ubuntu and Social Challenges in Zimbabwe	208
5.5 Kairos Consciousness and Political Space in Zimbabwe	210
5.5.1 Kairos consciousness and Political Tolerance	211
5.6 Ubuntu, Ecclesiology and Development	214
5.6.1 Kairos consciousness and Ecology.....	217
5.7 Re-aligning the Church to Kairos Agenda.....	220
5.8 Conclusion	222
Chapter 6	224
Evaluation, Conclusion and Recommendations	224
6.1 Introduction.....	224
6.2 Evaluation on Findings of the Study	224
6.2.1 Land Restoration: A Revolution Hijacked by Elites	225
6.2.2 Kairos Consciousness and Justice	226
6.2.3 The Culture of Violence.....	227
6.2.4 The Broken Zimbabwean Nation	228
6.2.5 The Efficacy of Christian Groupings.....	229
6.2.6 Economic Challenges	230
6.3 Conclusion and Way Forward.....	231
6.3.1 Land Restoration and Kairos Agenda.....	231
6.3.2 Ecclesiology with Kairos Consciousness.....	232
6.3.3 Aligning African Values and Ecclesiology.....	233
6.3.4 Kairos Consciousness, Conflict Resolution and Mediation.....	234
6.3.5 Kairos Consciousness and Non-violence.....	234
6.3.6 Kairos Consciousness and Interfaith Collaboration	235
6.3.7 Consciousness of Marginalised Groups.....	236
6.4 Concluding Reflections	237
References.....	239

Declarations

I declare that this Thesis, which I hereby submit for the Doctoral Degree at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previous been submitted by me for a degree at another university.

Signed:.....

(Kudakwashe Paradza)

Date:.....

Place: University of Pretoria

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my late and loving mother Evelyn, who sacrificed to make me what I am today. To my loving wife Demetria (*Umazikhali*) and our dearest daughters Mandie and Nyasha, my gratitude to you is better felt than expressed for the sacrifice you made towards for this accomplishment.

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to express my special gratitude and appreciation to my Supervisor, Professor Vuyani Vellem and Co-Supervisor Professor Stephan de Beer, whose expertise helped to ensure that this work meets the required standard. Indeed, they have become my academic mentors par excellence. Their critical insights and comments were quite important in shaping the direction of this study. It was through their tireless efforts, guidance, astuteness, corrections and expertise that I managed to produce this work. May the Lord bless him abundantly.

I want to recognise Adolf Garikai Gomwe, I do not know how to thank him fully for the time spent proofreading this pertinent work.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge the warmth of my immediate family. My wife Demetria and children Mandie and Nyasha who continued to be patient, loving when I sacrificed their precious time at the altar of my academia. Certainly, my sincere love to them is better felt than expressed.

Abstract

This study is based on the contemporary Christian Church's response to the Zimbabwean crisis for the period 2000 to 2013 through the lenses of Kairos Consciousness as articulated by Allan Boesak. The framework of this study constitutes a liberationist perspective and is, thus, armed with insights from liberation paradigm in its broadest sense analysing the significant role of the church in contemporary Zimbabwean society. The research was analysed through Kairos Consciousness which implies that the marginalised, the powerless, the ghetto people, the masses occupy the central epistemological space in this ecclesiological discourse. Further, Kairos consciousness is a liberationist framework of ecclesiology, when the church becomes the interlocutor and articulator identified and associated with non-persons and marginalised. Fundamentally, Kairos consciousness is probing liberationist questions as to what the church has not done in post-independent Zimbabwe. Crucially, this discourse is categorically liberationist, hence black liberation theology starts when there is pain, the cries of the voiceless, the impoverished, those who go to bed without a meal. This study strongly argues that Kairos Consciousness existed in Zimbabwe when the church joined the masses in the liberation struggle. The days when the church was called 'the church of the struggle in trenches and combat with the marginalised people'. The church actively participated in Chimurenga (armed struggle). However, the attainment of political independence silenced the prophetic voice of the church. Possibly, the black government partnered the church in coming up with a shared horizon on some post-armed struggle themes such as reconciliation, reconstruction, education, nation-building and peacebuilding. The research investigates the ambivalent that the

attainment of political independence also meant the emergence of the black elite, the minority who hold the epicentre of power and control of political and economic spaces at the expense of the majority impoverished. Hence, the Christian church rose from the slumber of silence to challenge this injustice. This thesis is developed in the context of the Zimbabwean ecclesiology as an appraisal to some action by the church as responsive to the crisis in Zimbabwe. In addition, the study also makes an in-depth analysis on what was behind the smokescreen in Zimbabwe, particularly the genesis of the *Third Chimurenga* (land restoration) in the year 2000, economic meltdown, *Operation Murambatsvina* (restore order), and political violence. These issues, in Zimbabwe, inevitably called for a critical engagement between ecclesiology and political discourses. Subsequently, the problem under spotlight has seen the political discourses calling the church to shy away from the public space, perpetuating a myth that the church must not be involved in politics. Crucially, the landmarks of the study are meant to realign our ecclesiologies to current conceptual challenges in Zimbabwe, a society broken by conflict and crisis. In other words, the Zimbabwean crisis calls for a church with Kairos Consciousness whose theological roadmap is based on the wounds, pain and dehumanisation of the marginalised. Therefore, the main thrust of the church brings the marginalised people to the centre and first business of its existence. Over and above all odds, this study also made a ground-breaking contribution to theology exploiting some possibilities to integrate the African philosophy of Ubuntu and ecclesiology in Zimbabwe as a positive move towards creating Africanness community promoting moral fibre and realigning a genuine African church.

Abbreviations

AICs:	African Initiated Churches.
AIDS:	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome.
AIPPA:	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
AFCAST:	African Forum for Social Teachings.
CCJPZ:	Catholic Commission for Peace and Justice in Zimbabwe.
CCSR:	Christian Council of Southern Rhodesia
CIO:	Central Intelligence Organisation
CIS:	Church in Society.
EFZ:	Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe.
GNU:	Government of National Unity
HIV:	Human Immune Virus.
HOCD:	Heads of Christian Denominations.
ICT:	Institute for Contextual Theology.
IMF:	International Monetary Fund
MDC:	Movement for Democratic Change.
POSA:	Public Order and Security Act
PF ZAPU	Patriotic Front Zimbabwe African People's Union
PJC:	Peace and Justice Commission.
SASO:	South African Student Organisations.
UDI:	Unilateral Declaration of Independence.
UCM:	University Christian Movement.
ZANU PF:	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front.
ZANLA:	Zimbabwe National Liberation Army
ZAOGA:	Zimbabwe Assemblies of God in Africa
ZBC:	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation
ZCBC:	Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference.
ZCC:	Zimbabwe Council of Churches.
ZIPRA:	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army

Glossary of Terms

<i>Aluta Continua:</i>	The struggle continues
<i>Badza :</i>	Hoe
<i>Batsira Vamwe:</i>	Help others
<i>Bofu:</i>	Blind
<i>Chimumumu:</i>	dumb
<i>Chematama:</i>	Fat cheeks
<i>Changamire:</i>	Leader
<i>Chimurenga:</i>	Struggle for liberation
<i>Dare raChangamire:</i>	Community assembly
<i>Dare reVapostori:</i>	Assembly in the AICs
<i>Dare remusha:</i>	Family gathering.
<i>Dare rechimurenga:</i>	Liberation Council
<i>Gukurahundi:</i>	The Rains that Clear the chaff
<i>Hoko:</i>	Pegging the land
<i>Hurema:</i>	Disability
<i>Husahwira:</i>	Friendship
<i>Inkundla:</i>	Arena
<i>Jambanja:</i>	Violence
<i>Kugarisana:</i>	Living in harmony/peaceful living
<i>Kunzwanana:</i>	Mutual respect
<i>Minamoto:</i>	Prayers
<i>Moyo murefu:</i>	Patience
<i>Munhu:</i>	A person
<i>Musha:</i>	Family home
<i>Murambatsvina:</i>	Removal of dirt
<i>Mushandirapamwe:</i>	Co-operation
<i>Muzodziwa waMwari:</i>	Anointed of God
<i>Nesango:</i>	In the battlefield
<i>Teurai Ropa:</i>	Spill the blood
<i>Umwe:</i>	Oneness
<i>Unhu/Ubuntu:</i>	Good conduct

Mukadzi: Woman
Madzimbabwe: House of Stones
Zunde raMambo: The King's Granary

Key Terms

- Aluta Continua:** the term means “the struggle continues”. It is used in the study to refer to the continued struggle for land in the contemporary society.
- Divine visitation:** is a phrase used to refer the time when God intervenes in a situation of struggle in the world. It may also be used interchangeably with the term ‘Kairos’.
- Ecumenism:** is the coming together of Christian denomination into an alliance of common faith. It also refers to the common affiliation of Christian denominations. This affiliation is aimed at building a common purpose.
- Inclusivity:** comprising of all parties not selective or unbalanced.
- Liberation:** A root paradigm of theology that galvanizes the vision and norms of liberation theologies including black theology of liberation.
- Mugabology:** Is a political ideology meant to blindly and submissively ascribe To the leadership of Robert Mugabe. The political space in Zimbabwe was more of a religious affiliation to the political beliefs of Mugabe.
- Nation Building:** is an exercise aimed at restoring or reconstructing the nation and Its values. It also involves how a political state defines the values of democracy and ensure the equal participation of its citizens in order to construct a new society.
- Post-colonial:** This is a periodization which is marked after the attainment of Political Independence. It has been used as a discourse to analyse the continued impact of colonialism and imperialism on independent colonies.
- Public:** The space/arena in which participation is reasoned without coercive power for common life.
- Public Sphere:** Place of interaction on matters which guide society such as morality, justice and democratic values.

Trinity of Evils: A liberationist analysis on the impact of neo-colonialism, colonialism and globalisation to the contemporary African society.

Naïve consciousness: Refer to circumstances when the church concentrates on spiritual matters neglecting issues to do with the political space.

Reserves: Small pieces of land allocated to black people in Zimbabwe which constitute the land covered by most rural areas in present day Zimbabwe.

Chapter: 1

1.1 Introduction

This chapter maps the landscape for the study which analyses the Christian response to the Zimbabwean crisis for period 2000-2013 through the lenses of Kairos Consciousness as articulated by Allan Boesak. The Chapter introduces the study, provides the background to the thesis, articulates the research problem, explores the methodology and presents the scope of the study.

Essentially, this study is situated in the area of Liberation Theology and raises an appraisal on some action points by the Zimbabwean ecclesiology in the context of the crisis. The research framework places liberation at the very centre of the Christian church's response to the Zimbabwean crisis, since the church has a crucial role to play in the process of liberation. Predominantly, the study examines how the church interfaced with political discourses in trying to solve the Zimbabwean crisis. The study thus, investigates an ambivalence presented in the Zimbabwean situation when the political elite called the church to shy away from politics and not interfere with the public space. Subsequently, the study envisions the significance of the prophetic ecclesiology in the Zimbabwean society showing how the Church has modelled its role in a broader society becoming an active participant in social change and resistance against political idolatry.

1.2 Background to the Problem

The Christian Churches in Zimbabwe through their prophetic document, *The Zimbabwe We Want: Towards a National Vision for Zimbabwe*, understands its mandate as follows:

The church is a divine institution which has been called to serve God and all humanity by means of being actively involved in the transformation of the world.

The church carries the mission of Christ by boldly standing for justice and liberation to make the world a better place.

The above liberation discourse serves as an entry point to our analysis of the Zimbabwean ecclesiology in the context of liberation. This model of ecclesiology, above all odds, places in question the socio-cultural and economic condition of people as a priority and first business of the church. The term liberation in this study, assumes a prophetic meaning that the Zimbabweans must be authors and masters of their own destiny (Banana 1991:95). The Christian churches in Zimbabwe began to ask critical questions on the unbalanced and unfair historical journey emanating from colonial hangovers and bad governance which created a marginal status of captivity and hostage for ordinary people (Maposa 2012:106). Thus, the 21st century liberationist ecclesiology cannot be unvoiced and silenced when the minority gets filthy rich while the majority citizens are progressively languishing in grinding poverty.

This study on ecclesiology is analysed through the lenses of Kairos Consciousness, as laying a foundation of this liberationist framework “ecclesiology from below” (Boesak 2015). In this study, some critical tenets of Kairos Consciousness are engaged in this

methodological framework namely liberation, discernment, hermeneutic of liberation and contextuality. Kairos Consciousness means 'engaging a liberationist approach which start specifically when there is pain, humiliation, oppression and suffering'. In addition, the church becomes conscious to the struggle for liberation with the marginalised and impoverished in society (Banana 1996:363). Thus, our framework of analysis places the church on the forefront of the struggle for liberation, more specifically; to establish how its operations and mission serves the people in the peripheral. Further, Kairos Consciousness implies that the victims, the people affected by the crisis, widows, orphans, the unemployed and the impoverished denied their basic privileges and rights occupy the central epistemological space in these ecclesiological discourses (Boff 1985:75). In other words, the situation of crisis and conflict creates victims and thus, in the liberationist model, the church becomes an interlocutor and articulator in association and solidarity with the non-persons. Consciousness is how the Christian church assumes the prophetic stance in reading and discerning the signs of times, the consciousness that the crisis in Zimbabwe also offer opportunities for a self-critique by the church to align its pastoral and prophetic responsibility (Maposa 2013:139).

Historically, the church in Zimbabwe has radically indicated the boldness to identify itself with the struggle for justice and liberation of the people. In the early 1970s the church became concerned with the issues of black struggle and racial discrimination in Rhodesia. Thus, this prophetic ecclesiology assumed the title "The Church of Struggle in trenches and combat with the marginalised" (Banana 1996:363). McLaughlin observed that the church in Rhodesia became committed to the armed struggle. In an

analysis viewed as the listening church, consciousness to the voiceless, impoverished as opposed to the teaching church of the Rhodesian elite mostly concerned itself with the survival of their institution (1998:258). This implies that Kairos consciousness existed in Zimbabwe in the black church which joined the masses during the liberation struggle. The framework views the church of Chimurenga, the church of the people, the church which takes sides consistently and unequivocally with the oppressed and impoverished (Kairos Document 1985:25). The church in Zimbabwe raised the banner of Kairos Consciousness and participated in the struggle for the liberation of the majority.

As such, the attainment of political independence in Zimbabwe brought a decline of the prophetic voice of the church. The new political dispensation ushered in the black political and economic elite under the banner of majority rule, the black administrators took over the major functions and top civil servants. Mandaza cited in Weiss (1994:139) argued that the black elite emerged within the nationalist ideology but also disguised the class structures of the Zimbabwe society. However, the black elite enhanced the reality of class struggles in way that reinforced neo-colonialism. This implies that the new black elite lifestyle matched those of white elites, thereby stratifying the Zimbabwean society. A new black elite wealth class emerged in Zimbabwe, this new elite in African society just crossed the line to join the minority who control power and privileges in society (Van Aarde 2016:8). In other words, the voiceless, the marginalised and impoverished remained powerless without control in post-independent Zimbabwe.

Crucially, Kairos consciousness is the liberationist stance probing critical questions on what the church has not done particularly after the attainment of political independence and the silence of the prophetic voice (Boesak 2015:5). The emergence of black elite, the minority wielding power and control of politics and the economy stratified the society. Ezra Chitando (2009:196) argues that the church was trapped in this matrix of power because of its closeness to the black government. In the case of Zimbabwe, the church also joined the elite, hence the first black President, C. Banana was a clergy whose presence in the government silenced the prophetic voice of the church. Some churches shared the Afrocentric approach of Africanness with government particularly the African Initiated ecclesiology thereby relaxing the prophetic positions and aggressiveness in post-independent Zimbabwe. More so, the church and state shared similar approaches towards nation-building, reconciliation and restoration. However, the decline of prophetic voice gave the state a greenlight to mis governance, injustice and abuse of human rights. The key question of the research is based on the package which this new dispensation brought to the powerless, the voiceless, the ghetto people, the rural population and the marginalised. Subsequently, the thrust of liberation entails that, the marginalised black Zimbabweans must be the masters and authors of their own destiny (Banana 1996:363). That means, the black people must have the ability to plan and control their future.

Fundamentally, the background to the development of this thesis is informed by the fact that the political elite in Zimbabwe relegated prophetic role of the Church from the political processes and public space to spiritual matters. Thereby narrowly placing its

role to what the ruling political elite referred to as, the important business of reading the Bible, offering lengthy prayers and preaching the message of heaven (Chitando 2011:44). To the political establishments in Zimbabwe, particularly the ruling elite, “The Church must always desist from sin”, and to them, the worst sin is when the Church makes utterances on political issues (Chitando 2011:44). By virtue of its theological mandate, the Church cannot stand aloof while bad activities happen in their midst particularly where human lives are subjected to a system of oppression. Nevertheless, from a liberationist perspective Ezra Chitando (2011) observed the critical role of the church in the public space and made this remark:

The church in Zimbabwe occupies a very central space in society. It is therefore bound to make responses on major issues. It becomes inevitable in face of the nation’s full-blown economic, social and political crisis post year 2000, that the Christian church intervened in quite several ways as a means of finding a lasting peaceful resolution to the political impasse (pp. 43).

This entails that the prophetic church plays a significant role in the public space, hence cannot stand and watch while everything goes astray such as the situation of conflict which threatens people’s lives and dehumanises their existence. The study reiterates the framework of this thesis on Kairos Theological Tradition, places liberation at the very centre of the contemporary church’s response to crisis in society (Boesak 2015). It also implies that the situation in Zimbabwe is viewed considering the obstacles, which emanated in the political space hence affected the entire nation.

Thus, the Zimbabwean crisis from the year 2000 is a historical process that was a culmination of various factors ranging from greediness, corruption, self-aggrandising and political aggressiveness. Thus, the background of the crisis is investigated from two folds; that is, the Historical factors and internal factors. Meanwhile, the situation of the conflict has always marginalised people, dehumanised the weak, trivialised people's dignity and identity. More importantly, the situation created victims and brought a situation of poverty. Accordingly, Herzog implored the notion that Theology must start at a point where there is pain such as perceived in the Zimbabwean situation (Brown 1978:61). In other words, Theology, particularly of this framework is not about theories but practical experiences of the views "from below". Crucially, in our diagnosis of the Zimbabwean crisis we take note of the fact that the change in people's lives must not be done from above "super-version" if any historical transformation in terms of social, economic, political rehabilitation must be achieved it has to come from below "sub-version" (Gutierrez 1998: xi).

Accordingly, Maposa observed that the Third World countries such as Zimbabwe are severely grappling with the problem of colonial hangovers which are the aftermath of the colonial process (2011:45). This implies that even the Zimbabwean crisis which has send some shockwaves regionally and internationally, is part and parcel of the colonial hangover; specifically considering that the Western superpowers can frustrate a nation like Zimbabwe which is situated in the Third World. Crucially, Zimbabwe is subjected and dominated because of neo-colonialism, hence, it is enmeshed in a block comprising countries that are continuously subjected to exploitation and imperialistic domination.

For that reason, it was quite easy for the European Union and the allies of Britain to punish the entire nation of Zimbabwe by imposing economic sanctions in 2002 as a political agenda to remove the government of Robert Mugabe, who in their view, was a dictator of the highest calibre. Further, the economic sanctions were imposed on Zimbabwe as an imperialistic reaction to the fast-track land reform program which started in the year 2000. Notwithstanding the fact that the access to the Zimbabwean economic system by the Western Countries entailed the presence of political independence and the absence of economic liberation. Dube (1997) cited globalisation as a serious threat to African democracy and economic stability around the continent of Africa in the following remark:

When God created the world, it was good, but the giant multinational companies together with the monetary bodies in form of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) were busy colonizing God's beautiful creation (pp. 49).

In other words, the colonial system has continued to dominate African states such as the scenario witnessed in Zimbabwe. In addition, globalisation has caused negative effects as a system which has prevented most citizens particularly in the contemporary societies in Africa, from not enjoying freely the blessing bestowed upon them by God (Dube 2002:31-37). As such, the Zimbabwean crisis can not only be viewed from the dimension of (mis)governance by the incumbent but also from a point of injustice in the world order.

By and large, some scholars such as Ezra Chitando noted the need of revamping the systems of governance in Africa as a liberation perspective to leadership accountability. Whereas the abuse of power has been cited as a serious challenge in contemporary society thus, Zimbabwe is trapped in the religious ideology of political dictatorship. Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe has been on record for dismissing, from the democratic space such language as, “human rights”, “democracy” and “good governance” on the basis that they are mere “western glamour” (Chitando 2007:135). Further, Mugabe made a strong remark in dismissing these concepts in these words:

These are just mere ideological smokescreens which have been used to gloss over elements of neo-colonialism. We wonder whether the West qualifies to teach the continent of Africa any lesson about the subject of human rights, good governance or democracy. We wonder to see how perpetrators of colonialism and slave trade can claim to be paragons of human rights? Can those who used naked bomb on democracy on Libya and Afghanistan claim to know how to champion democracy? (Chitando, 2007:136).

Critically, this brilliant post- colonial political rhetoric is meant to divert and mislead the society from the truth. Meanwhile, it is credible to know the hypocrisy of the Western countries in dealing with the Third World countries such as Zimbabwe but there is a fresh threat in the form of new dictators who have wielded power to their advantage.

The analytic key of this liberationist framework raises critical questions in contemporary society in that the seats of political power in our nations in Africa is no longer under the

occupation by colonial powers but “our own” fellow African leaders and yet the practices of injustice have continued to trouble the society (Boesak 2015:10). This statement can be analysed on how we review democracy and the value of political independence but also sharpens our theological thinking that the transfer of power into the hands of some African leaders did not change the system of oppression. Notably, it can be observed that the lowering of colonial flags in form of the Union Jack in Zimbabwe and the raising of the new flag under a new political dispensation of ZANU PF did not, in any way, bring expected results in terms of transforming the socio-economic conditions of most citizens. A comment has been forwarded that the great expectations of independence by most African states has been turned into a nightmare. This has been caused by the presence of some leaders who are more defined as rulers than leaders (Chitando, 2007:29). This also applies to the nation of Zimbabwe which had only one leader for more than 37 years, a clear indication of the ideology of dictatorship.

Ferreira observed the temptation by the church to be passively subjected in what is called “naïve consciousness”. This is when the role of the church is completely relegated to issues of spiritual matters. Subsequently, the so called “spiritual matters” is just but a blind submission to the status quo and empty promises in way of “pie in the sky” according to Kaulemu as cited in *Churches in Manicaland* (2006: vii). In other words, this asserts the view that the church cannot just be concentrated on spiritualizing everything where action is needed. Instead, a prophetic church values the pragmatic gospel of *sadza/isishwala* “pie on the table” (Banana 1996:359). To ensure that

liberation is not about promises, but rather, living the promise. In addition, Banana (1996) called on the church to combat expressing this view:

Combat is a theology that cannot be neutral in a situation of oppression. It does not in any circumstance fail to take sides on issues related to the plight and view of those who are oppressed. It therefore advocates for a direct confrontation with and engagement of the force of negation (pp363).

The church must be quite focused on practical things and move away from the temptation of heaping empty promises. Chitando noted that Black Theology of Liberation today challenges the churches in Africa to be more practical in a way, striking the balance between preaching a mere futuristic gospel and rather begin challenging oppressive structures in the here and now (2007:29). In other words, that has been the thrust of Black Theology in South Africa in its view of calling for the emancipation of the oppressed. Further, it is a theology which proclaims justice, freedom and restoration of the lost dignity particularly on persons who suffered under all forms of oppression (Chitando 2007:29).

The Zimbabwean crisis which has been viewed as a conspicuous experience fully manifested in the year 2000 (Gahamadze, Sibanda and Maposa 2011:248). This period was characterised by massive political, social and economic challenges. These included unemployment, critical shortages of food, skyrocketing prices, political violence, political intolerance, repressive legislation, and massive displacement of citizens, negative economic indicators and the highly contested redistribution of land. There are some

crucial factors which further worsened the Zimbabwean situation. Importantly, the political landscape completely changed during the period under review because of the formation and birth of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) led by Morgan Tsvangirai. Further, these developments affected the political sphere through the ushering in of the strongest political competitor since independence in 1980. As a matter of coincidence, the ruling Zanu PF lost an election in form of a referendum of the draft constitution in early 2000.

Eventually, the political landscape became highly polarised and was characterised by tension and violence. Robert Mugabe, the leader of Zanu PF, radically and negatively restructured the political terrain employing a strategy of victimising the political opponents in order to guarantee supremacy and security in ensuring that the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2000 and 2001 respectively were won at all costs (Sachikonye 2011:60). Crucially, the crisis in Zimbabwe was not only limited on the levels of governance, but it also became the crisis of legitimacy, hence, Ezra Chitando observed that Zimbabwe also battled against negative and damaging publicity internationally which resulted in massive exodus of citizens, some of them of skilled status into the Diaspora (2002:47). Mlambo also echoed the same view that the political landscape in Zimbabwe during the period under review made the nation to be a pariah state on the international arena (2014:236). Further, the situation was worsened by the *Third Chimurenga* (the struggle for land) or *Jambanja* (violence) which gained momentum from February 2000. This enterprise marked the genesis of the period of mayhem which greatly affected the white farmers and their workers. Scholars of religion

and theology in Zimbabwe have showered several designations to this period in trying to explain the deepening crisis such as the '*Turbulent Years*' Togarasei (2013), '*darkest moments*' Chitando 2013, '*Deepest Crisis*' Vambe (2008) and '*Decade of Violence*' Mangena (2013).

One can describe the Zimbabwean crisis from 2000 as a Kairos moment for the Church which discerns the signs of times (The Kairos Document 1985:4). Crucially, the church of God perceived in a crisis the Kairos moment of truth and acted accordingly Mofokeng in Boesak (2017:41). In other words, it was no longer business as usual for the Christian Church in Zimbabwe in the face of such a crisis which threatened to wipe out the very dignity of the citizens who became exposed to poverty, hunger, lack of medical care, excessive school drop out of children and unemployment. This crisis, the turbulent years, the darkest moments, the deepest crisis, of this decade of violence raised serious questions on how to define and come up with theological responses and the church's response in the Zimbabwean public space. Given the scenario obtaining from the crisis, the leaders of the main Christian bodies which are the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) and Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) embarked on a courageous strategy to promote dialogue (Chitando 2014:44). The Christian groupings, under the banner of The Heads of Christian Denomination (HOCD), produced a document called "The Zimbabwe We Want" launched on the 15th of September 2006.

Notably, the study argues that a prophetic filled theological discourse was spearheaded in the document, 'The Zimbabwe We Want': Towards a National Vision for Zimbabwe (2006), by the Church leaders in response to the Zimbabwean crisis. This was indeed the symbol of consciousness for the Zimbabwean Christianity. Important insights are drawn from this document. First, the document gave a platform for the Christian groupings (ZCBC, ZCC and EFZ) to have a collective voice on issues bedeviling the Zimbabwean society. Second, the platform criticised wicked tendencies in both the state and the Church in their lack of truth and aligning with the status quo and neglecting the poor people of God. In a way, the document was more of "self-examination" by the church to realign and redefine its missional discharge to be relevant towards the tackling of current problems in the Zimbabwean society. Further, the Christian block (HOCD) interrogates economic, political and social problems in Zimbabwe and conscientises the citizens through various pastoral letters giving political literacy to society.

In challenging times, as Zimbabwe went through the darkest moment during the crisis. At one moment, many Zimbabwean citizens opted to cross the borders to neighbouring countries such as South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Mozambique. Some Zimbabweans settled there illegally, and others used unorthodox means in leaving their own country because the situation at the peak of the economic crisis in 2008 was life threatening in terms of political polarisation and escalating levels of violence. Such is the sad page for Zimbabwean history, a pariah state and a nation in conflict since the year 2000. Crucially, the problems in Zimbabwe greatly exposed the pillars that

supported the sectors of the economy and social services. Of importance, there has been a social brain drain as experienced and senior academics searched for greener pastures in countries abroad, escaping from lower salaries and an unstable political environment.

As alluded earlier in the chapter, in the face of such a crisis, the church re-examined its theological mandate and sought to be prophetically relevant to the lives of its adherents and other citizens. By virtue of its divine mandate, the Christian Church in Zimbabwe did not remain silent it began raising its prophetic voice courageously challenging the status quo. However, the church came face to face with the political elite who wielded power. It is important to note that the Zimbabwean Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) issued a prophetic and provocative pastoral letter entitled “God hears the Cry of the oppressed” published on the 5th of April 2007. First, the letter was directly challenging the very leadership of President Mugabe. It came as a reminder that the situation in Zimbabwe had gone out of control because of corruption and bad governance (Chitando 2013:86). Second, the pastoral letter raised a serious alarm on the political strategy of resorting to violence by political parties. Since the beginning of the crisis, political violence, intimidation and intolerance has been employed during the electoral process rendering the values of democracy a shame. The study also takes cognisance of other prophetic responses to the Zimbabwean crisis by the church, one such document called *The Truth Will Make You Free: A compendium of Christian social Teaching published on September 2006* by the fraternal of churches in Manicaland in the eastern part of Zimbabwe. In a nutshell, the document articulated the role of the church in society. The

most striking contribution from the document is the thrust that the church is in the world and like Christ, it is expected to announce good news to society and denounce the unjust systems perpetrated by political leaders in Africa. However, the document was quick to mention that most political leaders are not comfortable particularly when the church criticises their government (Churches in Manicaland, 2006: ix). Political establishments are therefore, not comfortable when the church takes a more pro-active role especially the prophetic stance of translating gospel values into pragmatic life experiences hence prefer a passive approach of spiritualising every event as given.

Meanwhile, Taringa, Mapuranga and Chitando (2014:179) highlighted the view that politicians in Zimbabwe, particularly the then President of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe, have limited and narrowly defined the role of the Church to prayers and moral values. Therefore, President Mugabe constantly reminded the Churches to keep check of their boundaries and not encroach into the political lane. This problem and myths perpetuated by political leaders have saw the persecution of some church leaders such as Pius Ncube, the Catholic Bishop. More so, political polarisation influenced state theology based on (Romans 13:1-7) that the citizens are obliged to submit blindly before the governing authority (The Kairos Document 1985:6). This interpretation was being used by the state to divide the Church, promoting the 'Pro-ruling Party ideology' of Churches submissive to the ruling elite and 'Anti-ruling Party Churches' which offers prophetic criticism to state policies (Togarasei 2004:76).

Subsequently, Kaulemu observed and argued that there is a prophetic strand of Christianity within Zimbabwe, those who raised their consciousness in face of the crisis in the nation (2010:51). This view was shared and echoed by Chitando who noted that the church leaders in Zimbabwe did not just sit and watch while the nation was going through a crisis of such immense proportion. They raised their voices and spoke with conviction and eloquence (2013:93). However, Chitando also commented that Mugabe insisted that the world was misplacing the term “crisis” referring to the Zimbabwean situation, in fact he strongly believed that there was no crisis in the country (2011:44).

Importantly, the Zimbabwean crisis has also generated the emergence of Kairos discourse in a way. It also ushered in the visibility of church existence in society, in their different affiliations the realms of Kairos Consciousness (Boesak 2011:2). This thesis critically presents this argument. Whereas the framework of Kairos Consciousness makes critical engagement by the church possible and broadens the scope on issues affecting humanity, it perceives the church as a catalyst of meaningful positive change in society and walk with the excluded citizens instead of siding with the status quo (Swart 2013:2). Kairos Consciousness has also built a global platform on how faith can challenge oppressive structures, hence Church leaders in Zimbabwe have internationalised the crisis because the Church is constituted as a global institution (Chitando 2013:43). More so, it is how the church has begun theologizing from the viewpoint of people on the ground (sub-version) (Gutierrez, 1983: xi) bringing about the connectivity between Kairos Consciousness and Liberation Theological genre to doing “theology from below” (Boesak 2011:7). This paradigm also resonates with the models

of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Frederick Beyers Naude whose contribution was focused on the nexus between religious and social change. They brought to the fore, the idea that the church is always relevant in the public space as a key stakeholder on matters of governance; a viewpoint which Mugabe and the ruling elite denied bringing the church-state interface to the fore during the period under review.

1.3 The Research Problem

This study investigated the Zimbabwean crisis for the period 2000-2013 through the liberationist framework of Kairos Consciousness articulated by Allan Boesak. The Zimbabwean crisis has generated theological contestations pertaining to the concept of ecclesiology in terms of its prophetic role in the public space. The political elite in Zimbabwe have constantly and openly advised the Christian Church to shy away from socio-economic and political issues affecting people. Further, a strong myth has been perpetuated by the political elite that the Christian church has nothing to contribute in public space and political processes. Subsequently, the popular rhetoric by the ruling political elite that, “churches concentrate on the business of praying and reading the Bible after all, the Bible is a large book, if Church leaders do the reading of the bible and meddling in politics, they will not finish reading it” (Chitando 2012:44). Above all odds, this study analyses the crisis as a litmus test for ecclesiology, particularly from a liberationist framework which defines the church as an institution actively involved in historical action and always in trenches and combat with the marginalised people (Banana 1996:363).

In addition, the research is also a self-critique for the Christian church to analyse its boldness and courage in identifying with the struggle for justice and liberation. Meanwhile, Kairos Consciousness also implies evaluating what the church has not done after the attainment of political independence since the seat of power is no longer occupied by colonial powers but fellow African leaders and yet, the practice of injustice has reached alarming proportions. The church is expected to be prophetic in grappling with the challenge of black elites, the minority, occupying the epicentre of power and control and the expense of the impoverished majority (Weiss 1994:102). Thus, the study investigated an ambivalent that the lowering of colonial flag did not mean transfer of power to the impoverished majority but instead, meant the canonisation of the black elite. The framework focuses on whether the Christian church has remained committed to the values of the liberation as the “voice of the voiceless” or sided with the status-quo as the voice of the elite.

1.4 Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to analyse the prophetic role and relevance of the Church’s response to the Zimbabwean crisis through the lenses of Kairos Consciousness.

1.5 Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the strengths and challenges of ecclesiology in solving the Zimbabwean crisis?
2. What are the strengths and challenges of the Zimbabwean Church in standing for justice of the marginalised?

3. How did the interface between the church and political discourses affect the Zimbabwean situation?
4. What form of engagement has taken place between ecclesiology and political discourses to restore human dignity in Zimbabwe?
5. What are the strengths and inadequacies of integrating ecclesiology and African values?

1.6 Research Objectives

This study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To investigate the strengths and challenges of Zimbabwean ecclesiology in dealing with situation of crisis and conflict.
2. To evaluate the strengths and challenges of Zimbabwean ecclesiology in fostering justice for the marginalised people.
3. To analyse the interface between Church and political discourses in Zimbabwe during the crisis.
4. To examine the critical engagement of the Christian responses to the Zimbabwean crisis.
5. To analyse the integration between ecclesiology and African values in Zimbabwe.

1.7 Methodology

This study is situated in the area of liberation theology placing special emphasis on Kairos Consciousness as articulated by Allan Boesak (2015:4). The study is thus, armed with insight and tenets from the liberation paradigm in its broadest sense.

Meanwhile, the framework analysis on ecclesiology more specifically, the Christian churches in Zimbabwe observe the following critical dimensions: First, the basis of this methodological framework informs that, liberation theology starts specifically from the bleeding open wound, the experience of pain, crying and human suffering (Boff 1985:72). This implies that from the lenses of our framework, it is not the wounded people who join the church, but instead, we view the church of struggle in the trenches and combat with the wounded and bleeding people (Banana 1996:363).

Second, this framework is liberationist from the viewpoint of the victims and those affected by historical events of crisis and conflict hence, our engagement and interface of a “theology of ecclesiology from below” (Boesak 2015:4). This implies that the victims of crisis occupy the central epistemological place in the framework analysis of the ecclesiological discourse. This thesis is, thus, informed by the liberation notion that bad things in society are changed from below (sub-version) which means from the pain of a wounded society as opposed to change from above “super-version” (Gutiérrez 1983: xi). In other words, any change from above turns to be more detached from historical facts and experiences of the people. As such, the church is located within a milieu associated with the peripherals in society, involved in daily activities where human beings are and challenging unjust structures in society to make the world a better place.

Third, the framework is hermeneutically based on the thrust that the bible is a historical book of resistance and justice for the Christian church (Boesak 2011:7). The term hermeneutics in the study implies the art of correctly reading and interpreting the bible,

interpreting historical events from a liberationist perspective, the consciousness and new realisation of one's own destiny (Maposa 2011:46). Crucially, a thorough appraisal is raised on the ecclesiology prophetic communiques, pastoral letters, documents, primary sources, engagements in order to critically establish the strengths and inadequacies of the responses.

Fourth, this framework is self-determination that marginalised and the wounded are the masters, champions and artisans of their eventual emancipation (Banana, 1991:95). Further, this study is based on the approach that the authenticity of liberation is not merely based in keeping its integral character but practically in its being affected by the victims and the wounded themselves (Boff 1995:70). This study is developed based on the notion which focuses on Christian church's openness to its social environment inform of the society, in a dynamic rather than passive sense (Orobator 2005:31). This approach raises the symbol and appraisal of ecclesiology in public space which is relevant for this study in so far as the church's role for liberation in Zimbabwe goes.

1.8 Literature Review of the Study

This part of the study reviews relevant literature pertaining to Kairos Consciousness and the Zimbabwean ecclesiology. This part of literature review is carried under two sub-topics. The first part covers literature on the framework of Kairos consciousness and the second part reviews literature on the Church and the Zimbabwean crisis.

1.8.1 An Analysis of Kairos Consciousness

Kairos consciousness is a liberationist framework articulated from the perspective of this study by Allan Boesak in a book, *Kairos, Crisis and Global Apartheid: The Challenge to Prophetic Resistance* which was published in 2015. Boesak provides a comprehensive insight into the meaning of a revitalized Kairos Consciousness or rebirth of Kairos theological tradition. Hence, the remark to have “a humanity with a Kairos Consciousness”, that discern, respond and critique the situation in which we live (Boesak 2015:2). Kairos Consciousness is therefore, marked by criticality, contextuality and change. This discourse on Kairos raises critical reflection by challenging people of faith to be prophets who are courageous and fearless to say the truth in face of the crisis in contemporary society. The book also reflects on how the bible can be used as “a history of faithful resistance” against oppression (Boesak 2011:7). The Bible can therefore, be a relevant book in making the Church remain true to the tenets of Liberation Theology. In addition, the work is also conscious about the dangers of reverting to religious, theological and biblical justification to the systems of oppression citing recurrences of “Church” and “State” theologies in post-colonial society.

Boesak’s thrust on Kairos Consciousness is also shared by Swart in an article: *Revival of a Kairos Consciousness Prolegomena to a Research Focus on Religious and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa (2013)*. Swart provides an insight on the “rebirth” of Kairos theological tradition or Kairos consciousness. The revival of Kairos consciousness is rather, a broader movement of the ecclesial organisations not specifically South African response, but a network of prophetic tradition (Swart 2013:2).

The Kairos Document: Challenge to the Church: A Theological Commentary on Political Crisis in South Africa (1985), compiled by several South African Theologians and Church leaders stand as an important prophetic tradition in response against apartheid and other form of crisis in post-colonial society. Hence, the document has left an indelible trail that gave and inspired other initiatives in form of documents in continuity with the South African theological discourse. There are distinctive features from the South African Kairos (1985) up to the Palestinian Kairos (2009) especially pertaining the phrase “moment of truth” which brings indication of continuity and connection within the Kairos trajectories is the view that Kairos documents are a response to a crisis within a context of struggle, but there are not open-ended documents.

Allan Boesak’s book *Farewell to Innocence: A socio-ethical study on Black Theology and Power (1976)* is a ground-breaking work which contains a Black Theology perspective in the African context. The following reflections are crucial for the study. Boesak observed that black liberation theology comprehensively embraced an ethic of liberation to change the inhuman conditions in society. Further, the ethic of liberation is contextual hence raises from a situation of black experiences (Motlhabi 2008:83). This ethic must also be motivated by the black people’s experience of struggle. However, there is a gap in Boesak’s notion, particularly on the aspect of ethic of liberation. One such has been cited by Barney Pityana who observed that the expression of a “new way” may to a certain extent liberate Christians in Africa towards their own experiences but still the church continued utilising the white interpretation of Christian traditions particularly on the Christian events (1994:173). Boesak’s publication *Black and*

Reformed: Apartheid Liberation and the Calvinist Tradition (1986) highlights crucial landmarks in our review on Black theology and the use of “theology from below” by the church (1986: xii). This entails the starting point for theologising the situation of the people in the margins of society, the oppressed, the downtrodden, destitute, the people who fell victim of unjust systems. This view is because historically, the church took side of the status quo and supported the state machinery in its suppression of black people. However, the work did not subscribe to the part on solutions and did not address any contemporary challenges in terms of gender and children.

Mofokeng in the book *Pharaohs on Both sides of The Blood-Red Waters: Prophetic Critique on Empire: Resistance, Justice and Power of the hopeful Sizwe (2017)* provides useful insights in the development of the research, especially the analysis on the framework on Kairos Consciousness and the Church. The notion raised in the book pertains to the characteristic of a prophetic church. As such, a prophetic church does not reflect so much on the ecclesiastical hierarchical, but instead, it is the church of the people in their struggles, suffering and protesting, hence, it is always renewed and well-focused (Mofokeng 2014:42). The prophetic church is also committed to the values of justice, the work is crucial in the analysis of the thesis particularly our view on how the church can relevantly minister in the 21st Century. Gustavo Gutierrez in the book, *The Power of the Poor in History (1983)* pointed out on some crucial reflections which are valuable in the development of this thesis. The aspect on the notion “underside of history” occupies a central focus in our review on the contemporary Christian church’s response to the situation of crisis. Gutierrez’s notion on “underside of history” is a

refocus, a re-alignment and a call to the hermeneutical readings of the bible from the views of those who are victims of a system.

Maluleke in an article, *May the Black God Stand Please! Biko's Challenge to Religion*, highlighted theological insights in Biko's thought, legacy and basis of black liberation theology. In the article, Maluleke draws from Biko's instinct and thrust that theology of liberation is a situational interpretation of Christianity which provides the black man's understanding of God. The article provides useful material on how liberation theology can make a relevant approach to crisis in society today such as the Zimbabwean problem. *The Zimbabwe We Want: Towards A National Vision for Zimbabwe (2006)*, is crucial document which gave contemporary Christian churches in Zimbabwe a prophetic framework to respond to the crisis in Zimbabwe in form a Christian alliance of churches under the banner of the Heads of Christian Denominations (HOCD). It is important to note that the document was produced for the purpose of providing a platform for dialogue in a bid for the nation to embrace a national vision and reach consensus on national issues (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006:6). Hence, the Church leaders responded prophetically to the situation of crisis.

Vellem, in the article, *Prophetic Theology in Black Theology with Special Reference to the Kairos Document (2010)*, provides a comprehensive analysis; drawing links between Black Theology of liberation to prophetic theology in the Kairos document. Important theological insight can be drawn from this article applicable to the topic under review. Vellem (2010) argues that the Kairos document (1985) is a version of liberation

theology that offers a relevant methodology on issues pertaining to the democratisation in the contemporary society. The article, *Tracing the Kairos trajectories from South Africa (1985) to Palestine (2009): Discerning Continuities and Differences (2012)* West traces the connections and differences from the South African Kairos (1985) to the Palestinian Kairos (2009). West (2012) argues that all the Kairos documents have a similar connection brought about due to the situation which invokes a theological process. Hence, the Kairos family enables the society, the Church and theologians to have their own theological reflection upon their experience and praxis.

Hopkins and Antonio in the book *Black Theology (2012)* made a comprehensive study on the development of Black Theology and its objectives in the African society. Hopkins and Antonio (2012) had similar connection in their assessment to the need for a prophetic generation as presented by Boesak (2011) on what constituted the revival of a Kairos Consciousness. *Zimbabwe Kairos document: A Call to Prophetic Action: Towards the Jubilee Year 2000: For a Socially Just, Democratic and Prosperous Zimbabwe (1998)*, is well placed document within the Kairos trajectories, making a call to consciousness and a prophetic witness approach in actively advocating the dismantling of structures that negate the value of justice, love, peace and reconciliation. The Zimbabwean Kairos (1989) is unique in a fashion that it is the first Kairos document which tackles the issue of HIV/AIDS as part of its “critical moment”.

In the book, *The Church Struggle in South Africa (2004)*, De Gruchy highlighted the struggle of different Churches in South Africa to be true to their calling, to be legends for

the kingdom of God, justice, righteousness and peace. The book also assessed the role played by Church leaders such as Desmond Tutu in the transition to democracy under the leadership of Nelson Mandela. In Mandela's words, "Church acted as midwives of the birth of new South Africa" (2004:154). *The Rainbow People of God: The Making of a Peaceful Revolution (1994)* traces South Africa's glorious victory over apartheid in writings and speeches of one of its central figures Bishop Desmond Tutu. The book present extracts from the graveside of Steve Biko to the triumphant inauguration of Nelson Mandela as president of South Africa (Tutu 1994:15). The book contributes in studying information on how black Church leaders can inspire transformation in society.

A Moment of Truth: A Word of Faith, Hope and Love from the Heart of Palestine on Suffering (2009). Is a theological discourse produced by a group of Palestinian Christians in response to suffering and struggle in their society? Boesak (2011:1) argues that the publication of the Palestinian Kairos Document (2009) awakened encouraging responses from concerned circles from different faith communities across the world giving rise to a new interfaith conversation. The notion concurs with the article, *the Rebirth of Kairos Theology and its Implications for Public Theology and Citizenship in South Africa*, in which Clint Le Bruyns explores the link between Kairos theology and the public theology. Clint Le Bruyns alluded to the view that Kairos consciousness was greatly influenced by the Palestinian Kairos document of 2009. This article is important in that it sheds light on the role and influence of this theological tradition notably, the Zimbabwean situation.

1.8.2 Ecclesiology and the Zimbabwean Crisis

The significant role of the church in public space always attract contemporary debates. With some views advocating that the Church has no role to play in political processes. Some views ascribe to the notion that the church has a significant role to play in the political processes and has always been viewed in the thrust of its prophetic responsibility as the “voice of the voiceless” hence the mission of the church must be aligned towards the promotion of justice in society. Muchena in a book, *Critical Voices Emerging in Times of Crisis (2013)*, highlighted the notion that the Church in Zimbabwe must critically understand its relevance in face of a Kairos moment (2013:2). The work challenges the Church to act, mobilise its energy and God-given wisdom and be part of the solution to end the Zimbabwean crisis. However, the work is narrowly presented in terms of the ecclesiological landscape of Zimbabwe.

Chitando, Taringa and Mapuranga in the article, *Zimbabwean Theology and Religious Studies during the Crisis Years (2000-2008) (2014)* provided insight into the challenges within the discipline of religious studies pertaining their response to the Zimbabwean crisis. Chitando, Taringa and Mapuranga (2014) in this article, grapple with a critical question that religious studies and theology do not address existential issues in Zimbabwe and Africa. The book, *Prayers and Players: Religion and Politics in Zimbabwe (2013)* by Chitando explores how the umbrella bodies of Christian Churches in Zimbabwe came together under the banner of the Heads of Christian Denominations in Zimbabwe (HOCD) in 2006. This collective move by the Christian Churches turned

them into a solid block (2013:27) making the prophetic voice of Church to be visible over the plight and welfare of the general populace.

In the book, *Do Zimbabweans exist? Trajectories of Nationalism, National Identity Formation and Crisis in Post-Colonial State* (2009), Ndlovu-Gatsheni discusses how Zimbabwe lost its trust and prospects of building a happy nation (2009:191). Ndlovu-Gatsheni argues that the post-colonial society in Zimbabwe was engulfed and greatly affected by political violence. These sentiments are shared by Chitando in the article, *Prayers, Politics and Peace: The Church's Role in Zimbabwean Crisis* (2011) analyse the role of Church in political, social and economic issues in the contemporary society in Zimbabwe. Chitando argues that the Church cannot be marginalized from issues to do with national interest but instead, it is a strategic actor to issues in the public in Zimbabwe. Hence, the attitude by the government of President Robert Mugabe of limiting the Church to prayers is rather a trivialisation of religion and narrowing the mission of the Church.

Canaan Banana in the book, *The Church and The Struggle for Zimbabwe: From Programme to Combat Racism to Combat Theology* (1996), presents the journey and partnership between the Church and State as a theologian and as a former Head of State. In the book, the author acknowledges that Churches played a sterling role that brought about the much-awaited independence of Zimbabwe in 1980. The Churches have been prophetic in accompanying the excluded and victims of war during the bloodshed and rocky path. A thorough walk through the book by Banana (1996), one

will spot a scholarly gap of a scholar who is hesitant to encroach the pitfalls of government policies which eventually led to the crisis. Vestraelen in his book, *Zimbabwe Realities and Christian Responses: Contemporary Aspects of Christianity in Zimbabwe (1988)* gives an insight into the Church-State relations in Zimbabwe. The concept of Church-State relations is a postulation drawn from the Christian tradition from a historic perspective. However, the Zimbabwean government led by Robert Mugabe has been greatly influenced by strong Marxist Ideologies and could not tolerate that religion and state in Zimbabwe are at par (Maposa 2014:24).

In the book, *The Hidden Dimensions of Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe (2008)*, Vambe analysed the negative impact of *Operation Murambatsvina* (clean up) which was carried out by the Zimbabwean government in May 2005. Maurice Vambe strongly argues that the operation to clean up towns and cities, demolition of unauthorized structures portrayed the treatment of people as “Human dirt”. Hence, demands that we rethink the notion of citizenship in Zimbabwe. This book profiles an important overview on how the Zimbabwean crisis can be understood in dehumanizing citizens and making them homeless (Chitando 2013: viii). In this case, the gap of the book is that it does not incorporate responses from other stakeholders to the crisis such as the Church.

1.9 Limitations

There are inherent limitations encountered by this research work. Thus, the research is in the area of Liberation Theology, a Theology too broad in terms of coverage and themes, and hence, the study is limited to Kairos Consciousness exploring some

fundamental tenets. We also take note that Kairos consciousness from a Zimbabwean perspective may not be a well-developed area thus, our topography on this framework will be greatly informed by dialogue with some works and themes written and constructed for other contexts. The researcher is a male black Zimbabwean student of black theology. The work is thus, limited to the Zimbabwean context and experiences. Nevertheless, the study may also have implications for contexts beyond Zimbabwe. Conceptually, Kairos consciousness cannot be over romanticized as the beacon or icon of liberation discourse. There are also underlying inadequacies in terms of cultural issues in Africa particularly in view of the subject of ecclesiology under review. In other words, the liberation project has been slow in terms of integrating the African values such as Ubuntu and ecclesiology. In short, liberation discourses have paid attention on the question governance more than the promotion of moral fibre, dignity personhood and Africanness. Fundamentally, the research is carried out in Zimbabwe, the researcher is born and bred in the Church Tradition and is a serving Bishop in the Methodist Church making Him not spared to the situation on the ground. However, these limitations will not compromise the quality and competency of the research.

1.10 Scope of the Study

This work is divided into six chapters.

1.10.1 Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter One introduces the study, provides the background, articulates the problem statement, methodology and literature review. The chapter is mapping the landscape for the study which analyse the Christian response to the Zimbabwean crisis through the lenses of Kairos consciousness as articulated by Allan Boesak.

1.10.2 Chapter Two: Kairos Consciousness and the Ecclesiological Landscape in Zimbabwean

This chapter profiles the framework of the study by articulating some crucial tenets of Kairos Consciousness in its liberationist discourse. Critical tenets are highlighted namely liberation, hermeneutics of liberation, discernment and contextuality. Further, the chapter makes an in-depth analysis of the concept of ecclesiology in Zimbabwe from a liberationist perspective.

1.10.3 Chapter Three: Kairos Consciousness and Ecclesial Bodies in Zimbabwe

The chapter evaluates the interface between ecclesiology and political discourses in Zimbabwe. The chapter focuses on the theology and framework of Christian bodies in Zimbabwe tracing their historical and theological background. A general survey of Christian bodies in Zimbabwe is highlighted in order to appreciate their response to the crisis.

1.10.4 Chapter Four: Zimbabwean Ecclesiology's Response to Crisis: A Critical Engagement

This chapter marks the climax in the development of the thesis hence analyses some critical engagement between the Christian churches in Zimbabwe and political discourses as a response to the crisis. The Zimbabwean ecclesiology responded to the issues at play such as land redistribution, political violence, operation restore order and economic meltdown. Further, the Christian bodies came together reviving the block of Christian alliance known as the (HOCD) which became a prophetic mouthpiece of the Zimbabwean ecclesiology.

1.10.5 Chapter Five: Kairos Consciousness and Ubuntu

The Chapter takes on board the Kairos consciousness and the African Philosophy of Ubuntu/Hunhu. Some pillars of African philosophy Ubuntu/Hunhu are articulated in the chapter reflecting their significance to the contemporary society and the church. More so, Ubuntu is essential in our construction of a communitarian model of ecclesiology in Zimbabwe.

1.10.6 Chapter Six: Evaluation, Conclusion and Recommendations

The chapter provides an evaluation of the entire research that is based on Christian response to the Zimbabwean crisis from the year 2000. Accordingly, the chapter evaluates the findings of the entire study by providing highlights on the major landmarks in the study. The chapter also articulates reflections on recommendations by the study to guide the Christian church as key stakeholders in conflict resolution and management. Finally, a conclusion of the study is provided.

Chapter 2

Kairos Consciousness and the Ecclesiological Landscape in Zimbabwe

2.1 Introduction

This chapter critically and analytically forwards some tenets of Kairos consciousness in its liberation genre as articulated by Allan Boesak. Essentially, this section of the study navigates the ecclesiological landscape in Zimbabwe and its foundation from Western Christianity to the 21st century Zimbabwean model of ecclesiology anchored and modelled in the framework Consciousness. Further, the chapter also profiles some windows of suitability and synchronises some liberative tenets of Kairos consciousness in the context of Zimbabwe`s experiences. Crucially, the study seeks to investigate the Zimbabwean crisis from the year 2000 by reflecting on Christian participation in public space.

2.2 Setting the Scene

Richard Maposa, a Zimbabwean theologian postulated that consciousness becomes “good news” as opposed to the “bad news” for Africans, more specifically those in the peripheral, the marginalised people, and the “ghetto people”. In re-reading their situation, they became aware of the effects of colonial evils such as neo-colonialism, colonialism and globalisation; they themselves had to be artisans of their own eventual emancipation from the hangover of historical imbalances (Maposa 2011:47). The above statement in reference to “good news” presupposes the presence of “bad news” in form of struggles of the marginalised people. From a liberationist view, good news is the arm

and consciousness that rescues people out of the great moral avalanche set in motion by oppressive forces and dehumanisation (Banana 1990:67). Thus, this thesis is developed from an ecclesiological approach on how the church in Zimbabwe responded to the crisis as a matter of urgency because of the gross deterioration of the socio-economic and political landscape of Zimbabwe. The situation in Zimbabwe from the year 2000 onwards was characterised by hyperinflation, unemployment, deterioration of the health sector, massive human capital flight and food shortages.

Historically, Zimbabwe's political independence was born after a protracted liberation struggle popularly known as the '*Second Chimurenga*¹' (armed struggle) from the year 1966 to 1980 (Maposa 2012:70). This protracted struggle captured the imagination of many people particularly in the Global South. The churches strongly collaborated with the liberation movements of Zimbabwe National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and Zimbabwe People's Army (ZIPRA) during the armed struggle. More importantly, the church became a fertile ground for the grooming of nationalists such as Canaan Banana, Joshua Nkomo, Robert Mugabe, Abel Muzorewa, Herbert Chitepo and others. Canaan Banana (1991) described the church as an extension of the liberation front in these words:

We have seen the daily struggles by our people, we cannot remain in comfort zone but join them in solidarity as a church of trenches and combat, placing emphasis on anthropology over ecclesiology (pp. 364).

¹ Second Chimurenga; refereeing to the 2nd open resistance to the white rule following the 1890 Shona Rebellion

This collaboration raised the banner of consciousness and liberation for the Zimbabwean ecclesiology with a clear recognition and a statement that the armed struggle is a “Kairos” moment for the church which is treated as a matter of “urgency” and “immediacy”. Thus, the nation faced a crisis created by the colonial Rhodesian regime in their violence of racism, land dispossession, repressive legislation, and denial of quality education and militation of African values.

Further, the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe from 1966 to 1980 became a turning point for the Zimbabwean ecclesiology hence, ushered in a new understanding of the church not just as an institution of hierarchies but a church of liberation, a church of the marginalised in community, a church in combat and trenches with the oppressed people (Banana 1990:158). However, the genesis of the *Third Chimurenga*²(land restoration) is described as a faith-crisis, a Kairos for the Christian churches in Zimbabwe (Sibanda and Maposa 2013:138). From year 2000, the nation of Zimbabwe experienced what would be described as full-blown crisis which implies a total collapse of the economic, political and social systems. Further, it was a time when the political elite unvoiced and pacified the church. A strong myth has been perpetuated by the political elite in form of Robert Mugabe that religion has nothing to do with the public space hence, his popular statement *vemakereke itai zvekunamata, hamuripedze musiyе zvevatongerwo enyika*³ (Chitando 2011:11). The nation of Zimbabwe was at crossroads and the Christian churches raised the consciousness in form of resistance to be silenced by the political

² Third Chimurenga referred to the Land Reclamation that saw the minority white farmers displaced from the farming land starting in 2000 going forward

³ Churches were being warned to stay away from political issues

elite particularly in a time when the society was severely threatened by the crisis. The Zimbabwe Council of Churches commented in a communique on the 2nd of July 2003:

What does it mean to be a prophetic church and voice of the voiceless when people are starved to death, level of poverty has increased, children are running all over the streets? There is a violence in society, rape, intimidation, harassment by state machinery, political polarisation and perpetrators are free. The church has noted these developments and cannot keep on playing without action. Let us re-align and search our prophetic calling (2003).

It is from this backdrop that the study views the Zimbabwean church's response to the crisis through the lenses of Kairos consciousness as articulated by Allan Boesak, raising the four critical tenets in this framework. The Christian church in Zimbabwe cannot just be unvoiced particularly when most citizens are languishing and progressively reduced to mere objects of poverty each day.

Nevertheless, this framework posits the liberationist approach for the ecclesiology hence, Allan Boesak ushered the characteristic tenets that have become definitive of this style of theologising (1976). The work raised the symbol of the liberation discourse in face of apartheid practice. Importantly, it presented the thrust and a fresh roadmap that liberation is the content of Christian faith thereby, exposing pseudo-religious ideologies as well as the political ideologies which had infiltrated ecclesiology in South Africa during the apartheid era. Fundamentally, the publication contained a theological significance in that it opened new horizons for the development of a "theology from

below” for the ecclesiology in Africa. Boesak also called this a “new way of theologising, a new way of believing” (Pityana 1994:174). Essentially, this brought an increasingly positive shift in black theology of liberation towards active political participation and visibility of ecclesiology in the public space. Elaborating further, the use of a “theology from below” profiles crucial tenets in the language of liberation discourse such as liberation, hermeneutics of liberation, discernment and contextuality which Pityana cited as the branding of Allan Boesak’s lenses and theological framework.

Consequently, Boesak explores the liberation trajectory as the rapid response to the historical church inadequacies. One can recognize some similarities in Boesak’s theology to what Kusuko Koyama also called “theology from below” (1986: xii). In other words, this connection emerges from the experiences and daily struggles of people on the marketplace or “ghetto”. Therefore, black people’s experiences function as a vehicle enabling them to hear the word of God in the way which addresses their plight (Boesak, 1986: xiii). Notably, one extreme classic theological system was captured by state becoming part and parcel of its political mechanization particularly during the inception of Western Christianity in Africa.

Vellem (2015) argued that:

Kairos theology, Black theology in South Africa, Min Jung, Feminist theology, Latin American liberation theology, contextual theology, all use the category of liberation to define their purpose, tasks and methodology. All then originating from different contexts symbolise a global world expressions of liberation motif for another possible world (pp3).

From the above comment the study can deduce the following reflections. First, the methodology is the key to distinguish the mode of theology whereas the interlocutor of liberation paradigm is a “non-person” (Vellem 2015:3). Secondly, liberation paradigm is orthopraxis, that is, “right actions” Parry (1996:117), whereas, the traditional Western Christian theology is *sui generis* meaning a legitimate style of its own. Third, the liberation discourse uses the social analysis in its interpretation (The Kairos Documents, 1985:8). Analytically, the themes guiding all liberation theologies are the same but what makes Kairos Consciousness crucial is that it is a theology talking to African issues and the gap pertaining to what the Church has not done towards its prophetic and pastoral responsibilities.

2.3 The Tenets of Kairos Consciousness

The framework investigating Zimbabwe`s crisis for the period 2000 to 2013 takes cognisance of what Leonardo Boff has observed that third world countries like Zimbabwe have wounds that are bleeding because of the systematic oppression imposed on them through colonisation (1985:58). As such, the Zimbabwean ecclesiology has been grappling with these challenges since the inception of colonialism in Zimbabwe. Therefore, the perceived point of our methodological framework is focused on the rising tide of consciousness by the Zimbabwean ecclesiology in response to the crisis through the lenses of Kairos Consciousness. Subsequently, the chapter explores some fundamental tenets of Kairos consciousness.

The study reflects broadly on Allan Boesak's framework which boldly and explicitly clamours for "ecclesiology" to confront political, social and economic injustice head-on. The essence of this framework lies in the renaissance of consciousness in the Zimbabwean ecclesiology and its impact in public space with a contemporary outlook rather than the decorated hierarchical structures. The study thus, delves on the four tenets model of analysis which constitutes the major emphasis on Boesak's articulation of Kairos Consciousness in form of unpacking the discourse. These four critical tenets are; liberation, hermeneutics of liberation, discernment and contextuality. Notwithstanding the fact that Boesak's framework cannot be over romanticized or over emphasized, but just an analysis laying foundation towards what constitutes the pillars of the Zimbabwean ecclesiology and how far it was inspired and synchronised by this model of analysis.

2.3.1 Liberation

Gutierrez (1983) asserts that:

Liberation must be holistic, as human effort to be free from all forms of oppression whether social, racial, political, or religious (pp. viii).

In tracking the radar on this study, liberation stands as a key tenet in analysing the ecclesiological landscape in Zimbabwe. Boesak, who is one of the exponents of Black Theology, stated that, Christians should be actively involved in the liberation process. Further, he made a critical reflection that the oppressor cannot be liberated unless the oppressed are liberated, he further argued that, it is not only people who need to be liberated (1976:76). The statement also considered the church as a site of agony in

terms of propagating the colonial agenda and mind-set. Aylward Shorter reinforced this notion expressing that the heartbeat of “liberation” needs to articulate a “theology from below” which is accountable to the situation, context and experiences of people in the margins of the society (Ferm 1986:71). By so doing, consciousness raises questions about the daily struggles and issues to do with the powerless in society and how to overcome systems of subjugation and domination.

Essentially, Kairos Consciousness is a comprehensive articulation of liberation motif situated in the womb of liberation discourse, a typical characteristic of doing theology “from below”.

Dussel argues that the word “liberation”, in its political and economic sense, indicates liberation from economic dependence, pedagogical dependence and erotic dependence thus, the church’s function is a *prophetic-pedagogical* function of liberation (1973:59). This implies that liberation is not only part of the gospel of Christ or in consistence with the gospel, it is the content and framework of the gospel of Jesus Christ born in the community of the oppressed, taking seriously their experience and situation (Boesak 1976:9). Therefore, liberation becomes a theological reflection in the context of Christian faith as a response to the struggles in society. Further, the deliberation on the term “liberation” is carried out in this study considering Christian dispensation and eventually responses to issues in social-political arena in Zimbabwe. James Cone categorically stated that liberation is not only consistent with the gospel, but it is rather the Gospel of Jesus Christ in operation. Subsequently, there can be no theology which is not identified unreservedly with those who are abused and humiliated (1969:51).

The focus of this thesis perceives liberation as one of the key tenets in doing theology in the framework of Kairos consciousness thus, highly constitutes the circumstances of the dehumanised due to political instability and reckless political decisions by the political elite. This liberation motif is crucial and relevant to the Zimbabwean situation, especially considering Christian participation and involvement in issues affecting the society. Whereas, political elite emphasised that involvement in the political arena by the church is gross interference. Thus, the determination to delve on the hermeneutic and theological understanding of the term liberation is meant to analyse and reflect upon Kairos or critical moment in history in order to engage relevantly towards the building of a new society unshackled from evils of colonial legacy.

2.3.2 Hermeneutics of Liberation

By and large, the terrain and scope of Allan Boesak's hermeneutical approach is a critical tenet in this framework considering that the Bible, is a crucial source of theologising in liberation discourse thus, is a vital tool in shaping, guiding and directing historical events. As Gerald West (1997) puts it:

Many black Christians in Africa read the bible and discover the texts that has been deliberately silenced but one that speaks through this silence about the struggles of the silenced and marginalized people (pp138).

This entails the analytic reading of the bible in the context of liberation. From a liberationist perspective, hermeneutics can be defined as "the theoretical and methodology of re-reading, interpreting of the Bible in the situated-ness and cultured-ness" (Maposa 2011:47). Further, hermeneutics gives us a new realisation, a new re-

reading of historical events in order to grasp the significant of the deep-seated signals for a fresh roadmap towards liberation. Notwithstanding the notion by Dietrich Bonhoeffer who stated that reading the Bible “from below” implies reading one`s socio-economic and political situations, a key tenet to the praxis of the liberation theology (Boesak 2011).

The Uruguayan theologian Juan Luis Segundo is one of the proponents of hermeneutical circle. The hermeneutical circle states that one must be aware of reality, which leads to analysis and suspicion of the underlying ideologies. In addition, the awareness must lead us to critique superstructures and ideologies. Further, the critique in turn builds mistrust on how the bible has been interpreted. The final stage must be exegetical suspicion on how to use the bible, this process is called *see, judge, and act and celebrate* (Fabella and Sugirtharajah 2000:97). From this scholarly perspective, the hermeneutical interpretation is also meant to remove the captivity scriptures, in which for long the bible has been used as a tool for oppression. Therefore, the liberating activity of black people relied on the bible. Nevertheless, Barney Pitso Moseneke cited Allan Boesak`s reliance upon biblical interpretation and exegesis as a preferred method of Black Theology. As such, he emphasized on the centrality of the bible in theologising, as a critical reflection considering God`s word. This implies that all action and reflection is judged by the Gospel of Jesus Christ (1994:176).

Important for this theoretical insight and development of the thesis under review is the reflection that the hermeneutics of liberation is taken from a marginalised position which

Boesak steers away from the ultimate and fundamental religious claims. This unique hermeneutical position enables the contemporary society to confess Jesus Christ as Lord amongst the poor, the Christ who is at the centre for those who are in the margins, Christ who cries for justice and on the side of the oppressed (Taljaard 2017:130).

Crucially, our “Kairos”, the symbol of consciousness with its critical, contextual on change is a framework of reading the bible “from below” which is key to the praxis of Liberation Theology. The re-reading, re-engaging “from below” also implies that the bible is a critical tool in our socio-economic, political situations, stories against imperial enslavement and domination. More so, an ideology of solidarity for the marginalised (Boesak 2011). Subsequently, the emphasis on Kairos consciousness is self-critical as well as critical in the adoption of this hermeneutics of the liberation as espoused by Allan Boesak. In addition, Hugo Assmann in the book *Practical Theology of Liberation* (1975) asserts that hermeneutics of liberation opened new insights of theologising and analysing historical experiences. Hermeneutics is therefore, a key tenet in understanding historical truth. This tenet (hermeneutics) greatly informs the Zimbabwean ecclesiology on its prophetic role considering the Zimbabwean crisis under spotlight.

2.3.3 Discernment

Discernment is a consistent tenet commonly used in this liberation discourse. Cornel West defines discernment as the analytic moment at which prophetic thought develops the capacity to provide a broad and deep analytical grasp of the present considering the

future (1993:40). As such, discernment is mentioned among components which characterises prophetic thought, thus inspires people towards transformation and goes beyond what we perceive. In addition, Llewellyn McMaster cited Cochrane's definition saying that, discernment implies reading, understanding the will of God for our time as well as our context (1991:78). It also means, reading the signs of times correctly and discerning the truth. Subsequently, this entails the analysis and the interpretation of historical reality. Thus, the heart of Christian church is listening to the word of God in scripture with eyes opened to the oppressive and suffering of people.

By and large, this analysis comes “from below”, from the viewpoint of the crisis in Zimbabwe to establish how the situation raised the legacies of the prophetic consciousness and how the Christian community discerned in “reading the signs of time”. Importantly, Chitando (2013:6) insisted that the Zimbabwean crisis is presented the efficacy of prophetic characteristics in form of pastoral letters, prophetic communique like *The Zimbabwe We Want* document, bringing the visibility of the church into the democratic space in Zimbabwe. Precisely, as alluded in the problem statement, the Zimbabwean scenario where the church was pushed out of the public space and greatly silenced by Robert Mugabe (Chitando et al 2014:179).

Emphatically, James Cone cited two theologians who discerned and prophetically saw beyond their time. What distinguished Bonhoeffer and Martin Luther King Junior from most theologians of their time was their refusal to keep silent about great moral issues of their time and situations, their courage to fight social and political evils in their

societies (Hopkins and António 2012:143). The identified theologians strongly opposed Nazi and American racism. Further, Bonhoeffer said “when Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die”. On the same token, Martin Luther King Jr says “if physical death is a price, I must pay to free my white brothers and sisters from the permanent death of spirit, then nothing can be more redemptive” (Cone, 1991:315).

Crucially, Takatso Mofokeng singled out that faith discernment always turns into moments of prophetic truthfulness, of political commitments towards the act of justice (2017:43). Discernment and prophetic mode also evoke the boldness to achieve a goal through solidarity and resistance. Analytically, Allan Boesak poses a critical question saying, “What does it mean when one is called a prophet?” The statement continues that, “are they always the steadfast, rock solid, courageous women and men of God who inspire us so much?” (Boesak, 2011:6). The methodology in this thesis thus, employs the liberationist hermeneutics in analysing the Christians’ response to the Zimbabwean situation.

2.3.4 Contextuality

The main thrust of liberation theology is premised on the dimension to construct a church that is genuinely African and Christian. Therefore, the challenge on African ecclesiology is to discover who they are as a people in God’s image, upon this discovery the church is determined to participate in God’s liberative activity in history (Martey 2000:172). Liberation has become a key component in the construction of a theology for the church and emerge primarily in response to western cultural imposition

on the African continent. This study gives a nod to the notion that contextuality is the entry point of doing theology in Africa and quest for a genuine African ecclesiology (Maposa 2014:42). The framework of the study considers the fact that Liberation Theology does not claim universality, but rejoices the relevancy of its contextuality (situational) in which it comes to life in the liberation interpretation of the gospel message, the faithful praxis of the people of God everywhere through which, it draws its source of strength (Boesak 2015). Therefore, contextuality is one of the key tenets in a framework of Kairos Theological discourses.

Pobee (2001) noted the need to review the distinctive classic mark of a church in view of the proliferation of (AICs) in these words:

The emergence of (AICs) is asking us to quickly review our time-honoured marks of the church as we used traditionally to say, one wholly catholic apostolic church or the place where the gospel is preached and the sacraments of baptism and eucharist are celebrated (pp xii).

The ecclesiological landscape has completely shifted in that the (AICs) play a pivotal role in the formation of a contextualized African church. As such, the African Initiated Church serves as a reminder for the need to realign and democratize Christian and the church precisely the (AICs) are fast growing numerically because their theology is marked *holism*. Theology that holds people must address the emotional physical, social, mental and personal needs of the people in context. The emergence of African Initiated Churches was because western Christian churches or historical churches did not

respond abreastly and contextually to the needs and demands of the African society.

Appia-Kubi (1986) commented that:

The spiritual hunger, not social, political, economic and racial factors was the main cause of the emergence of indigenous African churches. In these churches religious need such as healing, prophesying, divining and visioning are fulfilled through Christian means (pp. 86).

Cultural consciousness is thus, pivotal in development of this thesis because Christianity in Zimbabwe is meaningful in terms of its context as ushered in by the African initiated churches. This brand of (AICs) is proactive ecclesiological organisations just as we view the historical churches. Therefore, the Zimbabwean crisis from the year 2000 cannot be deliberated without taking into consideration the role played by the (AICs) given the fact that they have steeped the numerical superiority within the 21st century ecclesiological landscape in Zimbabwe. Over and above, their prosperity emanates from contextuality and the need to blend Christianity with African culture.

2.3.5 An Analysis of the Framework

Nevertheless, the tenets of Kairos Consciousness articulated through the lenses of Allan Boesak in our liberationist approach and framework has laid the foundation on views of the liberation and ecclesiology. Crucially, the tenets serve as tools to unlock and open into the basis of the 21st century model of Zimbabwean ecclesiology which makes a critical appraisal to the Christian Church's views and response to the crisis. At this juncture, our radar traces the Zimbabwean ecclesiological landscape right from the

genesis of the Eurocentric Christianity. As such, the framework raises some four critical pillars as analytic tools and model of the Zimbabwean ecclesiology anchored on liberation. In context of the crisis and challenges, the study views a church of the struggle in trenches and combat with people Banana (1991:364) a prophetic church that discerns and reads signs of times West (1993:40) a church of liberation Cone (1975:138) a church with cultural consciousness. Therefore, the emphasis on cultural consciousness cannot be undermined particularly in view of massive proliferation of the (AICs) constituting the 21st century Zimbabwean ecclesiology. Over and above, the study proceeds to view how the Zimbabwean ecclesiology has interfaced with historical events in the dispensation of Chimurenga and the decline of Kairos consciousness in post-independent Zimbabwe. Essentially, the dispensation under review is in form of a renaissance of Kairos consciousness.

2.3.5.1 Kairos Consciousness and Chimurenga

This thesis is developed in context of the Zimbabwean ecclesiology as an appraisal upon the action and views of church within the Third *Chimurenga*⁴ struggle. *Chimurenga* is a Shona word meaning war, revolt, riot or revolution (Dale 1983:25). The usage of the term Third *Chimurenga* has assumed several names within the 21st century political discourses in Zimbabwe. Third *Chimurenga* implies (The armed struggle for liberation) or *Jambanja* (fast track-land redistribution) and *hondo yeminda* (war for land restoration) (Maposa, 2012:70). In other words, all names and designations of the term *Chimurenga* connotes some historical grievances based on the account of colonial imbalances in the Zimbabwean society.

⁴ *Third Chimurenga* was a phrase coined by the veterans of the liberation struggle when referring to the land repossession crusade that took place in the early 2000

Meanwhile, our hermeneutics of liberation guide the framework in re-reading the situatedness and culturedness hence informs that the nation of Zimbabwe has been troubled by colonial evils and hangovers. As such, the notion of Third *Chimurenga* resonates as the issue and mantra of *ivhu kuvanhu* (land to the landless) ushered in the struggle. Accordingly, Bakare uses the metaphor of land in Shona as *amai* (mother), this entails that land is sacred, hence, cannot be a commodity that can be sold (1993:72). Further, the Third *Chimurenga* is revolutionary, this explains why the term *Jambanja* is used meaning that the issue of land is meant to redress the colonial imbalances.

In this analysis, the Second Chimurenga (armed struggle) from 1965 to 1980 was an inevitable enterprise because of the land issue, hence, the salutation *mwana wevhu* (son of the soil) was popularised during the war of liberation as a way of motivation to value the cause worthy to fight for (Bakare 1993:46). In addition, the popular dimension that Zimbabwe *Ndeyeropa*⁵ (Zimbabwe came through the price of blood) explains that the value of liberation fulfilled and achieved through sacrifice. The Christian Council of Zimbabwe endorsed the armed struggle and sponsored the guerrilla movements during the Second Chimurenga from 1965 to 1980 (Watyoka 1991:16). The scope of this study critically examines whether the Zimbabwean ecclesiology is pro-Third Chimurenga or anti-Chimurenga considering James Cone's (1975) notion that:

Neutrality is not an option when people are oppressed, the fight for justice and freedom is a divine right for every Christian (pp. 141).

⁵ Part of a song composed to psych and motivate the mass to fight and reclaim their independence

However, the council of churches in Zimbabwe (2006) issued a statement in the climax of the Third Chimurenga stating that:

The land question remains the single most emotive subject in our country and its resolution have far more reaching benefits for the nation of Zimbabwe (pp. 30).

Meanwhile, a four-point analysis is rendered pertaining the appraisal of Zimbabwean ecclesiology to *Third Chimurenga*. First, Christian churches endorsed the first and second *Chimurenga* because of their view against racism, segregation, land imbalances and violence of the Rhodesian regime and oppression as a threat against blacks. More so, the same church which endorsed the *Second Chimurenga* from 1965 to 1980 could not celebrate the value of independence when people remain landless. Second, the term *Chimurenga* also connotes the shelling in the Christendom in that it became a turning point and new dawn in the Zimbabwean ecclesiology to have an autonomous afro-centric ecclesiology. Further, the dawn of political independence in Zimbabwe meant the recognition of some African Initiated Churches (AICs) who had suffered under the yoke of colonialism in terms of derogatory naming and undermining.

Third, the church is always divided, while they accepted the value of land and giving of land to the landless, some Christian circles disagreed with the method employed especially the use of force "*chirongwa chejambanja*" (the violent taking of land) (Maposa 2010:192). In addition, the Third Chimurenga started as a typical liberation by the people as artisans of their own emancipation in Marondera, but it got the backing of state machinery and became a well-timed program to give the ruling Zanu PF party a

political boost over the other political rivals in the form of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). Fourth, the church and liberation movements collaborated during the armed struggle from 1966 to 1980 in what Banana viewed as the church of “trenches and combat” (1996:363) but later during the crisis Mugabe started unvoice the church of any negative political utterances. What started as a crisis in the response to the *Third Chimurenga* in the year 2000 entered a full-blown crisis reducing Zimbabwe to a pariah state (Mlambo 2014:231). It is from this viewpoint that the study profiles the four pillars of the 21st century Zimbabwean model of ecclesiology.

2.3.5.2 Decline of Kairos Consciousness in Post-Independent Zimbabwe

Kairos Consciousness is our continuous probing to the question as to why the prophetic voice of the church has faded after the attainment of political interdependence (Boesak 2015:2). With some sentiments that the church has moved from combat to compliance. The leading prophetic voices of the church are no longer audible as they used to during the Second Chimurenga (Liberation struggle). The prophetic voices became inaudible during the inception of the new dispensation or black government (Chitando 2009:96). In other words, the framework of Kairos Consciousness critique what the church has not done after the attainment of political freedom with lenses focused on a theology of ecclesiology from below with the impoverished, downtrodden, excluded those who have remained marginalised.

First, after independence the society became stratified, a new black elite class emerged widening the gap between elites and impoverished (Weiss 1994:102). This entails the power matrix in society is viewed with transfer of power and control from the white

minority elite to the black elite weakening the link between the ordinary people and political elite. Chitando argues that the formation of the black elite is viewed in Christian context. As a matter of fact, the church was trapped in the power matrix because it was closely connected to the foregoing, the emergency of majority government in Zimbabwe (2009:96). During the dawn of political independence in Zimbabwe from 1980 church leaders strongly co-operated with the government. The two crucial institutions state and church shared common horizons particularly in their reconstruction themes such as reconciliation, peacebuilding and development (Chitando 2002). The cordial relations in church-state continued unchecked from the time of struggle to independence.

Second, the attainment of political independence in 1980 is interpreted as the “pay-back time” for the church’s participation in the struggle symbolised by the appointment of Rev. Canaan Banana, a clergy, as a ceremonial President. Banana was one of the vocal, prophetic liberation theologian mouthpieces of church during the liberation struggle in the 1970s. Quite a good number of clergies were absorbed into various platforms and positions of government in 1980. This implied that, eventually the church became part and parcel of the government of the day putting to a compromise on the critical voice and prophetic ecclesiology brand.

Third, the church in Zimbabwe, to a large extent, shared Robert Mugabe’s Afrocentric approach on black empowerment, especially the quest towards land restoration. Meanwhile, the Western Christian church played a part in land dispossessions as colonial chaplains and handmaids, it also differed with the black ecclesiology,

particularly the African initiated ecclesiology which felt land must be restored back to its rightful owners. However, the church was silent on the land issue in 1980 because of its possession of vast pieces of land and mission stations distributed to them during the colonial era. The church became non-confrontational to follow black leaders with some politicians claiming to have been born and bred in the church. As such, Kairos consciousness; that prophetic mode of the church declined on attainment of political independence in Zimbabwe and the following decade. The silence and absence of prophetic ecclesiology gave room to recurrences of State and church theologies in Zimbabwe which negated the concerns of the poor in favour of the elites.

2.4. Kairos Consciousness and Ecclesiology

This section of the chapter traces the historical and theological foundation of ecclesiology. The landscape is tracked from the division and splits of the Eurocentric ecclesiology into Western Orthodox and Eastern Orthodox, followed by the reformation events which gave rise to Protestant and Roman Catholic branches of Christianity. A snap survey of Leonardo Boff's liberation ecclesiology is also profiled. Further, this part of the study makes an in-depth analysis into the western missionary ventures in Zimbabwe and their pitfalls. Finally, the pillars of the 21st century Zimbabwean ecclesiology are presented.

2.4.1 Ecclesiology: Historical and Theological Foundation

The ecclesiological landscape and foundation are vital in the development of this thesis analysing the Christian response to the myriad woes in the Zimbabwean society from the year 2000. Accordingly, Pobee (2001) commented that:

The contemporary mantra in the study of ecclesiology informs us that the centre of gravity to define world Christianity has shifted from the north Atlantic to the south with Asia, Africa and Latin America becoming heartlands of Christianity (v).

The rise of Christianity outside the West and the growth and proliferation of non-traditional church forms have made ecclesiology a unique and wide discussed topic. In addition, this study cannot undermine Philip Jenkin's notion that there is a new Christendom attributed to the continuing dramatic changes in the global ecclesiology (2008:259). As such, one manifestation of the shifting of the centre and gravity of Christianity is the numerical vibrancy and growth of the African Initiated Church (AICs) and Pentecostal Christian. Precisely, the concept of ecclesiology in the 21st century is marked by intensification of enculturation, inclusivity, gender considerations and the value of liberation ecclesiology as the context in which the thesis locates and traces the model of the Zimbabwean ecclesiology.

Etymologically, the Greek word for the church is *ekklesia*, which implies assembly of those called together or congregation, the word appears two times in the gospel of (Matthew 16:18 and 18:17). The Hebrew term *qahal* means to summon the people brought together for a purpose (Dussel 1975:60). Paul also used the theological context of the term church referring to a generic universal sense (1Corinthians 12:28). Okullu moved a theological exposition on the foundation of ecclesiology, stating that the church is a pilgrim people with a mission, a special people of God as stated in the bible in (Mark 3:13-15). In addition, the church which implies the people of God have been called out for three reasons (2008:8). First, the church is called to preach and hear the

good news. Second, the church is called to be companions of Christ and third, the church is a frontier in confrontation with the forces of evil. The evil and darkness could be in-form of corrupt ethics of power, poverty, false religiosity, social marginalisation and environmental degradation (Okullu 2005:8). Subsequently, the question of ecclesiology inevitably assumes a liberationist dimension in that the task of the church concerns the value and well-being of the total human-person.

The Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner advanced the thesis that the church has gone through three stages of epochal change. First, one of the remarkable features of the Christian church was the transition from Jewish Christianity to the gentile Christianity within the *Greco-Roman* world. Subsequently, Christianity in a way, became the dominant religion of Greco-Roman world. Second, with the passing on of the Great Roman Empire, Christianity became the new faith of the Byzantine East and Europe. Thus, we perceive manifestations of the church as religion of the European civilization and culture as well as Hellenism (Cwlekowski 1988:199). Third, is the transition of church from its Jewish milieu to the rest of the world and missionary enterprise.

Convincingly, it is imperative to capture the logic by Cox (1965) who also defined the church (ecclesiology) analysing the view of Reformers who prescribed that:

The church is, “where the word is rightly preached, and sacraments rightly administered” this will not simply apply today. We must therefore be reminded that Christ was not crucified on the altar between two candles but on a cross between two thieves. (pp14).

Notwithstanding the fact that the early understanding of the church from the catholic view was mainly doctrinal and hierarchical making the pope infallible when he pronounces from the *ex-cathedra* (from the throne of the bishop). A view that was highly contested by the reformers giving birth to protestant branches of Christianity.

Juan Luis Segundo's perspective about church is anchored on the question "what can the church offer to the world"? In his view, the church should be a sign to the world particularly to the people outside itself. Further, the church should be a symbol of God's love, its efficacy is judged by the mutual love it has encouraged people (McGovern, 1989:2013). Elaborating this notion, Segundo argued that the focus of the church should not be on the size of growth and membership but, rather on the world. In addition, Segundo implored the term "revolutionary vanguard" (McGovern 1989:213). This implies that the church is the minority persons who can effectively raise the consciousness to avoid mass tendencies but ready and able to usher transformation.

Leonardo Boff views the church as a post-resurrection community. In his book, *Ecclesio-genesis*, he argues that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ ushered the church into existence (1986). Further, Boff stated that during his public life, Jesus only gave essential elements of the church teachings, eucharist, the apostles but in it, concrete historical form. The church came from the decision of the apostles as enlightened by the Holy Spirit after the resurrection of Jesus Christ (McGovern, 1989:214). This entails, according to Leonardo Boff, that Jesus intended not to establish a church but rather to preach the Kingdom of God on earth. Therefore, he chose the

twelve apostles not as builders of a new church, but as a symbol of new Israel. However, Boff's analysis of ecclesiology is liberationist in approach forwarding the commutarian trajectory in favour of the traditional institutional church which is more western ecclesiology.

John Sobrino joins Leonardo Boff in his major contribution to the liberation theological view on the church whose thrust is based on "a new way of being a church in the world of the poor" (McGovern 1989:218). In the work *True Church and the Poor*, Sobrino profiles a liberationist ecclesiology of the new church of the poor as mainly representing a resurrection of the true church. Accordingly, the church has a dimension to have broken away from the traditional ways of being the church and began to attain a great fullness and authority. In other words, John Sobrino says use of term "resurrection" does not mean the church had died, but that the new way of being a church manifests a new substance and life more in conformity with the spirit of the early church. Sobrino further pointed out that the church is "of" the poor, where they constitute its very basis. Over and above, the basis of the church is in unity and solidarity in the work of liberation, seeking justice, confronting evils and making liberation a reality.

The Zimbabwean Christian Churches stand in the framework of consciousness through the prophetic document. The Zimbabwe We Want (2006) defined the church as follows:

The church is a unique divine institution in the world, which comprises women and men called to serve God and all humanity through the preaching of the liberating gospel and service to alleviate human suffering in this world.

The definition by the Zimbabwean Christian Churches consider the liberation dimension in that the church stands for the poor and the marginalized in order to remove the yoke of slavery in terms of dehumanization, poverty, exploitation, lack of any physical needs which constitute the full humanity. In addition, Canaan Banana noted that the church is defined by varied functions it performs, the church is a watchdog of democracy which ensures that there are no impediments placed upon innocent people by oppressive structures or instruments in society (1990:96). In other words, the church has a calling and the church has the divine mandate to execute in the world. The ecclesiology framework takes a liberationist dimension for the church from below, which implies from the marginalised and impoverished.

2.4.2 Ecclesiological Shifts and divisions

There are some major ecclesiological divisions and shifts in the history of the Christian Church. The Church dramatically passed from being a persecuted sect to the status of being officially a state religion of the Empire around 381C.E. The conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine signified a major landmark in the history of the church. It was also a time that the church adopted the Nicene Creed in 325C.E, and eventually the canonisation of New Testament. More importantly, the Christian church became institutionalised and episcopate the office of the Bishop for the purposes of continuity and identity with its origins (Nickoloff 2007:386). The history of the Christian church has been characterised by internal crisis due to the splits and divisions from time immemorial. One such split was between the Eastern Church (Orthodox) and western Church (Catholic). Meanwhile, Dyrness and Karkkainen (2008) observed that:

Church history informs us that the division did not take place until AD 1054 as a result of the *Filioque* dispute and several Ecclesio-political factors otherwise, the division between Catholic and Orthodox Christian movements goes further back in history (pp252).

However, the split and differences were much centred on what theologians of these churches viewed about Jesus Christ, particularly his nature of being Man and God. Further, these branches of Christianity consist of major Christian movements in the trend of global ecclesiology.

The Eastern Orthodox is one of the oldest Christian family, sometimes referred to as the Orthodox churches. This family of Christianity consists of the Greek Orthodox Church and the Russian Orthodox Church. Buhlmann (1976) observed that:

The eastern orthodox churches in the first sense extend from Russia, Greece, and Yugoslavia through the Middle East to Ethiopia, Egypt and south India. They reflect the structure of the church of early century with strong autonomous patriarchs and with early centuries Christ mysticism (pp. 9)

Crucially, the Eastern Orthodox ecclesiology has spread to Europe, Japan, Australia and America through migrations. Orthodox Churches are anchored from the rich *patristic* and *trinitarian-pneumatological* traditions, and thus, attempt to balance the one-sided Christological foundation of ecclesiology in the West.

What is most striking and distinctive about the Orthodox ecclesiology is the notion of the church as the image of the Trinity. Further, at the heart of the Eastern Orthodox

ecclesiology is the issue of *Eucharist*. In their view, human nature enters union with the divine nature (Dyrness and Karkkainen 2008:253). The Orthodox Ecclesiology is also liturgical in terms of worship because of the belief that the earthly liturgy is a foretaste of heavenly worship. However, the communist government was hostile to the Russian Orthodox Church because of the forced co-operation with the political establishment. Whereas, the thesis views how the Zimbabwean ecclesiology can hold surmountable political pressure of the crisis.

The Roman Catholic Church's early understanding of the church was mainly hierarchical and doctrinal. The Vatican established and championed a predominantly hierarchical view of ecclesiology. The first Vatican Council of 1869 promulgated the famous *Papal Infallibility* which stated that "the utterances of the Pope are viewed and accepted without error". This condition was believed religiously based on (*ex-cathedra*) which implies (from the throne or Bishop's Chair) (Dyrness and Karkkainen 2008:255). In other words, the Pope is pronouncing to the universal church on matters of morals and faith as the successor of St Peter. Importantly, Catholic ecclesiology is sacramental in that the church is where there is celebration of *Eucharist* under the priest or bishop who is linked and related to Rome. Essentially, the splits between the western orthodox and eastern orthodox is a manifestation on the crisis of ecclesiology right from its Eurocentric founding which led to the reformation era of the Christian church.

2.4.3 The Crisis of Reformation

Mugambi viewed the crisis of reformation in the western ecclesiology as early as AD 1517 as the main basis of the emergence of protestant churches as we know them

today in Africa (1990:204). More importantly, the ecclesiological reforms in Europe also gave birth to missionary order and missionary adventures such as the Catholics (Jesuits) (1990:204). Despite their splits and differences both protestant and catholic Christians saw their mission as the fulfilment of the great commission (Matthew 28:18-20). Therefore, the ecclesiological landscape in Zimbabwe and other parts of Africa is a product of Eurocentric ecclesiology bedevilled by divisions, splits and the crisis of reformation.

Mullet (1999) commented that:

The protestant reform inaugurated by Martin Luther (1483-154) was indeed a titanic movement in the history of the church (x)

The protestant landslide which followed Luther's revolt of (1517-20) engulfed most of Germany, Scandinavia within a short space of time. Further, Calvin systemized protestant theology which engulfed the greater part of Swiss reformed religion. The spirituality of reformation swept across some Europe stronghold in Poland, Hungary, Scotland and Netherlands. Author Dickens observed that England remained in such a schism, hence, received multiple protestant influences and ended up developing a national Christian church which was distinctly protestant in character (1969:7). The reformation movement was much revolving around issues of rehabilitation, renovation, re-aligning and cleansing the Christian church. Therefore, the protestant reformation emerged out of the strong aspirations in favour of the renovation within the Western Christianity (Mullet 1999: x). The issue of financial abuse and schism was a cause for concern for the church. As Mugambi (1993) puts it:

The crisis in the church came when money was being raised for the building of St Peter's Basilica in Rome. People were called upon to pay indulgences which some Frairs and Monks objected (pp. 204).

Martin Luther then dropped a "bombshell" through the posting of 95 propositions which led to the crisis in the church. The propositions by Luther opened doors for other reformers such as John Calvin to emerge in (1509-1564). Essentially, there was total rift between the people who demanded reforms in the mainstream Christianity.

The people protested against what they thought was not going well in churches. This led to the founding of churches like Lutheran, Methodist, Dutch Reformed, Presbyterian and Baptist church which form the Christian block of protestant reformers. Importantly, the likes of Zwingli and Calvin did not move out of the church but continued to insist on the need to reform within the church, a phenomenon called Counter Reformation. However, Dickens observed that like the advent of Catholic reformation and Counter Reformation which is described as a "slow starter" to the protestant reformation which had made some significant advances and progress. The analysis in the development of this thesis, the crisis of reformation in Western ecclesiology reflects the shortfalls and pitfalls which the church brought in its adventure to Christianise Zimbabwe and other African nations. Subsequently, the church came to Africa in the realm of white supremacy and had nothing to take from the African religiosity. More so, Christianity came in the guise of civilization heavily militating the African culture.

2.4.4 Liberation Ecclesiology

Leonardo Boff, the Franciscan theologian is a key figure in the analysis of Liberation Ecclesiology. He thus, questioned the way the church has traditionally operated. In his book, *Ecclesiogenesis*, Boff develops his idea by contrasting two different ways of being the church namely institutional and community (McGovern 1989:214). The traditional institutional church acts from the top to bottom. In other words, it views itself as a juridical society in which God the Father, empowers Jesus Christ to find a Church headed by a Pope and the Bishops who transmit teachings and sacraments through the priests to the faithful “below”. Emphatically, Boff preferred a new way of being a church in the mould of liberationist view which develop from the “bottom to up” more specifically, a church “from below”. This type of a church views all members as equals and all bear responsibility for the church.

Importantly, Boff highlighted crucial reflections pertaining the basis and foundation of the liberation ecclesiology. The liberationist represents a “particularist” ecclesiology in contrast to the Vatican “universalist” view. The “particularist” approach starts from the local church, while the “universalist” starts from the global community (Dyrness 2008:258). The “particularist” view or ecclesiology “from below” tend to see groups as being kind of spontaneously formed under the impulse of the Holy Spirit and as constituting themselves. The ecclesiology “from below” of the base communities challenges the way traditional theology in form of Eurocentric theology understood the classic marks of the church. As opposed to viewing the church as monolithic unity, the

base communities envision the oneness of the church as unity-in-diversity composed of several ecclesia and the sanctification of all people of God.

Accordingly, Boff preferred the use of the term “reinvention” of the church. This reinvention is also premised on the theological reinterpretation of the founding of the church. Hence, Boff’s key question on the church states “did the historical Jesus will only one institutional form for the church?” (1986:23). As such, Boff sees Jesus Christ’s ministry as one not of founding of the church but preaching the Kingdom in the context of conversion of Israel. The founding of the church only came considering Jesus’ failure to convert Israel. Therefore, the church is not part of intention of the historical Jesus but arises from the commission and mandate of the risen Christ (Matthew 28:18-20). In other words, the church was born more specifically when the apostles felt inspired and called to go forth as mandated apostles to convert the world.

Analytically, Boff’s writings and model of liberation ecclesiology have proven highly controversial particularly from the western ecclesiology on negative descriptions he gives of the institutional church. Practically, he pictures authorities in the church “as amassing all power in the church” so that the actual community is divided between celebrants and onlookers, between producers and consumers of sacraments. In addition, he sees the institutional church as centre in the society’s affluent sectors, where it enjoys social power thus constitutes the church’s exclusive interlocutor with the power of society (McGovern 1989:214).

Reflecting from the above notion, Leonardo Boff develops a new liberation ecclesiology, whereas discussions of the church begin with a society which takes cognizance of sociological analysis. Thus, the vision or desire of a community style church or communitarian aspect of Christianity. Subsequently, Ormerod (1997) commented that:

One of the distinct features of liberation theology is based on its willingness to draw upon insights from the social science which is a significant challenge in terms of methodology from traditional theology (pp13).

However, there are critiques and comments about Boff's works on liberation ecclesiology; the traditional church authorities reacted strongly to this new understanding of the church view especially the archdiocesan commission for the doctrine of the faith in Rio de Janeiro.

Some traditional theologians objected to the use of sociology to analyse a divine reality such as the church (Ormerod 1997:161). Critically, if we are to develop the proper theology of the church whatever the weakness and strengths of Boff's ecclesiological analysis particularly his use of sociological context marks a significant value and addition to the contemporary ecclesiology. More so, Boff has not fully developed his ecclesiology anchored on hierarchical structure as developed from top to bottom in favour of the "church from below". Thus, our analysis of the Zimbabwean ecclesiology, particularly as a responsive church and a beacon of hope for the suffering ordinary citizens.

2.4.5 Western Christian Missionaries in Zimbabwe

Canaan Banana observed that when the Western Christian Missionaries came to Zimbabwe, their main objectives were to displace African Traditional Religion with Christianity under the banner of civilization -cum-colonisation. As such, civilization was perceived as being synonymous with the Europeanisation of Zimbabwe (1996:19). Christianity came as a political and economic project under the banner of civilisation. Further to that, Banana argued that there are five pitfalls created by the western Christianity missionaries in Zimbabwe namely, planting of racism, promoting tribalism, cultural confrontation, creating elitism and the use of imperialism machinery to silence the indigenous. These five pitfalls became the basis for the need of a Zimbabwean liberationist ecclesiology, modelled in Kairos consciousness. As alluded in the study, the ecclesiological landscape is anchored on liberation, hermeneutics of liberation, discernment and contextuality.

The nineteenth century era ushered in a new impetus to the spread of Christianity in the world. On the other hand, this was a century of colonization when European countries sent their men out to found colonies in Africa precisely, these were Christian countries. Mugambi (1990) remarks in a statement:

The nineteenth century was marked by what one would call missionary zeal because of the spread and stampede with which catholic bodies founded missionary societies in Africa and these societies had their spheres of influence (pp205).

Intentionally or inadvertently western Christian missionaries collaborated strongly with the colonial regimes to bring what they thought and described as transformation and civilization. Gana (1997) commented that:

The church served as the strong ideological arm of the colonial regime in its mission to destroy the African Civilisation (pp223).

In other words, the collaboration between the church and colonial state brought negative effects to the African society in terms of militating against their way of life. First, western Christian church both protestant and Catholics shared racist ideology which came from their cultural milieu. Practically, racism is rather a negative attitude or illusion of perceived notions of self-importance. Unfortunately, the protagonists of racial discrimination have infused havoc and untold misery, particularly to the powerless people in society. Thus, the institutionalization of racism did not spare the church in Zimbabwe, especially in most protestant and catholic churches. As Katie Cannon cited in Fabella and Sugirtharajah (2000) puts it:

Racism is a serious moral evil which takes a form of claim that some human races are rather superior to others. As it grows, racism becomes a conviction in the right to dominate others who differ from their own distinct identity traits (pp. 175).

The cancer of racism invaded the church and caused undesirable elements to the extent of having separate administration stipends and church services. The church thus, became a fertile ground for African resistance to colonialism, grooming of nationalism and a support arm of the liberation.

Banana also argued that the western Christian missionaries fuelled tribalism in the Zimbabwean society (1991:41). The system of colonialism collaborated by the state and church disintegrated the African society. Mugambi commented that:

The western intervention in Africa set in the process of disorganisation by imposing institutions of governance which were alien to Africans. The erecting of artificial provincial and national boundaries was meant to destroy the national cohesion and solidarity amongst the African society which was highly moulded into a unity. The culture of the African society promoted the national fibre and there was no room for individualistic.

Tribalism became a system much planted by the colonial regime as a way of controlling the black African community because of divide and rule approach. More importantly, the demarcation and boundaries were meant to pacify the national cohesion in the African society. As alluded to in the study, the missionary church was a close accomplice to the state and facilitated in a way the possibility of tribalism hence the contemporary Christian church is battling with the issue of tribalism which is an aggression against the African ethics of Ubuntu which unified the Africans.

Canaan Banana argued that the western Christian church in Zimbabwe collaborated with the colonial regime in creating elitism as a way of pacifying the Africans from exploding their frustration and anger. Banana cited what Franz Fanon calls “horizontal violence” which is a form of stage-managed violence between the oppressed people themselves (1990:68). Thus, elitism came as way to extend the colonial class by incorporating a form of Western culture to the minority blacks and as a result, elitism

infiltrated the Christian church. Further, elitism is a deliberately created tool by the oppressor on the basis of economic consideration, education and employment as a buffer between the oppressed and the oppressor. The western colonial regime has employed the aspect of divide and rule through a form of creating an elite society which serves to add numbers to the oppressing family.

The Eurocentric Christian church also placed the role of chaplains to the imperialism machinery. Imperialism is built on the power to subjugate, impose and to suppress the powerless. This power is anchored and vested in an elaborated machinery consisting of the police, riot police, army, prison service and the central intelligence service which collectively present the government as a perfected instrument of oppression (Banana 1990:67). In addition, imperialist states and their machinery do not necessarily serve the national interest, but the interest of the small group of minorities in the society which controls the means of production at the expense of the majority. In a way, the imperialists' machinery was meant to punch the poor so that they lack the power to demonstrate, strike and redress their situation (1990:67). As a result, the poor people had to live by the decisions of the minority capital holders.

Accordingly, western Christianity was very aggressive and confrontational to African culture. The missionaries created a sense of self-superiority making the Africans feel the sense of self-rejection and backwardness (Banana 1991:124). Immediately, African culture was rejected as uncivilised and replaced with the values and system from the western in the name of civilisation and white superiority. Chitando observed that any relevant theological discourse in Zimbabwe must take cognisance of the value and role

of the African culture (2014:193). As such, there can never be authentic Christianity in Zimbabwe hence, the Eurocentric church ignored the cultural values.

2.4.7 Kairos Consciousness and Zimbabwean Ecclesiology

In this part of the chapter, the study synchronises the tenets of Kairos Consciousness and the main pillars of the 21st century Zimbabwean ecclesiological landscape. In that view, the chapter analyses how the Zimbabwean ecclesiology has been inspired and propelled by Kairos Consciousness particularly in the crisis moment. However, one cannot romanticise Allan Boesak's lenses of Kairos Consciousness especially on the lack and deficiency of cultural consciousness, in failing to formulate an in-depth analysis of the African Initiated Churches (AICs) which constitutes the model of the 21st century Zimbabwean ecclesiology. The four main pillars to describe the Zimbabwean ecclesiology are, church of struggle, cultural consciousness, the church of liberation and prophetic church.

2.4.7.1 The church of struggle

The Zimbabwean church has reflected some features of protest, resistance, and risk of life in order to maintain fairness, justice, peace and unwavering champion of the oppressed and weak. *The Zimbabwe We Want* (2006) is a document expressing prophetic voice by the Zimbabwean ecclesiology in the mould of Kairos Consciousness issued the following statement:

In all these years and through the protracted liberation struggle and the challenges of independence, the church has been part of the unfolding national landscape, many times unseen and unnoticed even though many-a-time the church has observed that

issues in the political arena are often emotive, controversial, sensationalised and potentially divisive. It has remained faithful to its mandate or has made great effort to take corrective action (pp6).

The church is the conscience of the nation and stand for the people and with the people in the struggle particularly when injustice permeated the Zimbabwean society. This view opened a new window in the analysis of the church as a church of struggle.

Further, the Zimbabwean Christian groupings responded to the Kairos' moment by asking crucial questions like "are we now meddling in a sphere that does not properly belong to us as the church?" The church must be concerned when material and political conditions impinge on the spiritual well-being of people (2006:12). One can comment that in such a time, the "Kairos" time for Zimbabwe generated a Kairos moment whereas Christians cannot just stand aloof and watch. In addition, the responses by the Zimbabwean churches explicitly define the prophetic responsibility of the church. Crucially, the relevance of the church is determined not through its decorated hierarchical model, but through the effectiveness of its responses to daily struggles of a society. Further, our framework of this study focused beyond the description of "business as usual" of a church concerned with administrative structures, institutional body upholding sound theological standards, but the institution which constantly re-examines human conditions.

Subsequently, this framework is also hermeneutical as alluded to in one of our tenets whereas we view the colonial legacies in the history of the church, very authoritarian, patriarchal, conservative, institutional and resembling instrument of colonialism (De

Gruchy 2014:125). However, hermeneutical means the re-reading, re-aligning and interpretation of the church (ecclesiology) beyond the dogmas, hierarchical decorations, buildings, denominations and focus on human situation (Maposa 2014:48). The liberation dimension enables the study to engage the Zimbabwean problem above conflicting images of the church, this theological roadmap entails that the church is Christ working in the world.

The perceived status and role of the church as an ecclesiastic institution beyond Christian traditions considering the myriad woes in turbulent political landscape is predominantly the handwork of Boesak (1987) who has articulated such a critical conversation and framework which can be reviewed from the following position:

Christians should be engaged in historical action. They should to the best of their ability, be doing the work of God. The work of God involves liberating the oppressed. What Christians do can only make sense within the framework of God's liberating deed for those who look to him for their liberation (pp131).

Meanwhile, the notion by Boesak ushered in a fresh view situating the mission of the church in the liberation discourse and eventually, developing an ethic of liberation. As such, the church places itself squarely within the process of transformation. Simon Maimela clearly endorsed the church's participation in political processes especially in the liberation struggle as part of God's mission cited in Motlhabi (1973:109). Analytically, we view the church of the struggle whereby the church joins in solidarity with the people in the attainment of liberation. Any situation which dehumanises people calls for the church's participation hence our framework brings into fold a new model of the Zimbabwean ecclesiology in form of the church of struggle.

2.4.7.2 Prophetic Ecclesiology

The events which erupted in Zimbabwe from the year 2000 can be described as a Kairos for the Zimbabwean ecclesiology. Kairos defines the moment of opportunity and grace, a favourable season in which God issues a challenge for decisive action (The Kairos Document, 1985:4). The crisis in Zimbabwe provided a new understanding of the pastoral responsibilities and prophetic discharge of the church. Mapuranga, Taringa and Chitando (2014) argued that argued that:

The prophetic church emerged with boldness and courage to challenge the government of Mugabe during the crisis years in Zimbabwe from 2000 (pp. 179).

The prophetic church is the form of church with elements of discernment in reading the sign of times and sees in a crisis the Kairos moment (The Zimbabwe Want 2006:2). This mark of a prophetic church brings into fold the link which synchronises the tenets of Kairos consciousness and the pillars of the Zimbabwean ecclesiology especially the prophetic modes of the church. Nolan (1994) reiterated that:

The prophetic church begins by reading the signs of times. This is not only done by means of social analysis of the season, but rather interpreting the times from God's viewpoint. Therefore, this point in time is viewed as a divine visitation of God (pp217).

The essence of discernment is seen in the prophetic action of the church in interpreting a crisis and calls for experience than simply an intellectual reflection of the bible. Second, the prophetic church is driven by radical gospel of liberation, justice, hope, compassionate faithful resistance and political activism (Mofokeng cited in Boesak 2017:41). This dimension further buttresses the view that liberation is the key entry point

in doing an ecclesiological analysis in the Third World Christian perspective. In that regard, Cone (1975) pointed out that:

There is no liberation without the commitment of revolutionary action against injustice, oppression and slavery (pp. 152).

In other words, a prophetic church has the courage to risk the cost of liberation. During the period under review, the Zimbabwean church critically engaged political establishments who, in their view, had relegated church to pulpit, prayer and bible reading.

The assertion critically reads into the prophetic role of the church as an institution not divorced from the contemporary struggles of the people. Initially, the Kairos Document (1985) specified the activities of the church. First, the church gives moral guidance in that, amid the crisis, moral guidance is expected especially, the appeal to the conscience of those who act thoughtlessly and wildly (The Kairos Document 1985:27). Second, over and above regular activities the church also carries out campaigns as a means of conscientising the public particularly in relation with the struggle of the time. Third, the church is also expected to act prophetically if need be, by being part and parcel of civil disobedience and special campaigns (Kairos Document 1985:26). Fourth, the church is well placed by virtue of its activities. The Sunday service carries out the *Eucharist* to act as an agent of transformation. All these activities can be more fully consistent with prophetic faith related to the Kairos that God is offering us today.

Crucially, it's no longer business as usual for the church when people's lives are in danger, but can change its traditional pastoral practices so that it becomes a true agent of humanisation and ultimately, liberation. Only a renewed church can transform the society. Importantly, Juan Luis Segundo claimed that in the past, the church has acted as a closed religion for the society (1974:34). Further, Segundo hermeneutically claimed that the church needed re-alignment and re-evangelisation in terms of its mission so that it gets oriented towards transformation. Theologically, the church has a divine mandate, meaning that it has authority and command enshrined upon its role by God (Matthew 28: 18-20). By virtue of its calling, the church has a special assignment enshrined in its divine calling (The Zimbabwe We want 2006:16). The church is also expected to have a prophetic character drawn from the word of God in the saying, "Let justice flow like a stream and righteousness like a river that never goes dry" (Amos 5:24) which the Zimbabwean ecclesiology demonstrated during the period under review.

2.4.7.3 The church of liberation

The study raises an appraisal that the action and courageous voices of the Zimbabwean ecclesiology constitutes a powerful theological discourse of liberation in face of the deepening crisis in Zimbabwe during the period under review. The Zimbabwean church resembles a form of ecclesiology "from below". This symbolises consciousness of the Zimbabwean Christianity in that liberation is a radical transformation which can be carried in the context of Christendom. In addition, liberation becomes an entry point to the main business of the church. Chitando (2010) noted that:

As the Zimbabwean crisis worsened the church took a very firm fundamental stand against unfairness, exploitation, cruelty, corruption and injustice. There was a strong sense of Christian solidarity against violence to human life during the crisis years in Zimbabwe (pp. 51).

The comment serves to confirm what liberation is all about in view of the crisis in Zimbabwe. Hence, a liberated church has the capacity to liberate the society from the yoke of oppression as obtained from the courage of the Zimbabwean ecclesiology.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer defined the church as a genuine community not derived from individual wills, but Holy Spirit. He further asserted that, the church community exists only through liberation from Christ and Christ exists as the church community (1927:158). In other words, the church is Christ's existence in the world for a reason, theology begins with Christology in context of liberation which places the doctrine of the church at the very beginning of theologising.

Accordingly, Wilson commented that Bonhoeffer's articulation of ecclesiology is liberationist and the role of the church stands not only in the world but also against the world with the moral will and courage. Therefore, the history of the church is the hidden centre of world history (2007:209). As such, Bonhoeffer's definition of the church was so much constructed towards resistance against the Nazi state which was oppressive in Germany. Wilson also informs us that there is a clear affinity between Karl Barth and Bonhoeffer's theologies of church which is much premised in Christ and opposed to the worship of status quo. This angle also informs the study on the role of the church and its

liberation obligations in the face of human struggles, particularly the thesis under review on the Zimbabwean crisis.

Subsequently, James Cone described and situated the church in the context of the theology from below buttressing, “where Christ is, there is the church.” Christ is to be found as always where men are enslaved and trampled underfoot. Christ is found suffering with the suffering, Christ is in the ghetto, and there also is his church (1984:115).

Jürgen Moltmann centred on the ecclesiology thrust considering liberation. Hence, the riding theme of the book is that the church is found where Christ is and vice versa (1975:84). In other words, the position is also hinged with the liberation discourse which reflect and perceive Christ’s presence as a vital force against injustice in the world as exposed in the gospel message in (Mathew 24:40). In addition, John Wilson commented on how Moltmann viewed the church as the “Exodus Community”, (2007:251). The implications to the statement are perceived on Christ’s role of liberation of the poor. Liberation is opposed to powers of exploitation, exclusion, violence in economy and political life, the context in which we review the Zimbabwean Church. From the reflections, one can therefore deduce that liberation is a crucial pillar in the 21st century Zimbabwean ecclesiology.

2.4.7.4 Cultural Consciousness

Cabral (1979:147) observed that, one of the most serious mistakes made by the colonial pioneers in Africa, may have been to ignore or underestimate the cultural

strength of the people of Africa. Importantly, critical questions guiding this study is based on what role was played by the church in the historical processes which has shaped and moulded the Zimbabwean nation? Therefore, the church is an ideological and cultural institution. Accordingly, Masanja (1978) noted that:

We must recognize that imperialist powers used not only physical force when they occupied some of these nations, ideological instruments were used as well as different forms such as racial superiority, liberalism, all justifying in different ways domination of the countries (pp. 20).

This reflection brings into fold the role of the church in contemporary society. One such role is that the church is part and parcel of the ideological and cultural sphere.

Nevertheless, Cultural Consciousness has always been an integral and determining part of the struggle for our liberation in Africa. In other words, culture has played a crucial role as a factor of resistance against foreign dominations. Cabral (1979) observed that:

The dominations of people can only be maintained by the permanent, organized repression of the cultural life of the people concerned. In fact, to take up arms to destroy their cultural life. For as long as part of the people can have cultural life, foreign domination cannot be sure for its perpetuation (pp. 143).

Therefore, cultural consciousness is the awareness by the African ecclesiology that they wield power and draw strengths from the fact that the rootedness in African soil is crucial. This entails the fact that the church played a crucial role in the historical process

that has shaped and moulded the African society. Subsequently, the church, by virtue of her location, is a cultural and ideological institution (Masanja 1978:21). The analysis to this framework maintains the position that the church must always engage in meaningful dialogue with culture. The trends and the thinking of the contemporary society is therefore, strictly shaped by the cultural hegemony. Whereas this study is a consciousness forum that in our response to contemporary challenges, the church upholds some positive cultural values while challenging the negative beliefs (Chitando 2009:45). Thus, the Christian church in Zimbabwe also takes cognisance of the fact that the response to the crisis in society needs a pragmatic approach in order to have an informed solution. In as much as the study embraces Allan Boesak's liberationist framework of Kairos Consciousness, we thus view the inadequacies and shortfalls of his ecclesiological analysis particularly when it comes to cultural consciousness. Hence, the thesis also emphasises the importance of cultural consciousness in the Zimbabwean ecclesiology as an integral part of re-aligning a genuine Christian and African church.

2.4.7.2.1 African Initiated Churches

African initiated Churches (AICs) in Zimbabwe mark a distinctive feature in terms of the growth and pro-liberation of a highly contextual ecclesiology because of the wide use of indigenous tools of culture in worship. Being strongly rooted in the African soil, the theological mode of the (AICs) in Zimbabwe is typically Afro-centric and quite different from the western Christianity. Crucially, the African Initiated churches are regarded as the most dynamic, cultural consciousness brands of church movement in the 21st century Zimbabwean Christianity. Maposa and Sibanda (2013) commented that:

The phenomenon of (AICs) is of indigenous foundation and highly reflects an inclination of Christianity in the African soil (AICs) is therefore relatively recent and is gaining acceptance (pp. 126).

One can comment that (AICs) are genuine expression of religious context and African culture as a clear protest the western missionaries. The type of this Christian spirituality and faith does not merely contextualise some superficial elements of the western Christianity but uniquely represent a legitimate version of Christian faith. Further (AICs) is non-western religion that has taken root in the distinctive heritage of the African continent.

One of the distinctive elements found in (AICs) is the wide use of the indigenous cultural tools in worship, perhaps with a strong emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit. Some common phenomenon includes speaking in tongues, faith healing, prophecy and exorcism. As such, African cultures are quite communal in nature; which makes the African churches very close to their communities and provide home-grown solutions. AICs are thus, a force to reckon with given their numerical superiority, entrepreneurial thrust and blending of Christian values and African traditional ethics place them in a strategic and unique position. This brand of African Christianity has grown significantly making a paradigm shift in the Zimbabwean ecclesiological landscape. Some of the common names of these churches include Johanne Marange Apostolic Church (JMAC), Zion Christian Church (ZCC), Johanne Masowe Apostolic Church (JMAC) and African Apostolic Church (AAC). Consciousness of this brand of Christianity is worthy in the development of this thesis in a thrust towards an afro-centric ecclesiology hence, the

AICs have become active players in the public space and the political field. More importantly, AICs have strong resemblance of Black Liberation Theology in their quest for Black Consciousness, black identity and cultural consciousness.

2.5 Interface between Zimbabwean Ecclesiology and Liberation

Trajectories

This part of the study reflects on how the Zimbabwean ecclesiology has interfaced with some liberation trajectories within the Third World Christian perspective. The section profiles crucial landmarks on black consciousness, the Zimbabwean Kairos (1989), The Zimbabwe We Want (2006) and the Palestine Kairos (2009). An analysis and reflection on these liberative themes sharpen our appraisal on the Christian response to crisis. Analytically, these liberation trajectories are born in Africa and highly experiential thus, in our view theology is talking to African issues within the context of an African ecclesiology discharging prophetic responsibilities in contemporary society. Further, this framework of liberation discourse distinguishes the interlocutor who is a non-person as opposed to Western Christianity which focuses on the non-believer.

2.5.1 Black Consciousness and Ecclesiology

Steve Biko in his work, *I write what I like*; expressed in the strongest terms that, the greatest weapon in the hand of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed. The implication of this statement provided insight on political and religious (ecclesiastical) factors at play in South Africa which gave birth to the rise of black consciousness. The theme on the Black Consciousness is crucial for this study reflecting on how the churches in Africa have been inspired in their fight for liberation to remove the colonial legacies as well as an appreciation of their African identity. Allan Boesak argued that

the development of black consciousness brought with it a “Christian Consciousness” (1994:76). Importantly, it became impossible for black Christians to escape the pressing questions of history. As such, critical questions manifested. First, “How can a person be black and also be a Christian?” Second, “What has faith in Jesus Christ as Lord got to do with the struggle of the black liberation?” Third, “What was (and still is) the role of Christian church in the oppression and liberation of blacks?” (1976:76). When one is attempting to answer any of the above-mentioned questions of history, it also emerges clearly that “white” answers lose precedence as far as Christian reflection on faith and experience is concerned. In other words, an inescapable question of history evokes the tide of consciousness.

Black consciousness is a Black Theological reflection considering what the traditional Western Christian theology has ignored. In addition, black consciousness may be described as the awareness of black people that their humanity is constituted by their blackness. It also implies that black people are no longer ashamed of their identity, their history and culture, which is unique and distinct from the white people (Boesak 1976:1). Tinyiko Maluleke in the article; *May the Black God Stand Please! Biko's challenge to Religion* pointed out that, Steve Biko is one of the many courageous blacks in South Africa who gave and sacrificed their lives for their convictions. Therefore, he was very instrumental in the founding of South African Students Organisation (SASO) in 1969. Dean William Ferm stated that, Biko became a forceful advocate of black consciousness and Black Theology contending that Black Theology was meant to deal with racism and give South Africa a new look (1986:64). Therefore, Biko's position

clearly outlined the different beginning of Black Theology in South Africa and United States. Barney Pityana noted that a common feature on both settings of Black Theology in South Africa and United States is centred on political and social condition of black people yet, responded to different problems of racism and class struggle (1994:174).

Some important observation is highlighted in black consciousness. Consciousness is a discovery in that the term “blackness” does not designate the colour, but a state of mind and an affirmation of power (Boesak in Fabello and Torres, 1994:80). As such, the manifesto stated that the concept of Black Consciousness implies the awareness by black persons of the domain and power they wield economically and politically. Therefore, group cohesion is a critical and crucial facet of Black Consciousness (Ferm, 1986:64). In addition, Black consciousness reflected a clear “green light” on the Christian gospel and Christ is siding with the oppressed. The implication to this position is that black consciousness has been used as an analytic tool by the Christian churches in Zimbabwe that they have a political obligation towards liberation. Hence, considering the development of this study, a Prophetic Church is therefore conscious of its role to critically align its activities towards transformation of the society thus, make adherents aware that the gospel is part of liberation. As Black Consciousness is also an affirmation of identity and culture hence, one of the pillars identified in Zimbabwean ecclesiology is on cultural consciousness, which entails the removal inferiority complex in that the black people are not second-class citizens.

2.5.2 New Consciousness Model of Ecclesiology

Allan Boesak highlighted three important components which in his view can be referred to as a new consciousness for the Christian church in response to the situation of oppression. First, new consciousness is when the people in a situation of crisis, conflict or those who are in the condition of the “underside of history” (Gutiérrez 1983: xi), which implies the downtrodden and dehumanised become aware of their situation. In addition, when people become aware of their situation, they start asking new questions they have never in their lives asked before (Boesak 1979:169). The birth of a new consciousness is thus experiential in that the people in the situation of oppression often in turn become the artisans of their own liberation after a realisation of the need for change.

Second, Boesak emphasised this new consciousness as a condition of awareness brought by the society in their asking the question why? (1979:169). This implies that the question “why” is not merely a simple question but rather a liberative probing question on some underlying assumptions on traditions in society such as political dominance, the absence of democracy and pseudo religious traditions which are meant to morally justify the existence of evil in the society. More importantly, the issue of oppression and structures which have greatly divided and fragmented the contemporary society manifested in a country with an outward banner of Christian nation. Critically, the prophetic church can interpret the values of liberation in that evil cannot thrive in a society which is predominantly claiming to be a Christian community and yet not questioning the presence of such vices. In that situation, Boesak (1979:170) alludes to the notion that a new consciousness is when the Christian church begins not to see

things the same way. Therefore, the church in failure to discharge its prophetic duties and responsibilities gave rise to the development of liberation which eventually necessitated the emergency of Black Consciousness. Third, a new consciousness critiques suppressive legislation which have been passed selectively as a way of controlling and limiting potential persons to actualisation.

In addition, it is after such realisation that the Christian Church can revisit the traditional theology in that there are some questions of human liberation which have not been asked by the traditional theology. There has been a limited space and no room for critical questions pertaining to the liberation of the gospel as well as the church traditions. As such, Boesak brings into the fold a fresh realisation that Christian consciousness also critiques the mission of the church especially when it begins to take sides with the status quo neglecting the plight of persons who suffer under the colonial yoke. This reflection in the study stand as an analytical framework on how we review the Christian response to the Zimbabwean crisis in terms of their prophetic outlook towards the situation facing the nation; the church stands with the oppressed.

2.5.3 The Zimbabwean Kairos

There are two crucial documents authored by the Christian groupings in post-independence responding to the Zimbabwean crisis within the framework of Kairos trajectory. First is the Zimbabwean Kairos (1989). Gerald West brings into the fold the claim that the Zimbabwean Kairos (1989) reflects some close linkages and connections to the South African Kairos (1985). The evocation tone presented in the beginning of the document reads:

As prophets have done through the ages up to this very time, we must search ourselves very honestly and speak courageously of the changes that are needed for justice to prevail for all God's people in the land (Zimbabwean Kairos Document 1985).

Importantly, the sentiments and statement of the assertion in this document is rather an inspiration to the engagement of prophetic action. As such, West (2012), noted that the Zimbabwean "Kairos" proclamation on the statement "critical moment of truth", reflects the prophetic efficacy in the Kairos Tradition. More importantly, the Zimbabwean Kairos (1989) is more visible and louder, as a critique of the current theological and ecclesiastical models that determine the type of activities the church engages in when faced with national problems. This brings into the fore that the church cannot be a passenger towards issues of national interest as well as the public space, but always intervenes when it is necessary particularly in life threatening situations as obtained during the period under review.

Second, *The Zimbabwe We Want: Towards a National Vision for Zimbabwe (2006)* is crucially a unique framework on how the Christian denominations in Zimbabwe have contributed in the public space, to mitigate the crisis. The Zimbabwe We Want, is a document which was authored by the Heads of Christian Denominations (HOCD). This Christian fraternal based in Zimbabwe comprises of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) The Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) and Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC). Fundamentally, the document is a typical version of what constitutes ecumenism in society. Hence, all the Christian Denominations gathered together for a common cause to tackle pressing issues in the country. More importantly,

the document is prophetic in providing a platform for a dialogue in a bid for the nation to embrace a national vision in order to reach consensus on national issues (The Zimbabwe We want 2006:6).

This reflection is an important way on how church leadership amid a crisis responded in form of inclusiveness in the society. Precisely and diligently is also what Pius Wakatama cited, that Christian leaders must speak against evil being perpetrated by national leaders (The Daily News, 14 May 2003). Over and above all, our problem, the Zimbabwean crisis is in view of the contestation of space and the efficacy of Christianity in the public space in post-colonial society nevertheless, political cannot submerge the Zimbabwean ecclesiological voice in form Christian churches in Zimbabwe. However, this has shown what one would refer to as prophetic consistency for the church in Zimbabwe, but this response is weakened by the lack of voice from the African Initiated Churches (AICs) which constitutes numerical superiority in the Zimbabwean ecclesiological landscape.

2.5.4 Palestinian Kairos 2009

The Palestinian Kairos (2009) highly inspired the “rebirth”, reawakening and reinvigorating of the Kairos Consciousness. By way of introduction, the Palestinian Kairos Boesak (2015) pointed out that:

It took the compelling and inescapable moral authority of the Palestinian cry for justice, it was indeed a cry from within authenticity of Christian witness in the midst unnameable, unremitting suffering and courageous struggle, of unbearable contradictions and deep complexities to reconnect the remnants of prophetic movements in the churches

worldwide to their prophetic tradition, and reawaken the sense of Kairos in communities where prophetic voices seemed to have been silent for a long time (pp. 1).

By its nature, and theological background, Palestinian Kairos (2009) is a unique discourse. First, the characteristic of the document is a collective response from different faith communities from all walks across the world. More so, the document is not only ecumenical but also reflects an interfaith conversation (Palestinian Kairos 2009:4). Further, it is a document which represents a block of diverse faith communities in its action plan and methods, the Palestinian Kairos (2009) is inclusive of faith-based affiliations such as Christians, Jews and Muslims. Analytically, the Zimbabwean crisis provides an opportunity of interfaith dialogue as a solid response in that people of faith can work together for the betterment of society as prescribed by the Palestinian Kairos.

Second and more importantly, Palestinian Kairos (2009) is a vigorous platform to awaken the prophetic witness in the global village. The Palestinian Kairos (2009) is a critical reflection on Prophetic Tradition within the global arena and post-colonial society. In its character and view, it is important to note that the crisis in the world Global South is a reflection on the relegation of prophetic voice in post-colonial society. The birth or rebirth of the Kairos Theological Tradition in post-colonial society hinges on the efficacy, relevance and seriousness of religion and its commitment to justice. Palestinian Kairos begins with a quotation from the bible “They say, peace and peace when there is no peace” (Jeremiah 6:14). Analysing the assertion and text, West (2012) is of the view that the document on its inception begins with some confession of guilt. However, the response of a universal mission, is considering something much more

profound, durable, namely the question of Kairos Consciousness and the cry for hope and faith.

Third, the Palestinian Kairos (2009) calls for discernment. Theologically, the first reference of Christian discernment is in the letters of Paul in the statement that “do not quench the spirit, do not despise the word of prophets, but test everything, hold fast what is good, abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5: 19-22). Discernment is applied in context of Kairos Consciousness in terms of what is wrong in a situation. Further, is the angle to have the awareness that the crisis creates, for the most vulnerable discontent, situation of injustice. Subsequently, the Palestinian Kairos is quite a strong analytic tool for the 21st Century Zimbabwean ecclesiology to its commitment of championing the values of democracy rather than concentrating on the pulpit and structures of the churches.

2.5.5 Ecumenical Movements

This study brings into fold the Christian church agenda of ecumenism as a way of trying to find each other following a series of splits, divisions and works against each other. The contemporary Christian church has greatly been weakened by divisions, the splits and divisions within the Christendom also weakens its response to contemporary challenge hence ecumenism is an arm in which the church tries to foster unity on itself. The word ecumenism is derived from Greek *Oikoume* which implies the whole inhabited earth (Dyrness and Karkkainen 2008:263). Further, ecumenism is the practice of Christian churches and other Christian groups in which they seek and work for the unity that binds them together as fellow Christians and as one family (Clarke and Linzey

1996:271). In other words, this is the practice of the churches towards the visibility of oneness and unity as a response to the mandate and prayer by Jesus in the gospel of (John 17). Walbert Buhlmann (1976) expressed these words:

The history of ecumenism can suitably and fairly be called the story of quite a great discovery. It was a mutual discovery just like what the apostles felt at that night on the lake. Surely, we have learnt to see one another no longer as ghosts but as the Lord (pp216).

As such, the ecumenical agenda and movement is quite a crucial development in the history of the Christian churches. The ecumenical movements seek increased cooperation amongst the churches especially in their mission agenda to the world (Buhlmann 1976:217). Further, the ecumenical movement is focused on the healing aspect considering the historical splits and divisions among the Christian churches. The movements also try to mobilise the Christian churches to confront the problem of injustice and poverty in society.

Notable significance of ecumenism was the establishment of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948 which stands as a principal expression of the ecumenical movements. Basically, ecumenical movements serve as conduits of world peace and convergence in terms of doctrinal matters. In addition, the visibility of international organisations and events like Red Cross, World Fair and League of nations has been made possible through ecumenism. In reference to the Christian response to the Zimbabwean crisis, the ecumenical movements play a crucial role hence the four arms

constitute a solid block of the Zimbabwean Christianity. The Zimbabwe council of churches (ZCC), The Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC), the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) and the Fambidzano Yavatendi converged towards the issues of nation-building during the period under review. However, political polarization and infiltration of churches by political players has not spared the ecumenical agenda in Zimbabwe.

2.6 Ecclesiology and Liberation: An Appraisal

Meanwhile, the chapter critically analyse the Zimbabwean problem pertaining to the contestations and efficacy of ecclesiology in public space in terms of standing for justice of the marginalised. In the Zimbabwean context, Robert Mugabe had narrowly defined politics and the church's participation in the public space. Thereby, insisting that only the "brave ones" were to play the game in the public space (Wermter 2003:41). More so, the church cannot portray deafening silence of the prophetic voice of the church in post-colonial society in the face of the deficiency in democracy, deterioration of citizens' quality of life and violence, hence calls for a robust approach which is more visible in the public space.

In context of such challenges, Kairos Consciousness articulated through the lens of Allan Boesak in its liberationist paradigm is increasingly relevant in terms of numerous ecclesiastical engagements, conversations and contributions of the church to public life. Focusing chiefly on Kairos aspects such as contextuality, criticality and change, Kairos Consciousness as a liberation discourse is aimed at the transformation of society and

humanisation of people who are suffering injustice, marginalisation and exploitation (Parratt 1996:117). Contrary to the views that Kairos Theology tends to be relegated to the apartheid era, Kairos Consciousness is the new version of doing theology in post-colonial society and tackles contemporary challenges in particularly the role of ecclesiology in the public realm cannot be undermined.

In retrospect, the study takes cognisance of theological contributions by Allan Boesak as one of the founding heads in the articulation of Kairos Consciousness, the tenets of Kairos Consciousness as highlighted in the study namely liberation, hermeneutics, discernment and contextuality. Analytically, our appraisal on the Zimbabwean ecclesiological framework is anchored in the struggle for liberation and has raised the four pillars as a model of analysis namely; the church of struggle, church of liberation, cultural consciousness and prophetic ecclesiology. This implies that theology of the church in Zimbabwe is a by-product of the ongoing struggle of humanity in some way to overcome oppression and poverty (Gutiérrez 1983:70). Further, the relevant way of doing theology is premised on orthopraxis that is right actions, these actions are meant to bring transformation in society (Parratt 1996:11) considering such a discovery, and context of countries in many parts of the Third World like Zimbabwe. We contend that Kairos Consciousness is a paradigm in which, through its lenses, one can assess the Zimbabwean ecclesiology's response to crisis from 2000 to 2013. Therefore, the participation of Christian groupings and contribution to public space in the Zimbabwean society is what one can describe as the prophetic efficacy of the Zimbabwean church

notwithstanding the inadequacies and limitation of the Zimbabwean model of ecclesiology in a society polarized with divide and rule by political elites.

2.7 Conclusion

A “*tour de force*” was made in this chapter highlighting the tenets of Kairos Consciousness and ecclesiology in Zimbabwe traced from the Eurocentric ecclesiology. In general, some scholars and theologians wrestling with the history and development of Kairos Consciousness and ecclesiology have a consensus that it is about God’s liberating acts of justice in history for the souls of the oppressed and downtrodden hence our framework portrays liberationist views “from below”. Nevertheless, this chapter has been navigated and articulated in search of the efficacy of Christian participation in the public life precisely in the Zimbabwean crisis from 2000 to 2013.

Above all odds, Kairos Consciousness has been in Zimbabwe particularly the participation of the church in the liberation struggle popularly known as Chimurenga. However, there has been a decline of prophetic voices in post-independent Zimbabwe under the black government. The silence of churches after the attainment of political independence left power and control of resources in the hands of black elites at the expense of the impoverished majority. Notably, Kairos consciousness is good news for the marginalised people in Zimbabwe as the church spoke prophetically on what had gone wrong in the Zimbabwean society. Our probing question is based on what the political independence signified to the impoverished in Zimbabwe hence the role of the church is to take a bold stance in seconding the genuine causes of the marginalised people.

Chapter 3

Kairos Consciousness and Ecclesial Bodies in Zimbabwe

3.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to evaluate ecclesial bodies in Zimbabwe through the liberationist framework of Kairos Consciousness. These are the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) *Fambidzano yamakereke avatema* and Heads of Christian Denominations (HOCD). The chapter analyses how the Christian bodies responded to the Kairos moment in Zimbabwe focusing on their theological foundation and operation. Further, the chapter evaluate the consciousness of the Zimbabwean ecclesiology and the significance of their coming together in times of crisis through the Kairos discourse to establish the strengths and limitations of the Christian alliances.

3.2 Classification of Kairos Theologies

This chapter makes use of theological classification of the Kairos theologies articulated in the Kairos Document (1985) as an entry point to our analysis of the church bodies in Zimbabwe and how they interfaced with political discourses. Precisely, this thesis is developed basing on the socio-economic and political landscape of Zimbabwe which radically shifted from the year 2000 marking the genesis of a crisis. In addition, the Zimbabwean crisis was viewed as a matter of urgency interms of recognition and responsiveness for the Christian Church. The situation was a threat to the very

existence of innocent citizens. As such, The Kairos document profiled three forms of theologies namely; State Theology, Church Theology and Prophetic Theology which are documented in the context of the interface between ecclesiology and political discourses in response to crisis. Most importantly, the title of the document in the opening chapter emphasises that, the moment of truth has come, which calls upon the Christian church to awaken from its years of slumber in order to light the flames meant to signal the birth of a new consciousness responding to the situation of crisis (The Kairos Document 1985:4). Notwithstanding the fact that our methodology implies that the very victims of the situation of crisis occupy central epistemological space in the analysis with the view that liberation theology starts specifically where there is pain (Boff 1985:72). Crucially, the church occupies the central discourses in liberation in taking a bold stand against injustice.

Accordingly, Robert McAfee Brown (1992) commented that:

All proclamation shares the sense of urgency which arise from the situation of politics singled by committed theologians and church members of varying faith, they call the Christian church to badly identify with the struggle for justice and liberation around the world (pp:2).

The Kairos Document (1985) authored in South Africa became an analytical instrument for the church in Zimbabwe in making theological classification corresponding with their situations. Essentially, the South African Kairos (1985) greatly impacted on the

prophetic responses by the Christian bodies in Zimbabwe since the beginning of the crisis in the year 2000.

Etymologically, the term “Kairos” is a Greek word that connotes a period, implying an “opportune” moment or rather the “right time” during which God creates an opportunity to fulfil what in our view is something special (White 1987:13). Further, *Kairos* does not mean the same as the word *Chronos*, which refers to the chronological time or succession of moments of time. By implication, the Kairos document was authored in a time of crisis which is popularly called as the “dark” days at the peak of apartheid and became an opportune moment. Further, a challenge for the time, but on the same token an opportunity.

Explicitly and logically, the Kairos Document (1985) delineated three types of theology namely; State Theology, Church Theology and Prophetic Theology. The state theology model is a religious justification of injustice, oppression, racism, totalitarianism, and capitalism. Further, it is a theology which misuses theological ideologies to support the status quo (The Kairos Document 1985:6). State Theology legitimises an illegitimate state for it was premised as a biblical justification for the apartheid state. More so, this theology misuses biblical texts and theological concepts such as found in (Romans 13: 1-7) which blindly justifies the status quo as God given. Theological debates have sufficed within a political religiosity of Zimbabwe where biblical titles such as *Son of Man* have been taken as a preserve for the Head of State in form of Robert Mugabe (Daily News 22 December 2014). However, some section of scholars has viewed this as a manifestation of State Theology.

Turning to Church Theology, it is a limited theology and inaccurately applying Christian Traditions. Therefore, Church Theology as an instrument, is a one-sided presentation of the minority in society. A critical analysis in view of the Church Theology, is that it possesses fundamental problems such as, its lack of social analysis, indiscriminately applying of its absolute principles. This theology uses the bible selectively and it is the very cause of racial discrimination and a belief in the superiority of “whiteness” as ascribed in the apartheid religiosity. The third model of theology in the Kairos Document is crucial for the topic under review. Prophetic Theology, as cited in the (Kairos Document 1985:18), would be an attempt at social analysis on what biblically Jesus would call, “reading the signs of times” (Matthew 16:3) and interpreting the Kairos (Luke 12:56). Importantly for this study, the following reflections are worth citing. Crucially, the appenditure of the document is in form of a challenge to action. Hence, it is ecclesiological in terms of its call for the church to take side unequivocally and consistently with the poor and marginalised (Kairos Document 1985:25). The visibility and sacrifices for justice and liberation defines the church’s role in contemporary society as far as the Kairos discourse is implemented. In our analysis, the Kairos document (1985) prepared a fertile ground for the Zimbabwean ecclesiology as alluded in its pillars that it is a church of struggle, church of liberation, church with cultural consciousness and prophetic church. Thus, we view an ecclesiological approach “from below” in solidarity with people in the periphery of the society.

3.3 Christian Bodies in Zimbabwe: An Overview

Vestraelen provides an insight into the composition and framework of Christian bodies in Zimbabwe profiled as Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop's Conference (ZCBC), Heads of Christian Denominations (HOCD) and the African Initiated Churches (AICs) brand of *Zimbabwe Amalgamated Christian Churches*. Undisputedly, the church occupies a strategic role in the public space hence becomes a key stakeholder in socio-economic and political issues. A strong statement has been registered by the Zimbabwean churches in that:

How can the situation in Zimbabwe degenerate this extent when more that 80% of the population claim to be Christians? Including some of those in political positions, that means something has gone wrong with Christian values and how we practice them (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006).

As such, the Christian church carries the divine mandate by virtue of its calling thus, becomes a role model towards the issues of social responsibility in the alleviation of human misery and preserving the sacred values of human life. At this juncture, the chapter reflects on the notion by a French theologian Andre Dumas who says that “the church is called together and raised by God therefore, the church is inevitably involved in politics if politics is about issues of co-existence of all men” (1978:11). The church follows the footmarks of Christ on earth to bring equality, peace, harmony and reconciliation in the contemporary society. The philosophical saying by Plato is crucial that, “the good man pays a penalty for not being interested in politics because he is

governed by a man who is less moral than themselves” (Chimuka 2013:28). These insights articulate how the Christian bodies in Zimbabwe understand their theology and the contribution of the church to the liberation of people in the contemporary society.

Canaan Banana observed that the churches are conscious of the liberation of the marginalised and oppressed people in the third world countries such as Zimbabwe. Further, there are actively involved in campaign for liberation and humanisation of societies in order to foster socio-economic and religio-political changes as noted by the Medellin Conference of 1968 and the Puebla conference which uncompromisingly took a position basing on the mantra for preferential option for the poor (1991:1). Fundamentally, the Christian churches in Zimbabwe have opted in their implementation plan to improvise the “preferential option for the excluded” to touch base with people in the peripheral of society. Thus, the study underscores hermeneutically “a church from below” in our analysis of Christian bodies in Zimbabwe as an appraisal to their response to the Zimbabwean crisis establishing the strength and inadequacies of this crucial interface. However, the genesis of the titanic *Second Chimurenga* (Land Redistribution) also marked a faith crisis for the Christian churches and their bodies. Some Christian bodies became proactive and vocal against human rights abuse while others went into the neutral zone and others supported the status quo.

3.3.1 The Zimbabwe Council Churches

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches is a fraternal of churches within the protestant tradition in Zimbabwe. The protestant tradition historically revolted substantially to the issue of hierarchical, juridical view of the church that had been developed by Canonists

in the medieval ages. This tradition saw the church as solely an invisible society depending upon Christ, as its unique mediation. In Zimbabwe, the protestant ecclesiology constituting the (ZCC) fraternal, is a product of missionary churches that established their presence in Zimbabwe at the turn of the century but coincidentally arrived at about the same time with the colonial settlers' unit of *Pioneer Column* led by the colonial supremo Cecil John Rhodes (Banana 1996:36). Three important insights are drawn pertaining the colonial arrival of the church in the company of colonial machinery inform of the *Pioneer Column*. First, there is a theory that the presence of protestant ecclesiology was rather an advance team working in cohorts with the imperialist machinery for political surveillance in order to pave way for the colonizing process. In other words, the colonizing process was a well calculated inevitably enterprise which the Christian churches did not attempt to stop. Second, the missionary enterprise was characterised by racial outlook (Banana 1991:36). Racism portrayed by missionary churches in Zimbabwe during colonialism was in two dimensions against the black indigenous and black South Africans who accompanied the pioneer column. Racism was practiced in church right from the point of colonial settlement portraying Western Christianity as an imposition and an extension of government machinery. Third, it may rather appear to be over emphasis of a one-sided perception as some missionaries may have tried to distance themselves from the co-existence to the colonial machinery. Subsequently, the presence of Protestant churches in Zimbabwe marked a fresh crisis of racism, land dispossession, paving way for mission farms, civilization in terms of banning of *Bira* (traditional ceremonies) in favour of Christian civilization.

The ZCC according to its policy statement in the church and her mission pointed out that:

The church, is sent out in the manner of Jesus Christ, to serve the world in solidarity with mankind, proclaiming goodness to the hopeless, bringing wholeness to those broken bodies and spirit speaking justice for all who are treated unfairly, as a witness to God's mercy, compassion and righteousness (The Zimbabwe Council of Churches 1993:1).

This body was founded during the colonial era in 1964, as a fellowship of Christian Churches in Zimbabwe specifically belonging to the Protestant establishments. Some of the churches affiliated in this Christian block include the Dutch Reformed Church of Zimbabwe, Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, the Salvation Army, Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, United Congregational Church and others. Further, the umbrella of Christian churches has some specialized department such as the Justice, Peace and Reconciliation and the Church and the Development which are Christian unity handling issues of advocacy, justice as well as development.

Politically, the ZCC was a serious threat to the colonial government of Ian Smith in Rhodesia since its inception in 1964. As alluded, the armed struggle began to gather momentum during the end of 1960s. The Church was used as a strong extension of the liberation struggle which supported the guerrilla movements and nationalism (Watyoka 1991:16). The ZCC responded to issues of detainees, political restrictees and greatly maintained political victims created by the colonial regime of Ian Smith. The council wrote several letters responding to issues of bad governance, racism, selective torture of black people on the forefront to the Lancaster House Conference which eventually

brought political independence in Zimbabwe. Some crucial objectives of the ZCC were to create fellowship of Christian Churches in Zimbabwe linking with other regional fraternal bodies such as the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC). In addition, the ZCC is an instrument of Christian Churches' forum to promote nation-building, peacebuilding, reconciliation, justice in society and a strong advocate of women and children. Apart from other Christian activities, ZCC is much focused on the theme of development and liberation in the 21st century contemporary society. Meanwhile, the church has always been weakened by divisions and ZCC encourages inter-denominational fellowship, conferencing and bridging traditional differences. More so, the ZCC theological preamble is liberationist view drawn from Jesus Christ mandate whose mission is focused on emancipation of the poor and marginalized (Luke 4:8).

3.3.2 Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop's Conference (ZCBC)

The Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop's conference (ZCBC) co-ordinates the church's work and life in seven dioceses within the Catholic Churches in Zimbabwe. Hellencreutz summed up the objectives of the ZCBC in this statement:

To give visible witness to the churches concern for justice and peace, to inform the conscience of people on social teaching of the church and to recommend reforms on both intermittent and radical social structures, more importantly to investigate allegations of injustice and to publish its findings (1988:452).

The ZCBC is responsible for authoring pastoral letters with telling and appealing titles such as "Reconciliation is still possible" and the documented "Reaching for justice"

(Banana 1996:272). This Christian body has been very vocal, prophetic and mounting criticism against the government of Zanu-PF pertaining security problems in Matabeleland and Midlands province regarding the plight of civilians during the *Gukurahundi* operations by the state security in the period around 1983 to 1987. The most important role played by the Catholic Churches was to foster the spirit of reconciliation which eventually led to the “Unity Accord” of December 1987 between Zanu-PF and PF Zapu putting to end political instabilities and atrocities which had bedevilled the Zimbabwean society since independence in 1980.

The Catholic Churches in Zimbabwe through its mouthpiece and leadership (ZCBC) noted with concern political polarisation in Zimbabwe from the year 2000 hindering the democratic processes. The implementation of controversial instruments by Government such as POSA was viewed as placing impediments for citizens to freely express their political will (Kaulemu 2009:32). In addition, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Conference mocked the Zimbabwe Republic Police for being partisan in favour of the ruling Zanu-PF and taking an anti-opposition stance. The Catholic body noted that the political campaign period selectively enforced the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) to stop opposition parties from mobilising their campaign rallies (Kaulemu 2009:33). The Catholic Church also registered their displeasure to the deterioration of democratic values in Zimbabwe where civic societies could carry peaceful demonstrations.

The Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference denounced political violence in Zimbabwe which was unleashed in most farming areas and rural areas during the period of 2000 to

2008. The establishment of “base camps” manned by youth militias terrorized the rural populations hence the (ZCBC) was courageous to condemn such political barbarism. Part of the catholic efforts to contribute in the political process is also done through the church publication called (Moto) which served as a mouthpiece in some views critical to repressive policies since the colonial era (Banana 1996:252). On the other hand, the prophetic role of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) cannot be over-emphasised hence this arm has been outstanding in its advocacy for justice and values of the Catholic social teachings. The (ZCBC) also constitutes the greater family of churches in Zimbabwe under the banner of the Heads of Christian Denominations (HOCD).

3.3.3 Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe

The Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) formed in 1962 comprising Pentecostal churches is one of the prominent Christian bodies in Zimbabwe. Examples of churches affiliated to the (EFZ) are the Assemblies of God, United Apostolic Faith Church, Baptist Church of Zimbabwe, Brethren in Christ Church to mention but a few with the number amounting to eighty-six. Importantly, Lovemore Togarasei observed that Pentecostal Christianity has grown tremendously hence commands one of the largest populations of the Zimbabwe Christian network (2013:87). The (EFZ) fellowship has played a crucial role in the humanitarian assistance and peace building in Zimbabwe. The (EFZ) which is predominantly a body of Evangelical and Pentecostal churches cannot be isolated on issues affecting the Zimbabwean society since it commands quite a large following

hence in such a time as the period under review pastoral and spiritual solutions are sought from such highly placed ecclesiology.

There are diverse views pertaining to the Pentecostal ecclesiology in Zimbabwe. First, some Pentecostal churches have been founded in Africa by African leaders under the banner of the African Initiated Churches with an emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit (Togarasei 2013:98). These charismatic group of Christianity focus on spiritual gifts such as prophecy, speaking in tongues, exorcism and healing as referred in the Bible in (1 Corinthians 12). Further, Pentecostal ecclesiology in Zimbabwe emphasises in the importance of biblical teachings on the church. However, this brand of churches has an ad-hoc character which create room for improvisation hence it is more practical rather than systematic in character. In other words, Pentecostal brand of ecclesiology in Zimbabwe are not just charismatic and African but reflects a second Christian Protestant. As such, their birth and growth in Africa is a response to the lack of spiritual needs by some western churches within the protestant family. Most of their founders are coming from protestant churches such as Methodist, Lutheran, Anglican, Roman Catholic and others. Second, the Pentecostal churches theology on leadership revolves around charismatic personalities in form of a spiritual father figures (Biri 2013:114). The scarcity and influence of such leaders has become a common practice in Pentecostal churches hence the identity of the church is known through common figures in churches such as Apostle Ezekiel Guti (ZAOGA), Andrew Wutawunashe Family of God, Emmanuel Makandiwa (UFIC), Walter Magaya (PHD Ministries), the list goes on.

Lovemore Togarasei observed that Pentecostal ecclesiology which constitutes the part of the Evangelical Fellowship in Zimbabwe has emerged as strong institution in the democratisation process in Zimbabwe (2013:106). In addition, the Evangelical Fellowship in Zimbabwe has responded to issues in the public space by addressing economic and socio-political problems in Zimbabwe during the period under review. The evangelical fellowship has also joined the umbrella family of Christian churches in Zimbabwe under the banner of the Heads of Christian Denominations (HOCD) who authored the prophetic document, *The Zimbabwe We Want* (2006). However, the ecclesiology in 21st century have also been weakened by divisions based on partisan politics and apolitical options by other denominations.

3.3.4 African Initiated Churches

African Initiated Churches (AICs) are regarded as one of the most dynamic fast-growing brands of Christianity in Zimbabwe since independence 1980 (Maposa and Sibanda in Chitando 2013:125). This group raises the symbol of consciousness regarding African spirituality particularly the integration of culture in worship. Vestraelen informs us that since 1972, there has been a conference of black churches (*Fambidzano yamakereke avatema*, in short *Fambidzano* a Shona word referring to fellowship, 1995:8). However, most of the African Initiated Churches highly regard the characteristic of pan-Africanist agenda in terms of their view on church-state relationships. Their emergence can be classified and attributed to religious, economic, political and social factors. They are more to a resistance dimension against white missionary Christianity thus AICs were founded as “spiritual homes” for the African to express religious sensibilities of their past

(Maposa and Sibanda in Chitando 2013:127). As such, they are active “Game-Changers” in as far as the political terrain in Zimbabwe is concerned.

3.2.4.1 AICs: Political and cultural consciousness

M.L. Daneel observed that most (AICs) churches in Zimbabwe openly supported the Second Chimurenga (Armed struggle) hence they were proactive in nationalism and party politics (1991:129). Having noted this development, there is need to highlight the fact that the Second Chimurenga (Liberation Struggle) was all about expression of very deep grievances by the Black people in Zimbabwe. Further, some prominent leaders of the African Initiated Churches such as Mutendi, Johane Masowe, and Wimbo used their gatherings and churches as basis of the ZANLA and ZIPRA Forces or *vakomana* (Freedom Fighters) (1991:129). As a matter of coincidence, African Initiated Churches greatly thrived in most rural areas of Zimbabwe which in case became liberated zones or political strongholds for the liberation fighters.

Taking on board Oosthuizen’s comment that African Initiated Churches emerged because of racial discrimination, disrespect of Africans by the white minority and selective disciplinary action on black people (1968:7). In other words, this remark explains the reason why the church became a fertile ground for grooming nationalists and political mobilisation of the armed struggle. On the other hand, Adrian Hastings noted that the (AICs) emerged because of colour bar and lack of opportunities for blacks in politics, industry, churches and civic spheres (1971:208). However, one cannot also rule out the existences of leadership schism within the framework of (AICs) which led to the splits and division. There is also a consensus that the schism was not

squarely based on leadership wrangles, some theological and doctrinal issues cannot be ruled out.

Fundamentally, the Ethiopian and spirit type of churches constitutes the most commonly known brand of the (AICs) which originated as a reaction against the negative perception by some white dominated churches. This band of (AICs) was militant against white supremacy which imposed itself on the African religious space during the colonisation process. As such, the Ethiopian churches reflect and expresses the message of political and cultural protest by blacks in that the Western Christianity invaded the most crucial space for Africans. Subsequently, our framework raised in our pillars of the Zimbabwean ecclesiology highlighted the church of struggle in trenches and combat with the oppressed masses thus the (AICs) brand fought white domination right from the onset of colonialism (Sundkler 1961:53). The study can take note that the emergency of the (AICs) was indeed a cultural and political conscience a great step towards an Afrocentric ecclesiology.

The study reflects on the spirit-type churches in (AICs) which have a special emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in healing, exorcism, speaking in tongues and prophecy has seen the (AICs) in Zimbabwe adopting a common name as *Kereke DzoMweya* (Churches of the Spirit) (Daneel 1991:39). Crucially, for the study the growth and proliferation of (AICs) inform of Spirit-type churches in Zimbabwe is a clear manifestation on failure to address African spiritual needs by western Christianity. Thus, the pillars raised the fact that the Zimbabwean model of ecclesiology is anchored on

cultural consciousness, a tested, tried brand of African ecclesiology which did not succumb to the western cultural mentality. More so, the Ethiopian churches represented a strong consciousness towards African identity. In addition, this type of African ecclesiology incorporated biblical text such as Psalm 68:31 where Ethiopia is mentioned. To them, Ethiopia, which means Africa, shall stretch out her hand to God. The view has been interpreted as symbolic that the oppressed black people have a place in the hands of God. Hence the popular mantra in most (AICs) in Zimbabwe says *Africa Yedu* (Our Africa) (Daneel 1991:38).

Our analysis on Ethiopian type as a brand of (AICs) particularly in Zimbabwe is a message of revolution and black liberation against white churches. On the other hand, this brand has greatly raised self-esteem and psychological reinforcement of the African people. Therefore, Ethiopian brand of (AICs) is significantly raising the African consciousness in terms of the nature of their ecclesiology. The growth and spread of the brand of (AICs) in Zimbabwe speaks.

3.3.5 Heads of Christian Denominations (HOCD)

The Heads of Christian Denominations (HOCD) is a highly profiled Christian structure union which brings together all the fraternal Christian Bodies in Zimbabwe in form of the (ZCC), (EFZ), (ZCBC) and some other branches of AICs. Some use the term Christian alliance of churches in Zimbabwe referring to the (HOCD). On its establishment, the highly profiled Christian structure discussed matters of common interest especially those related to church-state relationship (Vestraelen 1995:8). In other words, this constitutes the most powerful ecumenical voice in Zimbabwean Christianity network.

Muchecheterere advanced the notion that the political role of the church in Zimbabwe intensified during the crisis but most importantly, was the engagement facilitated by the Heads of Christian Denominations (HOCD) (2009:1). By and large, there is need to establish the impact of this Christian groupings in Zimbabwe's political landscape.

The umbrella bodies of churches converged into a solid block under the banner of the (HOCD) this alliance was rather a paradigm shift particularly from the year 2000 onwards. Therefore, it was no longer business as usual, whereas in previous years church denominations voiced their concerns in a shambolic way and from an individualistic point of interest. Muchechechere (2009) noted that:

The HOCD confronted the issues affecting the Zimbabweans particularly political intolerance, rule of law and political repression. Further, the ZCC, EFZ, ZCBC also collaborated other civic respective organs such as the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (CCJPZ), Peace and Justice, Commission (PJC) and the Church in Society (CIS) respectively (pp2).

This collaboration became a major landmark in which the churches in Zimbabwe voiced their concerns in a more visible way in the public space.

Crucially, the Heads of Christians Denominations (HOCD) authored one of the most unique documents, in *The Zimbabwe We Want* 2006. The main thrust of the document is prophetic and advocating for the national vision for Zimbabwe. The document had an impact in Zimbabwe, shook the status quo and registered the voice of the church more

audibly and visibly. Further, the (HOCD) became proactive in its consciousness towards election processes, monitoring and observing as well as calling for free, fair, harmonised and credible elections. More importantly, the (HOCD) constructed a culture for engagement hence the historical event of meeting the then Head of State President Mugabe in 2006 to discuss the political impasse in Zimbabwe. In a nutshell, the visibility of the heads of Christian denominations and the organs attached to its operations is a clear indication that religion in form of Christianity has a role to play in processes.

3.3.6 Prophetic Ecclesiology in Zimbabwe

Consciousness is the discovery, an awareness of the situation of injustice and is also the courage to make life transforming decisions in difficult times. Thus, we analyse the church and Christians situated in the Global South (Boesak 2015:7). The crisis in Zimbabwe from 2000 raised the consciousness of the churches to stand against injustice and abuse of power by politicians. Meanwhile, Chitando, Mapuranga and Taringa discovered that Christian resistance emerged during the crisis years in Zimbabwe against the political ideology in form of the ruling Zanu PF (2014:183). In addition, this section of the chapter reiterates once again that Robert Mugabe defined politics to a narrow perspective bragging that only the brave persons like himself were fit to play the game, the church leaders' business is in the pulpit and in prayers (2014:184).

However, despite the fear and intimidation from the political elite, a few Christian organisations, Christian alliances, courageously challenged the fearful politicians particularly in their deliberate abuse of human rights. More importantly, the situation in

Zimbabwe also raised the consciousness of Christian churches whereas some leaders did not fear to stand against what they believed were true values of democracy, we thus, started to note the visibility of figures such as Pius Ncube from the Catholic Church and Levy Kadenge from the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, Sebastien Bakare from the Anglican Church, Oscar Wermter of the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe and Jimmy Dube of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. Thus, the political ideologies of Mugabology⁶ was critically challenged by some Christian activists who bravely featured prominently in the Public Space in Zimbabwe. It is important to note the emergence of a theology of resistance in Zimbabwe during the period under review hence the challenge against the political elite and their ideologies.

Accordingly, the spirit of resistance gripped Christian groups, some who openly confronted Mugabe through pastoral letters challenging the lack of rule of law in Zimbabwe as observed by Chitando, Mapuranga and Taringa (2014)

Pius Ncube who was the Bulawayo archbishop in the Catholic Church during the climax of the crisis in Zimbabwe. He emerged as highly outstanding and courageous with such a critical voice challenging the government of Robert Mugabe. He was courageous and bold enough in mobilizing people to rise against Robert Mugabe's rule. He further declared his preparedness to go in the forefront of blazing guns. Pius Ncube thus squarely blamed the President of Zimbabwe for the socio-economic leadership and plunging of a loving country into a political dilemma (pp179).

⁶ Mugabology refers to belief in the principles laid by Robert Mugabe

Nevertheless, the statement was echoed by a high placed cleric figure, motivated Christians in Zimbabwe to openly resist the regime in Zimbabwe.

3.4 Church-State Relations in Zimbabwe

The Church-State relationship in Zimbabwe has been greatly shaped by historical factors. Mainly, the presence of earliest Christians in Zimbabwe were chaplains who accompanied colonial administrators and business traders on a mission to establish colonies or trading posts. As such, the missionary enterprise and activities was greatly lanced through racial imperialistic manoeuvres. In other words, the work undertaken by missionary societies and Christian orders in Zimbabwe was viewed as part and parcel of the colonial administration. Further, the foreign religion in form of Christianity heavily denigrated the African traditions and African cultures immediately replacing them with foreign western systems and values. This was seen by the indigenous African people as destruction of the social cohesion and fabric of African community. More so, engaging them through exploitation by conquest by imperialists (Banana 1991:4). Colonising process in Zimbabwe created the sense of self-dejection for Africans. Further, Africans were looked down as uncivilised, primitive and barbaric. This entails that the church was accepted in the African society as foreign and aggressive because of its alignment with the state right from its founding in Zimbabwe.

One of the biggest challenges for the Christian church was to deal with problem of racism emanating from the colonial background. Most of the structures in the church in terms of its leadership were white dominated. This prompted the white churches and black churches. However, the blacks in churches began to mobilise along nationalism.

Most of the nationalist leaders were groomed in churches (Banana 1991:5). In other words, the liberation struggle was mobilised from the African pulpits and preaching points. This was prompted by the fact that racism became an open practice in church which seconded the minority rule and supported the status-quo at the expense of majority citizens who suffered under the system of colonial oppression. In a way, the black community learnt the skills of togetherness and communalism under the system of oppression.

Accordingly, Chimuka noted that the big question is how religion relates to politics (2013:27). This brings into the fold the concept of church-state relations. Therefore, the study also takes cognisance that the church was largely regarded as non-confrontational and highly co-operating institution in sound relations with the government since the independence 1980 until the dawn of the full-blown crisis in 2000.

The study reiterates, at this juncture, the Christian alliance of churches in Zimbabwe`s response to the crisis, “taking the bull by its horns” pertaining their participation in the political sphere:

We have it repeatedly stated within the context of our situation in Zimbabwe that the church should stay out of politics. Without being defensive, we need to explain why we as church are so concerned and why we have taken the course of constructive engagement described above. The question is, we are now meddling in a sphere that does not properly belong to the church. Thus, the church must be concerned when the

material and political conditions impinge on the well-being of our people (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006:12).

One can comment that the statement reflects the symbol of consciousness in Zimbabwean Christianity particularly the character to align the mission to the prophetic discourse. This alignment resonates with the observations of the Germany Theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer who says that the church is Christ in the world (1927:158). This theological thrust points to incarnation implying God's church in the world exist to transform humanity for the better. Further, the political sphere has, its own challenges including unjust structures, corruption, abuse of people and selfishness; these and other factors have pulled the nation of Zimbabwe in crisis. Nevertheless, Banana alluded to the nation that churches follow the footmarks of Christ in order to bring equality, justice, accountability, and reconciliation in society. In other words, the churches in Zimbabwe can minister relevantly through partaking in political processes in a praxistic manner.

It is important for this study to explore the concept of church-state relations. Perhaps, a close analysis into the purposes of these two important institutions, church and state, particularly the dimensions and dynamics during the period under the spotlight enables the study to explicate the Zimbabwean crisis. Ezra Chitando observed that Christianity is a major stakeholder, commanding a large percentage in the religious sphere as well as the public space (2002:44). The Zimbabwean crisis from 2000 exposed that, much of the tension between church and state arises from perceptions and how the two institutions relate to each other.

3.4.1 Church-State: Exploiting Common Grounds

The study views the need for a robust approach which can bring together the church and political discourses in Zimbabwe towards the mutual commitment for a common purpose. Accordingly, Adam Chepkwony observed that the church and political institutions can exploit common grounds for the betterment of the society (2003:250). The common grounds between the church and political institutions can be exploited by linking the two institutions. As such, there are some inevitable points of convergences between the church and state in Zimbabwe.

Crucially, there is a standing Christian tradition, where the church and political establishments both claim to be the conscience of the society (Banana 1997:274). This view is explainable in terms of the prophetic vocation of the Christian church. However, we can thus, critically analyse this notion considering contemporary view of multi-religious communities' presence in the Public Space in that Christianity can no longer have the preserve to enjoy this position which other religions like Islam, Buddhism and Confucius also claim entitlement of being the watchdog of the society. Similarly, some politicians particularly in the ruling parties in government have viewed and interpreted their being voted into power by the majority as a clear entitlement to be called the "conscience of society".

The study, thus, discovered that some political leaders have assumed the titles given to church leaders for example the Shona term *Muzodziwa waMwari* (The Anointed one of God) (Sunday Mail 29 July 2018) is commonly used to the party president of Zanu-PF and MDC respectively. Essentially, this development is an indication that both political

institutions lobby for such a status of being the conscience of the society. Analytically, both the church and political institutions have a well stipulated role in the Public Arena which may be positively utilised in nation building. Subsequently, collective efforts by both institutions that is the Church and the State will emerge a strong front towards addressing contemporary challenges in context of the Zimbabwean experience. Therefore, it is important to have means and ways of collaboration between the church and political institutions in Zimbabwe towards common objectives of serving the nation as the conscience of society.

The common ground between the church and political institutions is found in their appeal to common terms in public space such as; peace, justice, human rights and freedom. Chepkwony (2003) commented that:

Democracy is rather not a new word to the African citizens. However, African nations are facing quite a new situation in which they experience a multi-party politics which come as an imposition on condition for the attainment of grants and loans from the western affluent countries (pp251).

Subsequently, the new form of partnership between the Christian church and political institutions in contemporary Zimbabwe is rather fragile in that the democratic space has not improved very much even after the attainment of political independence. We however, experience the dark side of the three evils which have continued to haunt most independent countries thus one cannot undermine the impact of neo-colonialism, colonialism and globalisation in such nations like Zimbabwe. As cited above the

democratic space in Zimbabwe is still attached and controlled by their former colonisers. However, the Political Space is more of materialistic type more than providing service to people.

3.4.2 Kairos Moment for Ecclesiology in Zimbabwe

As alluded to, the Zimbabwean crisis is viewed as a Kairos moment for the Zimbabwean ecclesiology in terms its responsiveness and prophetic calling to stand for justice of the marginalised people. The Kairos moment for the church in Zimbabwe also reflected what was brought by the crisis from 2000 to 2013 indicated the divisions within the Zimbabwean ecclesiology. In other words, the study perceive struggle within a struggle in context of splits and divisions in the church. The sterling work and robust engagements by the church are greatly weakened and capitalized by politicians because the church is divided. Historically and theologically, the church has always been limited by divisions from time immemorial. However, our framework follow suite, the South African template mentioned in the Kairos document (1985) on three theologies; State Theology, Church Theology and Prophetic Theology to the Zimbabwean scenario. Three camps emerged as the church responded to the Zimbabwean crisis. The first camp is motivated by riding on the notion that the church has a social obligation towards the political order. Therefore, religion has a crucial role in the public space which also emanates from its theological and historical mandate. Crucially, the biblical saying of Jesus Christ that “You are the salt of the world and light of the world” (Matthew 5: 14-16). Henry Okullu (1984) observed this model in a scenario

where the church must move to the centre of life as an active participant on issues to do with everyday life affecting the people closely partnering the government saying:

The church and state are both established for the service of God and persons. The recognition of separation of church and state at the institutional level must be seasoned by an equally vigorous recognition of the integrated view of life at a deeper level (pp64).

The Christian Church cannot be silent on issues affecting the people. This model is also described by Tarisayi Chimuka as “Accommodation Thesis” in which the church and state accommodate each other. He added, the church ought to be deeply involved in politics because religion is an influential force in human society (2013:29). As a matter of fact, Christian involvement in politics is a conviction that God is at work in the church, in the world and beyond the boundaries of church buildings. The Kairos Tradition articulated by Kairos Theologians in South Africa also zeroed in on the need to reinvigorate church structures to speak on political situation thus remarked:

True justice, and God’s justice clearly demands a radical change of structures. This can only come from below, that is from the oppressed people themselves. God will bring about change through the oppressed which the “church theology” has failed and lacks an adequate understanding of the politics and political strategy (The Kairos Document 1985:7).

The interface between the church and state is regrettably associated with sharp and constant reminders from the political elite that the church should not make unnecessary

confrontations and interference in politics, a strong myth has been perpetuated that politics is a “dirty game” which ironically is played by players in smart clothes. The model of operation puts the church and state relations on the horns of a dilemma.

The second camp is one of complete separation between the two institutions that is the church and state in that the Christian church must avoid political engagements and shy away from the political space (Chimuka 2013:30). Ezra Chitando noted that the Zimbabwean political elite, particularly Robert Mugabe are religiously subscribed to the model perpetuating a myth that the role of the church is limited to offering moral guidance, reading the bible, preaching and offering prayers (2002:44). Thus, Christians should stay away from politics which is a game of the brave. He also added that a towering church leadership in the mould of Kairos Theologians of 1985 South African crisis response to apartheid refused to subscribe to such a narrow and myopic interpretation of the role of the church especially in the heavily polarised political atmosphere (2002:44). Overall, this model has proved to be a rough path in Zimbabwe since the church has made some attempts to employ checks and balances on the state maneuverers resulting in strained relationships between the two institutions.

The third camp is in form of a “Patriotic Church”, patriotic in this instance to the status quo and its system. This is a crucial development in the contemporary society. Ezra Chitando (2002) commented that:

When the government of Zimbabwe plunged the country into a crisis, they countered criticisms by church leaders through promoting visibility of other groups who are favourable to them. This entail brings into fold the efficacy of state theology (pp44).

Henry Okullu reflected on the moralization of State Theology manifesting from a situation whereas a regime purporting to be a Christian nation yet suppressing the freedoms and civil liberties of its citizens (1984:9). As such, theological propaganda has been perpetuated in colouring public banners that Zimbabwe is a “Christian Nation”. Crucially, Philip Hogman observed that, any political philosophy remains incomplete unless it has reference to a vision of what is ultimately good and true. Politics needs religion, the ruler must seem to be moral and religious (Mzumba and Rosa 1995:33). Christianity can therefore, be manipulated as a tool to legitimize a cruel state. The oppressive regimes in Africa will always be particularly abhorrent to Christians by making use of Christianity to justify its evil ways (The Kairos Document 1985:10). This dimension is however opposed to the prophetic role of the church. Ezra Chitando highlighted the fact that politicians in Zimbabwe manipulate some church leaders for their political mileage in attempt to articulate pro-Mugabe statements (2013: xiii). This is done to further political agendas. Paul Gifford invented the term “Domesticated Christianity” referring to the public role of Christianity when it is manipulated and co-opted by political elites (2009:215). The bottom line is meant to appreciate how oppressive structures dismantle prophetic voices.

3.4.3 An Analysis of Three Fears: Okullu Model

Accordingly, Henry Okullu (1984) has claimed that there are three fears why people in the African society shy away from the political sphere as obtained in Zimbabwe during

the period under review. The first fear, he referred to as the “paralysis fear”, this implies the fear to openly criticise the government (1974:72). This fear is also called the “fear of the unknown”, in the sense that there are many intelligence officers in plain clothes in universities, colleges, churches and government institutions. Due to their heavy presence, it makes it almost impossible for people to criticize the state willy-nilly. David Kaulemu also reflected on the presence of the intelligence services in Zimbabwe (CIO) operations during the 2008 elections to bolster the ruling Zanu-PF party. In other words, the security fencing within the political space simply shy away people from the sphere.

The second fear regarding political participation is based on the ruthless suppression of the opposition parties in Africa. The gruesome suppression is rather a thorny issue which also promotes the ideology of unconfirmed one-party state political ideology (Okullu 1974:73). This issue of one-party state cannot be separated from dictatorship; in fact, it is squarely supported by the system of dictatorship. As alluded in the South African “Kairos” on the religiosity of the dictatorship and how it clings to power at all cost:

We have the god of superior weapons who conquered those who were armed with nothing but spears. It is the god of casspics and hippos, the god of teargas, rubber bullets and sjamboks, prison cell and death sentence (Kairos Document 1985:10).

In most cases, the political sphere is polarised with intimidatory atmosphere to scare away other participants. Canaan Banana observed that some liberation movements are afraid of political competitors hence they employ an unconfirmed one-party ideology. In addition, he thus, described state as a symbolic temptation by the political devil and

wary of inventing a god of politics (1996:279). Thus, the first thrust of dictatorship is bent on creating a “safe net” through the shuttering of the democratic space.

The fear of joining or associate with the opposition parties is propelled strongly that the people are convicted to view it as a “political sin”. Sachikonye (2011) noted that:

There was a clear shift to authoritarian methods of government to thwart the opposition MDC and to punish those sections of bourgeoisies and civil society that sought democratic change. Instead of performing its stipulated role, the state played a central role in expropriation process using its coercive instruments (pp38).

Analysing the above statement in terms of political play field there are numerous impediments that have seen some Christian church institutes claiming to be apolitical because of fear.

The third fear or obstacle in political participation is presented in a situation when the political system is welded around intimidating structures and instruments in form of repressive legislation, political trials, detention and the utterly closure of freedom avenues in society (Okullu 1974:71). The obligation of public authority is meant to promote human rights respect personal liberties and ensure that people do not affiliate to political organisation because of intimidation. The political system can be scaring and used as a political tool to protect the thriving of the status quo as stated in the South African Kairos the state makes use of the concept of law and orders to maintain the status quo within depicts as normal. However, this law is injustice and discriminatory

laws of apartheid and this is organised and institutionalised disorder of oppression. Anyone who wishes to change this law and order is made to feel that they are lawless and disorderly. In other words, they are made to feel guilt of sin (The Kairos Document 1985:88).

Importantly the “Kairos” commentary opens some views in that first and foremost, we see the role of the state machinery in maintaining power and grip through its structures. Thus, we cannot undermine the role of the state machinery in the political processes. Second, our consciousness and objectivity inform that there are some discriminatory laws, these instruments are not applied justly and equal in society. Whereas, the period under review in Zimbabwe has seen opposition political parties subjected and exposed to the instruments such as Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) go on freely with their gathering uncontrolled.

3.5 Ecclesiology and Democratisation Processes in Zimbabwe

Our framework is a Liberationist Discourse, hermeneutically reading the Zimbabwean situation “from below” and in the context of God’s liberating activity, we thus focus on the impact of the church in the democratisation process in Zimbabwe. Accordingly, David Kaulemu observed that the democratisation process includes the space for democracy, electoral processes, civic education, political participation and political literacy. Meanwhile the church and political players have always differed with the church.

The consciousness of the church is defined on how one values the democratic system in as much as it ensures the participation of citizens in making political choices (The Churches in Manicaland 2006:56). By virtue of its divine mandate, the churches are key stakeholders in the democratisation process. Canaan Banana noted that the church is the watchdog of democracy (1996:277). That means the church ensures that there are no impediments placed in the democratisation process on paths of those persons wishing to exercise political choices. Whereas this study analyses the interface between the churches in Zimbabwe and political discourse particularly their partnership as far as democratisation process is concerned.

Accordingly, the study makes an exposition on the term democracy in order to appreciate the limits and strengths of the two institutions in form of the churches and political parties in the democratisation process in Zimbabwe. The term democracy is derived from Greek *Demos* referring to people and *Kratos* meaning power and strength. This entails that authority and power in each society rests in the hands of the people. Therefore, in a genuine democratic society, the government is conducted by the electorate or people and virtually becomes the government of the people (The Churches in Manicaland 2006:56). In other words, the elected representatives are indeed the servants of the people and not masters. However, the Zimbabwean scenario has seen politicians being superior and remote than being the servants of the people.

Ezra Chitando raised an alarm on what has been obtaining from the Zimbabwean situation during the period under the spotlight, which the churches were caught up in the

shrinking of the democratic space, disrupted and trivialized by the state machinery (2012:47). The chapter reiterates the crucial points at this juncture. First, is based on the interface between churches and political discourses particularly how they linked in the democratisation process in the period under review. Second, in our interrogations and development of this thesis, the study established the presence of a full-blown crisis according to Chitando (2012). This view was shared by Togarasei (2013) who preferred to use the term “a turbulent nation” referring to Zimbabwe and Mlambo (2014) who explicitly designated the period under review as the “crisis years”. Such designation and consensus by scholars also implied that our diagnosis in a way indicate that the democratic space is also endangered in terms of principles and politicisation.

The setup in the democratisation process in Zimbabwe during the crisis also became a “Kairos moment” for churches in Zimbabwe, of grace and opportunity, the favourable time in which God issued a challenge to decisive action (The Kairos Document 1985:4). However, as prescribed in the South African “Kairos”, it was also a dangerous time for the church as they were also seeking relevance by addressing the challenges in the democratic space through pastoral letters and discussion documents. They inevitably antagonised political structures wielding power (Chitando 2013:85). Generally, an ambivalence loomed in the public space in Zimbabwe since prophetic churches and other leaders were taken to be rebels against the state. Whereas the visibility of state theology in terms of some religious figures who invented theological justification of the status quo also manifested showering praises to state functionaries even when things seemed too bad for the nation of Zimbabwe.

The political elite in Zimbabwe constantly reminded the church to shy away from issues to do with the political space (Chitando 2012:44). However, the position by the ruling Zanu-PF was grossly undermining and trivialising the democratic space and democratisation process. Notwithstanding the strong echoes by Christian Churches in the mould of Kairos Consciousness once again Chitando (2012) informs us that:

Vehemently church leadership in Zimbabwe bravely interrogated the economic political and social problems that had rocked and paralysed the country. In particular, the Catholic body of the ZCBC issued provoking pastoral letters that highlighted the negative impact brought by the crisis. To describe them, the pastoral letters were hard-hitting in publicising the falsehoods that had been peddled by the state media (pp45).

This friction and antagonism by the church and the ruling political establishments did not offer a conducive atmosphere for democratic participation. Thus, the echoes of the struggle for liberation was based on ushering in freedom that allowed all members of society to enjoy and contribute meaningfully towards nation building.

The churches in Manicaland; the ecumenical forum of churches in the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe in their response document to the 'crisis' highlighted the following components of democracy. First, democracy means listening to the people, and rule by the people and not the remote leadership which characterises members of parliament who only avail their services to people during election (2006:57). This component reflects the shortcomings in the democratic space in Zimbabwe accused of dictatorship and rule by force as demonstrated in the leadership of Mugabe.

Second, the democratic process must allow the multi-party democracy as opposed to one-party state. Third, good governance also means being faithful custodians about human life, human dignity and human rights. Further, the Christian desires that the democratic processes directed by the word of God (2005, Parliament Elections, Pastoral Letter, ZCBC). Fourth, democratic process entails the atmosphere of political tolerance, inclusiveness, co-existence (2006:58). Importantly, the democratic processes must never be polarised by hate speeches, character assassinations, fraud process. Instead, the process must allow a peaceful environment, political persuasion, peaceful campaigning and solidarity to the cause of justice.

3.5.1 Ecclesiology and Justice

Considering the myriad of woes bedevilling the Zimbabwean society from the year 2000 onwards, the church and political discourses in form of Political Establishments inevitably interfaced on the issues of justice in society. However, the critical questions posed in the study pertains to how the institutions interpreted and believed in justice when “things fall apart” in the turbulent of times and the midst of a crisis, when human beings are subjected to torture, humiliation hunger, poverty, unemployment, loss of life more seriously the political space polarized and shuttered. The framework of the study draws the linkage between justice and Christian faith as articulated by Allan Boesak`s statement; In that voice injustice, but that is precisely the voice of God. As one whose consciousness has been touched by the spirit of God, we say *Vox Vietimarum Vox Dei* the cries of the victims are the cries of God (Boesak 2011). In addition, Boesak refers to the spirituality and authentic reformist tradition laid by John Calvin as the basis of Kairos

Consciousness. This statement signed that justice is a package which can be described based on the moral uprightness, righteousness, equitableness but more importantly all these mentioned components are in vain in a society with an unjust system which creates victims or ignores their existence.

Jerry Pillay commented that Allan Boesak's framework views; the issue of justice as crucial, thus being part and parcel of the Christian gospel. Further, whenever Christians condemn the acts of injustice, dehumanisation, hence in inequalities in society, they are indeed serving as ambassadors of Christ in the world (2016:167). Meanwhile it is also crucial to observe that Boesak linked the question of justice to liberation in that, the people who are oppressed socially they are also subjected to the power of injustice hence depend on God for their liberation (1976:146). In other words, we draw a critical reflection to the study in that justice cannot be divorced from events that transpires on the public space hence the prophetic church encompasses and is constantly reminded of its prophetic responsibilities.

Arthur McGovern's biblical expression noted that the prophets in Israel did not organize the poor to act but they "raised the consciousness of Israel" (1989:70). They did that by simply raising a mantra that, "God demands justice to the poor". One such is Book of Amos who criticizes rulers and the rich who "trample the heads of people and push the poor out of the way" (Amos 2:7). Prophet Isaiah also attacks the elite who disposes the poor of their land thus, depriving them of their sustenance "saying"; Woe to you who add house and join field to field till no space is left and you live alone in the land (Isaiah

5:8). Further, Isaiah also read, not to the powerful and rich in society in these words” learn to do right, seek justice and encourage the oppressed to defend the causes of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow (Isaiah 1:17).

Analytically, the Bible is a book to dislodge injustice. Justice is integral to faith in the living God (2016:33). The assertion concurs to Boesak who linked injustice to Christian faith thus, becomes the heart of believing. In addition, Kwame Bediako observed that, “Christian faith is holistic and responsive, a mystery and gift which binds Africans to Christ and God (2004:5). The term mystery employed by Kwame Bediako may also imply how African Christian strongly carry their conviction in the face of a crisis. Velli Matti and Dyrness asserts that faith is directed towards God for salvation and everything essential in life. Subsequently, the concept of justice is deliberated in connection to Christian faith in this thrust, the Christian churches in Zimbabwean relevantly opened their pastoral responsibilities in advancing justice in society more so creating a just community. However, justice cannot simply prevail in a society without antagonizing those who wield political power and repressive legislation in this case the status quo that thrives on principles of capitalism.

3.5.2 The Church and Bridge Building

The Church is mandated to build bridges in a situation where people are separated by conflict such as obtaining in Zimbabwe from the year 2000. Critical question forwarded in the study pertains how the 21st century Zimbabwean ecclesiology can utilise the identified pillars to bring restoration to the nation of Zimbabwe separated by conflict? Because of their political affiliations, religious beliefs or any event which separate a

society particularly the electoral processes. This study reiterates and refers to the strong viewpoint in 'Kairos' which states that: There is no true reconciliation and genuine peace with justice. Thus, any form of peace which allows any sign of oppression and injustice to reign is a false peace hence does not portray a genuine picture of true justice (The Kairos Document 1985:). The church in Zimbabwe played a significant role which ushered in the birth of new era through the Unity Accord in December 1987 between PF- Zapu and Zanu-PF ending the political impasse and civil war. The hope of the Zimbabwean society is placed in the church which is destined to play a significant role in shaping the future of the Zimbabweans.

In terms of our framework, the study reiterates to the perceived notion of the church in order to establish its mandate towards the building of bridges in society. Accordingly, the Rev Stanley Mugambi defined the church etymologically referring to the Hebrew term Qahal meaning the "calling". Thus, we understand the clarion calls for people of God to gather for such a crisis like conflict which is translated to an action to solve the crisis (1996:89). Further, the other concept of the church is that of "new humanity". As such, the Christian Church is viewed as the new creation (beginning) and new humanity in that through Christ all people are brought together through his love (Mugambi 1996:90). This notion can be analysed in view of fact that since Christ is the Centre of fellowship it has always been the thrust of Liberation Theology to advocate for the need of transformation and the desire to build a new society. The church must build bridges which have solid foundations. In other words, the church must ensure that there is harmony and peace in the society. The presence of peace, harmony brought about

through reconciliation cannot achieve any single step without considering the importance of justice. Therefore, the church has always played a mediation role in bringing together parties which are divided by antagonism. What is crucial on the part of the church is to ensure the trust bestowed on them is accountable.

Nevertheless, Adam Chepkwony observed that: The contemporary Christian church has the duty and obligation to aid in the rebuilding of the nations in the African society on principles of justice, freedom peace cited in Gatui and Obiang (2003:39). This entails that the Church and the State share common ground in their serving as the conscience of the society. However, in this operation to build-bridges in society, the church is always the pacesetter in the model of reconciliation and co-operation/re-engagement.

3.5.3 Church and Nation Building

The Christian Church plays a pivotal role in nation building particularly in the Zimbabwean divided by conflict. The term nation-building may have been of frequent use and central to the political thinking in Africa, it is however crucial to analyse the role of the contemporary Christian Church in nation building. Accordingly, Okullu commented that the Christian church should occupy the central space in society and actively participate in the theme of nation building (1984:28). However, the nation is quite credible because the church is an active institution in the Public Space, but the bottom line is how we view the mission of the church and the link towards the theme of nation-building. More importantly, the issues to do with nation-building take cognisance of ownership in terms of the space, participation, what is expected and the checks and balances in focusing the nation towards the right direction.

Further, Okullu (1984) observed the concept of nation building in contemporary society in this remark:

Nation-building means the interaction, the people's contributions where they decide and act upon the resolutions. This process of nation-building means that all persons in society are dully accorded the opportunity and right to asking questions pertaining the utilization of resources (pp. 32).

In other words, nation-building is not imposition but, rather a process of inclusivity. It is also important to note that nation-building need to be guided by principles and goals which are well tabulated.

Nevertheless, the Alliance of Christian Church which in our view comprises of all Christian bodies in Zimbabwe in form of the (ZCC), the (ZCBC) and (EFZ) cited nation-building as a core theme in taking the nation of Zimbabwe forward after the impact of the crisis. The umbrella network of churches in Zimbabwe noted the need to clearly and explicitly redefine the core values upon which the nation of Zimbabwe can be built. Therefore, expressed the following sentiments:

The core values towards nation-building must be clearly defined. The nation of Zimbabwe needs shared valued describe its nationhood. The core values determine the paradigms, the behaviour and direction we take as a nation (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006:15).

Therefore, we analyse and view the concept of nation-building as a prophetic agenda for the Christian Church in which its ethical and pastoral implications are extended to what has been traditionally taken as political obligations.

3.6 Limitations of the Contemporary Church

The contemporary Christian church is struggling to overcome some historical factors particularly in view of having been the chief accomplice to colonialism. Further, the Christian church has been greatly weakened by internal crisis in terms of defining good governance due to its elective process and leadership schisms (Chepkwony 2003:251). More so, the Christian church still carry the negative legacy particularly the way some African Initiated Churches has been given derogatory terms. Further, the church has been suffering from internal crisis in terms of good governance. Therefore, there are critical questions on the relevancy of the church towards democracy such as first, can the contemporary Christian church challenge democratically elected leaders of the state, while their own leaders and bishops are not democratically elected? Second, how can the contemporary church freely campaign for the freedom of expression in the political space, while its radical leaders and theologians are expelled? Third, is it possible for the Christian Church to meaningfully advocate for human rights while its system discriminates youths, women, people living with disabilities, African initiated churches, lesbians and gays? (2013:251). All the above questions call for the church to realign its thinking, its language, its theology and doctrinal practices so that they can speak on what is happening in the contemporary society.

These probing questions are indeed critical and greatly expose the institution of the church and its critique to the secular institutions. As such, we therefore discover that the issue of democratisation is rather a fresh challenge for the contemporary Christian church and the political institutions in Zimbabwe. This area requires a redefining on the part of both the political and ecclesial institutions in order to work a complementary framework to serve the nation of Zimbabwe. There is however, a lacuna on the technical part in that the incumbent state and the church maybe exposed to similar leadership defects. Subsequently the church can contribute positively and relevantly to the democratic values and in so doing, abreastly participate in the formulation of an inclusive society. In a way, the church, by virtue of its divine mandate, has an opportunity to propagate the mission of the gospel of Christ in contemporary Zimbabwe.

The churches in Manicaland, an ecumenical forum in Zimbabwe, observed that the society has been destroyed by lip service, political rivalries and empty promises hence the crisis is artificial meaning it is man made (2006:171). The churches in Manicaland noted that Christians cannot just be satisfied with those who always talk about the values of freedom, morality and justice. What matters is not what is being said, but what is being practiced. The nation has been weakened by church and political leaders who promise to defend justice, champion freedom and yet do not comply to their utterances. In other words, the custodians of justice have not lived to their expectations.

3.7 A Theodicy in Zimbabwean Society

The situation of crisis and conflict is not just a Kairos moment for the community but a theodicy in theological terms. A dark period which left many scars and wounds in terms

of the escalation of violence in society. The crisis which engulfed the Zimbabwean society during the period under review is quite probing in terms of posing critical questions of faith such as “where is the loving God when it hurts most”? Thus, questions bring into the fold the theological exposition of theodicy. In its familiar premises, theodicy attempts to answer the questions on why God permit the evil to thrive as manifested in the Zimbabwean turbulent (Togarasei 2013:97). Further, the Theological questions are not an end in themselves but beyond the struggles and suffering, humanity embrace hope and faith that God is in control of historical events (Job 2:1-10).

Thus, the study raises some appraisal on self-understanding of the Zimbabwean ecclesiology in face of crisis in how to mold the nation’s faith in God. The Kairos Commentary is an epistle of hope, this hope has brought about the presence of the church in the situation hence the remark:

The church of Jesus is not called to be a bastion of caution and moderation. The church should challenge, inspire and motivate people. It has a message of the cross that inspires us to make sacrifices for justice and liberation. It has a message of hope that challenges us to wake up and act with hope and confidence (The Kairos Document 1985:27).

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (2013:2) ecumenical organs comprising of the mainline churches described the situation in Zimbabwe, particularly the electoral process in 2008 as a “Kairos moment” for a nation at “cross-roads” in terms of seeking God’s divine intervention on problems bedeviling the nation .

Nevertheless, the thrust of this framework is meant to establish the theological narratives of value addition bought through the interface between churches and political discourses in the face of historical desperation, brokenness of community desperation and decline in the crisis years (Mlambo 2014:231). We therefore drive into the ambivalence zone whereas questions of Theological relevance are inevitably asked as the situation obtaining from Zimbabwe, is the church capable of problem solving?

Takatso Mofokeng reflected on the character of prophetic church which discern the signs of times but crucially perceive in crisis the “Kairos” of moment truth and act on it cited in Boesak (2017:41). The statement is probing in the sense that our framework, Kairos Consciousness, critically focuses on the missiological capabilities, which implies the relevance of the church’s mission is to challenge the source of problem (Boesak 2011). The powerful political structures stand as an obstacle to the Democratic Space in Zimbabwe brought by reckless political decisions. More importantly, the Kairos moment is not only a moment of truth in terms of the bad system or (mis)governance in the Political Space (Chitando, Taringa and Mapuranga 2014:46), but it is also introspective, this implies an inward, self–examination in this case by the body of Christ in form of the church (The Kairos Document 1985:4). This explains the reason why the alliance of churches sees in the Zimbabwean crisis a Kairos time, an opportunity for God’s time.

The first step towards consciousness is viewed in the language, the discourse of liberation defines the course of action in Steve Biko’s works, *I Write What I Like* says;

the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed. Further, the Argentinian revolutionist Ernesto “Che” Guevara would say “our freedom cannot be obtained without fighting, every action is a battle cry against imperialism” cited in Ferm (1986:13). This critical language is also found in the expressions of Allan Boesak`s remarks that: “True freedom consists not only in fleeing from the world and its problems, but in acting as if the only concern of Christian were heaven” (1984:9). Crucially, the churches as alluded to in the study are always in the forefront in terms of confronting historical events and its challenges. The remarks by the Alliance of Churches in Zimbabwe presented in their discussion document is important as a self - critical reflection in that the Zimbabwean crisis was first and foremost challenging the church. As such, the churches condemned its culture of aloofness, disengagement, the tradition of being by-standers and the negative attitude of quickly withdrawing to spiritual matters living the political actors as the sole voice in Public Space (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006:10). Thus, consciousness as articulated by Allan Boesak reflects on criticality, change and contextuality hence the church is expected to be a transformative source in a hopeless society.

3.8 Renaissance of the Prophetic Ecclesiology

Takatso Mofokeng emphasised the return to the concept of the Prophetic Church. The Prophetic Church defined and identified in the prophetic witness, faithful resistance of the multitudes of Christians whose faith led them to political activism, the church driven by radical gospel of compassionate justice, hope and liberation (2017:41). The analytical trends of the church have indicated the decline of prophetic activities in post-

colonial society hence the calling for the renaissance of Political Consciousness. Kairos Consciousness raises critical questions about prophetic faithfulness, in that the seats of power in the countries in Africa are no longer occupied by the enemy but by “our own” fellow black leaders and yet the demands for justice are unrelenting as they were yesterday (Boesak 2015:2). As such, the model of Kairos Theological Tradition is the question of efficacy and relevance and to rediscover a pragmatic approach towards the new challenges in society.

Nevertheless, the Prophetic Church perceives and understands the crisis that “where there is a struggle there is suffering, and where there is a struggle, there is hope which is kept alive by the sacrifices of the people” (Mofokeng 2017:43). From the sentiments by Mofokeng one can comment that the church can never, in any circumstance, stand in neutrality whereas atrocities and suffering engulf the society because neutrality in a way is being on the fence or hiding behind the theory of apolitical. Mofokeng further remarked that when a church ceases to be prophetic, it hides from confrontation, pain and suicidal benefiting from the wounds of others when the struggle is over (2017:43). In other words, understanding the Kairos means acting and being part of the critical conversation.

Accordingly, Mapuranga, Taringa and Chitando explored how Zimbabwean Christian Church and Academic Frontier are recovering the prophetic voices in form of theological writings and responsive documents during the crisis (2014:176). Banana has described this scenario as the renaissance of Political Consciousness or a fight against negative

vices in society (1996:364). Admittedly, the prophetic voice in Zimbabwe took a “silence character” particularly after the attainment of the political independence in 1980. This was attributed to the culture of Marxist-Leninist adopted by the government whose ideologies are somehow counter Christian practices. More so, Vestraelen argues that the first president of Zimbabwe, Canaan Banana, played a role in the articulation of State Theology thereby betraying the prophetic role of the church. More importantly he was on a strategic position of influence as a state President and as a clergy in the Methodist Church (2002:56). However, Manyonganise noted the presence of prophetic documents as the move by the Zimbabwean churches to correct the character of silence such as the *Zimbabwe We Want* (2006), *Churches in Manicaland* (2006) *Faith and Election in Africa* (2009) and several pastoral letters by the ZCBC, ZCC, EFZ and the HOCD (2013:135).

The chapter highlighted critical key features in projecting the concept of the church in Zimbabwe hence, views of some scholars were closely examined and consulted. In general, scholars wrestling with the concept of the church in contemporary society particularly from a liberation perspective agree to define the concept beyond institutional status, hierarchical decorations and statistics growth in the prophetic church of God. Our framework constitutes a strong hermeneutical approach whereas theology is done “from below”. Essentially, for our coverage, the key question at stake resonates with political construction by the political elite in its bid to trivialise Christian Churches in the public space as meddling in a sphere they do not belong to. Nevertheless, the chapter

grappled with the significance and renaissance of consciousness in Zimbabwean Christianity.

3.9 Conclusion

The study has been developed mainly by focusing on the Christian church in Zimbabwe. Meanwhile, the Zimbabwean ecclesiological landscape, which is constituted by various Christian bodies namely (ZCBC), (HOCD), (EFZ) and some AICs ecclesiology. This thesis has opened a specialised exploration which examined ecclesiology in Zimbabwean context. The crisis became a faith crisis and a litmus test for the Christian church. As highlighted, the thrust of this study is mainly based on how theologically relevant the model of ecclesiology in is addressing and solving the Zimbabwean crisis. Three crucial theories emerged from the findings of the study that first, some churches supported the status quo in their endorsement to every decision taken by the government bringing into fold the remnants of state theology in Zimbabwean ecclesiology. Second, there was deafening silence from some sections of churches in Zimbabwe, particularly when the ruling political elite announced that the church must not interfere with politics. Thirdly, the crisis in Zimbabwe also prompted the visibility of prophetic ecclesiology showing resistance to political idolatry by the ruling party. A fresh roadmap is projected in the study to analyse what the crisis season means to the church in Zimbabwe. Nevertheless, our study is guided by a critical review riding on the framework of consciousness. In addition, the chapter noted the indications of Kairos consciousness in the Christian church's re-aligning to its prophetic calling and boldness to identify with the struggles in Zimbabwe. However, the engaging of Kairos analytic framework is self-critical in identifying the limitations of the church especially the

divisions and siding with the status-quo in form of political elites who have been founded and thrived within the context of the church. Finally, our radar keeps on focused on probing liberationist lenses to whether the church is part of the solution or part and parcel of the problem. The following chapter makes a critical engagement on Zimbabwean ecclesiology response to crisis.

Chapter 4

Zimbabwean Ecclesiology's Response to Crisis: A Critical Engagement

4.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to evaluate the church's response to the Zimbabwean crisis through the liberationist lenses of Kairos consciousness. Importantly, this critical engagement raises a liberationist platform on how the church in Zimbabwe committed itself to the struggle of liberation in siding with the marginalised people in the situation of crisis and conflict. For the purposes of precision and sequence, the key concerns under spotlight in this chapter are political violence, *Chimurenga* (land restoration), *Murambatsvina* (operation restore order) and economic meltdown in Zimbabwe. Further, the socio-economic and political landscape in Zimbabwe radically shifted from 2000 onward marking the genesis of crisis in our view which is a matter of urgency in terms of recognition and responsiveness for the church. The study also closely examines the interface between the church and political discourses in Zimbabwe in the period under review to enhance the strengths and inadequacies of the engagements.

4.2 The Zimbabwean Crisis: An Overview

Essentially, chapter three of the study provided a critical overview of the ecclesiological bodies in Zimbabwe and how they interfaced with political discourses. This framework raised critical pillars of Zimbabwean ecclesiology first, as a church of struggle in trenches and combat with the people (Banana 1991:364). Second, a prophetic church

that discerns and reads the signs of times (West 1993:40). Third, a church of liberation (Cone 1975:138). Fourth, a church with cultural consciousness. Crucially, the events which erupted in Zimbabwe had a direct massive impact on the churches. Vambe described the period as the “Deepest Crisis” which provided a faith crisis in terms of the prophetic responsibilities of the Christian Church in Zimbabwe. This faith crisis is a Kairos for the Christian churches (Maposa and Sibanda 2013:137). As articulated in the study, Kairos is the moment of grace and opportunity, a favourable time in which God issues a challenge to decisive action (The Kairos Document 1985:4). More importantly, the church which understands its political and social role in society stands within the prophetic stand.

Churches in Zimbabwe, from the time of liberation struggle in the 1970s, played a significant role in society. One of the key research questions in this study is premised on the significant role of the churches in solving the Zimbabwean crisis. In a discussion document, a response forum by Christian churches to the crisis in Zimbabwe, strongly noted:

In the past, the churches’ nation building initiatives were pursued from the EFZ, ZCBC and ZCC. In recent times however, the common and continued suffering of the people of Zimbabwe, with no end in sight, has not left the church untouched and now in a common desire to bring to an end the daily suffering and pain of our people, the church has come together to speak with one voice, one faith, one hope and one vision in order to bring about the Zimbabwe we want (The Zimbabwe we want 2006:6).

The above statement is a statement of mobilisation and a symbol of consciousness in Zimbabwean Christianity so unique and putting aside the denominational boundaries

thus, giving utmost commitment to the struggles of the citizens. As such, Christian machinery, persons, groups as well as communities are not mere passive on lookers during the crisis times. They also undertake and engage in practical endeavours as key contributors towards resolving of the crisis.

Importantly the period under review is well tabulated as the “Crisis and turbulent years” in Zimbabwe (Mlambo 2014:231). Thus, denying that Zimbabwe suffocated and suffered a crisis, not a mere crisis, but of staggering proportions from the year 2000, is tantamount to a form of dishonesty of the highest order (Chitando 2013:x). This crisis also entails that the nation of Zimbabwe also captured the global attention in terms of media coverage. For the purposes of clarity Mangena and Hove observed that the Zimbabwean crisis took various terms in that at once it was economic, social, political, legal and moral (2013:228). As follow-up to these observations, Chitando is therefore justified to implore and refer to the term “Full-blown” crisis (2012:43). In other words, the situation described total collapse of the pillars that define the nation’s survival.

Accordingly, Chimuka observed that the crisis in Zimbabwe ushered in a lot of initiatives by the churches within the view of making a difference and helping to establish the ideal Zimbabwe (2013:33). Therefore, different Christian groups in Zimbabwe engaged the political discourse particularly the dominating ones in the form of Zanu PF and MDC. Considering the discussion at stake, the remarks by Chitando (2013) makes a lot of sense in saying:

Religion plays an important role in equipping its adherents to make sense of extreme difficult experiences. It does this by explaining why people find themselves in dire circumstances. Given the dominance of Christianity in Zimbabwe. It is not surprising that Christian interpretations of disaster tended to feature persistently amidst the hyper-inflation, hopelessness, violence and despair (x).

However, in as much as churches in Zimbabwe took their prophetic responsibility, the matrix of public space remained a contested terrain. The political elite in the form of Mugabe constantly reminded the church to avoid meddling with the political space. The study thus, examines the problem in Zimbabwe as a unique and theological in that the political establishment perceived the public space as a sacred space where only the brave venture in more specifically the ruling political parties. More complicated and ambivalent is that, in times of crisis, religion undergoes a crisis in terms of the theological roadmap.

4.2.1 Historical Factors

A diagnosis of the Zimbabwean crisis cannot just be viewed from one angle hence several factors would be considered. The key question in this phenomenon is pondering on what really caused the full-blown crisis in Zimbabwe? The chapter unpacks what Maposa described as colonial wounds in form of the “three evils” which the Third World countries like Zimbabwe are grappling with even up to this day (2011:45). Further, the crisis in Zimbabwe that has sent shock waves locally, regionally and internationally is a mere reminder on what specifically colonialism, globalisation and neo-colonialism can do. They frustrate and exploit the Third World countries (2011:175). In other words, the manifestations of these evils cannot go unnoticed, but the bottom line stand as western

countries maybe dominating the economic and political landscape of Zimbabwe even after its independence in 1980.

Patrick Masanja, the Tanzanian Theologian, described neo-colonialism as one of the characteristic features particularly of contemporary Africa in that the Third World countries are trapped and enmeshed in world economic, political and ideological system that continuously subjects them to imperialist exploitation and domination. In addition, imperialist countries have strongly resorted to the neo-colonial formula whereby countries have all the outward manifestation of independence and colouring of independence flag of their choice, yet the political and economic systems of these countries are dominated and tied by the imperialist countries (Masanja cited in Torres and Fabella 1978:9). Therefore, our discussion on neo-colonialism as part and parcel of the problem in contemporary Zimbabwe is necessary in order to understand and analyse the root cause of the crisis. More so, the economic sectors such as Mining and Agriculture are controlled by multinational companies which have a typical monopoly on the part of pricing, commercing, profits, labour control, marketing all these factors translate into domination.

Meanwhile the colonial supremo, Cecil John Rhodes heralded the genesis of what has become a major problem for the contemporary Zimbabwean society through the land dispossession in 1890 (Banana 1986:350). The Pioneer Column completely stripped the Africans of their heritage by confiscating vast tracts of land to which they did not have legitimate claim, thus creating historical imbalances. In reaction to the dispossession,

that marked the birth of Chimurenga, Africans put up a spirited resistance to the colonialist menace although in the 1890s, they were overwhelmed by the superior firepower of the maxim guns (Banana 1986:152). Subsequently, colonialism posed a trail of negative consequences in the Zimbabwean history such as wars, hatred, resistance, negative perception of others, tribalism, brutality, death of innocent persons the trend has sadly bedevilled the society up to this day.

It would be certainly wrong to ignore these historical factors. A rigorous analysis of the total package to the problem under review is crucial, thus, another parenthetical remark is that the background and dynamics of Zimbabwe's crisis is tracked from its past colonial experience (Sachikonye 2011: xvii). This view is further buttressed by Father Mukonori who argued that the colonial regime initiated a system which has been carried into this generation particularly the culture of violence and superiority of a certain race over others (2012:11). Quite often one would interpret the colonial mentality of master and servant ideology (Mukonori 2011:73). This setting prompted the superiority of "whites" by virtue of their colour became the masters and blacks were made to be subjects or servants. Further, it is a fact that when people are dominated and oppressed, they become poor (Dussel 1986:22). Therefore, poverty which has dominated some of the Third-World countries such as Zimbabwe is an artificial problem emanating from the "Trinity of evils" meaning colonialism, neo-colonialism and globalisation (Maposa 2011:45). However, our framework facilitates a theological praxis in context of the Zimbabwean experiences whereas the historical problem before us is also a moral and every moral problem eventually becomes a theological problem.

4.2.3 Internal Factors

Internal factors such as (mis)governance triggered the Zimbabwean crisis for the period under review. Charles Mutasa, a policy analyst at Africa Forum, argued that the world has enough resources for everyone, only if we find a political will to eradicate poverty and hunger, as well as put human life before profit (2015:2). The statement in its strongest terms is pointing to the internal structures within the governance. Chitando, Mapuranga and Taringa alluded to the fact that one of the pressing issues of the African contemporary continent is the concerns of (mis)governance (2014:173). Thus, reckless political and economic policies have been formulated to benefit the individuals and creating the elite detrimental to the majority populations. In the Zimbabwean crisis the Christian groupings pointed out the problem of corruption as a cancer which has destroyed the gains of independence (The Zimbabwe We Want, 2006:9). In addition, corruption fuelled by a character of dishonest, lack of accountability has become a fashionable epidemic in Zimbabwean society. Further, the rise of corruption in Zimbabwean society is an indication of progressive disintegration of the national moral fibre. What the society has lacked is ethical, moral and good conduct of *Hunhu/Ubuntu* (Chimuka 2001:32). Sadly, the resources meant for the poor and less privileged are at times hijacked by those in position of authority creating trails of scandals that are not brought to justice.

The Catholic Church, through its leadership of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC), cited the problem of bad governance and corruption as the root causes of the crisis. Crucially, in their pastoral letter titled *God Hears the Cry of The Oppressed* published on the 5th of April 2007, they pointed out to the culture of

selfishness and greedy. The reference to the phrase “graveyard governance” is quite striking and appealing, this is a situation when the tiny minority of people become rich overnight, while the majority languish in poverty (ZCBC 2007:3). Therefore, a country which once flourished with God-given resources turned to a poor state not because of lack of resources but due to poor administration.

The churches in Manicaland also observed that many of Africa’s problems, including Zimbabwe, are as a result of the manner of governance often rocked by corruption (2006:85). In addition, corruption also translates to the life of poverty in society. Despite having attained independence in 1980, most Zimbabweans live in abject poverty, within an alarming rate of unemployment and thereafter with diseases and hunger. One of the largest ecumenical bodies in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) observed the following in their pastoral letter:

In instances where investigations have been done to establish the causes of our situation the results have pointed to bad governance, unjust laws, corruption, and lack of integrity and unfair distribution of resources as some of the root causes... “Wealth that you get by dishonest will do you not good, but honest can serve your life” Proverbs 10:2 (ZCC, Pastoral Letter to the Nation of Zimbabwe 02 March 2006).

The facts, as stated by the pastoral letter, strongly reflected how enormous masses of the people in Zimbabwe were trapped in severe poverty while a few enjoyed the wealth. This entails deprivation and the problem of structural injustice whereas the problem becomes morally of a system and a structure which promotes poverty. Bluntly and

unreservedly, the pastoral letter by the Catholic Bishops dismissed as “false” and malicious claims by the ruling elite in Zimbabwe the ruling that the nation is in a mess because of colonial structures, inherited from pre-independence hence continued to be problematic in society (ZCBC 2007:7).

4.3 Consciousness of the Zimbabwean Ecclesiology

Kaulemu argued that there has been a prophetic stand within the Zimbabwean Christianity in that, the church leaders did not sit idly while the country was undergoing a crisis of immense proportion (2010:31). As such, Christian leaders spoke with a conviction and eloquence on issues which badly affected the nation of Zimbabwe ‘from 2000-2013’. Importantly, as alluded to in our problem statement that Mugabe insisted that the word “crisis” was misplaced and misused in fact over emphasised that the church was venturing dangerously political domain and leaving spiritual matters unattended (Chitando 2011:44). The perpetuation of this myth and political rhetoric did not detour the brevity and consciousness of the Zimbabwean Christianity as they shelled out of the character of silence cited earlier in the study in form of ZCC, ZCBC and EFZ appeared in public challenging the environment in Zimbabwe. The church also sought relevance particularly to its adherents and citizens. In taking a stance to address issues affecting the general populace, which also antagonise those who oversee the political power.

In this section, the chapter provides a comprehensive analysis to the Zimbabwean crisis. The church undertook some exposition of the crisis and presented an action plan. Our Christian response to the Zimbabwean crisis is guided by an ecumenical document,

The Zimbabwe We Want which is also referred to as the National Vision Discussion Document (NVDD). The document is unique, historical and theological exposition reflected the church took a stance to correct the character of silence in face of a fully blown crisis (Manyonganise cited in Chitando 2013:155). More importantly, the document contained very useful details for the national discourse in that it was authored by almost a Christian consensus. Thus, the document was produced by the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC), Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ).

An analysis of some pastoral letters presented in form of the Christian response to the Zimbabwean crisis are considered in this part of the chapter. Therefore, the eloquent and provocative pastoral letter entitled “God hears the cry of the oppressed” by the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) produced at the peak of the crisis in 2007 is worth of considerations. The pastoral letter is heart searching, accurate, bold and prophetic. However, the letter was viewed as gross antagonism and undermining the status of President Mugabe hence, prompted his immediate response that pastoral letters are fond of criticism (Chitando 2014:2). Importantly, the pastoral letters spoke on most issues bedeviling Zimbabwe such as political violence, myopic land redistribution, fraudulent electoral process, massive displacements of citizens in urban areas with *Operation Murambatsvina* and the economic crisis. Other pastoral letters produced by the Christian fraternal in response to activities unfolding in Zimbabwe during the crisis are also being consulted in this study.

Crucially, the book entitled *The Truth Will Make You Free: A compendium of Christian Social Teaching: Churches in Manicaland* greatly informs the chapter as a Christian campus on social issues in the contemporary Zimbabwe. The book begins its presentation by quoting a statement in the bible:

This is what Yahweh asks of you, only this; that you act justly, that you love tenderly, that you walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8).

The churches in Manicaland or the Eastern province in Zimbabwe are an ecumenical group of churches and institutions in that part of the country. Since the year 2000, the crisis fully manifested, the churches have been seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit in acting in order to promote tolerance to give public decision-makers and to enable people to live by gospel principles and values. In that framework, the churches in Manicaland compiled a book responding to the unjust social situation in Zimbabwe and giving an exposition based primarily on scripture which is the window through which Christians look upon the world (2006: ii). The compendium is essential to the study hence provide coverage on issues of democracy, economy, political involvement, justice, peace and analysis of violence.

The perceived notion that the Church in Zimbabwe has been on the forefront as part and parcel in the struggles bedevilling the nation. Therefore, as the crisis intensified several Christian Bodies, over and above well-established traditional bodies cited earlier in the study in form of ZCC, ZCBC and EFZ featured prominently on issues in the public discourse (Togarasei 2013:100).

4.4 Land Revolution in Zimbabwe

The land revolution in Zimbabwe created new forms of alienation because of its chaotic, retributive and racial overtones as indicated by the fraternal of churches (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006:38). Precisely, it was one of the major sources of political, economic, moral and social instability during the period under review. Robert Mugabe said:

The antagonism that expressed itself finally in the form of liberation war had been natured by a host of ever-growing grievances, chief among which was that of land hungry. It was mainly on the principle of the recovery of the fertile land that the armed struggle was built (Martin and Johnson 1981: v).

Crucially, the question of land in Zimbabwe can tentatively be said to be as old as human existence itself. Further, this view is even truer for the Africans than any other ethnic groups since Africans have for generations been totally depending on land for subsistence (Banana 1986:152). From an African perspective, particularly in Shona, the term land (*dunhu*) connotes a place of belonging where a person identifies herself/himself with. Some give reference to home (*Kumusha*) as a connection where one's roots are and one's umbilical cord is buried. In other words, basing on this concept land is sacred.

An Afrocentric approach comes into play hence John Mbiti's remarks are crucial saying that, "Africans are notoriously religious" (1989:1). The Zimbabweans in their greetings and cheering use the expression *Mwana wevhu*⁷ (meaning 'son of the soil') (Bakare

⁷ The loss of land to a child of the soil means losing the graves of one's forbearers and home of one's childhood.

1993:11). This salutation and sense of humour was more commonly used during the second Chimurenga (Armed struggle) as a gesture to inspire the spirituality to fight for the dispossessed community. More importantly, the main slogan during the second Chimurenga was *pamberi hondo* (forward with the revolution) (Martin and Johnson 1981: v). The other metaphor of land as mother is commonly used in reference to the fact that land is the means for sustenance hence provides humans with food for survival as Mother Nature to all her children.

4.4.1 The Framework of National Struggle: Chimurenga

The struggle for liberation was primarily based on the land issue which had been seized and parcelled to colonial settlers in 1890 by the British colonial architect and supremo Cecil John Rhodes. The struggle for Zimbabwe was fought under the banner of second Chimurenga. The term Chimurenga has several meanings in contemporary usage such as revolution, war, struggle or resistance. Further, Martin and Johnson observed that Chimurenga has its political origins in the 1890s uprisings by Africans north of the Limpopo who fought to prevent the white settlers from occupying their land (1981: v). It was after intensive battle that the uprising was crushed in 1897 resulting in the occupation of fertile lands by white people. However, the word Chimurenga lived in folklore of villagers and townships as the elders passed over the stories of resistance to other generations. As such, the war of resistance was inevitable in face of the settler occupation of Zimbabwe.

More importantly, the people were forcibly removed from their arable lands and pushed into crowded and unproductive “reserves” (2006:9). In addition, the Pioneer Column in

Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) employed the manipulative instrument of the Rudd Concession of 1888 which conceived land as a commodity or personal property rather than a sacred place of livelihood. Further, a series of Land Tenure Acts were implemented in which the black people lost vast pieces of land to white settlers. The land Apportionment Act (1930), The National Husbandry Act (1951), The Land Tenure Act (1969) empowered the colonial regime to act and make unfair decisions which favoured the “whites”. Eventually, the armed struggle began, hence the mobilisation of the second Chimurenga, nationalism and guerrilla movements. This protracted struggle gave birth to independence Zimbabwe in 1980.

4.4.2 The Third Chimurenga: Struggle Continues

Maposa, Hlongwana and Gamira moved a motion that the land redistribution in Zimbabwe, carried under the banner of the Third Chimurenga, created a fresh crisis in the Zimbabwean society hence the Fourth Chimurenga is inevitable (2010:191-200). They used the term *Aluta continua* (the struggle continues) which implies that the land redistribution or Third Chimurenga in Zimbabwe does not mean the end of the land problem, but instead, it is the beginning of the new genesis towards a new revolution. The Agrarian Revolution (Third Chimurenga) or the Zimbabwean land reform program inaugurated in 2000 was anchored on the framework of a rather fresh political discourse with a variety of agenda attached to it and a political mileage to score. The term Chimurenga (struggle for liberation) was in existence from the colonial era but the Third Chimurenga is a new development coined during the year 2000. The Zimbabwean Agrarian Revolution was also carried under the banner of *Jambanja* a Shona term meaning excessive violence as a result the land program was rather a point of no return

in that avenues for dialogue had been exhausted without accomplishing positive results on the part of the landless Zimbabweans some who had joined the armed struggle with a hope of having land as soon as the nation attained political independence.

Importantly, the land redistribution program in Zimbabwe had some shortcomings which resulted in the potential of having yet another land revolution thus the concept of *Aluta continua* (struggle continues), highly resonates on the need to address the imbalances created as a result of the Third Chimurenga (Maposa, Hlongwana and Gamira 2010:191-200). Some of the shortcomings of the land issue in Zimbabwe is in part on the methodology employed to solve the land problem. As such, the land redistribution in Zimbabwe created an elite class whereas the issue of multiple farm ownership could not be ruled out. In other words, those who needed land mostly did not benefit from this program which, in some instances, was directly an enterprise of those who wield economic and political power, thus, in our liberationist discourse, those who are on the “underside of history” did not benefit (Gutiérrez 1983: ix). Further, the land reform carried out in Zimbabwe may not have improved the livelihood of the poor people instead, it may have widened the gap between the “haves” and the “have nots” contrary to the values of liberation theology. The land issue in Zimbabwe is still a liberation view thus any issue on this discourse needs urgent attention in that we perceive a struggle within a struggle and a crisis within a crisis in our analysis of the land redistribution in Zimbabwe.

4.4.3 Christian Response to the Land Reform

The land question in Zimbabwe is quite a sensitive and emotional issue, thus Sabastian Bakare commented that Zimbabwe is coloured with blood because of the land problem

(1993:11). The Christian response to the land issue is contained in their discursive document in form of the “Kairos” response to the Zimbabwean crisis referred to as *The Zimbabwe We Want*. Crucially, the church’s response to the land problem is presented in a tri-partite analysis. First, the church sees the need for the land redistribution as a credible and an inevitable enterprise making a convergence with the government perception. Second, the church disagreed with the method and way the land redistribution was carried out. Third, the church also responded by a mitigatory manner by giving a way forward to what they viewed as the solution.

Importantly, as alluded earlier in the study by views on some scholars, the principle, the need, the urgency of land redistribution in Zimbabwe is inevitable hence cannot be avoided because of the existing blunt injustice and imbalances created (Vestraelen 1989:111). This view is also reinforced by Chitando on the basis that land is a thrust of black empowerment and resonates with the principles of liberation (1998). Crucially, the church’s position on the need for land redistribution is anchored in the following statements:

The Agrarian Structure before independence was highly inequitable, largely along racial lines. This situation continued late into 1990s. Whereas large-scale commercial sector comprised 4000 white farmers owning about 9000 farms and about 20 large agro industrial estates. By contrast, over 1.2 million smallholder families held an average of 3hectres each of a marginal arable land with limited infrastructure, while approximately 300 000 households were landless or land short. Sooner or later there was bound to be some unrest resulting from the glaring inequitable distribution of land. This situation was

morally defensible and certainly needed to be corrected (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006:30).

The sentiments clearly and explicitly registered the gross injustice as far as the land issue is concerned, particularly after the attainment of independence from 1980. The majority population languished in arable land while vast prime land remained in the hands of a few racial minority. In other words, the church concurred with the need for land redistribution in Zimbabwe. From a liberationist dimension, the land redistribution in Zimbabwe is quite credible in empowering the majority poor and marginalised citizens (Taringa and Sipeyiye 2013:51). In a way having land is also achieving liberation whose mission the church existed for.

4.4.4 Limitations of the Land Reform

The church also released a clear and strong statement disagreeing with the way the fast track land redistribution program was carried out hence remarks:

The process of correcting this situation of imbalances has been fraught with controversy, violence and was accompanied by a lot of pain, leaving a society highly polarised. Between 2000 and 2008, the land redistribution process gave rise to numerous social and political conflicts on the farms and elsewhere. Some standing crops, livestock, farm equipment and other properties were lost or affected (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006:30).

It is important to note that, the Christian groupings in Zimbabwe through their national vision gave a vote of no confidence particularly in the fast-track land redistribution program which was championed by Robert Mugabe's government.

Nonetheless, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) anchored their response to the land redistribution in Zimbabwe in a striking pastoral letter entitled "God hears the cry of the oppressed" dated 5 April 2007 which had the following sentiments:

Following a radical land reform program seven years ago, many people are today going to bed hungry and wake up to a day without work. Hundreds of companies were forced to close. Over 80 percent of the people of Zimbabwe are without employment. Scores risk their lives week after week in search of work in neighbouring countries (ZCBC 2007:5).

As a result, the pastoral letter was meant to expose the ditch and wilderness before the nation of Zimbabwe because of the reckless political decisions. Christian response on the land issue also came from the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) pastoral letter released in February 2006. The letter stated that the land distribution is a noble idea, but the direction and operation was done in such a haphazard manner without due consideration of all factors in place particularly the plight of the people who were directly affected by the operation such as farm workers (2006). Further, the letter also noted with concern some inconsistencies in the land redistribution which created the problem of multiple farm ownership and land barons. Whereas some political elite took

advantage of the political music and ended up having more than one farm at the expense of other citizens.

4.4.5 Christian Views on the Way Forward.

The Christian response to the land issue in Zimbabwe carried under the banner of *Third Chimurenga* or *Jambanja* may have sounded a strong rebuke to the government of Robert Mugabe but to some extent forged a way forward considering the recommendations presented. Importantly and foremost is the reference to the churches in the hermeneutical approach by the alliance of Churches imploring the dimension that land is a gift from God. Therefore, every person has the right to have a piece of land that they call their own with everything that is found in it in order to sustain life (Genesis 1:25-30) (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006:30). This point of departure that land is a gift also resonates with the liberation perspective of the God who is a liberator and liberation means equality of persons in each state. Elaborating further, the land redistribution must be done irrespective of gender, race, political affiliation, religious affiliation and ethical background. By virtue of being Zimbabwean or *Mwana wevhu* (Son of the soil) one has entitlement to land (Maposa 2012:102). The church also reiterated that a fresh method to be employed in the land redistribution rather than continue with the Third Chimurenga model whereas land was being politicised by those who wielded power as an electoral advantage while the people of Zimbabwe suffered from the impact of the crisis (Banana 1986:241).

The Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops deliberated and criticised the Zimbabwean government for its shortfalls and lacking sensitivity in tackling the land issue properly (Catholic

Pastoral Letter April 2005). However, the landless citizens, whom they viewed as the oppressed people continued to suffer and be dehumanised years after the attainment of political independence (Maposa 2012:97). The Catholic stance on land also resonates with the thrust of Liberation Theology where the church sided with the oppressed people living on the underside of history as espoused by Gutierrez (1971:26). This entails that land is a form of empowerment particularly the liberation discourse, it is a precious commodity and means of human livelihood.

The alliance of churches in Zimbabwe constituting the ZCBC, ZCC and EFZ reflected honourable efforts by churches towards economic restoration, nation building, reconciliation and healing. Thus, the Christian alliance of the Zimbabwean churches pointed out towards the need to improve equity in the land allocation in order to accommodate a broader range of groups particularly those who had been marginalised by land redistribution (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006:33). The roadmap on land issue was expected to reflect such an inclusive model where all groups are represented rather than to be a preserve of a certain elite in the society. This direction concurs with Maposa's comment that the land redistribution in Zimbabwe under the auspices of the Third Chimurenga was done in a partisan way (2012:99). An analysis on the issue of land redistribution in Zimbabwe is that it remains a very noble idea which was unfortunately a protest captured and misused by the elite.

4.5 Political Violence in Zimbabwe

It was Sachikonye in his work *When A State Turns on Its Citizens* who moved an argument that political violence engulfed the Zimbabwean society and has become a decisive political instrument, a cancer that has corroded the country's political space (2011: xix). That entails the moralisation and canonization of violence in society although the act is a painful choice. Accordingly, Kaulemu observed that violence is almost a political culture which accompanies all major political events in Zimbabwe especially the election process (2011:14). In other words, violence is celebrated in some parts or has been used as a tool to solve problems. Further, Father Fidelis Mukonori a Catholic clergy in the Harare Dioceses commented that the political violence is a question of the medicine being more life threatening than the illness (2012:14). Subsequently, political violence is one of the biggest post-colonial challenges for Zimbabwe particularly on the moral aspect whereas a moral problem is also a theological problem.

4.5.1 Political Landscape

Reflection on the period under review the crisis years in Zimbabwe or decade of violence as Mangena and Hove (2013:227) prefer to designate. Such a Kairos moment is crucial in tracking the phases influencing the nation's political landscape. The phases being we the colonial time, the liberation movement and the current political dispensation. In order to navigate the root cause of the crisis particularly on part of the development and spread of politically motivated violence. Father Mukonori drawing from historical factors which he profiled in the study as a trinity of evils in form of neo-colonialism, colonialism and globalisation strongly argued that the colonial regime

legalised violence as a political tool (2012:11). The submission of the remark is premised on the fact that colonialism was violent in nature in order to force the black people to submit blindly and religiously to a colonial system.

Further, this view is explainable in terms of a powerful structure legitimising its dominance on racial grounds. Subsequently violence, in the colonial phase created an ideology of the “master and servant” (Mukonori 2011:73). The Rhodesians “whites” by virtue of colour became masters and blacks were subjects. The servants were instruments in the sight of masters. Dussel also argues that when people are instrumentalised, dominated and oppressed they eventually succumb to poverty (1986:22). This explains why black people became poor and more vulnerable considering colonialism. The second phase is observed on the birth of war of resistance against a colonial system which came to be known as Chimurenga (Banana 1981:24). The spirituality of the liberation struggle in the 1970s celebrated and inspired violence particularly employed by the two guerrilla fronts of ZANLA and ZIPRA. Further, the combatants in the struggle were given code names for inspiration such as Teurai Ropa (spill the blood), Mabhunu Muchapera (colonialists will be wiped out) and Tichatonga negidi (we shall rule through the barrel of the gun). During the armed struggle some fellow black people who were believed to be sell-outs also faced the fate of violence. The phase of the protracted struggle ended in 1980 through the attainment of political independence.

The lowering of the Union Jack (the colonial flag) in 1980 marked another phase under the new dispensation of a black government ushering in the majority rule. However, Canaan Sodindo Banana observed that violence was perpetuated in conjunction to elections in 1985 and 1990. More so, there had been serious political destabilisations in Matabeleland and some parts of the Midlands province since 1980 (1986:270-274). In other words, political disgruntlements led to some intra-party and inter-party fighting between political rivals in Zanu-PF and PF-Zapu.

The political landscape in Zimbabwe completely changed from the year 2000 marking a clear manifestation of the full-blown crisis (Chitando 2012:43). As a matter of coincidence or fuelling of a crisis a new competitor was unveiled on the political scene through the birth of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). The political party led by Morgan Tsvangirai proved too strong for the ruling Zanu-PF party. Further, the opposition MDC quickly gained ground on the Zimbabwean political scene. The formation of the MDC coincided with a poor performing economy, unemployment, disgruntled workers, poor performing agricultural sector, massive retrenchments. These and other factors became fertile ground for its growth. Lovemore Togarasei argued that the economic situation deeply worsened from the year 2000 due to the imposition of economic sanctions on Zimbabwe by Britain and her allies. Thus, the agrarian revolution *Third Chimurenga* or *Jambanja* triggered and worsened the crisis particularly that it employed violence. The coinage of two terms *Jambanja* (violence) and *Chimurenga* (the struggle for land) all connoted to the use of violence (Sachikonye 2011:15). Political violence impacted negatively in Zimbabwe causing injuries, loss of

lives, homelessness, broken relationships, massive displacements, fleeing of homes and desperation.

4.5.2. Media and violence

The media plays a significant role to build the character of a nation and negatively incite violence (Mangena and Hove 2013:22). The biggest challenges on media also hinges on its biases towards certain objectives. James Muzondidya in his work, *Redemptive or Grotesque Nationalism: Thinking Contemporary politics in Zimbabwe (2011)* observed that the media especially, the state media promoted the theory of *Jambanja* (violence). After the inauguration of the land reform program in 2000 the Zimbabwean state media, that is, the radio and television deliberately portrayed partisan character in promoting ruling Zanu-PF ideologies. More so, media can also be used in gatekeeping as a political strategy to ensure that nothing discredits the government in both print and electronic media. Hence, Mangena and Hove (2013) inform the study on how the state media became the official mouthpiece of the Zanu-PF government together with other state-controlled newspapers.

Further, Mangena and Hove (2013) also bring into the fold the idea that violence is caused by inciteful remarks. Negative remarks inflicted on one's personal character causes aggression which is turned into violence. This character assassination was portrayed by the state media by giving a negative coverage where the MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai was portrayed as *Chematama* (fat cheeked one) that on its own constitutes verbal violence (pp229). On the same token, the independent print media

also gave coverage of reckless statements by the opposition MDC such as *chihurumende chembavha* (government of thieves) (Mangena and Hove 2013:229). This political rhetoric perpetuated violence in the Zimbabwean society. This is one side of the media where it is used as a tool to incite violence.

Muzondidya (2011) also noted how the state media utilised the air platform in playing revolutionary music genres like *Zanu Ndeyeropa* (Zanu is for bloody), *Chave Chimurenga* (it's now a battle) by Stella Chiweshe, *Hoko* (pegging the land) by Simon Chimbetu, *Nesango* (in the battlefield) by Clive Malunga were popularised. The headlines on both independent and national newspapers brought up some inciteful elements to the society. Muzondidya (2011) further noted the same in the appointment of the minister of information whose role was gatekeeping and controlling the media houses. However, the negative side of the democratic process was brought about on the passing of Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (AIPPA) Act in 2002. The bill passed a ban on the operation of international private news agencies such as *Al Jazeera*, *BBC* and *SABC*. Some local newspapers were also affected such as the *Daily News*, *Financial Gazette* and *Newsday*. The motive of such a move was meant to manipulate information thereby fuelling violence which is unexposed.

However, the development of technology and the coming in of social media in form of *Facebook* and *WhatsApp* also fuelled violence in society. This development came as a blessing especially to the opposition parties who were denied coverage on national print and electronic media. The Zimbabwean government battled to identify *Baba Jukwa* (a

Facebook page) which became an inciteful and expository platform to the moves and strategies by the Zanu-PF government. Further, the government of Zimbabwe was challenged by the *#This Flag Movement* started by Pastor Evan Mawarire who even inspired the whole nation to go on a stay way. In the interest of the study, media can be a conduit of violence in society. However, there is a scholarly gap in that the negativity of media cannot be overstated because African Dictators have also thrived on the political illiteracy of the society.

4.5.2.1 The Militarisation of the Zimbabwean Society

Lloyd Sachikonye (2011:97) noted the legitimization of political violence as part and parcel of the political culture to hold power at all costs by the government structures in the society. The idea of deploying and appointing military service personnel into key positions in parastatals is also part of extending the military influence in the Zimbabwean society. Importantly, the concept of militarisation is a strategy which dates back to the colonial era in which the regime defended policies of internal colonisation particularly during the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in Rhodesia and the days of South African racial policy of apartheid constituted in (1948) (Catholic Institute of Internal Relations 1982:15). Negatively, the regime through their incumbent leaders, made deliberate effort to militarise the society with traditional and conventional strategies. In the same fashion, the ideology to militarise goes hand in hand with the philosophy to extend the banner of national security. Therefore, militarisation is viewed as a strategy to extend military services outside conventional institutions.

Moorcroft in the work, *Mugabe's War Machinery (2012)* argues that the Zimbabwean society went through a heavy process of militarisation from 2000 onwards. Significantly, the characteristics of militarisation of the Zimbabwean society are worth an overview analysis in this study in order to appreciate how the situation in Zimbabwe deepened. This concept also stems from the view that the Youth Brigades, under the banners of National Service are code named *Border Gezi*, initiated their role and influence in the society (Moorcroft 2012). The marks of this constituency became significant and visible through the National Service which was rather developed more formally on the ruling party Zanu PF structures. Some notable characteristic of the Youth Militia is how they displayed partisanship and allegiance to Robert Mugabe. Thus, these ideologies are oriented from National Service Centres and the Hebert Chitepo School of Ideology. It is also important to note that some youths attended this orientation as a ticket to access other partisan privileges in national institutions such as nursing, teaching, police force and army. It became a prerequisite to have such an orientation for one to stand a chance of enrolment into tertiary institutions.

Further, Sachikonye (2011:48) noted the purpose of militarisation was intended on creating the stronghold of the ruling Zanu-PF party through a vanguard in some areas as Mashonaland East, Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland West Provinces. These areas became liberated zones and political hotbeds which were impenetrable by the opposition MDC and any other suspicious movements. The Chiefs, police and other security agents played the role of gate keeping ensuring that any political gathering related to opposition political partisanship is quickly disrupted. Kaulemu (2009) also took

this view further and brought the notion that some churches and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) failed to have access into these areas. This was meant to barricade political influence into these areas.

More importantly, Kaulemu (2011) and Sachikonye (2011) related how there was coordination between the war veterans and youth militias during the election time. The youth militia/*Border Gezi* played a significant role in the mobilisation of the electorate in Zimbabwe. Kaulemu (2009) also argued that the militias and war veterans intimidated the electorate during the election campaign. Political gatherings were attended not by choice but coercion. This view also resonates with Mukonori (2012) that violence can be used as a means of compulsory submission to the political power.

4.5.3 The Church's Response to Violence

In the face of such a deep polarisation of the political space and public space in Zimbabwe, the church could not just stand and watch this beloved society suffer from this deep internal malaise, hence they raised their voices. Whereas, their raising of prophetic voices above the whisper is inspired in that the church is the watchdog of democracy prophetically placed in society to ensure that no impediments obstruct the paths of Zimbabweans wishing to exercise their constitutional rights (Banana 1986:274). The rising of the Christian voice in the public space also symbolises consciousness in the Zimbabwean Christianity. However, Christian groupings could make this move of challenging the polarisation of the political space without antagonising Robert Mugabe and fellow ruling elite who perpetuated a myth that the public space is a sacred place

and a no-go area for church leaders. In the peak and climax of crisis the in 2008, Mugabe pronounced that “Only God who appointed me will remove me and not any other persons” (Morris 2008). Analytically, the statement by Robert Mugabe is misplaced and a form of State Theology in the Kairos Document (1985) but most striking is the lack of hermeneutical discourse, thus, misuse and manipulation the bible.

Closely linked to this development, the crisis also created an ambivalence in that the political elite urged the Christian community to turn a blind eye to what transpired on the ground to an extent of calling them to concentrate on the pulpit business and not get involved in politics. However, there is a consensus that a dark cloud hovered over the society of Zimbabwe from 2000 which is called “the darkest period” the crisis time (Chitando 2013:83). This theory in making Christian churches stay away from politics, was also built by politicians who wanted to achieve certain goals in society.

4.6 Critical Pastoral Letters and Discussion Documents

The Christian community in Zimbabwe refused to be silenced, hence responded to the situation of political violence through several pastoral letters and one discussion documents entitled “God hears the cry of the oppressed”, the (ZCBC) a Zimbabwean Catholic forum for bishops contends that, Zimbabwe was facing a moral crisis demonstrated in the manner in which violence escalated particularly during the re-run of the June 2008 elections. The letter also pointed out how young people have emulated their leaders’ bad culture of habitually engaging in brutal acts and hateful words, racism, corruption, lawlessness, dishonesty, greed and the use of violence in order to hold on to

power, wealth and privileges (ZCBC 2007:6). Importantly, the pastoral letter pointing to the fact that Zimbabwe's political leaders had lost their moral standing expected in guiding the nation by employing violence to sustain power.

An analysis to the violent situation in Zimbabwe was given attention by the churches in Manicaland an ecumenical group of churches in the province of Manicaland. In their analysis to the state of political violence in Zimbabwe, they observed that first, violence is not just physical, but it is also institutional and psychological (2006:169). In their remarks:

Violence thrives because of oppressive and repressive institutions on structures. In other words, Zimbabwe's moral failure was as result of structures wielding power. Second, the Christian forum in Manicaland also commended that peace is the opposite of violence. However, peace to the Christians consists in the permanent efforts not only to disarm violence and hatred but also to build up justice with love (pp169).

The sentiments of the assertion pointing to the building of a fresh culture which promotes true peace and must be viewed as an ongoing process. Third, the compendium of Christian social teaching also reiterated to the culture in people finds it easier to dominate than to convince and to knockdown than convert. Citing the excessive exaltation of one's own tribal pride at the expense of national character (2006:168). These root causes and others needed attention in order to deal with a political culture where violence easily thrives and is celebrated.

The discussion document towards a national vision for Zimbabwe by the churches of Zimbabwe responded to the crisis particularly where violence dominated the political space. As such, they pointed out the following areas. First, they re-emphasised the respect for human life and dignity. Therefore, deliberate and avoidable taking of human life should be regarded as immoral and against the will of God (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006:17). The environment that promotes the wholesome existence of human life is more appealing in terms of modern democracy rather than the use of violence to achieve political ends. Second, the Christian groups also commented on the need to respect other persons regardless of tribe, race, nationality and status (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006:17). This entails that violence is avoided and minimised through positive perceptions towards other persons of different affiliation be it political, religious or tribal. In addition, respect for others also point to humility which is being courteous and respectful thus staying away from the boastful. Third, political violence can also be avoided according to the Christian discursive documents in Zimbabwe (2006) by respecting democratic freedoms. The democratic freedoms are achieved by allowing every member of society to contribute and enjoy the democratic space.

4.7 Murambatsvina (Operation Clean-up)

In midyear 2005, the Zimbabwean government carried out a “clean-up campaign” code named *Murambatsvina* (operation clean-up) which was quite a sensitive and bitter issue in society which left many scars (Vambe 2008:65). The name *Murambatsvina* is Shona word meaning removal/refusal of dirt or filth. Under the government directive, operation clean-up was carried out in most towns and cities and Growth Points throughout the

country. Further, the operation razed down all that was regarded as illegal structures, buildings, tuck-shops and houses. The technical part employed in the operation was based on approved certification from the local council. Failure to produce proper documents of any structure led to the destruction of the property. Apart from the state machinery in form of the riot police, some earthmovers and bulldozers were used to destroy the structures. Importantly, the operation created a crisis on part of the displaced victims. Within a short space of time most people lost properties, some became destitute, homeless and prompted forced migration (Vambe 2008:65). The government justified the move and described the programme as meant to enforce council by-laws in order to put an end to illegal activities in cities. However, Hammer and Raftopolous argued that, some of the government moves pertaining to the massive displacements of people into new settlements were politically oriented and aimed at destroying the strongholds of the opposition MDC party. The indications of the national referendum in 2000 where Zanu PF lost to the National Constitutional Assembly became a watershed of Zimbabwe's political landscape and an awakening on the presence of strong contesters in the political space (2013:10).

Subsequently, *Murambatsvina* brought a trail of negative indicators in the Zimbabwean society. Maposa and Sibanda observed that the operation affected people who were involved and active in the informal sectors particularly located in the light industries, their goods, pushcarts, baskets and chicken troughs were destroyed (2013:133). In addition, the process left several people as destitute and homeless, and amongst them were women and children who became vulnerable due to the operation. More

importantly, *Murambatsvina* also affected the open-air worshippers as it targeted urban spaces which were mostly used by churches within the brand of African Initiated Churches (AICs) (Maposa and Sibanda 2013:134). This move did not spare the churches using open spaces in towns and cities on the ground of good hygiene and lack of proper ablution facilities.

4.7.1 Crisis of Conscience

In response to the *Murambatsvina* (Operation clean up) in Zimbabwe, the churches registered their deep concern on the methods employed, timing and how the operation left many scars of bitterness in creating victims (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006:39). Whereas, the churches in Manicaland province observed the crisis of conscience hence stated:

The voice of conscience calls us to compassion, leaving our security, to reach out to others in pain and poverty. Conscience calls us to civic duty enshrined in the aspirations of the founders of this nation. Some of these operations were that the interests of the people be paramount. We have not listened to our conscience, which is the voice of God with us (2006:20).

Comments can be drawn on the effects of *Murambatsvina* whereas hundreds and thousands of innocent people, women and children lost shelter and were left exposed and vulnerable to the cold winter season. Christian leaders interpreted the move as a crisis of conscience. This came when the society was bound and satisfied in orders without allowing to ask whether they are good or evil (Churches in Manicaland 2006:20). In its application, the term *Murambatsvina* is dehumanising and undermines

the value of persons created in the image of God. The Christian Churches in Zimbabwe in the discussion document also noted with concern the destruction of poor people's shelter and their means of livelihood without proper consideration of alternatives to avert the crisis. The churches in Manicaland commented that the crisis of conscience is viewed where discrimination instruments are implemented by the state contrary to God's intent (2006:165). In other words, *Murambatsvina* in terms of the method and in the eyes of the church was morally wrong. From a hermeneutical perspective, an action that dehumanises people and a system which creates victims in society is indeed against the pillars of liberation as alluded to and compelled in framework, the church with consciousness understands their situations of political, social and theological crises as a "Kairos" moment for themselves (The Kairos Document 1985:10). Lastly, in the need to understand and appreciate the human hand in a crisis thus the internal factors contributed towards the collapse of the social system in creating a form of social violence on citizens by the state.

4.8 Economic Meltdown in Zimbabwe

The crisis years in Zimbabwe from 2000 onwards ushered in a period which Lovemore Togarasei described as the "turbulent years" (2013:100). The economic instability also translates to social transformation of a nation. Drawing from the discussion document by Christians in Zimbabwe, the country's economic situation was in a state of a crisis. The economy was characterised by high levels of unemployment and hyper-inflation with companies reducing production, this development also impacted negatively particularly on the livelihood of families causing a common phenomenon of family

disintegrations (2006:28). Further, the period also experienced a critical shortage of basic commodities particularly on the formal market and severe food insecurity resulting from periodic droughts and disruption of the Agro based economy due to the land redistribution (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006:28). This entailed that the ordinary Zimbabwean faced hardships as they grappled and struggled to make ends meet.

Alois Mlambo observed that at the end of the year 2001, the nation of Zimbabwe was in the throes of an economic meltdown of a higher magnitude and unprecedented proportions (2014:238). Accordingly, the United Nations Economic Commission in Africa (UNECA) described the situation in Zimbabwe as the worst economic crisis ever experienced in its history. Thus, the economy confronted a complicated combination of domestic and external debt causing foreign currency shortages, escalating inflation, negative developments in the economy, translated to job losses, crippling of the agriculture empire in Zimbabwe and eventually the placing of millions of people living below the poverty datum line. Therefore, Zimbabwe as a country suffered a trail of problems ranging from unemployment, lack of descent jobs, poverty and severe decline on social service among other social problems.

4.8.1 Impact of the Crisis on Marginalised Groups

The Zimbabwean crisis, for period 2000 to 2013 had a very negative impact on some special marginalised groups such as people living with disability, people who needed special health care (HIV/AIDS), women, orphans and prisoners. The economic decline and collapse also meant the under performance of the welfare system in the country. Zimbabwe has got a very special attention of the marginalised groups supported by the

welfare system. Some orphans and under privileged children's education depend on social welfare support which was greatly affected by the economic crisis in Zimbabwe. Accordingly, orphans, street children represent one of the greatest challenges of the crisis in Zimbabwe (Chitando 2013:147). The number of children roaming in the street may not be undermined because of the crisis. Importantly, vulnerable children are prone to abuse particularly during the time of crisis, some are raped, and some are subjected to child labour, human trafficking and used as instruments of crime.

The collapse of the health sector and its underperformance also meant the lack of crucial drugs particularly on people living HIV/AIDS during the period under review. To matters worse, some health workers frustrated by the situation migrated to neighbouring countries and overseas partially crippling the health sector. Importantly, people living with chronic ailments such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension, depression and kidney failure need proper healthcare respect and dignity considering the cost attached to caring for those suffering from these ailments. In a situation of crisis and decline of the health sector, these people suffered immensely. Subsequently, the Zimbabwean crisis impacted very negatively to women in the society as an exposed group in a situation of conflict. Some women have gone through various challenges caused by the Zimbabwean crisis such as health care, HIV/Aids, unemployment, land ownership and lack of maternal rights.

4.8.2 Preferential Option for the Marginalised

The lenses of liberation theology in form of the Kairos agenda primarily addresses the plight and struggles facing the marginalised persons in society. Kairos consciousness entails that the church start theologising from the point of humiliation, subjugation, hopelessness, pain brought about by the situation of crisis (Chitando 2009:94). Kairos consciousness also implies the endeavours by ecclesiology to lift the persons in the margin to their rightful position and status hence appreciate their dignity and full humanness. Christian churches in Zimbabwe were not silent about the plight of the impoverished and marginalised because of the situation of crisis and conflict in Zimbabwe on the period under review.

As such, they forwarded, as their response, an item speaking to the situation facing the widows, the poor, orphans, aliens and vulnerable children under the banner “preferential option for the marginalised and impoverished” in (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006:22). This banner meant, firstly, that the church and society pay special attention unconditionally to vulnerable groups such as people living with disability, aliens, and orphans, the poor, homeless and street children. Second, the church urged the community to prioritise proper care for the vulnerable groups. The issue of vulnerable groups to be taken seriously as the first business of the church and society. Third, preferential option for the marginalised and impoverished also meant that the church unequivocally took sides in solidarity and action to this group. Fourth, the church through the discursive document strongly registered the short coming for the social institutions in supporting and proving care for the vulnerable groups (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006:22).in other words our linking of Kairos consciousness and the church’s

response to the Zimbabwean crisis takes cognisance of the fact that the church stand for the justice of the marginalised, impoverished and vulnerable groups in society. Further, a church with Kairos consciousness put on its centre the vulnerable groups, the marginalised and the impoverished.

4.9 The Dynamics of External Interference

Robert Mugabe and his government insisted that the economic crisis in Zimbabwe experienced from the year 2000 onwards was as a result of “The Westerners” (Chitando 2013:92). Further Mugabe argued that the “West”, particularly Britain and her allies, had been on an agenda in terms of interfering in Zimbabwe’s politics (2013:92). In one of his popular political rhetoric, Mugabe scoffed at imperialism saying, “Blair keep your England and I will keep my Zimbabwe” also insisting that, “Zimbabwe will never be a colony again”.

Crucially, as alluded to earlier in the study, a meltdown in Zimbabwe also coincided with the birth of the strongest opposition political party in Zimbabwe MDC led by Morgan Tsvangirai. This, Mugabe and his government accused MDC to be a mere puppet of the “West” and the bid by the imperialist to recolonise Zimbabwe. The dynamic and operations of the ruling party Zanu PF intensified on a campaign involving the vilification of the opposition MDC and labelling it as a puppet of the Western countries (Chitando 2013:92). More importantly, a pattern of systematic violence developed in Zimbabwe particularly targeting white-dominated commercial farms which in a way was a direct attack on the country’s white community (Mlambo 2014:234). These political

manoeuvres dented and severely damaged Zimbabwe's international status and reputation. The attack on white community in Zimbabwe did not go well with most of the Western countries especially within the block of European Union hence criticism mounted on the Zimbabwean government and eventually led to the imposition of Economic Sanctions which impacted negatively on the lives of ordinary Zimbabweans.

4.10 Ecumenical Responses: A Critique

The crisis in Zimbabwe which manifested to a full-blown level from 2000, witnessed the mobilisation of Christian churches in Zimbabwe to set aside their denominational differences and focus on the national challenges. The framework has been greatly informed by the publications from churches in Zimbabwe in response to the crisis such as the Zimbabwe We Want (2006), *The Truth will make you free: A compendium of Christian Social teachings* (2006), pastoral letters from (ZCBC) a catholic forum of bishops, Pastoral letters from the (ZCC) which is an affiliation of protestant churches in Zimbabwe. However, the efforts and engagements to transform the Zimbabwean society by the churches reflected some limitations.

First, the discussion document, especially, *The Zimbabwe we want*, lacked an inclusive approach in its lack of considering the voice of the (AICs) who in this present-day command a very large following. More importantly, we take cognisance of the crucial role that the Christian church has played in the public space, there is also a need to be conscious of an interfaith dialogue. The church at times has purported to be the sole

representative of the religious voice in the public sphere ignoring other religious affiliations such as the African Traditional Religion and Islam.

Second, it is also crucial to observe that the contemporary Christian church is patriarchal dominated, hence the bias to generalise its findings towards the church controlled by male world view. As such, the groupings that constitute the alliance of Christian churches in Zimbabwe (ZCBC), the (ZCC) and (EFZ) are led by male clerical figures which raises some serious suspicion towards patriarchal bias. In other words, the absence of women voices is a cause of concern which may have greatly weakened the Christian responses.

Third, Manyonganise noted that the church leaders have also been accused in terms of their lack of consultative and inclusive process. They begin their diagnosis of the Zimbabwean problem and come up with a document before making consultations to the church on the grassroots (2013:150). This entails that they used top to bottom approach which we noted in our analysis as the lack of a pragmatic formula. Whereas our framework is liberation perspective in that the people on the ground are artisans of their own destiny instead of banking on elitist solutions lacking groundwork consultations.

Fourth, Christian churches in Zimbabwe have been accused, particularly, in their lack of prophetic approach to some contentious and sensitive issues such as the subject of Gukurahundi issue based on the killings of civilians by the state security in the Matabeleland and some parts of Midlands in the 1980s (Manyonganise 2013:151).

Therefore, we also perceive these biases as the lack of consistence by the Christian churches hence the Zimbabwean society is lagging in terms of the processes of national healing and reconciliation. Over and above all, the Christians churches in Zimbabwe have been infiltrated and divided along some partisan ideologies a typical State Theology that has weakened their voices.

4.11 Conclusion

This chapter mainly analysed the Christian response to the Zimbabwean crisis which in our view fully manifested from the year 2000. The framework of the study is a Liberation Theological perspective situated in the Third World Christian discourse, more specifically Kairos Consciousness lenses. In this diagnosis, the chapter has reflected on the relevance of the Christian Churches in the public space that they did not stand and watch this challenging moment in Zimbabwean society. The prophetic actions by the church in the public space also symbolised the consciousness of the Zimbabwean Christianity. Essentially, such an engagement of church may draw some strengths and inadequacies of which, the next chapter focuses on Kairos Consciousness and the African philosophy of Ubuntu as a step towards humanness and Africanness in a nation divided by conflict and crisis.

Chapter 5

Kairos Consciousness and Ubuntu

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on Kairos consciousness and the African philosophy of Ubuntu. The chapter underscores the value of Ubuntu as an African way of building relationships, encourage harmony and interdependence in families, communities and nation at large. Further, the chapter explores avenues on how the Christian churches in Zimbabwe can fully utilise the philosophy of Ubuntu and its principles to restore the moral fibre, dignity, personhood and move towards re-aligning a genuine African ecclesiology. The study also argues that practising Ubuntu for the Christian church means taking a positive direction towards an inclusive and genuine model of ecclesiology in contemporary Zimbabwe.

5.2 Kairos Consciousness and Principles of Ubuntu

Kairos consciousness is a liberationist framework, which implies starting theologising from below where there is pain, wounds, humiliation and taking the issue of the marginalised and impoverished as priority (Boesak 1976:56). The society may lose the sense of integrity and value particularly in the state of chaos as obtained in Zimbabwe during the period under review. Fundamentally, Kairos consciousness strongly connect with Ubuntu in endeavours to restore dignity, respect and Africanness which are core values in our journey to restore the integrity of the Zimbabwean society broken by conflict and crisis. Above all, odds the framework of Kairos consciousness makes an in-

depth analysis on the gaps in ecclesiology particularly after the attainment of political independence hence the appeal to African philosophy of Ubuntu. The African society lost the flavour of Africanness and humanness after embarrassing western Christianity, which in a way militated against African philosophy of Ubuntu. Consciousness also implies going back to the genuine values of what defines Africanness within the context of ecclesiology.

Michael Battle defines Ubuntu as an African way of seeing the world, a unique and intricate web of relationships emphasizing personhood, identity and interdependence among individuals and communities. Further, to those who practice Ubuntu, they come to know themselves as they weave their lives into the lives of others (2009:1). This implies that at the core principle of Ubuntu is how the African society has reached out to other persons and encourages harmony, peace personhood in communities. Prag and Magadla observed that Ubuntu simply means African humanness and putting into practice the principles of dignity, interdependence, respect for others, self-respect, forgiveness, communalism, co-operation and equality (2014:29). In other words, Ubuntu is practical and can be defined by human beings and communities who value the relevancy of relations in their lives.

Tarisayi Chimuka explores the African philosophy of Ubuntu from the Zimbabwe Shona concept and alluded to the notion that the moral virtues of the African people hinge on good conduct *hunhu/Ubuntu* (commendable character) (2010:36). The word *unhu* in Shona means (a good person) is commonly accompanied by the following terms *tsika*

(good human behaviour and dignity) (Dale 1983:233). Further, the aspect of Hunhu/Ubuntu from a Shona view implies the usage of the following key words *kugarisana* (peaceful living together), *kunzwanana* (mutual respect), *mushandira pamwe* (working together or co-operation), *husahwira* (friendship), *umwe* (oneness) (Chimuka 2001:33). The above expressions constitute what one will describe as the African identity, personhood and what makes the society live together in solidarity, respect and value of communalism. Copper and Morel used the term *hunhuism* derived from Hunhu (personhood) which implies the moral attributes, the African inspiration, sense of identity and values regulating the Africans to be who they are (2014:196). This entails that the African society lived in harmony with each other, this sense of respect extended to the environment hence our view of the strong ecological ethics of which the forest and trees grow, wild animals and rivers would flow throughout the year.

Ubuntu means self-identity which one discovers through interdependence. Self-identity is not discovered through capitalizing on the weakness of others. Tutu (1999) expresses the word Ubuntu in this way:

A person with Ubuntu is available and open for others, affirming others, does not feel threatened that others are good and able, for she/he has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that she/he is a greater whole.

This implies that the concept of Ubuntu enriches the complimentary aspect in communities and families. We thus recognise that the success of a person is commutarian more than individualistic. Ubuntu is what makes the African society unique and far contrasting with the western notion of consumerism and materialism. In addition,

Ubuntu deepens the African spirituality that no human is an island (Battle 2009:13). The world we live in has seen families, communities and nations divided apart but Ubuntu teaches and guide the Africans that we need each other. The richness of Ubuntu is uniqueness of the African society were a person is described through the community as Desmond Tutu puts it *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* cited in Battle (2009:2). The equivalence of this statement in Sotho proverb *Motho ke motho ke motho ka batho* meaning one is only human because of others. In other words, a person`s conduct is greatly sanctioned by the community which considers the goodness and satisfaction of one`s behaviour. Therefore, the person`s conduct must be in line with the society`s conception of *unhu/Ubuntu*.

Ubuntu means the wisdom of African people in their diversity maintain dignity and respect regardless of age or sex, more specially the inclusiveness. Battle (2009) observed that:

Ubuntu is an African way of mending and redefining relationships in that what is broken is restored and what is down is uplifted (pp. 10).

In other words, the philosophy of Ubuntu is outreaching. This dimension resonates well with the Christian teachings on how God raised those who were despised and looked down upon in the community. This wisdom draws some link with Jesus` benevolence in (John 6:1-15) where we encountered a historical event built upon a symbolism conveying a message that nothing is wasted and valueless in God`s eyes who has the heart and care even for the broken lives of men. The aspect of Desmond Tutu`s theological insight on Ubuntu is viewed from the idea that human beings are created to

be persons within the community. What makes human beings unique and sacred is that fact that they are created in the image of God (Genesis 3:1). This notion is contrary to western lenses where people are disconnected.

Interdependence in Ubuntu is also what defines the ethics of Jesus hence the parable of the women looking for a lost coin in (Luke: 15) which teaches the aspect of love in that after finding the coin, the women celebrated with neighbours and was not bothered by the cost of celebrating party which is more than the value of the coin found. Yet, where there is love one does not look at the cost, a typical benevolence found in Ubuntu. Meanwhile, the parable teaches from a Christian view that human life is meant to be shared (Battle 2009:28). This reflects the communitarian aspect of the African people and their solidarity in all circumstances hence important functions in society such as funerals is done at a community level.

It was John Mbiti who popularised the importance and centrality of community to the life of the Africans hence the saying “I am because we are”. This entails the significance of community in African life but more importantly instils the sense of belonging and the value of other people. Further, Chitando noted that African theologians elaborated on the theme by illustrating how their communities placed emphasis on the collective, as opposed to the individual (2009:20). This is rather a positive position and progress is extending the scope of the church’s pastoral oversight and relevance in the Third World. Our framework explores that the Zimbabwean ecclesiology is well placed to inculcate the values and virtues of Ubuntu as a model towards embracing the African society. This also implies that the church in a way promotes ownership where the Black

community has the sense of identity that there are part and parcel of the decisions in the church.

5.2.1 Dare Concept: “Consultative Discussion”

This section of the chapter proceeds to unpack the Dare concept in Shona as part of reinforcing *Unhu/Ubuntu*, expressing how families and communities address issues in Zimbabwe. The *dare* word is Shona, *Indaba* or *Inkundla* in Ndebele refers to a forum of dialogue, consultation, consensus and inclusiveness in decision making in order to promote harmony, ownership and peace in family and community (Rukuni 2007:58). Further, the *Dare* or *Indaba* implies a “bottom to top” approach in that the starting point of consultation is done at the family level to community level. Importantly, the foundation and function of *Dare* entails how people live in the African community through collectiveness, sharing wisdom, learning, planning, resolving conflicts and promoting harmony in decisions. As alluded the Dare concept is a “bottom to top” approach as highlighted in our pillars and issues in our community are solved from below meaning family as opposed to imposition from above or higher institutions in the society.

Mandivamba Rukuni noted that the *Dare* system is all about a pathway which enhances “a talk and listen” to others platform. In addition, the Shona proverbial saying *gara dare nedzimhuri nevavakidzani* (sit down, have a consultative discussion with your family, relations and neighbours) comes into fold (2007:130). This implies that the Dare concept is a form of roundtable of discussion and consultations. Importantly, the Dare concept is also used at a higher platform as a means of judiciary process in resolving conflict in community. The *Dare* system is crucial for solving problems through

brainstorming, deep-level consultation until consensus is reached. By the same token, *dare* concept is used as mentoring platform for younger people. This implies that *Dare* is inclusive by its nature in accommodating people of all ages more importantly, as instrumental platform in promoting the African philosophy of *unhu/Ubuntu* (Rukuni, 2007:131).

The *Dare* system is constituted by four principles namely, consensus, dialogue, consultation and inclusivity. The first principle of *Dare* is in the strength of consultation. This entails that every issue cannot simply be confirmed or ratified in the large space before thorough engagements are made. This view clearly expresses the Shona saying that *chengawose manhanga hapana risina mhodzi* (all pumpkins are good) (Pierce, 1983:233). In other words, the concept of Ubuntu/Hunhu means taking all people, be it in family, community and nation, as of utmost value. The value on other people is demonstrated through consulting them so that they become part and parcel of the society. The 21st century Zimbabwean ecclesiology is in a process of re-aligning its perception on marginalised groups in the society which sometimes are left behind such the people living with disabilities, children, singles mothers and orphans.

Second, the *Dare* concept values dialogue, the African community will talk over an issue until they got to a binding and lasting solution. As such, the *dare/Inkundla* was used to sharpen the minds of African people, it was also a grooming ground for technocracy in African skills. The African society is also cherished for its “hands on approach”. Third, the *Dare* view is quite inclusive as one of the outstanding pillars of Ubuntu. From a

Shona wisdom the saying *batsira vamwe* (help others) and *usatarisire vamwe pasi* (do not look down upon others) (Rukuni 2009:99) are crucial in building an inclusive community. This explains that the African society values benevolence, generosity, gratitude, listening to others and ensuring that no one is left behind. Importantly, all persons regardless of their status would fit well into the African community which has a space for the disabled, the widows, orphans, old people and the youths. Over and above, Ubuntu moulds the good personhood in society. Rukuni uses the Shona proverb *moyo murefu* (patience) as a virtue of sacrifice for other people (2009:84). Importantly, the African society is not comfortable in using the common term in English such as the “extended family” in their lenses the phrase is derogatory to family values. Meanwhile, the study has established that the *dare* concept in Shona is their way of life and platform of consultation dialogue inclusive and consensus. In other words, Ubuntu has got the space for every group in the society this dimension enriches the pastoral operation of the church

This chapter shapes the development of the thesis towards an inclusive model in nation building as a preparation for landing ground of this analytical study. The study has indicated an ambivalence that the contemporary Christian Church underwent into a crisis in a process of responding to crisis, thus, placing the church under siege of a struggle within a struggle. Accordingly, the chapter informs, in terms of its framework, that Liberation discourse is at the very centre of the church’s response to the Zimbabwean crisis. The chapter analyses some historical, theological, cultural and religious gaps which have weakened the church’s response and how to overcome such

gaps. The chapter also focuses on how patriarchal epistemology has exclusively marginalised other groups thereby distorting the outlook of the church. Last, the chapter is a review pertaining debates on the Church's thrust towards an inclusive and transformational function in society.

Meanwhile, the *Dare* in Shona is closed to women, yet most crucial decisions in family and community issues are made in this space, in the absence of women. In traditional Shona worldview the concept of *Dare* is important we have the *Dare Remusha* (the family assembly) this gathering is predominantly for males. Further, there is *Dare RaChangamire* (community assembly) whose purpose is to make important decisions for the community but mostly constituted by men. There is also the *Dare RaVapostori* (assembly in the AICs) it is also meant to influence crucial decisions in the running of the church. More importantly, the Zimbabwean armed struggle was directed through the "*Dare rechimurenga*" (the liberation council) crucial decisions were directed on this platform and yet women did not feature much. The *Dare* concept from Shona background, is predominantly patriarchal hence found its way into the church. We thus argue that patriarchal challenges are also internal challenges of the church in terms of weakening its responses to the Zimbabwean crisis thus also establish a lacuna, a gap in developing the thesis based on the Christians' responses to the Zimbabwean crisis from the year 2000-2013.

5.2.2 Eurocentric Ecclesiology and Ubuntu

Eurocentric Christianity greatly contributed in the disintegration of good values in Africa. The erosion of these precious values also meant a strong militation against the African philosophy of Ubuntu/Hunhu. The earliest missionaries in Zimbabwe aimed at displacing African values, culture and religion without considering the merit in Africanness and replacing these values with Christianity. Ubuntu had brought the sense of togetherness in the African society. Missionaries who brought Christianity designated negative labels, judged and dismissed the practices by Africans. Importantly, Christianity came as part and parcel of colonialism which was a system of economic, cultural, social and religious subjugation of the African society by the westerners. Therefore, the system brought discrimination and disorganisation to the African society which by the same token yoked and unveiled the African religious arena Kinoti in Mugambi (1997:11). This unfortunate development in the African community meant the devaluation of the principles of Ubuntu such as communalism, equality, interdependence and respect.

Western missionaries established mission stations as quarantine zones of civilisation of the selected few from the biggest community. Very intensive projects and programs of proselytization were carried out in mission stations such as education, orientation of catechism, baptism, confirmation and discipleship. The adherents to the new western Christianity came inform of separating the African philosophy of Ubuntu. The denominations which became a force of separation thereby dividing the African society into Christian orientation. The planting of Christian denominations in Zimbabwe became an aggressive and divisive tool which impacted negatively to the African philosophy of

Ubuntu particularly the value of *umwe* (oneness) and interdependence in African society (Chimuka 2001:33). The ceremonies and gatherings celebrated by African society such as marriage, birth, circumcision ceremony, graduation into manhood through circumcision ceremonies were overshadowed by Christian affiliations and domination.

Banana argued that that gatherings in African society were meant for sharing and promoting communal cohesion, one was never asked whether you belong to Methodist, Catholic or Anglican (1991:89). In other words, the concept of Christian denominations and mission stations separated and divided Africans from their kinsmen, tribal roots, teachings to traditional ceremonies hence abandoned their traditional attachment. However, Christianity did not totally dismantle the values of Ubuntu because some biblical teachings in form of agape love (1 Corinthians 13) promote relationships and togetherness, thereby drawing some points of connectivity with Ubuntu. Therefore, the avenues of configuration and synchronizing ecclesiology and Ubuntu are quite possible as a step towards a genuine African ecclesiology. Subsequently, there is a crucial point to embrace as a way forward for the contemporary church in Zimbabwe in her efforts to promote Ubuntu to the African society. African people must be allowed to formulate, promote and practice morality in their authentic way according to their interpretation of the gospel of Christ (Mugambi 1997:126). In a way, Christian faith is not divorced from the practicality of African culture otherwise we have many people who have a dual affiliation of faith as Christians in the registers but also affiliated to African Traditional Religion.

5.2.3 Ecclesiology Role in Fostering Ubuntu

Christian churches play a significant role in the contemporary society; one such is to inculcate basic morality which is informed by biblical principles and traditional African values (Kinoti 1994:90). Therefore, the church has a crucial role in fostering Ubuntu as part of an agenda of moral reconstruction. Mugambi defines moral values as a means of regulating behaviour of persons within a specific cultural context (1997:17). The study alluded earlier, to the problem of Missionary Christianity which cannot be easily separated from the operation of the colonial machinery. Mugambi noted that, the missionary and colonial enterprises denigrated African tradition as “barbaric” and “primitive” in contrast to their western values portrayed as “civilized” or “advanced” (1997:17). It is crucial at this juncture to highlight the fact that the colonized communities were subjected to imposition by the colonizers who in this instance were the British. As such, when a society is colonized its culture is invaded hence the colonizer imposes moral values on the subordinate society.

Nevertheless, Kinoti observed the possibility of reconstructing the pastoral responsibilities of the contemporary ecclesiology in Africa to fulfil all specifics for basic morality which are contextually informed by biblical values and traditional African values (1994:90). This entails that the combination of biblical principles and African traditional values strengthens the moral values of a community. Mugambi (1997) commented that:

The African society is lamenting a moral world fallen apart and there is need to rekindle memory of many good morals and cultural values that guided and guarded traditional African societies: (pp. 125).

In other words, the notion raised in the study particularly the reason to inculcate African values to the Christian outfit also enriches the religious outlook of an authentic African Church. There is need for the church in Africa to continuously speak to its African people rather than to be decorated with foreign values, meaningless to African peoples.

The methodology of Kairos Consciousness is also self-critical and self-examining; the moral compliances of the church which weakness its prophetic obligations. Mugambi (1997) highlighted this view in these words:

One of the greatest challenges facing the church in Africa is the need for moral reconstruction. The church`s credibility to point a finger is often questioned. People outside the church including politicians are sceptical about the ability of the church to spearhead moral reform when the church does not act and practice what she preaches (pp. 24).

In other words, the church has been weakened by divisions and double standards which compromises its prophetic voice. To drive the point home, Chitando (2011) described how politicians in Zimbabwe manipulated some of the church leaders in advancing their political agendas. Some notable areas of concern which have weakened the morality of the church is seen in the leadership disputes, divisions, the passing to hold power and character assassination which has been viewed in post-colonial Zimbabwean Christianity. However, this view cannot over emphasised because not all churches have experienced such negative elements.

Accordingly, Gana (1997) located the church in Africa as a well-placed institution to spearhead the thrust for reconstruction hence stated emphatically:

The challenge before the churches as we approach the 21st century is necessity to harness its immense political and moral force in the promotion of justice. In the African context, this dictates direct confrontation with the African ruling classes (pp. 223).

The statement implies that the church is not only obliged to be morally sound, but it is expected to discharge and promote a morally based society where justice is upheld as a virtue. More importantly, the church remains the custodian on moral issues which guides the society including the political space. As noted earlier, the framework continuously informs us of the change towards political establishments has been met by reactions and eventually where politics feel the church is meddling in the political space.

5.3 Ubuntu Consciousness towards Humanness

Generally, Ubuntu is the way of life and how the African society has reached out on others thereby creating space for all persons regardless of their status which implies the humanness or Africanness. As such, Ubuntu is what defines Africanness and humanness that feels for another person and never loses sight of humanity of others (Kaulemu 2011:20). More so, the crisis in Zimbabwe may also be attributed to the lack of humanness and Africanness by some political and economic cartels bent on selfish agendas to enrich themselves while the majority languish in grinding poverty. To be African or humanness means taking consideration of other people around you. There is a negative development that the space in society is shrinking leaving other people behind because of status contrary to the teachings and practices of Ubuntu which

humanness is (Rukuni 2007:59). This study envisions the renaissance of African Ubuntu and the consciousness of ecclesiology to address African challenges holistically. This consciousness entails that the church begins to discover some underlying assumptions and critique traditional bureaucracies which dominate and control the mind-set of a community. Importantly, the new consciousness is how we analyse that the liberation of black people is a matter of urgency which cannot be postponed (Chitando 2007:102). Accordingly, the framework of Kairos Consciousness and Zimbabwean ecclesiology is thus viewed in terms of humanness and Africanness as an urgent liberation agenda which the contemporary Christian Church cannot ignore particularly as a positive step towards the building of a new society.

Essentially, humanness is regardless of tribe, race, gender, age, religion, national origin, economic status, achievement, intelligence. Further, it is a realisation that we are all created by God in the image of God and stand as equals before his eyes (Genesis 1:27). Therefore, humanness implies that every human being is worth of respect and valuable of the very status to equality (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006:17). In addition, Africanness thus takes into consideration the value and respect society give to persons regardless of their status. The Christian Alliance of Churches in Zimbabwe pointed out the need of such considerations in these words:

To respect others means to take seriously their existence and value their thinking, their desires, their goals and give maximum support for them to overcome their disabilities, weaknesses and inabilities (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006:17).

Essentially, humanness and Africanness are also defined by the way of interaction through the freedom of religion, recognition of freedom of thought and the ways in which human persons are treated in the society. More importantly, humanness affirms the worth of all persons in the society. This part of the study thus, reflects on some underlying or positions in the Zimbabwean society which are presented in a wide range from the religious space, political space and social space which have limited the society towards an inclusive outlook. More so, the church has been greatly weakened in her response to contemporary challenges by the internal struggles and the failure to accomplish an inclusive model society even after the attainment of political independence in 1980. We thus, discovered that little has been achieved in terms of empowering women and children. This implies that the contemporary church is still under the dominance of patriarchal influence.

5.3.1 Kairos Consciousness, Ubuntu and the Marginalised Groups

Kairos consciousness takes cognizance of the marginalised and vulnerable groups in context of their plight and care during the Zimbabwean crisis from 2000 to 2013. Therefore, the tenets of Kairos Consciousness imply theologising through the lenses of “ecclesiology from below”, hence some groups in society are marginalised and vulnerable because of their social status. Kairos consciousness appreciates the need to re-align our ecclesiological lenses to the marginalised, impoverished and vulnerable groups so that they are fully recognised as humans in a dignified manner, particularly in the situation of conflict and crisis as obtained in Zimbabwe. A church with Kairos consciousness pays special attention to the marginalised and vulnerable groups such as people living with disabilities, women, youth, widows, people living with HIV/AIDS

children, orphans, aliens, lesbians and gays. Our lenses of Kairos consciousness and some pillars of Zimbabwean ecclesiology are meant to correct the past imbalances which resulted in the marginalisation of certain groups in society. Therefore, the past isolation, segregation and labelling of people living with disabilities, aliens, orphans, women, those living with HIV/AIDS, gays and lesbians must be corrected and taken as a matter of urgency just like any topical challenges which Liberation Theology is grappling with.

Importantly, an ecclesiology with Kairos consciousness explores the possibilities of integrating African values such as Ubuntu in its pastoral responsibilities. This consciousness means going back to our identity of Ubuntu which means inclusiveness, personhood and interdependence. Therefore, the church begins to have fresh eyes and new language pertaining the challenges of marginalised and vulnerable groups in society today. In addition, the contemporary ecclesiology through our liberationist lenses of Kairos consciousness and Ubuntu prioritises personhood, dignity and humanness of all persons created in the image of God (Hunter 2005:493). These views entail that there are certain tags and labels which have been associated and attached to persons in society because of their status hence consciousness is the participation in Christ's mission to liberate humanity from all forms of oppressive structures particularly the situation of crisis because of identity.

Denise Ackermann cited the problem of language which is used to designate people in connection with their status as an obstacle towards inclusivity (1994:204). On countless times and at various for a, Mugabe always referred to gays and lesbians as being "worse than pigs and dogs" (Shoko 2010). This label was perpetuated during the peak

of the crisis when Mugabe was shutting door to what he viewed as western influence in Zimbabwe. As such, people living with disabilities, women, lesbians and gays for years, have been named by the society they live in negative designs instead of using their personhood. This entails that they have been viewed in some cases as objects of sympathy and hence, such an attitude gives a wrong portrayal sending negative pictures to the plight of these people. Thus, consciousness towards the issue of disability and special persons should result in the full equality and participation in structures of society.

Crucially, the tenets of Kairos consciousness imply that the church assumes a prophetic stance in reading the signs of times that the crisis in the society offers opportunity for a self-critique for ecclesiology to align its pastoral responsibilities (Maposa 2013:13). In that vein, Mapuranga argued that the church in Zimbabwe has not given women enough space to participate and access clerical leadership and political offices particularly during the time under review (2013:178). This notion was also embraced by the Christian Churches in Manicaland; a grouping of churches from the Eastern part of Zimbabwe who pointed out the suppression of women in political and religious spaces is also the suppression of the nation since they constitute the majority. This body commented: “In so far as women are disempowered, men are too empowered.”

The framework on ecclesiology and Ubuntu is a self-critical self-examination by the Church in order to be effective and relevant in its discharge in contemporary society in that the women were given space at the *dare/Inkundla* which was more of consultation

and dialogue (Rukuni 2007:58). This implies the African values of Ubuntu have space for every person regardless of their status. Thus, the crisis in Zimbabwe stands as a reminder to realign ecclesiology for all persons. Chitando noted that women have continued to operate from the margins of society thus the expressed (2009:69).

Meanwhile, Kairos consciousness is liberationist, which entails the commitment for ecclesiology to stand on the side of people in a struggle hence HIV/AIDS is part and parcel of the 21st century struggle for the African society. More specifically, the study is keen to establish what the turbulence in form of the Zimbabwean crisis meant to people living with HIV/AIDS and the pastoral obligation of the church to ensure that proper care is given to them. The thrust of the study hinges on the fact that the church is not spared in the agony of HIV/AIDS, in that whatever challenge militating against the society also demands an active response from the church. The issue of HIV/AIDS is also a priority for the Zimbabwean ecclesiology as Jesus commanded the ministry of presence by the church to prisoners and to those who are facing health challenges (Matthew 25:40-43). With the same token, the African philosophy of Ubuntu greatly prioritized the humanness sharing and equality of all persons (Battle 2009:138). More crucially, our methodological discourse pursues the notion that the Prophetic Church is obliged to be on the forefront of these contemporary battles if ever we need to solve the problem of exclusivity. The framework of the study is an ecclesiological model in the 21st century Zimbabwe hence constantly refers to the research question pertaining to the Christian church`s response to contemporary challenges. The Christian church cannot be silent or stand aloof in a neutral position while people`s lives are in danger (Boesak, 2015).

The crisis in Zimbabwe also meant that the church takes a bold stance in looking and caring for people living with HIV/AIDS and other chronic illnesses. The framework of Kairos consciousness means that no persons should be segregated because of health status more so, Ubuntu implies special attention is given to all persons in society. The involvement of the church on HIV/AIDS is liberationist and motivated by several Theological debates. First, by their very nature and mission on the churches are rather orientated in their discharge which is greatly associated with the underprivileged, practising love, compassion and caring for the affected. This entails that the church's thrust and deliberations on issues of HIV/AIDS is greatly informed by Christ who took a liberation demission to fighting the attitude of stigmatization in society (Samiti 2003:178). The implications of such a position in that the church should be on the forefront in fighting HIV/AIDS through the proclamation of the values of compassion and Christian hope. The study also observed that the church in Zimbabwe is a well-established institution which commands a great following ranging from all different strand of church groups such as the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) the Zimbabwean Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC), the Evangelical fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) and the AIC (which may not be properly structured in their groups).

To a large extent, liberation theologies in Africa have also been adult-centred although they include children in their reflections, they remain focused on adult issues (Chitando 2007:157). This framework on ecclesiology in Zimbabwe is raising critical questions pertaining moral and ethical issues of children as one of the vulnerable and excluded groups in society. The significance of children in situations of conflict, their neglect,

abuse and lack of proper caring is considered as a serious challenge. The study emphasises on the plight of children particularly in the context of the crisis in Zimbabwe. From a biblical perspective, children are viewed as a blessing from God hence the constant calls by Christ to bring the children closer to him in these words “let the children come to me, do not hinder them, for such belongs to the kingdom of God” (Matthew 19:14).

Further, the crisis in Zimbabwe has not created a good atmosphere for the proper caring of children because of the situation of conflicts in the nation. In times of political crisis some parents abandoned their children because of the economic and political instabilities to neighbouring countries in a bid to attain “greener pastures”. Their departure meant that their children were left vulnerable and exposed to abuse. There has been an increase of street children in Zimbabwe since the beginning of the political unrest which eventually affected the economy. Notwithstanding the fact that Christian Churches in Zimbabwe have reflected on issues affecting children. The situation of conflict affected children in several ways. Some were left vulnerable and exposed to malnutrition. There has been a negative trend as children dropped out of school due to the lack of school fees. In addition, some children have been subjected to human trafficking and child labour.

5.4 Kairos Agenda, Ubuntu and Poverty

In our alignment of an ecclesiology with Kairos consciousness and Ubuntu, the debate on the issues of poverty is a priority. Considering that liberation theological view on the “underside of history” focused much on the people who are dehumanised and

impoverished (Gutierrez 1983: ix). This framework examines that the notion of poverty is all about the marginalized, destitute, poor orphans, the homeless, those who have been robbed of justice. Sadly, the “underside of history” today constitutes most people in Zimbabwe possibly because of the political, social and economic crisis. In other words, what in our views are the poor people have emerged to be the majority particularly in the situation of crisis in Zimbabwe during the period under review. The issue of poverty can be examined from a social dimension where critical questions are forwarded as to why the subject on poverty is not viewed as the major challenge in contemporary society particularly after the attainment of political independence? Meanwhile the gap between the poor and the rich is becoming too impossible to bridge in the contemporary society. As alluded to in the study, the challenge of poverty is viewed as a structural problem which calls the attention of the policy makers to have a shift in approach in parliamentary debates.

The subject of poverty can also be viewed in terms of lack of Ubuntu this is so because some people in the society have pursued selfish agendas and corruption to enrich themselves leaving others in grinding poverty. As such, Ubuntu principles alluded in this study informs us that a person cannot be in isolation hence one exists because of others. In that vein, Ubuntu is all about creating space for others, valuing the dignity of others, lack of greediness and uplifting others from the underneath, and see them as full humanness. The indication of crisis is viewed considering poor salaries and wages making it possible for the workers to make ends meet. In the lenses of the Peruvian Theologian Gustavo Gutierrez who described the poor in this manner: The life of poor

people in terms of exploitation and hunger, they lack proper care, insufficient health care, decent housing, minimum wages, proper formal education and are employed. In addition, the poor people are prone to abuse of their rights to expression and association are surrendered to the interest of a majority aristocrats (1990:10). Therefore, the following reflections can be viewed considering the contemporary church`s endeavours in grappling with the challenges of poverty in Zimbabwe which calls for a robust approach more than just perusing the Bible. It is also important to note that the situation of poverty concerns the very existence of human beings thus the church must always action it with the senses of urgency rather than business as usual.

5.4.1 Ubuntu and Social Challenges in Zimbabwe

Some social challenges experienced during the crisis time in Zimbabwe strongly militates against the African values of Ubuntu. Essentially, one of the challenging problems for contemporary Zimbabwe society is based on family disintegration and solidarity which may be attributed to the negative impact of poverty hence this is an aggression against Ubuntu. Crucially, our framework is focused on the “views from below”, hence the starting point of theologizing is on the marginalized and poor people (Boesak 2015) which in view are subjected to victims of oppressive structures. In our diagnosis on the problem of poverty the study also discovered the hidden dimensions that it’s a structural problem, a problem which comes as result human negligence (Gutierrez 1990:111). The subject on poverty and its social light of the rampant subhuman conditions in that the poor are sometimes exposed to the point of sacrifice and trapped into the state of misery.

The situation of poverty also calls for the consciousness of the church to order, to be its relevant amid the realities of suffering, a situation that denies the Christ in the world (De Gruchy 2004:155). Thus, the church by virtue of its divine mandate as a symbol of incarnation in the world, that Christ is at work amongst the humans (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006). Further, the impact of poverty is liberationist in view of contemporary church seeking God's divine intervention hence its demand for thorough and urgent attention. The church as alluded to in the "Kairos Document" cannot in any way present a message of harmony and peace when injustice prevails and reigns in the society (1988:). This view is also a biblical dimension in how we perceive the words of Christ saying, "I come that they may have life and have it in abundance" (John 10:10). Accordingly, Gustavo Gutierrez commented that the church will not remain different in the face of social injustice a scenario which has kept majority of people in poverty (1990:236).

The Church has referred to the problem of poverty as a moral imperative of exhibiting highest proportions Churches in Manicaland (2006). In our views and analysis, the Christian block an alliance of churches called upon to present the concept of poverty in a visible, clear and prophetic dimension otherwise, it will take the risk of losing relevance particularly in relation to the gospel of Christ focused on the manifest articulated in (Luke 4:18-19). This dimension entails that the Christian church has no choice but to get involved in social action in its pastoral responsibilities to the poor. The concern before the study is that the poverty is continued to prohibit some negative of not vanishing all that is an indicator that the post-colonial Zimbabwean society has adopted a cycle of oppression from former colonizers in form of British to renew

colonizers of the unethical governments. What is more disturbing in deliberations on poverty is the view how the gap between the rich and poor has emerged.

5.5 Kairos Consciousness and Political Space in Zimbabwe

As a follow up to the research problem that the political space in Zimbabwe shrank during the crisis time with the political elite claiming that the church should not interfere in political and public processes. Importantly, the absence of other groups from the political space such as women and youth particularly in leadership positions calls on for consciousness that such space should be for everyone despite of gender and status. Mapuranga (2013) observed this marginalization in the political domain in Zimbabwe and expressed that:

Generally, politics in Zimbabwe is much associated with males. As such, the issues related to politics such as campaigning for elections, holding political office or becoming a member of parliament are usually identified with the public sphere of life however, in turn related to male participation and dominance (pp. 177).

This entails that women and the youth have not been given equal opportunities of participation in the Political Sphere as compared to their male counterparts. The essence of women in the public sphere particularly in Zimbabwe can be viewed as perpetuated by patriarchal attitudes which are ascribed across most religions in the country. Notwithstanding the fact that their presence in politics can be a mere symbolism of spectators more than active participants. Women and youth in Zimbabwe also constitute the electorate and a fertile ground for men to ascend to power for the change while they remain in the margins of the society.

One can however make a critical analysis on the sentiments raised by Mapuranga that the attitude and mentality to trivialize the role and status of women and youth in the political field is greatly influenced by culture which views the leadership of a women as an abnormal arrangement. Notwithstanding the fact that patriarchal epistemology has also created gaps whereas the courage of brave female leadership in the realm of spirit medium such as Mbuya Nehanda is never in the spotlight. A community with Kairos consciousness is therefore, ready to make the political space inclusive for everyone. The issues raised by Mapuranga (2013) does not only pertain to women and youth but other vulnerable groups alluded earlier in the study such as people living with disabilities, widows, aliens, orphans, people suffering from chronic ailments. More importantly, a church with Kairos consciousness must also set an example by appointing youth and women in its influential position.

5.5.1 Kairos consciousness and Political Tolerance

The study continues to analyse how Christian churches in Zimbabwe advocated for political inclusiveness as the voice of the voiceless. Mogobe (1999) observed the existence of politics through ubuntu which implies, the principles of consensus, oneness, openness and humility and tolerance. Precisely, the political space in Zimbabwe shranked from the year 2000, one political party featured prominently. The ruling Zanu PF party, which claims to have led the liberation struggle dominated the space which was otherwise marked by violence and use of force against the people's will. Henry Okullu commented that some churches in Africa have played a crucial and significant role in promoting democracy by exerting pressure on the government to value and observe the ethics of democracy, this has been achieved through the

conscientisation of the public (1974:5). Notwithstanding the fact that the same incumbent leaders and governments have taken criticism by some churches as gross encroachment into the political space by the church. They have thus, insisted as in the Zimbabwean scenario that church leaders must leave politics to politicians and concentrate on reading the bible, offering prayers and preaching in the pulpit (Chitando, 2002:2). The study thus armed in view of our framework of “Kairos Consciousness” poses critical questions:

First, does the church in Zimbabwe really have a place in the political elite's attitude towards the church hence we ask? Why is the incumbent political elite claim that Christian church has no business in the political sphere? (Chepkwony 2003:244).

Generally, the church in contemporary Zimbabwe is judged through its response to the crisis as espoused in the document, *The Zimbabwe We Want* (2006) and several pastoral letters have become bold enough to constructively criticise the incumbent state of Zimbabwe. This in our view and analysis is a symbol of consciousness for the Zimbabwean Christianity. Further, the coming into the Public Space by the church is also a positive step towards the democracy and in promoting accountability, rule of law, human rights and justice. However, this visibility by the Christian Alliance of churches must be consistent, informed and aligned so that we do not have a one-sided presentation for the church which also introspected on its mission and account even where opposition parties have faulted.

The crisis in Zimbabwe which manifested to a full-blown level from the 2000, witnessed the mobilization of Christian churches in Zimbabwe to set aside their denominational

differences and focus on the national challenges. This framework has been greatly informed by the publications from the churches in Zimbabwe in response to the theologians such as the Zimbabwean We Want (2006), The Truth Will Make You Free: A compendium of Christians social teachings (2006), Pastoral letters from the (ZCBC) a catholic forum of Bishops, Pastoral letters from (ZCC) which an affiliation of protestant churches in Zimbabwe. However, the efforts and engagement to transform the Zimbabwean society by the churches reflected some limitations.

First, the discussion document especially the Zimbabwe we want lacked an inclusive approach when it did not consider the voices of the (AICs) who in this present-day command a very large following. More importantly, we take cognisance of the crucial role that the Christian churches has played in the Public Space, there is need to be conscious of an inter-faith dialogue. The church at times has purported to the sole representative of religious voice in the Public Sphere ignoring other religious affiliations such as the African Traditional Religion and Islam.

Second, it is also crucial to observe that the contemporary Christian church is patriarchally dominated, hence the bias to generalize its findings towards the church of controlled by a male worldview. As such, the grouping that constitutes the Alliance of Christian churches in Zimbabwe the (ZCBC, the ZCC and EFZ) are led by the male clerical figures which raises some serious suspicion towards patriarchal bias. In other words, the absence of women voices is a cause of concern which may have greatly weakened the Christian responses.

Third, Manyonganise noted that the church leaders have also been accused in terms of their lack of consultative and inclusive processes. They begin their diagnosis of the Zimbabwean problem and come up with a document before consultation of the churches on the grassroots (2013:150). This entails that they used the top to bottom approach, which we noted in our analysis as the lack of pragmatic formula whereas our framework is liberation perspective in that the people on the ground are artisans of their own destiny instead of banking on elitist solutions lacking groundwork consultation.

Fourth, Christian Churches in Zimbabwe have been accused particularly in their lack of prophetic approach to some contentious and sensitive issues such as the subject of *Gukurahundi*. The *Gukurahundi* is based on the killings of civilians by the state security in the Matabeleland and some parts of the Midlands in 1980s (Manyonganise 2013:151). Therefore, we also perceive these biases as the lack of consistence by the Christian churches hence the Zimbabwean society nagging behind in terms of the processes of nation healing and reconciliation. Over and above, the Christian churches in Zimbabwe have been affiliated and divided along some partisan ideologies; a typical State Theology that has weakened their voices.

5.6 Ubuntu, Ecclesiology and Development

This section of the chapter continues to explore possibilities of linking Kairos consciousness, Ubuntu and development as a thrust where all persons are valued as equals in the Zimbabwean society broken by crisis and conflict. First, the concept of development and Ubuntu are well connected in terms of the priority to develop the personhood. A society is developed through integrity and honesty hence the lack of

such values implies that development cannot take place. Africa is rich in terms of resources, but it has been let down by the selfish groups who hold economic and political muscle as obtaining in Zimbabwe. Second, the term liberation strongly links with African values in that the rehabilitation and transformation of a society comes from below (sub-version), any change from above is super-version which an imposition (Gutierrez 1983: ix). In other words, Africans have the potential to develop where there is unity of purpose, which is one of the core principles of Ubuntu. Third, an ecclesiology with Kairos consciousness is such a church which endeavours to take people out of poverty and wages war against any struggle which dehumanises (Chitando 2009).

The thrust of development is core foundation of Africanness where empires and great cities such *Dzimbadzamabwe*⁸ (house of stones) or Masvingo were built. Hunger and poverty were strongly fought in context of the Zimbabwean traditional values where grain reserves were stored call *zunde ramambo* meaning nobody starved even in drought years (Ringson 2017) lacks in the society are not the resources appraisal on some action plan and views of how Christian churches can be utilised in addressing the challenges of the poverty eradication in contemporary society particularly the path of recovery in Zimbabwe. However, the study reiterates that our framework embraces the rehabilitation of society. The church is located as an agent of transformation whereas the change comes from the below (sub-version) versus the change from above supervision (Maposa 2014:46). As part of a Christian roadmap, the study inculcates the linkage between liberation and development. In other words, the church in the discourses of the Third World Christian perspective cannot be deliberated outside the

⁸ Dzimbadzamabwe, a name from which the country derives its name

thrust of liberation. However, we also need to implore further to a point where the church embraces development as a corner stone of its pastoral and prophet responsibilities in empowering the marginalised and impoverished majority in Zimbabwe.

Meanwhile, the Christian community in Manicaland, Zimbabwe have already defined the term development from a Liberation Theological perspective in these words: True development is holistic. Thus, it touches all facets of life, the body, mind and soul. Holistic development includes the struggle to remove all that diminishes as at personal level. It also implies unbinding all that binds, crippling poverty because of economic mismanagement, closure of the Public Space because of economic power and control are kept in the hands of a few, inefficiency, in public service, apathy and indifference and fear. True development is therefore a fruitful of respect for human rights, political freedoms, social amenities and transparency in public affairs (2006:103).

The observation by these Christian churches is crucial in making a point of departure, particularly the embracing of materialistic component of development without taking cognisance of human development is limited to structures, machinery, cars, technological advancement and productive industry. The thrust of development as alluded to in the study, begins by addressing the structural questions that means looking at structures and barriers that hinder people from the holistic accomplishment.

Essentially, the wise words of the Pan-African Julius Nyerere are worth of consideration; he says that, “For the truth is that development means the development of people.

Roads, buildings, the increase of crop output, other things of this nature, are not development, they are only tools of development” (Okullu 1984:94). This entails that development encompasses the quality assurance of person in nation and inculcate a positive culture in society. In addition, White and Tiongco commented that development in a way is liberation in action in the sense that it is a successor to colonialism in which some Christian churches also played a crucial role. Technically, the scope of the church in its propagation of liberation allies are quite abroad. Broader in the sense of ensuring the free participation of citizens in all public affairs, respect democratic values and championing human rights.

In our thrust to the theme of development and liberation one embraces Charles Villavicencio`s notion that the church is obliged by demands of biblical tradition, and the exigencies of political reality, consciously to live at the nexus of powerless and power (1992:30). In other words, development is liberation, it is sensible that the system of justice that must prevail. Therefore, this locates the Christian churches in the fore front, morally and theologically resisting the structure have fuelled from the First World which has resulted in the unbalanced economic development of a few at the expense of the majority.

5.6.1 Kairos consciousness and Ecology

The context of Zimbabwean situation where land revolution is on course cannot negate the aspect of ecology. Mogobe (1999:106) argues that stewardship implies caring for the physical nature as well. The absence of such care, the interdependence between physical nature and human beings would be undermined. Crucially, human beings are

part and parcel of the physical nature. Kairos consciousness is thus, important in terms of how the church can engage in a struggle to preserve the environment in the 21st century Zimbabwean society. In addition, ecology is crucial as a thrust of Ubuntu on how African values the environment and interdependence of all species in the world. More so, ecology features predominantly as a crucial liberation agenda particularly in the aspect of land restoration as obtained in Zimbabwe from the year 2000. The thrust of the study is liberationist within which the framework of ecclesiology evaluates from the backdrop to see the world being a better place. Today, the theme of ecology is reflected from a liberation theology perspective from the cry of mother earth under siege or organised brutality to environment under the banner of development. As such, a struggle in the world calls for the awareness and the consciousness does not spare the Christian church which stands as the voice of the voiceless in terms of the environment. Meanwhile, the church connected the liberationist banner across the world saying preferential options for the poor (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006:22), there is also needed to go further and say, “preferential option for the environment”. In other words, this is alarmist to notify the world that there is environmental crisis is also a priority of the church.

Ecology in this study is evaluated from two levels. First, environmental ecology seeks to preserve the quality of life and to keep species created by God from becoming extinct. In addition, it also seeks to redress or correct various excesses of existing worldwide industrialization who’s plundering always entail high ecological cost (Boff cited in Fabella and Sugirtharajah 2000:82). This implies the concern of liberation theology

when the preservation of the earth has been compromised at the expense of industry, profits and modernity. This scenario has resulted in global warming, climate change, cyclones and eventually, a state of poverty particularly to the black communities which has been burdened by the aftermath of colonialism. Second, is the socio-ecology the natural environment, human beings and society located within nature? Social ecology looks at relationships that society develop towards nature (Boff 2000:81). This dimension strongly advocates for a form of development which provides for basic needs of human beings without sacrificing the natural environment. This implies that the approach is rather futuristic in conserving the natural environment for use by future generations.

There is need for awareness action of recovery towards the values of creation which biblically states that “God created the earth and was pleased with what he saw” (Genesis 1:12). Boff observed that there is need for the church to fight a struggle to defend the environment and the conservation of living species (1985:132). Thus, the disappearance of forests and the brutality on species, the settlement on wetlands and the propensity for profits by industrialists has endangered the earth and caused untold environmental devastations. As such, the environmental crisis is as good as any crisis the church is grappling with. The concerns for the environment and the theme of ecology should be the centre on stewardship whose custodian has been placed on the hands of man by God right from the creation story (Genesis 2:8-15). However, the land revolution in Zimbabwe is analysed on how the new settlers conserve the environment.

Maposa noted that some forests were created to create new homes, they can be viewed as gross injustice to the environment.

5.7 Re-aligning the Church to Kairos Agenda

The framework of Kairos consciousness has raised some critical tenets such as contextuality, criticality, change and cultural consciousness as a step towards attaining a genuine and authentic African ecclesiology which addresses the socio-cultural and spiritual needs of the people in Zimbabwe. Further, the contemporary Christian church can synchronise the African philosophy of Ubuntu to buttress its pastoral responsibility since “no one should be left” of the African ecclesiology which is quite inclusive. As alluded, this thesis is contributing to a renewed debate on how the contemporary Christian church can be orientated towards the transformational function in society. For the church to be able to deal realistically with the contemporary challenges in Zimbabwean context, it must have realigned and renewed itself, in a new form which addresses the concerns and questions of the contemporary society. David Parry observed that there has been a Theological discord in the Church, particularly the mainline churches, which prompted the rise of the Africa Initiated Churches did not bother to respond to the demands and needs of the Africans (1997:222). One such common claim was that the Western Christianity comprising of the churches such as Methodist, Anglican, Lutheran and the Reformed church are far removed in considering the cultural thesis. On the other hand, these churches are Western churches merely planted on the African Soil.

The AICs have greatly raised consciousness in their quest for an African church which holistically addresses the spiritual needs for the Africans. Maposa and Sibanda also

noted that religious factors were the basic root which saw the Africans reacting negatively against the Missionary Christianity their basic practices. However, Dartey critiqued the reaction by some African churches as the causes of fragmented outlook of the different faces of the churches (1997:223).

Most striking view in our deliberation is that, the church in Africa was invented by Western European institutions and ideologies (Dartey 1997:223), however, these ideologies have negatively continued to shape the future of the church as well as the state within the realm of the Westernisation. This entails that the future and control of the church is still tied to the western ecclesiological thinking and beliefs. This thesis raises a point that it's high time for the church in Africa to focus on the issues of identity which is a critical pillar of the African philosophy of Ubuntu. It is through this approach and process that church in Zimbabwe can meaningfully and relevantly attend to the question and challenges facing the Zimbabwean society today. Thus, the need to conceptualize the aim and praxis of the church`s mission in Zimbabwe today. Therefore, our methodology provides a broad-based liberationist discourse that inculcates the challenging issues as highlighted in the Zimbabwe`s experience of failed state, civil strife, political chaos, bad governance and economic deterioration.

The seriousness to realign the church`s approach to contemporary issues also emanates on the view that the inherited Eurocentric ecclesiology was more focused on the development of personal faith that shielded away the church from economic and political issues that greatly affected the lives of people. In a nutshell, the re-aligning of

the contemporary ecclesiology in Zimbabwe enables the Christian bodies see their pastoral responsibility through the eyes of Ubuntu which makes the Christian voice much stronger and communal. More importantly, the churches become located strategic on the platform to respond to question being asked daily by the contemporary society. The study reiterates on the core values of pillars that liberation is indeed when people fully become masters of their own destiny. Over and above all odds, the Zimbabwean ecclesiology re-align strongly connected to what Alan Boesak viewed as the tenets of Kairos consciousness such as liberation, hermeneutic in reading the bible as a book of liberation, contextuality in recognizing the African values and discernment in reading the signs of times. Thus, it aligns to the Kairos agenda as the church of the vulnerable and marginalised groups such an ecclesiology which views its priority in fighting human emancipation and lifting the livelihood of the impoverished.

5.8 Conclusion

The chapter is an anchor in shaping the study towards the new consciousness in form of Liberation Theology's urgent task of taking the theme of Ubuntu seriously. Further, the chapter noted the possibilities of integrating Ubuntu into the church to relevantly reinforce its pastoral responsibilities. As such, the church with Kairos consciousness opens its space unconditionally to the marginalised and vulnerable groups such as aliens' orphans, widows, people living with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS and other chronic ailments. Fundamentally, the chapter underscored the fact that the Zimbabwean model of ecclesiology should be focused on the restoration and healing of a broken society. Hence, Ubuntu, promotes dignity integrity, humanness Africanness,

unity of purpose and a sense of belonging to a family called Zimbabwe. This insight is further articulated in the following chapter on conclusion and way forward of the study.

Chapter 6

Evaluation, Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter executes the findings of the study and articulating recommendations aligned to Kairos consciousness and ecclesiology in Zimbabwean context. Subsequently, the chapter provides an evaluation of the entire research based on Christian church responses to the Zimbabwean crisis from the year 2000. The framework of the study has been articulated through the lenses of Kairos Consciousness raising and exploring some critical liberationist tenets such as liberation, hermeneutic of liberation, discernment and contextuality. These liberationist tenets acted as tools for analysing the Zimbabwean ecclesiological landscape and how the Christian church responded to the crucial issues in Zimbabwe.

6.2 Evaluation on Findings of the Study

Crucially, this part of the chapter reflects on the findings of the study. Some of the key landmarks of the study are the need to re-align our ecclesiologies to current contextual challenges in Zimbabwe, such as land restoration, justice, and liberation of marginalised groups, strengthening the African values, culture of violence and addressing historical imbalances. The research was categorically based on ecclesiology and its relevancy in addressing and solving the crisis in Zimbabwe through the lenses of Kairos consciousness. The research problem has been navigated basing on political elite's claim that the church must not interfere with the public space and political processes in

Zimbabwe. Further, the research self-critiqued the prophetic role of the Christian church in standing for justice of the marginalised and impoverished people in Zimbabwe against the backdrop of the emergence of black elites, holding power and control at the expense of the majority. In other words, a prophetic ecclesiology cannot put on sale the price of justice by endorsing the status-quo when people's lives are subjected to marginalisation and grinding poverty.

6.2.1 Land Restoration: A Revolution Hijacked by Elites

The navigation by the study reflected that the Third Chimurenga or Land restoration in Zimbabwe traced from the liberation struggle in the 1970s is a genuine liberationist enterprise in addressing historical imbalances. More so, Third Chimurenga is a form of empowerment in redistributing land to the impoverished landless. However, this post-liberation nationalism turned sour against the masses and benefitted the few political and economic elite. In other words, there was a manipulation of indigenous spirituality pertaining the land reform programme by the political and economic elites as an instrument for the scramble of economic resources (Sachikonye 2011:28). In fact, the political and economic elite utilised the Chimurenga project to enrich themselves at the expense of the marginalised and impoverished majority. Unfortunately, the strategy of coercive accumulation of wealth brought a serious decline in the performance of agriculture in that some of the farms expropriated from the year 2000 have not been productively utilized.

The Chimurenga project did not end in the agriculture sector but also occurred in some points of economic interest in which property and economic resources were acquired using political muscle. There is a strong critique from the finding that the ordinary Zimbabweans have not gained much in terms of livelihood and standards of living particularly after the Third Chimurenga. Wealth has remained in the hands of the few black elites while the majority languish in grinding poverty. More so, the black government has continued to use state machinery to suppress the impoverished. Notwithstanding the fact that the Third Chimurenga (land redistribution) was inevitable. The land enterprise has created fresh challenges of multi-farm ownership by the powerful political elite at the expense of poor citizens languishing in dry areas which created a historical imbalance this time not within the context of a white government but a black government. Therefore, there is need to re-champion the land issue in a credible, transparent and fair distribution in order to benefit the majority impoverished Zimbabweans.

6.2.2 Kairos Consciousness and Justice

Kairos consciousness grapples with the agenda of justice more specifically an ecclesiological approach from below, the persons who are denied dignity because of the situation of oppression. As alluded in the tenets of Kairos consciousness, the church equivocally takes a bold stance to be on side of the impoverished and oppressed. The radar of this research brings into fold, manifestations that the Zimbabwean society is grappling with colonial injustices brought by the colonising process, neo-colonialism and (mis)governance by the state in post-independent Zimbabwe. However, the attainment of political independence in 1980 reveals that the new government continued with the

malpractices of injustice just as their colonial predecessors. This implies that the crisis in Zimbabwe is also a clear indication of lack of justice by the state custodians and the elite cartel in society. Crucially, in this study, justice has been viewed in the context that poor, the widows, marginalised, orphans, vulnerable women, the landless, the unemployed, the homeless and impoverished becomes masters of their own destiny.

The church has been viewed in our framework as the centre and fountain of justice in helping the community fully understand what God is doing and the value of life. This study reflected on the notion that the dignity and respect of people's lives is not attainable where justice does not prevail. Some of the government activities cited in the study such as Operation Murambatsvina carried out in year 2005 where citizens were left homeless when the government demolished illegal structures in a cold winter was tantamount to infringement on the right to shelter by the state. This implies violence by political elites on ordinary citizens using state apparatus. The church generated pastoral letters bravely condemning the acts of violence in Zimbabwe. More so, there has been several calls by the Christian church for the government to value life of its citizens as God's gift and sacred. Over and above, the contested land issue in Zimbabwe has been deliberated as the lack of justice by the colonial regime and partly on the ruling political elite.

6.2.3 The Culture of Violence

One of the crucial objectives of this study was to interrogate the impact of the crisis to the Zimbabwean society. The findings of the study noted that political violence has developed into a political culture which has been justified as a tool for achieving political

and economic power. Importantly, political violence is also driven by powerful sources in society, the elite politically and economically for materialistic mileage at the expense of the depreciating Zimbabwean society. In Zimbabwe, political violence is now almost a culture used for compulsory submission during the democratisation process. The study also noted that the culture of violence is traced back from the colonial legacy which the Rhodesian regime of Ian Smith employed to suppress the blacks in their fight for liberation.

However, the lowering of the Union Jack (colonial flag) in 1980 did not end the culture of violence but instead ushered in election, political and tribally related violence. As a matter of fact, the period from the year 2000 presented some unfavourable events linked to the culture of political violence in post-colonial Zimbabwe. The study unveiled that the black political leaders have failed to break with the past in using violence as means of attaining political and economic goals. As such, violence has been moralized as a culture in Zimbabwe. As much as the society may have grievances and differences, the concept of non-violence is preferable to avoid loss of precious lives through violence.

6.2.4 The Broken Zimbabwean Nation

The lenses of Kairos consciousness have articulated a theological discourse starting where there is pain and wounds. One of the crucial research findings of the study is that the situation of conflict and crisis in Zimbabwe has left deep scars, deep wounds and a broken society. Political impasse and deadlocks as obtained in Zimbabwe for the period 2000 to 2013 sharply divided the nation. Therefore, the church is ministering in a society broken and divided by conflict. One of the crucial roles of the church is to be prophetic

in order to bring the society of Zimbabwe out of the depth of despair and hopelessness into a new era of prosperity and hope. In other words, Kairos consciousness is keen to confront and examine the implications of crisis and conflict which dehumanizes the society.

As indicated in our framework, Kairos consciousness also means a self-critique for the Christian church to align its pastoral and prophetic responsibilities towards fresh socio-economic and political challenges in post-independent era. The demise of colonial rule ushered in new challenges of political aggrandizement, propaganda and oppression of people by political dictators. As such, the Zimbabwean crisis stand as an example of how some African nations have not enjoyed the fruits of liberation. There is however needed to bring fresh theological insights responding to post-colonial communities broken by conflict and crisis.

6.2.5 The Efficacy of Christian Groupings

The significance and efficacy of Christian churches coming together to provide solutions to the Zimbabwean crisis is viewed in connection with the Kairos agenda when the church sides with the marginalised and impoverished. Importantly, as alluded in our research problem that the political elite in Zimbabwe relegated the voice of the church from issues affecting the citizens. However, the Christian fraternity spoke boldly challenging political idolatry in Zimbabwe during the crisis time. The crisis in Zimbabwe brought together all fraternal Christian groupings under the banner of ecumenism. Importantly, the battle for restoration of Zimbabwe was fought by the church as a united front most commonly featuring the banner Heads of Christian Denominations. As a way forward, the study embraced the ecumenical trajectory with a view that the church is the

body of Christ, a community of believers, persons of common faith who are gathered together in all their coming together is a roadmap towards a renewed society (Mugambi 1997:234).

The framework of study observed the coming together of all Christian bodies as a symbol a new prophetic ecclesiology model whereby the Zimbabwean Christian Churches, the ecumenical agenda in Zimbabwe can be strengthened through first, embracing a theological perspective of inclusion. Thus, Christian churches find each other particularly in their focus towards nation building. Second, the need for the ecumenical agenda oriented beyond the denominational traditions as a framework towards the church for all persons in conjunction with the mantra by Jesus Christ “come that all may be united (John 17:21).

6.2.6 Economic Challenges

The crisis situation in Zimbabwe during the period 2000 to 2013 brought serious economic challenges to the majority of citizens. The economic landscape once again, resembled the colonial-styled, where the minority elite enjoy economic privileges at the expense of the marginalised majority. During the period under review, the nation of Zimbabwe went through an economic crisis which dampened the spirit of workers who crossed the border to neighbouring countries such as South Africa, Botswana and Namibia in search of greener pastures leaving their families behind. This migration caused family disintegration and an increase in vulnerable children onto the streets. This economic crisis was characterised by high inflation, cash shortages, unemployment, increasing prices of basic commodities going beyond the reach of many. These hardships impacted negatively, particularly, on the livelihoods of families

and these challenges did not spare the church. More importantly, there is need to draw lessons from the situation in Zimbabwe that the political impasse will always impact negatively on the economic space of a nation. There is need for a theological roadmap to handle a nation suffering from economic crisis such as in Zimbabwe.

6.3 Conclusion and Way Forward

This part of the study provides recommendations strongly linking ecclesiological framework grounded in Kairos Consciousness on lessons learnt from the Zimbabwean crisis period from 2000 to 2013. The recommendations reflect on how consciousness can be fleshed out in relation to critical areas of contemporary life in Zimbabwe such as land restoration, non-violence, healing, conflict resolution, mediation, re-aligning ecclesiology and Ubuntu. These reflections and insights are also articulated as a roadmap for the Christian church to articulate and align its pastoral and prophetic responsibilities accordingly to the demands in the 21st century Zimbabwean society.

6.3.1 Land Restoration and Kairos Agenda

In view of the liberationist tenets of Kairos consciousness, it is crucial that the church inculcates a credible framework and a theological approach “from below”, be instituted to tackle the contentious land issue in Zimbabwe. First, this approach should be informed by the significance of land as a tool for empowering the impoverished and marginalised Zimbabweans as a priority of an independent state. Second, the issue of land should be approached in a holistic way; considering that all humans are equal before the presence of God despite gender, race, tribal background, political affiliation, religious affiliation and social status. In other words, everyone should benefit from the land because it is a crucial inheritance and source of livelihood. Third, the issue of land

must bring into fold the aspect of inclusivity, in that all stakeholders are crucial in this consideration hence the issue should not be left to politicians as custodians of land. Our Kairos consciousness means bold voices to ensure that the dignity, humanness and respect is given to all persons who are created in the image of God hence the situation of human beings is a priority for black liberation theology and ecclesiology.

6.3.2 Ecclesiology with Kairos Consciousness

The Zimbabwean issue calls for a church with Kairos consciousness whose starting point of theological roadmap is always on the wounds, subjugation, pain, humiliation and any obstacles which dehumanizes people to the peripheral of the society. The main thrust of the church is to bring the marginalised groups to the centre and first business of its existence. First, a church with Kairos Consciousness is equipped in terms of political literacy and theological roadmap, to inculcate positive values, transform the political culture, teach the society to respect different political opinion. Further, the church equips society in peace building and make them aware of political processes. Second, a church with Kairos Consciousness has the courage to confront the political sphere, it does not watch events happening without contribution, praise where good is done and correct where wrong is done. Third, cultural consciousness also self-introspection by the ecclesiology and a self-critique to align pastoral and prophetic responsibility towards human alleviation and fighting oppression and poverty. Fourth, a church with Kairos consciousness provides moral guidance to society in order to promote dignity and respect of all persons. The Zimbabwean ecclesiology is obliged to align its pastoral responsibility to Kairos consciousness.

6.3.3 Aligning African Values and Ecclesiology

One of the objectives of the study was to integrate the church and African values in order to restore the moral fibre, dignity and personhood in a society divided by conflict and crisis. Integrating African values in church means taking a positive direction towards inclusive and genuine model of African ecclesiology in Zimbabwe. This approach closes the gap between ecclesiology and African values. Hence, the African philosophy of Ubuntu addresses the problem of moral decadence in the Zimbabwean society indicated through greediness, selfishness and lack of respect for human life. The violence in Zimbabwe is rather a selfish agenda to control resources by the powerful political elite which has just emulated what the colonial regime used to do which is an aggression against the African philosophy of Ubuntu. In our analysis, the study noted how missionary Christianity from the west denigrated the African philosophy of Ubuntu in favour of Eurocentric teachings. Further, Eurocentric ecclesiology brought by Western missionaries strongly militated against the national cohesion within the African community and eventually the eroding of precious values of Ubuntu. The African philosophy of Ubuntu promoted good conduct and good behaviour in the society. In other words, Ubuntu means interdependence, respect, humanness, personhood and dignity. More so, the underlying factor in Ubuntu is that a person is never an island you live your life in a community.

6.3.4 Kairos Consciousness, Conflict Resolution and Mediation

Critical lessons are learnt from the Zimbabwean crisis which manifested from the year 2000 to 2013 that consciousness also means inculcating a responsive theology on conflict resolution and mediation. The situation of crisis is also interpreted as emanating from conflict in the society which entails a state of disagreement, stalemate, deadlock and standstill between crucial parties in society. This study articulates the mediation and conflict resolution as an important Kairos agenda by the Zimbabwean ecclesiology. These insights mean the church must extend its skills of mediation and conflict resolution over and above the area of concentration on prayers and election monitoring. To elaborate further, the church has the potential to make differing parties come together. By virtue of its Theological mandate, the church is the “conscience of the society” that ensures peace and harmony prevails in context of the Zimbabwean situation. In our analysis, the chapter forward the notion that the role of the churches in Zimbabwe should not be limited to mediation in an event of deadlock but ensure that issues which bring instability and divisions are dealt with to prevent further damage. It is also crucial to take note that the church also gives direction to society divided by conflict.

6.3.5 Kairos Consciousness and Non-violence

Some lessons learnt from the study is how the society of Zimbabwe has struggled to break the culture of violence. However, the lenses of Kairos consciousness also buttress the fact that a nation can achieve its goals and solve political, social and economic issues through non-violence. In other words, the consciousness model of ecclesiology informs that life is sacred and once given gift from God hence the loss of

precious life is unacceptable particularly to serve the objectives of the selfish cartels. Thus, this study strongly forwards a consciousness towards a theology of non-violence in Zimbabwe. Firstly, non-violence is linked to peace and love, hence rejects the use of violence in any circumstance to achieve an objective. Second, nonviolence is also ethically based on the principle of love demonstrated by Jesus Christ and that life is sacred and a gift from God. The ethical principle of nonviolence therefore advocates for peace-making in a world engulfed in violence. Third, nonviolence is also grounded in advocating for the liberation of the poor, the peripheral in the society. This has been demonstrated by Jesus' concern for the poor on the sermon on the mountain (Mathew 5). The theology of nonviolence is also transformative in its character, calls for genuine peace, based on justice and for the poor on earth. Fourth, nonviolence calls for the dismantling of structure that influence injustice in the society in a peaceful way. That means nonviolence teaches on the principle of not causing injury or damage to other persons.

6.3.6 Kairos Consciousness and Interfaith Collaboration

The study has observed that the consciousness of the Christian Churches is based on their spirituality towards solidarity and cohesion thus the Zimbabwean situation also requires a common voice. There is however a great potential to establish Christian networks and interfaith alliances working together and having a strong voice in their advocacy for justice in society. This collaboration is possible because faith-based organisations are not competitors in the Public Space but their complementary institutions who are meant to provide checks and balances as the conscience of the society. Therefore, there is a great potential of expanding the prophetic voice through

interfaith collaboration which maybe constituted by other religious fraternal such as Islam, African Traditional Religion, Hinduism and others. However, there is need to advance such a collaboration to another level in form of collaboration of Christian denominations and other faith-based organisations as a way of addressing the socio-economic and political problems in Zimbabwe. This avenue is necessary since the crisis in Zimbabwe affects the entire community despite of one's faith affiliation.

6.3.7 Consciousness of Marginalised Groups

The Kairos agenda also means the consciousness for ecclesiology in Zimbabwe to align relevantly with the excluded and marginalised groups. Meanwhile, the term liberation has been one of the key tenets of Kairos consciousness in this study. This implies that persons regardless of their status, background and gender they are priority in the liberation agenda of the church. Consciousness also implies that persons limited by their marginality become artisans and masters of their own destiny within the context of Zimbabwe. This framework has viewed the model of the church in Zimbabwe beyond the ecclesiastical traditions and societal boundaries so that it is able to minister effectively in a broken society. Learning from the findings by this research thesis, the marginalised groups in the society of Zimbabwe such as the orphans, women, lesbians and gays, street children and others must also be taken as a priority agenda in our ecclesiological theology. These marginalised groups must also be theologized as the first business of the church and not as any other business. This must be reflected in the vision and mission of the church. More so, the church structures need to be re-aligned in order to minister relevantly to these groups spiritually, morally, socially and reflecting on building structures welcoming people with disabilities. Over and above,

representation of marginalised groups in church spaces, political spaces and economical spaces is quite crucial and a Kairos agenda for the church.

6.4 Concluding Reflections

This final insight of the research study based on Christian response to the Zimbabwean crisis from the year 2000 to 2013 articulated through the liberationist methodology of Kairos consciousness articulated by Allan Boesak. This research framework is an appraisal on the Zimbabwean model of ecclesiology's response to the situation of crisis and conflict in Zimbabwe. Kairos consciousness implies the liberationist framework of ecclesiology from below when the church becomes an interlocutor and articulator identified with the marginalised, impoverished, vulnerable groups and non-persons. Further, the non-persons and marginalised occupies the epistemological space in this ecclesiological discourse. The thrust of this thesis was based on an analysis of the Zimbabwean ecclesiological model in addressing and solving the situation of crisis and conflict. Precisely, a crucial lesson learnt from the research is that there is need to re-align the church in Zimbabwe to the Kairos agenda speaking to the situation on the ground in terms of providing solutions to a broken society divided by crisis and conflict. In addition, the model of ecclesiology in Zimbabwe needs to re-align in terms of integrating the African values of Ubuntu in its pastoral responsibilities in order to restore the dignity, moral value and personhood of the Zimbabwean society. Ubuntu is a positive step towards the formation of a model of ecclesiology which is inclusive and African. A church with Kairos consciousness prioritises the situation of the marginalised, vulnerable groups and the impoverished at the centre of its pastoral and prophetic responsibilities. This ecclesiology from below inculcates hermeneutic skills to deal with

conflict resolution and mediation. An ecclesiology with Kairos consciousness is prophetic in terms of promoting justice in the society hence pays attention to contemporary challenges where the marginalised are oppressed in context of crisis of governance. More so, Kairos consciousness is the awareness that the church can challenge social ills such as corruption, the plunder of national resources and looting of public resources which are meant to benefit the vulnerable, marginalised and the impoverished. An ecclesiology with Kairos consciousness is a church of the people found where there are wounds, pain humiliation, disaster and challenges.

References

- Appiah-Kubi, K.1981. *Man Cures, God Heals*, Friendship Press: New York,
- Auret, M. 2009. *From Liberator to Dictator: An Insider's Account of Robert Mugabe's Descent into Tyranny*, Sandton: KMM Publishing.
- Bakare, S.1993. *My Right to Land: In the Bible and In Zimbabwe: A Theology of Land In Zimbabwe*. Harare, Zimbabwe Council of Churches.
- Bakare, S. 2008. *Violence and Intimidation in Zimbabwe Electoral Politics*. Unknown.
- Banana, C.S.1989. *Turmoil and Tenacity: Zimbabwe 1890-1990*. Harare, College Press.
- Banana, C.S.1991. *A Century of Methodism in Zimbabwe (1891-1991)*.
- Banana, C.S.1996. *Politics of Repression and Resistance*, Gweru: Mambo Press.
- Banana, C.S.1996. *The Church and the Struggle for Zimbabwe*, Gweru: Mambo Press.
- Barth, K.1954. *Against the Stream*. London, Oxford University Press.
- Barth, K.1960. *The Epistle to the Romans*. London, Oxford University Press.
- Battle, M. 1997. *The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu*. Cleveland: Pilgrim.
- Bediako, K.2004. *Jesus and the Gospel of Africa: History and Experience*, Mary Knoll: Orbis.
- Boesak, A.A.1970. *Farewell to Innocence: A Socio-Ethical Study of Black Theology And Black Power*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.
- Boesak, A. A.1979. *The Finger of God: Sermons on Faith and Socio-Political Responsibility*. Johannesburg, Raven Press.
- Boesak, A. A.1987. *Comfort and Protest Reflections on Apocalypse of John At Patmos*: Edinburg, St Andrews Press.
- Boesak, A.A.2005. *The Tenderness of Conscience: African Renaissance and The Spirituality of Politics*, Stellenbosch, Sun Press.
- Boesak, A. A.2009. *Running with Horses: Reflections of an Accidental Politician*. Cape Town, Joho.
- Boesak, A.2011. *Kairos Consciousness*: Posted by Kairos Southern Africa 25 March 2011.
- Boesak, A. *The Fire Within, Sermons from the Edge of Exile*, Cape Town: New World Foundation.
- Boesak, A, A.2015. *Kairos and Global Apartheid*. New York, Palgrave.
- Boesak, A. A.2015. *Kairos, Crisis and Global Apartheid: The Challenge to Romantic Resistance*. New York, Palgrave MacMillan.
- Boesak, A. A. 2017. *Pharaohs on Both Sides of the Blood-Red Waters: Prophetic Critique on Empire, Resistance, Justice and the Power of Hopeful Sizwe Eugene*. Cascade Books.
- Boff, L. & Elizondo, V. 1985. *Ecology and Poverty*: Sempress, London.
- Boff, L. 1986. *Ecclesiogenesis*: Maryknoll, London.
- Boff, L. 1989. *Faith on the Edge: Religion and Marginalised Existence*: Harper & Row Publishers, New York.
- Bond, P. 2005. *Elite Transition: From Apartheid to Neo-Liberalism in South Africa*. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu Natal Press.
- Bonino, J. 1983. *Towards A Christian Political Ethics*, Philadelphia: Fortress.
- Bonhoeffer, D. 1960. *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York: McMillan.

- Brown, R. 1978. *Theology in a New Key*. Westminster Press, Philadelphia.
- Buhlmann, W. 1976. *The Coming of the Third Church: An Analysis of the Present And Future of the Church*, St Paul Publications. Liverpool.
- Chimuka, T. A. 2001. *Ethics among the Shona*, Department of Religious Studies, Classics and Philosophy, University of Zimbabwe.
- Chitando, E. 2002. *Down with the Devil, Forward with Christ! A Study of the Interface Between Religious and Political Discourses in Zimbabwe*. African Sociological View from Within, 77-111. Auckland Park.
- Chitando, E. 2005. *In the Beginning Was the Land: The Appropriation of Religious Themes in Political Discourses in Zimbabwe, Africa*. Volume 75(2), 220-239.
- Chitando, E. 2009. *Troubled but Not Destroyed: African Theology in Dialogue with HIV And Aids*, Geneva: WCC Publications.
- Chitando, E. 2013. *Prayers and Players: Religion and Politics in Zimbabwe*, Harare: Sapes Books.
- Chitando, E. 2014. *Prayers, Politics and Peace: The Church's Role in Zimbabwe Crisis*.
- Churches in Manicaland. 2006. *The Truth Will Make You Free: A Compendium Of Christian Social Teachings*, Mutare. Churches in Manicaland.
- Clarke, B. & Linzey, A. 1996. *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology and Society*.
- Cone, J. 1969. *Black Theology and Power*, Minneapolis: Seabury.
- Cone, J. 1975. *God of the Oppressed*: Harper, San Francisco.
- Cone, J. 1986. *A Black Theology of Liberation*. Maryknoll, Orbis Books.
- Cone, J. 1997. *God of the Oppressed*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis.
- Cone, F. 1993. *Black Theology and The Black Church: Where Do We Go from Here?* Orbis Books Maryknoll, New York.
- Cwlekowski, S. 1988. *The Beginning of the Church*: Paulist Press, New York.
- Dale, O. 1985. *Duramazwi: A Basic Shona-English Dictionary*. Mambo Press: Gweru.
- De Gruchy, J. & Villa-Vicencio. C. 1985. *Apartheid Is A Heresy*. Cape Town, Grand Rapids.
- De Gruchy, J. 2014. *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, Suffolk: SCM Press.
- Dickens, A. 1969. *The Counter Reformation: History of European Civilisation*: Library Of Congress Catalogue, Rome.
- Dussel, E. 1996. *The Underside of Modernity*, New York: Humanity Books.
- Fabella, V. & Sugirtharajah. 2000. *Dictionary of Third World Theologies*, Orbis Books, New York.
- Flaendorp, C.D; Philander, N.C & Van Huffel, P. 2016. *A Life in Black Liberation Theology*, Rapid Access Publishers, Stellenbosch.
- Flaendorp, C.D; Philander, N.C and Huffel, M.A. 2017. *A Life in Black Liberation Theology*, Stellenbosch: San Merino.
- Freire, P. 1972. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Penguin.
- Graham, R. 1989. *Traditional Religion: In Biblical Perspective*. Fotoferm Limited, Nairobi.
- Gutiérrez, J. 1983. *The Power of the Poor in History*.
- Habermas, J. 1987. *The Theory of Communicative Action*. Vol. 2, Boston: Beacon.
- Hellencreutz, C. & Moyo, M. 1988. *Church and State in Zimbabwe*. Gweru, Mambo Press.

- Herzog, W. 1972. *Liberation Theology: Liberation in The Light of the Fourth Gospel*. New York, Seagull Press.
- Herzog, W. 2000. *Jesus, Justice and the Reign of God: A Ministry of Liberation*, Louisville: John Knox.
- Hopkins, N. & Antonio, E.P. 2012. *Black Theology*, Cambridge: Orbis Press, 2008.
- Huffel, M.A. 2017. *A Life in Black Liberation Theology*, Stellenbosch: Sa Merina.
- Kairos Document 1985. London: Catholic Institute for International Relations.
- Kato, H. 1987. *Theological Pitfalls in Africa*: Evangel Publication House, Nairobi.
- Kaulemu, D. 2010. *Churches Response to the Crisis in Zimbabwe*. *The Review of Faith And International Affairs*, Spring: 47-54.
- Kaulemu, D. 2011. *Ending Political Violence in Zimbabwe*, Harare: Konrad.
- Kaulemu, D. 2011. *Political Participation in Zimbabwe*, Harare: Africast.
- Khabela, G. 1991. *A Seamless Garment: Tutu's Understanding of The Role of The Church in South Africa*, PhD Thesis, Department of Systematic Theology, Union Theological Seminary.
- Le Bruyns. C. 2012. *The Rebirth of Kairos Theology and Its Implications for Public Theology and Citizens in South Africa*.
- Machingura, F. 2012. *The Messianic Feelings of the Masses: An Analysis of John 6 In Context of Messianic Leadership in Post-Colonial Zimbabwe*. *Bible in Africa Studies*, Volume, University of Bamberg Press.
- Martin, D. & Johnson, P. 1981. *The Struggle for Zimbabwe*. Zimbabwe Publishing House, Harare.
- Mbiti, J.S. 1989. *African Religions and Philosophy*, Nairobi: Heinemann.
- Maluleke, T. 2008. *May the Black God Stand Up, Please! Biko's Challenge to Religion*. New York: Palgrave McMillan.
- Maposa, R. 2010. 'Aluta Continua': A Critical Reflection on the Chimurenga-Within-Third Chimurenga among the Ndau People in Chipinge District, South-eastern Zimbabwe. *Journal of African Studies and Development* Vol. 2(6), Pp. 191-200, Available Online <http://www.academicjournals.org/jasd> .
- Maposa, R. 2011. *Liberation Theology and the Depletion of Natural Resources, A Smart Partnership? An Appraisal on Varimi Vatsva in the Former Commercial White Farms in Zimbabwe*. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* Vol 13, No.2, Clarion University of Pennsylvania.
- Mlambo, A. 2014. *A History of Zimbabwe*, Cambridge University Press.
- Martey, F. 1993. *African Theology*. Maryknoll, Orbis Books.
- Mofokeng, T. 1988. *Black Christians, the Bible and Liberation*. *Journal of Black Theology*: Vol. 2, 34-40.
- Mogobe, R. 1999. *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*. Harare: Mond Books Publishers.
- Moltmann, J. 1999. *God for a Secular Society: The Public Relevancy of Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Moorcroft, P. 2012. *Mugabe's War Machinery*, Jepperstown: Jonathan Ball Publishers.
- Moore, B. 1974. *The Challenge to Black Theology in South Africa*. Atlanta, John Knox.
- Motlhabi, M. 1972. *Essays on Black Theology*, Johannesburg: University Christian Movement.
- Motlhabi, M. 1978. *African Theology/Black Theology in South Africa: Looking Back, Moving On*. University of South Africa.

- Muchechetera, A. 2009. *A Historical Analysis of the Role of the Church in Advocating for Good Governance in Zimbabwe: Heads of Christian Denominations (HOCD) Advocacy in Zimbabwe's Political, Social and Economic Impasse From 2003 To 2008*. MA Dissertation, ALMA, Harare.
- Muchena, D. 2004. *The Church and Reconciliation: A Mission Impossible? The Father Figure in Zimbabwean Literature and Culture*. Harare: Weaver Press.
- Mukaronda, N. 2013. *Critical Voices Emerging in Times of Crisis*: Fem House.
- Mukoko, J. 2016. *The Abductions and Trial of Justina Mukoko: The Fight for Human Rights in Zimbabwe*: Sandton: KKM Review Publishing Company.
- Mukonori, F. 2011. *The Genesis of Violence in Zimbabwe*, Harare Adrock Printing 2011.
- Mullet, M. 1999. *The Catholic Reformation*: Routledge, London.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009. *Do Zimbabweans Exist, Trajectories of Nationalism, National Identity Formation and Crisis in Post-Colonial State*.
- Okullu, H. 1984. *Church and State in Nation Building and Human Development*. Nairobi, Uzima Press.
- Prophetic Thought in Postmodern Times, Monroe*: Common Courage Press
- Ormerod, N. 1997. *Introducing Contemporary Theologies: The and Who Of Theology Today*: Orbis Books, New York.
- Raftopolous, B. & Mlambo, A. 2009. *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from The Pre-Colonial Period to 2008*. Harare, Weaver Press.
- Ringson, J. 2017. *Zunde Ramambo as a Traditional Coping Mechanism for the Care Of Orphans and Vulnerable Children: Evidence from Gutu District, Zimbabwe*. African Journal of Social Work.
- Ruzive, M. 2010. *The Catholic Church and the Democratisation Process in Zimbabwe: A Critical Study of the Impact of Catholic Social Teachings on the Chinhoyi Dioceses*: Harare African Forum for Social Teachings (AFCAST).
- Sachikonye, L. 2011. *When a State Turns Against Its Citizens: Institutionalised Violence and Political Culture*: Auckland Park, Jacana Media.
- Shoko, T. 2010. "Worse than dogs and pigs?" *Attitudes toward homosexual practice in Zimbabwe*. 2010; 57(5):634-49.
- Sobrinho, J. 2004. *The Church and the Poor*. WIPF and Stock Publication.
- Swart, I. 2013. *Revival of Kairos Consciousness: Prolegomena to a Research Focus on Religious and Social Change in Post-Apartheid, South Africa*.
- Taringa, Chitando, Mapuranga, 2014. *Zimbabwean Theology and Religious Studies During the Crisis Years*.
- The Church and Civic Society, *Building Social Conscience for Democratic Participation*: Harare; Africast, 2009.
- The Kairos Document 1985. London: Catholic Institute for International Relations.
- Tshaka, R.S. 2010. *The Continued Relevance of Black Liberation for Democratic South Africa Today*. Scriptura 105, P536-545.
- The Zimbabwe Council of Churches Pastoral Letter to the Nation, 27 October 2009*.
- The Zimbabwe We Want: "Towards A National Vision for Zimbabwe"*, 15 September 2006.
- Tutu, D. 1994. *The Rainbow People of God: The Making of a Peaceful Revolution*.
- Uzuku, 1996. *A Listening Church: Autonomy and Communion in African Churches*, Maryknoll: Obis Books, 1996.

- Van Aarde, A. 2001. *Fatherless in Galilea: Jesus as Child of God*: Harrisburg, Trinity Press International.
- Vambe, M. 2008. *The Hidden Dimensions of Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe*, Harare
- Vambe, M. 2010. *Zimbabwe's Creative Literatures in Intergrum: 1980-2009*. African Identities.
- Vellem, V. 2007. *The Symbol of Liberation in Southern African Public Life: A Black Theological Perspective* , PhD Thesis Department of Systematic Theology And Ethics, University of Pretoria.
- Vellem, V. 2010. *Prophetic Theology in Black Theology, With Special Reference to The Kairos Document* [Online] Available At <http://www.hts.org.za>
- Vellem, V.S. *Interlocution of Black Theology of Liberation in the 21st Century Reflection*.
- Vellem, V.S. 2012. *The Opiate of Neo-Liberal Globalisation and Dawn of Democracy in South Africa*. *Theologia Viaticum*, 36(1), 76-90.
- Vellem, V. S. 2015. *Black Theology of Liberation: A Theology of Life in the Context Of Empire*.
- Vellem, V.S. 2015. *Black Theology of Liberation and Radical Democracy: A Dialogue*, *Scriptura* 115, Pp1-13.
- Vellem, V.S. 2016. *Epistemological Dialogue as Prophetic: A Black Theological Perspective on the Land Issue*, *Scriptura* 115, Pp1-11.
- Verbun Et Ecclesia, (35)3, Art, 14760. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v36i3.1470>.
- Vestraelen, F. 1998. *Zimbabwean Realities and Christian Responses: Contemporary Aspects of Christianity in Zimbabwe*. Gweru, Mambo Press.
- Villa-Vicencio, C. 1992. *A Theology of Reconstruction, Nation-Building and Human Rights*: Cape Town, Cambridge University Press.
- Wermter, O. 2003. *Politics for Everyone by Everyone: A Christian Approach*. Nairobi, Pauline Publications.
- West, C. 1993. *Prophetic Thought in Post-Modern Times*. Monroe, Common Courage Press.
- West, G. 2012. *Tracing the Kairos Trajectories from South Africa (1985) To Palestine (2009) Discerning Continuities and Differences*.
- Wilmore, G. 1973. *Black Religion and Black Church: From Slave Religion to Black Power*. Garden City, Anchor Press/Double Day.
- Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) 2006. *The Zimbabwe We Want: Towards A National Vision for Zimbabwe*. A Discussion Document. 15 September 2006, Harare.
- Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference 2007. *God Hears the Cry of The Oppressed: Pastoral Letter on the Current Crisis in Zimbabwe*. Holy Thursday, 5 April 2007: Harare.