



**A critique of land reform in Zimbabwe from the perspective of Miroslav Volf's
public theology**

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By

JOSEPH CHIFUNIRO USENI

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Abstract

The ultimate objective of this thesis is broadening our view of social justice so that it lessens conflict rather than fostering it and is firmly rooted in the justice of God. This endeavour is centred around Miroslav Volf's Public Theology. The thesis is focusing on the branch of historical theology known as public theology. When collecting data and interpreting the pertinent research data, the inquiry is using a mixed method to qualitative research. The study is focused on text analysis, using Volf's writings about his social life as well as images, words, affirmations, and other literature. In accordance with Van Aarde (2008:1216), public theology can be found in a wide range of media, including music, novels, films, art, architecture, marches of protest, newspapers, and articles from magazines. While establishing Miroslav Volf's public theology as a point of comparison and critique, the study is encouraging "historical-theological" critique of land reform as well as interrogating the socio-political situation and social exclusion in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean Land Reform Programme of 2000 serves as an illustration of a disregard for social justice within Zimbabwe. The study is employing a social transformational approach to reading the Bible and historical hermeneutics in theological analysis. Additionally, it is advocating for a social hermeneutic among Christian Bible interpreters. The study is beginning by providing a general overview of the socio-political situation in Zimbabwe, where an ongoing social and political crisis is significantly affecting the public's standard of life. The study is evaluating the major issues and making recommendations based on Volf's public theology of justice that may yield useful solutions for the future pursuit of justice. Second, the study is exploring and identifying the development of the past and present-day instances of social justice in Zimbabwe, as well as the role that Christian individuals and institutions are playing in advancing social justice. Based on the study, public engagement requires to be improved to further the cause of justice. This is ought to follow from Volf's conception of his public theology, which is emphasising embracing, remembrance, and inclusion.

Extended thinking can be used to transform interactions with the public. The key to proactively pursuing justice is attempting to develop one another and allowing the other to shape oneself for the common good. The third section of the study is looking at the theological foundations of Volf's research into public theology. The writings of Volf can provide insight into public theology, which has important implications for the quest of justice. A conviction of justice can exist in a nation where everything is promoted for the good of the whole because of Volf's initiatives. Finally, it is outlining the procedures by which the church might engage the public in a good and faithful manner for the sake of justice and within the confines of this mandate. In accordance with Volf's public theology and the study's proposed strategic map for Christian public engagement, the quest of justice must concentrate on restoring appropriate relationships beyond the obligation due and be a continual procedure rather than disconnected actions. Christian institutes and local churches can foster responsible citizenship on the part of their members by encouraging them to participate in public interest groups.

Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis: 'A critique of land reform in Zimbabwe from the perspective of Miroslav Volf's public theology' is my own work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. Furthermore, I have not previously submitted it in its entirety or in part to any university for a degree.

Signed *Chiefjoe* Date: 2024/07/30 Joseph Chifuniro Useni

Signed *Wim Dreyer* Date: 2024/07/30

Prof. W.A. Dreyer (Supervisor)

Dedication

The work is dedicated to my late uncle Isaac Masina, who was the last older brother of my mother, he died in my absence and was known as "*Sekuru* Isaac." I pray that his soul is at peace.

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List of abbreviations

The list of abbreviations of the works of Volf Miroslav and general abbreviations is only for recurring works and references

AL- *After our likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, William B. Eerdmans, Cambridge, 1998.

ASH - *A Spacious Heart: An Essay on identity and belonging (Christian Mission and Modern Culture)*, 1997.

AT - *Against the tide: Love in a time of petty dreams and persisting enmities*, Wm. B Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2010.

AV - "A Vision of Embrace." *Ecumenical Review* 47, 1995.

CWG- *Captive the world of God: Engaging the scriptures for contemporary Theological Reflection*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.

DE - "Demons or Evildoers?" Pages 26-28 in *Against the Tide: Love in a Time of Petty Dreams and Persisting Enmities*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.

E &E - *Exclusion and Embrace: A theological exploration of identity, otherness, and reconciliation*, Abingdon Press, 1996.

FC- *Free of Charge: Giving and forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2005.

FG – *Flourishing: Why we need religion in a globalized world*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015.

FRR - "The Final Reconciliation: Reflections on a Social Dimension of the Eschatological Transition." *Modern Theology* 16 2000, 91-113.

FLW - For the Life of the World: Theology that makes a Difference, Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2019.

GLT- God's Life in Trinity, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2006.

IQB - "Introduction: A Queen and a Beggar: Challenges and Prospects of Theology." Pages ix-xviii in *The Future of Theology: Essays in Honor of Jurgen Moltmann*. Edited by Miroslav Volf, Carmen Krieg, Thomas Kucharz, and Jürgen Moltmann. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

LHLL - *The limits of Hope and the Logic of love: Essay on Eschatology and Social Action*. Regent College Publishing, 2006.

LYH- "Love Your Heavenly Enemy." *Christianity Today* 44, 2000, 94.

M& C - *A common world: Muslims and Christians on loving God and Neighbours* – 2010.

OCP - "Original Crime, Primal Care." in *God and the Victim: Theological Reflections on Evil, Victimization, Justice, and Forgiveness* Edited by Lisa Barnes Lampman. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

PCSH - *The Church as a Prophetic Community and a Sign of Hope.* *European Journal of Theology* 2, 1993.

PF - *A public faith: How followers of Christ should serve the common Good*, Brazos Press Grand Rapids, 2001.

PFA- *Public Faith in Action*. How to engage with commitment, conviction, and courage, 2016

PT- *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life*, 2002.

RE - "Reconciled in the End." *The Christian Century* 116, 1999.

RR - "Revolutionary Remembering: An Interview with Miroslav Volf." in *Remembering the Future: A Collection of Essays Interviews, and Poetry at the Intersection of Theology and Culture: The Other Journal 2004-2007*. Edited by Chris Keller and Andrew David. Eugene: Cascade Books, 2009.

SD - "Soft Difference: Theological Reflections on the Relation between Church and Culture in 1 Peter." *Ex Auditu* 10, 1994.

SMR- "The Social Meaning of Reconciliation." *Interpretation* 54, 2000: 158-172.

TEM - *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*, William B Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2006.

TFH- *The future of Hope: Christian Tradition Amid Modernity and Post Modernity*- 2004.

TFT - *The Future of Theology*, Wm. B Eerdmans Publishing Co.1996.

TUG - *Trinität Und Gemeinschaft: Eine Ökumenische Ekklesiologie*. Mainz Neukirchen-Vluyn: Matthias-Grünwald, 1996.

TWL- "Theology for a Way of Life." *Ex auditu* 17 (2001): 125- 141.

WS- *Work in the Spirit*, Wipf and Stock, Eugene, Oregon, 1991.

Websites

LE - Volf, Miroslav. "Miroslav Volf Part 2: Loving Enemies - Dangerous and Absurd".

Centre for Public Christianity Video 1 June 2009, available from

<<http://www.publicchristianity.com/Videos/volf2.html>> (Date accessed: 24 October 2009

Volf, Miroslav.CV.April,2023.[https://www.google.com/url?q=https://divinity.yale.edu/faculty-](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://divinity.yale.edu/faculty-and-research/yds-faculty/miroslav-)

[and-research/yds-faculty/miroslav-](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://divinity.yale.edu/faculty-and-research/yds-faculty/miroslav-volf&sa=U&sqi=2&ved=2ahUKEwj_qZ7ZueqEAXWhg4kEHaonBb4QFnoECBUQAQ&usg=A)

[volf&sa=U&sqi=2&ved=2ahUKEwj_qZ7ZueqEAXWhg4kEHaonBb4QFnoECBUQAQ&usg=A](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://divinity.yale.edu/faculty-and-research/yds-faculty/miroslav-volf&sa=U&sqi=2&ved=2ahUKEwj_qZ7ZueqEAXWhg4kEHaonBb4QFnoECBUQAQ&usg=A)

[OvVaw02yM5tdgvt0jW_erQv3qNm](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://divinity.yale.edu/faculty-and-research/yds-faculty/miroslav-volf&sa=U&sqi=2&ved=2ahUKEwj_qZ7ZueqEAXWhg4kEHaonBb4QFnoECBUQAQ&usg=A)
Yale Centre for Faith and Culture, www.yale.edu/faith. 06/06/2023

General abbreviations

CIO – Central Intelligence Organisation

CCJP - Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace EFZ- Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe

GNU Government of National Unity

MDC – Movement for Democratic Change NCA – National Constitution Assembly

NVDD - the National Vision Discussion Document TRC - Truth, and Reconciliation Commission

UDACZA- Union for the Development of Apostolic Churches in Zimbabwe Africa WAZA- Woman of Zimbabwe Arise

WCC – World Council of Churches

ZANU PF – Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front ZCBC- Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop’s Conference

ZCC - Zimbabwe Churches of Council ZCC – Zimbabwe Crisis Coalition

ZHCD – Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denominations

ZIICC- Zimbabwe Indigenous Interdenominational Council of Churches ZWWD - the Zimbabwe We Want Document

Zimbabwean words

“Jambanja” - a lingo meaning violence (a state-sponsored, violent confrontation initiated to force farmers and farm workers off the commercial farms.

“Nyika inovakwa nevevavo” – a nation is built by its owners Musiki – the creator

“Mwana wevhu” – the son of the soil

Pastors 4ED - Pastors for Economic Development but literally meaning ED - Emmerson Dambudzo (the first initials of President of Zimbabwe- (President Mnangagwa)

“Rambai makashinga” – continue to endure. “Ropa remagamba” – the blood of the heroes

“Vapambi vevhu” – land colonizers.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

African political parties' platform statements have always focused on land reform and social justice in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Southern Africa, the argument over land is very hot. Serious, moral concerns regarding social life, agriculture, social justice, and land ownership patterns currently arise from the land reform in Zimbabwe. Public theologies that clarify equitable land distribution and advance social justice are desperately needed in certain of the countries of Southern Africa, particularly Zimbabwe. In order to restore interpersonal ties within the framework of right and equitable land distribution, Miroslav Volf's public theology will encourage theologians, citizens of Zimbabwe, and Christian organizations to confront the issues of social justice and land reform.

1.2 Research problem

The issue of social justice is one of the contemporary issues which is causing conflict and dilemmas in African societies and within the churches. In the Christian institutions and individuals, much attention is given to bringing back the New Testament church and uniting the Christians. The Christian institutions and individuals are not stretching where it is inching to the current church and society challenges. The Christian institutions and churches in Zimbabwe claim autonomous church governance whereby the individual churches determine their own prescription and uphold their congregational values depending on the majority law of the members of the church and denomination. The churches just meet and agree in ecumenical bodies like Zimbabwe Churches of Council (ZCC), Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, (EFZ), Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop's Conference (ZCBC), Zimbabwe Indigenous Interdenominational Council of Churches (ZIICC), Union for the Development of Apostolic Churches in Zimbabwe Africa (UDACZA), Fambidzano (Ecumenical Movement for the Development of Zimbabwe Independent Churches) and many more. To some extent all these ecumenical movements

have failed, and some have given pastoral response to the socio-cultural situation in Zimbabwe, though inadequate.

The churches end up in a dilemma because of different views in the same umbrella of being called Christians. The ecumenical movement in Zimbabwe should first try to resolve the disputes among themselves before they attempt to articulate the implications of what they believe in terms of social justice and then take it to the community at large. "Divisions within the church and lack of radical theologies have compromised the church's efforts" Ross et.al (2017: 81). The increased rates of social injustice in Zimbabwe whereby the civil rights organisations, human rights organisations, non-governmental organisations are advocating much about social justice more than the church. The disturbing high rates of corruption in judicial systems, abductions, ritual killings, racial discrimination, black lives matter, and all lives matters mantras, Christian divorces, and sexual harassment to sexual abuse, rape, poverty, human trafficking, party politics and gender-based violence in churches and societies. Protests against global economic collapse, political corruption, and social injustice are becoming more and more popular these days. Christians have struggled to end some of these public issues. It makes perfect sense for this study to investigate social morality and behaviour concerns from the perspective of Christian history, Volf's public theology, and ethical African societal values, utilising Zimbabwe's land reform as an example of justice and injustice.

1.3 Research Question

- What is Volf's public theological stance and understanding on the question of social justice?
- What is Volf's public theological assessment of social justice and his response to it?
- Are the Zimbabwean Christian institutions fully equipped to represent Jesus Christ to address social justice in the country?
- How can Volf's insights be applied to our Zimbabwean context and responses to social justice and injustice?

1.4 Justification

The issue of social justice has become the greatest challenge in Africa, especially for the nation of Zimbabwe. It is however noteworthy that politicians and human rights activists have politicised the concept of “social justice” and “social injustice” in Zimbabwe as a social problem, often out of touch with any religious and theological sensitivity. On the other hand, it is also important to take note that there is no significant representation from the historical-theological perspective in dealing with the social justice situation in Zimbabwe. Therefore, as a Zimbabwean, a Minister of Religion, and a theologian reflecting on contemporary theology, I have found it imperative to engage with Volf’s public theological assessment of social justice, and his insights that seem to be relevant to our Zimbabwean Christian response to “social justice” and “social injustice.” This research, therefore, seeks to come up with some suggestions that can help the church and nation in combating social injustice in Zimbabwe.

This dissertation in Historical Theology is a historical-theological critique of land reform in Zimbabwe, questioning the socio-political situation and social injustice in Zimbabwe using Miroslav Volf’s public theology as point of reference and critique. Zimbabwean citizens experienced severe injustice, both before and after independence. Since 2000, aggressive disapproval of the ruling ZANU PF land reform programme came from farmer’s unions, white commercial farmers, the opposition MDC party, lawyer’s unions, universities students’ unions and civil society groups. In recent years, international news carriers regularly mention Zimbabwe with reference to social injustice, including the radical and controversial land reform, the general meltdown of the economy and the deplorable violation of the rule of law and human rights. After the land distribution, Zimbabwe experienced a severe food shortage. Both small farmers and the remaining commercial farmers produce poor harvests, due to the deterioration of farming skills and interference by the government.

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The Zimbabwean government reacted against its critics by hiring and sponsoring war veterans to fight against those groups, raiding farms and properties of large-scale farmers without any payment and compensation. The land reform in Zimbabwe was done as a political move by the ruling government to remain in power and gain the support of the electorate. Many people were of the opinion that land reform caused further injustice and racial discrimination between Zimbabwe's ethnic groups, especially the blacks and whites. Right now, there are serious moral questions emerging from the current trends in Zimbabwe's social life, agriculture, justice, and land ownership patterns. Zimbabwe is one of the countries in Africa with a very high rate of human rights violations which continued unabated after the land distribution in 2000. The majority of Zimbabweans left the country because of injustice and poverty. Most of the people are relocating to neighbouring countries in search of employment.

among people in terms of race, tribes, and ethnicity. This research argues that the problem of land reform and social justice does not need a political solution only, it also needs a theological solution. Christians have always been silent to those issues, and they continue to neglect their role of promoting social justice in Zimbabwe. There is a great need for a public theology that articulates proper distribution of land and promotes the welfare of people in Zimbabwe.

This research will attempt, using Miroslav Volf's public theology as a point of departure, to invite theologians, Zimbabwean citizens, and Christian institutions to address the challenges of land reform and social justice, so that the people could be empowered to rebuild relationships with each other in the context of fair and equal distribution of the land.

This research is an attempt to answer one basic question: What is the Christian position regarding land reform and social justice in Zimbabwe?

1.5 Purpose or aim of the research

This dissertation is centred on utilising Miroslav Volf's public theology as a reference point to address matters of social justice in Zimbabwe. It is examining the Zimbabwean Land Reform Program as a case study illustrating the country's insufficient concern for social justice. Additionally, it is exploring the involvement of churches, institutions, and individuals in advocating for social justice in Zimbabwe through various means of communication and active engagement.

1.6 Objectives of the research

- To explore the historical situation of Zimbabwe's land reform programme by highlighting the socio-political situation
- To examine Volf's public theology in the context of Zimbabwe as preferential social justice and social injustice of land reform programme
- To apply Volf's public theology to Zimbabwe's current land question
- To summarise the findings, recommend and conclude

1.7 Research methodology

This dissertation is in the field of Historical Theology, with the focus on public theology. It is an interpretation of Miroslav Volf's public theology considering dealing with social justice in Zimbabwe. The investigation to be employed is a mixed approach in qualitative research, in the collection and interpretation of the relevant research data, in pursuit of the goals mentioned above.

The study will utilise historical, qualitative, comparative, and sociological analyses. According to Clarke (2001), the historical method is a systematic and objective location, evaluation, and synthesis of evidence to establish fact and draw conclusions about the past events. The historical analysis will present a picture of how the church engaged with public life. The historical method can also be used to furnish the historical background of social unrest in Zimbabwe. Lindlof and Taylor (2019:108) states that qualitative inquiry in all the social science disciplines has a long history of examining public problems and

issues. The qualitative and sociological analysis methods are important because they enable the researcher to understand the context of social unrest in Zimbabwean situations. Qualitative research gives us the ability to study not just the explicit meaning by social actors in conflictive situations, but also their implicit culture, the moral vocabularies, self-descriptions and customary tales and rules of thumb (Lindlof and Taylor (2019: 109). The research will employ the comparative method. The comparative method is going to be used in this research in comparing two given scenarios to come up with a common position. This comparative method will help the researcher to compare the Christian life, country citizen life and public life of a Christian or non- Christian person.

There are several methods that can be used in collecting data. However, the researcher shall use published literature and other archival material. Scholarly sources of Volf Miroslav's public theology as well as the social unrest situation in Zimbabwe will be analysed and reviewed. Scholarly sources and other published books about historical theology, social justice and social unrest will be used in the research.

1.8 Data collection methods

When collecting data and interpreting the pertinent research data, the inquiry is using a mixed method to qualitative research. This study is based in the literature. The study is focused on text analysis, using Volf's writings about his social life as well as images, words, affirmations, and other literature. In accordance with Van Aarde (2008:1216), public theology can be found in a wide range of media, including music, novels, films, art, architecture, marches of protest, newspapers, and articles from magazines. While establishing Miroslav Volf's public theology as a point of comparison and critique, the study is encouraging "historical- theological" critique of land reform as well as interrogating the socio-political situation and social exclusion in Zimbabwe.

1.9 Literature review

This section reviewed literature related to the issues of social justice and injustice that took place during the land reform programme to the present. In this case, literature to do with land reform during the colonial era, independent Zimbabwe and post independent Zimbabwe shall be reviewed. Additionally, this section also reviewed literature to do with

Volf's public theology which is giving the theoretical base of this thesis. This is done with the aim of exposing the social justice and injustice that took place during the land reform programmes in Zimbabwe and evaluate the role of the church either in promoting social justice or perpetuating social ills that took place during the land reform programmes in Zimbabwe. Some scholars tend to politicise the concept of social justice as a social problem out of touch without any theological sensitivity. **Galindo** (2004:15) expresses that the church has all but lost its voice in the public square. The loss of the church's prophetic voice and its inability to address the needs of declining neighbourhoods in concrete ways makes it vulnerable to its immediate problems. There is great need for analysing the church in Zimbabwe's voice in public square and its contextual relevance to the society. A great number of authors have written to inspire Christians to participate in public life. By bridging the gap, this study aims to enable the church to speak for the voiceless.

Allen (2020:14) asserts that many Christians have only a vague awareness of this ideology and consequently do not see danger when they hear 'social justice', they assume it is no different than biblical justice. True justice like biblical justice are essential building blocks for free, prosperous, and flourishing nations. Bad ideas like ideological social justice are terribly destructive rendering the social fabric, exacerbating hostility and ultimately destroying relationships. A crucial study is needed for the real justice model to be in Zimbabwe rather than creating social movements which cause divisions and social unrest.

Steyne (1992: 20) contends that aside from this real need for a relationship with his God, man has other physical and emotional needs which all religions meet one way or another. Every religion fills very specific sociological and psychological functions in the lives of its practitioners. The church must take part in addressing the social and psychological needs of its congregates. It is essential for the church to acknowledge that it serves individuals with psychosocial issues that require attention from them. The goal of this study is to address the psychological requirements outlined in Zimbabwe's land reform framework.

Thiemann (1991: 22) argues that the theologian thus enters the public realm with the confidence, born of faith, that Christian convictions do have relevance for public life. This

shows that there is a great need for rigorous inquiry in religious life in Zimbabwe therefore there must be a Christian faith that risks genuine engagement with the forces of public life.

Dreyer (2018: 5) comments that,

Political transformation, social justice, and ethical governance are issues which theologians should engage with. Studying the social engagement of the church through the centuries could improve our understanding of our own calling and responsibilities as theologians in the 21st century.

By this view it shows that the Christian institutions must take a leading role in promoting good governance and advocating social justice on behalf of the people. Some of the ecumenical church bodies in Zimbabwe like Zimbabwe Council of Churches can be identified in terms of promoting social justice.

According to **Chitando** (2020:34) over some years the Zimbabwe Council of Churches has focused more on issues that politicians see as sensitive issues like corporate governance, corruption and lack of accountability often make politicians complain that the church is intruding into the political domain. Some ecumenical bodies in Zimbabwe are controlled by political party and affiliation, one implication here is that there is a great need of Christian institutions and individuals to be identified as good citizens, whose lives belong to God and publicly engaged in the world and link social and political engagement to real Christian life. It is quickly becoming obvious that Christians should just preach the word without attending to some serious human problems.

In Zimbabwe there was enforced ecumenism, churches started to recognise the harsh circumstances of the political suppression, pandemic diseases, and natural disasters, among others. The Evangelicals, Protestants and Catholics institution in Zimbabwe began to work together in the country to deal with the indignities of the political violence in the country leading to the writing of *The Zimbabwe We Want Document* (ZWWD) and the *National Vision Discussion Document* (NVDD) in 2006.

Otien and McCullum (2005: 85) explains the role which is played by Zimbabwe Council for Churches; it is engaging in human rights awareness and advocacy; mediation during and after the liberation struggle, civic education, voter education and election monitoring, constitutional reform, and economic justice, linking domestic and global issues.

Most of the societal problems are rooted in larger social inequities, there is a need for correction through some form of public improvement and reforms in parliament, laws, and regulations in the country. Secular people, even the Christians think that just as direct assistance to victimised people, the poor and hungry is only a response to the gospel, but they must make efforts to help them by the means of promoting better public policies and decision making.

Hauerwas (1991:68) argues that as Christians we will speak more trustfully to our society and be of greater service by refusing things which are injustice and talk more about justice. Public decisions often deal with some of the causes of social injustice. The Christian institutions must not only focus on assistance, which is fully appreciated but must challenge and mobilise Zimbabwean Christians to respond to some of the social injustice crisis through a considerable and powerful instrument of their citizenship. As we understand that Christians care when others suffer, and they are often willing to make personal sacrifices to help if they know that a particular action should make an important difference. Therefore, Christians should show much concern in contributing to politically injured people and any other social justice crisis at that moment. Christians should take their time in learning how to express their concern about social justice and to those who make national policy decisions. Most of the Christians are unsure what public decisions and policies could provide solutions to the problem of social injustice in Zimbabwe.

Gushee (2000: 49) states that from a Christian point of view government is not the highest authority in human life. Christianity as a religion is a whole-life matter, a public matter. Public laws will be just only when they treat equally all religions communities and other communities of conviction in public as well in private life.

1.9.1 Volf's public theology as a theoretical framework underpinning this study

Miroslav Volf's work in public theology has been acknowledged and influenced by several academics and theologians.

Jurgen Moltmann: At the University of Tubingen in Germany, Miroslav Volf (1983: 246) studied under Jurgen Moltmann. Moltmann supervised Volf while he pursued his doctorate in theology. For Volf's work, Moltmann is an essential theological source. According to Volf, Moltmann's work ends retaliation and Jesus's work does the same. Krieg, Kucharz, and Volf (1996: ix). Volf remarks that Jurgen Moltmann has had a greater influence on theology than any other theologian in the latter half of this century. Volf was so impressed by Jurgen Moltmann's theology that he thought it was an exercise in considering both the future of humanity and the future of God. This research must contextualise the situation in Zimbabwe, create a connection between it and theology, and focus on thinking about a new future rather than taking revenge.

At Fuller Theological Seminary, Volf studied under **Orlando Costas**, who he says inspired him in liberation theological themes. Costas' work on liberation theology, which emphasises the significance of resolving social and economic injustices, had an influence on Volf. Volf's commitment to engage with other cultures and contexts and his own global viewpoint were probably shaped by Costas' experience and expertise in global missions and theology. Volf's own missional orientation and dedication to examining the relationship between faith and culture were probably motivated by Costas' emphasis on evangelism and mission. Costas organised many denominations to address the demands of theological education for minority populations, according to Conde-Frazier (2004: 41). Costas applied his skills as an entrepreneur, theologian, and community organiser to his work in an effort to improve education in marginalised areas. According to Costas, conversion is a never-ending process of transformation that culminates in active public commitment. This research will also examine the connection between faith and culture, as well as some aspects of pointing out social and economic inequities in Zimbabwe.

Miroslav Volf was influenced by **Jon Sobrino** in the following ways: Volf's view of liberation theology and its emphasis on addressing social and economic injustices was

probably influenced by Sobrino, a liberation theologian and Jesuit priest. Volf's emphasis on solidarity with the weak and marginalised may have been influenced by Sobrino's dedication to the "option for the poor," which prioritises the needs and perspectives of the marginalised. Volf's perspective of Jesus' purpose and identity, as well as his focus on the significance of Christology for public theology, may have been affected by Sobrino's work on Christology, especially his book "Jesus the Liberator." This study will make use of the framework that explains how individuals experienced being excluded and at-risk during Zimbabwe's land reform programme. Volf may have adopted Sobrino's method of contextualising theology in a variety of situations due to his exposure to El Salvador and his dedication to doing so in particular cultural and political circumstances. Volf's devotion to audacious and fearless public theology may have been influenced by Sobrino's focus on the value of prophetic testimony and speaking truth to power. In order to strengthen the church, this study will also attempt to contextualise the political and cultural settings of Zimbabwe within the framework of prophetic witness.

The following are some ways in which Miroslav Volf was influenced by **Gustavo Gutierrez**: Volf's understanding of liberation theology and its focus on addressing social and economic injustices was greatly impacted by Gutierrez, who is regarded as the father of liberation theology. Volf's personal emphasis on the significance of practical activity and public engagement in theology may have been influenced by Gutierrez's emphasis on orthopraxis (right action) in conjunction with orthodoxy (right belief). Gutierrez's writings and thoughts have probably had an impact on Volf. He has included his ideas into his own writing and teaching, especially in his book "Exclusion and Embrace". This study will also attempt to apply the significance of pragmatic action and public theological engagement in attempting to resolve Zimbabwe's land question.

Miroslav Volf was influenced by **John Howard Yoder** in the following ways: Volf's own theology of reconciliation has been greatly influenced by Yoder's work on reconciliation and his focus on the value of forgiving others and loving one's enemies. Volf's emphasis on peaceful conflict resolution and peace-making has probably been influenced by Yoder's dedication to peace and nonviolence. Volf's focus on nonviolence, reconciliation,

and discipleship, as well as his criticism of exclusion and his insistence on the significance of a prophetic and counter-cultural church, are all manifestations of Yoder's impact. As defined by Kim and Day (2017: 155), "*katalassoo*" (reconciliation) denotes harmony in a relationship. Belhar's reconciliation is based on the embrace that Miroslav Volf speaks of the embrace of people who are different from one another in terms of race, tribe, nationality, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, age, and ability. The focus of this study will be on nonviolent approaches of redressing injustices committed during Zimbabwe's land reform period.

Prominent theologian **Stanley Hauerwas** has discussed Miroslav Volf's work, especially in relation to political theology and ethics. Hauerwas, according to, has been focusing on the challenge of modernity even though he views the relationship between theology and modernity differently. He insists on "reading social realities and their non-theological interpretations from a theological perspective" and prefers to exercise a great deal of suspicion against self-portrayals of modernity. Krieg, Kucharz, and Volf (1996: xiv). Hauerwas had an impact on Miroslav Volf's emphasis on the value of interacting with current social and political challenges and the public relevance of Christianity. This study will also address the modern social and political land issue in Zimbabwe, with an emphasis on the public relevance of the Christian faith.

1.9.2 Land reform during the colonial era 1890 to 1980

Hanlon, Smart, and Manjengwa (2014: 983) land that has been alienated during liberation battles is now valued more symbolically than economically or socially, and many land reforms include elements of restitution. Regaining the land is a major objective because it was a part of the Zimbabwean liberation war. Zimbabwe has a lot of land, which should be utilised "best" for social justice, economic expansion, and environmental sustainability. All land reform has been associated with tension between production, welfare, and justice.

1.9.3 Land reform in independent Zimbabwe 1980 to 2000

Sam Moyo criticises the land reform process for its inability to fairly redistribute land to disadvantaged populations, especially small-scale farmers. As stated by **Walter**

Chambati and Sam Moyo (2013:30). In Zimbabwe, land reform was implemented in the 1980s with the goal of correcting previous settler-colonial land dispossession, the associated racial and foreign dominance, and the class-based agrarian inequities that were fostered by minority rule. Land reform between 1980 and 1989 was centred on state-led market acquisitions of land and its distribution to designated recipients within the framework of unconventional economic policies that allowed for higher public spending on social services and small-scale farming. Moyo (2001:313) contends that the land reform initiative has been compromised by nepotism, corruption, and a lack of openness; the study aims to theologically address all of these issues.

1.9.4 Land reform in post independent Zimbabwe 2000 to 2024

The land reform programme in Zimbabwe since 2000 has been the subject of several myths, according to Ian Scoones and his five co-authors. These include the claims that it has been a "total" failure, that political collaborators have benefited from it, that no new investment has been made in the resettled areas, that agriculture is in "complete ruins," and that the economy in the countryside has collapsed. The reform of land was not a standalone event. It is undeniable that the invasions led to certain positive advances. However, these are mostly ancillary to the invasions' primary goal, which seems to have aimed to drive out commercial farmers due to a larger issue of state violence and corruption

Farmworkers and supporters of the opposition also lost a lot of land in the land reallocation. A 2002 study of farmworkers, as reported by **Raftopoulos and Mlambo** (2008: 2016), identified a number of indicators regarding the effects of the land reform programme on this population: the occupations caused a significant decline in employment, estimated at 70% in the Midlands and 65% in the two provinces of Matabeleland; by mid-2000, approximately 900,000 people had been affected by the evacuations; less than 5% of farmworkers received ownership of land; a decline of incomes as well as access to housing and safe water became apparent.

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These authors have put a lot of effort into depicting and retelling the stories of the land reform. This research will examine the treatment of individuals throughout the land reform. The goal of this study is to analyse in the context of Christian theology and viewpoints in order to help the church offer some potential solutions.

1.9.5 The church, land reform programmes and social justice in Zimbabwe

This study will examine some of the literature on the church's role in promoting social justice and land reform in Zimbabwe, especially throughout the nation's volatile colonial and post-independence periods. Churches need to speak out loudly against injustices,

such as the colonial legacy of unfair land allocation. The church must engage in community empowerment, which entails working to strengthen local communities through the promotion of projects like communal land ownership and cooperative farming. This has facilitated marginalised people's access to resources and land. Human rights advocacy: Churches have been at the front of the movement to advance human rights, such as the rights to social justice, land, and housing. They have denounced violations of human rights, such as forced relocations and attacks on farms.

1.10 Structure of the chapters

The sections that follow will be an outline of this dissertation's structure of chapters:

1.10.1 Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of the research, including the problem statement, study methods, dissertation structure, and literature review.

1.10.2 Chapter 2: Contextual analysis

First, the thesis gives an overview of socio-political situations in Zimbabwe. Historically, Zimbabwe gained its independence in 1980. The new government attempted to undo the evils of the colonial period that was characterised by unfair distribution of resources between the black majority and the white minority by adopting a socialist political and economic ideology. However, the Zimbabwean government maintained the inherited systems from their former colonisers (the Rhodesian government), creating a new black elite. The socio-political situation changed when the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) established itself in 1999, which contributed to social unrest and socio-political challenges in the country. It was a threat to the ruling ZANU PF government. This period saw the establishment of diverse political movements in Zimbabwe.

The so-called Land Reform Program introduced many issues concerning social injustice in the country. Those in power invaded many farms, forcefully removing not only the white farmers but also the farm workers. Where farm workers were allowed to stay on the farms, they had to keep on working without any wages for many months. This was nothing more than forced labour without compensation, in other words, slavery.

The way land reform was conducted received widespread disapproval within and outside Zimbabwe throwing the country into crises characterised with food shortage, unemployment, poor health facilities and high inflation. Also, it caused social unrest in Zimbabwe, some opposition leaders and journalists were killed and abducted, currently the situation continues. Allegations of political violence and rigging of elections by the ruling party contributed to the deterioration of the economy and social life of the people. According to Bourne (2011:160) not all state institutions collapsed, which meant that instruments of coercion remained strong. But the state could no longer provide many citizens with food, basic services, a guaranteed rule of law and socio-economic as well as civil and political rights. The country continues to experience social and political crises impacting negatively on the lives of most of the population.

1.10.3 Chapter 3: Historical analysis

Secondly, the research will trace and identify the historical development and current experience of social justice in Zimbabwe and the role which has been played by Christian institutions in promoting social justice. Historically there have been various ways in which the church has related to the public sector and the matters of people's living and development. Most of the Christians in Zimbabwe understand that the church's business is to preach the gospel, not to get involved in public debates, political decision-making or policies. Churches' involvement in partisan public forums is generally regarded as unacceptable, while it is expected that ministers should preach justice and peace to their congregants, as well as the citizens at large.

Historically, politicians hold that the church should preach the gospel, pray for the sick, and take charge in funeral services. Everything else must be left to the individual to do his or her duty in local communities, and to the state and governmental institutions. They believe that it is not the role of the church to engage with the physical misery of the people or help them to find earthly happiness. This leaves individual Christians unstimulated, uninstructed, and even sterilised against social enthusiasms.

In biblical history both the Old Testament and New Testament contain the starting point of God's concern for the social act of liberating those who were marginalised. In the Old

Testament for example the book of Exodus God's love for the oppressed is so evident and its impact on the laws that governed the life of the people is the theme of social justice. Malina (2001:93) comments as follows:

The total social fabric during the time of Jesus consisted of politics and kinship, generalised order of existence was rooted in symbols interwoven in those specific social institutions that support the broader goals of society, that kinship and political forms. Jesus taught in public, the arena of politics, and came to Jerusalem to proclaim his prophetic message at the very centre of political religion, the temple.

The point is that Christian institutions must show that concern for the most vulnerable members of society, so pervasive in the narratives of the Old Testament and the New Testament; as well as the revelation of God as the God of justice who rescued the oppressed and made them his own, is fundamental to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Biblical history tells Christians about the most important truth about people: how the creation shaped them with the longing of them to find the ultimate fulfilment in a correct relationship with God. Justice allows that everyone to have the freedom from God's creation. The church must implement the biblical teaching on justice by offering quality education to all people in the community regardless of race and political affiliation.

Public theology has been experienced throughout church history from the origin of the church until it reached African soil even in Zimbabwe. The message of Peter in the public arena challenged the Roman Empire and the Jews. This was the beginning of the church striving for justice. The Roman Empire, both in the biblical times and later history, ruled with military and administrative proficiency. The justice in the courts was favourable enough to the citizens of the Empire. It was a peaceful empire well known as Pax Romana. Paul was one of the biblical characters who benefited from that Roman social justice system.

Public theology also existed during the time of Constantine, the church was part of the state and expected to follow and support it. The church was diluted by cultural and political ways of that time and the mission fervour of the church was overshadowed and the gospel

was meaningless. The church was to help the state to fight against those who threatened the peace of the land. The public life of Christian was determined by the state; some Christians at that time reacted to that; they rejected the imperial church and started practising ascetic religious life. The church cannot take orders from the state because its mandate is from God. The church must play a role to rebuke the state where the ones who are in public authority tend to abuse its mandate. *Augustine's City of God* suggests that the public task of the church is not just being in the world but to do a public service for the sake of the common good (Smith 2017:153). Bevans and Schroeder (2004:230) explained that an overly pessimistic attitude coming of Calvinistic doctrine of radical corruption of humanity tended to place the recipients of the missionary effort in an inferior position, such a feeling is always portrayed by the powerful and dominant towards the weak and dominated. This shows that Calvinistic theology was also introduced to bring justice and social order in the communities.

Christian history in Zimbabwe highlights that the church remained involved in the issues in the public domain. The church did not stop participating in public matters during or after independence. The history of Christianity in Southern Africa shows that the church played a bigger role in terms of the liberation struggle. According to Adogame et al. (2008:54) Christianity became powerful by virtue of its association with colonial agents, effacing all other competitors from the public sphere. The political and cultural context that shaped the coming of Christianity in Southern Africa, the church was characterised by being at the centre during the struggle for liberation. This shows that the church was part and parcel of promoting the social justices of the African societies. It was the mission-educated African nationalist who posed a serious challenge to racism and white dominance and Christianity valued equality and justice galvanised the black struggle for freedom Adogame et al. (2008:55). However, in Southern Africa the white missionaries worked closer with the people in public. This involvement of the local people and white missionaries helped most of the countries to gain independence. Ross et al. (2017:79) states that,

As demand for political independence deepened, supporters of independence looked to the church as a welcome ally. Church sympathy for the nationalist cause

aroused strong resentment, the churches made use of their parachurch agencies or organisation to engage the state on economic, political, and social issues.

Church and society in Zimbabwe were influenced by missionaries. Bevans & Schroeder (2004: 221) argues that the missionaries were associated with colonialism and imperialism, missionaries proclaimed the gospel in a way that made sense to them as children of their time influenced by the rationalism, pragmatism, secularism, and optimism of the Enlightenment. Some of the cultural aspects and public life of the missionaries in Zimbabwe brought both positive and negative effects for the African people. The majority of Zimbabweans were heavily influenced by missionaries' beliefs, practices and public life. The thinking and practice of the European missionaries in Africa, Zimbabwe reflected the values and patterns of the public system of the culture in which they live in their home communities. They brought their public life, social value, public patterns, and expectations with them and because they failed to comprehend the local people's public life and social systems, they instated upon transplanting their organisational and cultural values (Lingenfelter 1998:172). However, the missionaries gave their lives away to the Zimbabwean people in compassionate work of church ministry, pastoral care work, selfless Christian service, and defence of the local people's dignity during independence and they made God known to the weak, colonial powerless locals and built a faithful community in Zimbabwe.

1.10.4 Chapter 4: Miroslav Volf's public theology

In this chapter, Miroslav Volf's public theology is discussed and analysed. This is done within the context of social injustice in Zimbabwe. Thiemann's (1991: 21) definition of public theology is relevant, and for him: "Public theology is faith seeking to understand the relation between Christian convictions and broader social cultural context in which the Christian community lives". Bacote (2001:22) echoes that by saying

The relationship between cosmic pneumatology and rigorous, active involvement in the public sphere, ranging from politics to education to science to art, can be understood as public theology. Public theology in this sense is not only a

theological articulation of the rationale for such public engagement or an attempt to argue that religious convictions play a role in the structure and function of society but also a claim that some theological matters are at least comprehensible and at most necessary in public discourse among believers and nonbelievers alike.

Miroslav Volf is one of the important theologians in the field of public, historical and constructive theology. Reimer (2000:4) is of the opinion that Volf is well versed in classical theology; as well as modern and postmodern theology with the ability to reflect imaginatively on Christianity; without fear to engage with critical issues of history and contemporary culture. For that reason, his public theology will be used as a point of reference reflecting on social justice (or injustice) in Zimbabwe.

Most of Christians do not want to be part of public decisions in their communities and the country. Volf (2011: XV) recommends that faith should be active in all spheres of life: education, arts, business, communication, entertainment and more. This will require active participation of Christians in developing just policies for Zimbabwe.

Religion is very much alive today and it is a force not only in the private but also the public sphere. People also think that Christianity is the business of the church and home and has no place in public space. Christians must understand that the public space is not limited to the parliamentarians in government. Members of parliament are public servants. Every policy must be based on arguments that are public in character.

Miroslav Volf's **theology of engagement** is one of the aspects which can be used by Christians to promote social justice. Volf (1996:208) defines a Christian as to be attached to a community and shaped by its belief and practice. The place where someone will learn about justice is the community. The church as a community has a role to play in terms of educating and equipping its members about social justice. However, the church in Zimbabwe is in a very silent mode when it comes to social justice.

1.10.5 Chapter 5: Volf's theology as matrix for social justice in Zimbabwe

The church in Zimbabwe could learn from 'prophetic identity' as highlighted by Blenkinsopp (1996:31). Prophetic identity was based on social matrices, *the sitz im leben*, social status and roles in an explicit way. The Christian institution in Zimbabwe fails to address the current social life of the people. The Zimbabwean church should voice that the distribution of land by the Land Reform Programme is fundamentally unjust. It does not address the needs of the impoverished landless people of Zimbabwe and the injustice towards white farmers should be addressed by compensating them for the loss of property and family heirlooms. Ngong (2013:24) asserts that how Christians should live is not to be separated from what Christian believes. The early church saw that it was critical to carefully craft what Christians should believe because Christian beliefs have implications for Christian living. What Christians believe about God shapes Christian life. Christian institutions and individuals must work towards to the real definition of God's justice as stated by Muis (2018: 367)

God's justice in relation to human being is capacity and his desire to maintain his right as creator and to honour their rights as creatures, to liberate the suffers from injustice, to keep his promise to his covenant- partners, to give commandment that create and restore just relations in human society, to vindicate and bless those who obey his will, condemn disobedience to his will, to justify sinners who believe, inspire people to create justice and to do full justice to every human being in his kingdom.

Miroslav Volf's **theology of memory** and well-being can play a crucial role in addressing the social justice issues in Zimbabwe. Volf (2006:24) says:

Memory is central to identity. To the extent that we serve ourselves from memories of what we have done and what has happened to us, we lose our true identity. If suffering has been part of our past, pain will be part of our identity. We must hold fast to our memories along with their pain; otherwise, we will not be true to ourselves. So, salvation lies in memory insofar as that memory prevents us from distorting our essential selves and living a lie.

Volf's public theology will help the Zimbabwean citizens to reshape and correctly interpret their history and memories in terms of social justice. Beaumont (2019:96) argues that remembering right is important work. The way in which we shape our memories and tell them from generation to the next has powerful implications for identity, values, clarifications, and soul tending. The Christian institutions must help the government and Zimbabwe citizens to retell their memories and correct what must be corrected based on their experiences.

Since 1980, Zimbabweans have suffered under social injustice. Some of the injustices to be addressed, are the *Gukurahundi* (the genocide of the Ndebele people in Matabeleland) after independence; the *Hondo yeminda* land reform program in 2000; and *Operation Murambatsvina* (Restore Order) in 2005. Katongole (2005: 23) comments that Christians are not only invited to be people of memory; their lives are shaped around and by concrete geographies of memories which engender habits, visions, and expectations. The Christian institution must act as a public advocate for retelling the memories and work towards peace and reconciliation in the country.

Volf talks about the **public good of justice**, "justice is the virtue of being disposed to give people what is owed to them, whether that is punishment or reward or simply leaving them in peace" Volf (2016: 192). Volf quotes Roman lawyer Ulpian (170-223) in defining justice "as steady and enduring will to render to everyone his right". Volf (2016:193) provides four public virtues of justice which can help the Christian institutions and churches in Zimbabwe to understand what justice it is. The four virtues are as follows, a common way of understanding democratic politics, the "interest adjudication" model, attention to the many goods we share with others, commitment to justice counters the temptation to let the laws of the land determine our judgments about what is right and justice that shows no partiality, just for all. These models can help the government and the church to work together.

1.10.6 Chapter 6: Strategic perspective

The role of the Zimbabwean church in promoting social justice will be explored. The church in Zimbabwe can use the biblical statement of Micah 6:8 to love mercy and do justice and walk humbly with God.

The church institutions in Zimbabwe must relate to society primarily through the conversion of people and their nurture in faith. The church must make a lasting impact in the community and by this the church can contribute to the influence on the whole world. If the church is not involved or takes part on critical social justice issues, it is short-changing its members regarding their ministry and stewardship. The role of church leaders, especially the deacons, elders and pastors deserve special commitment and ability to uphold the issues of social justice. The Christian institutions must stand for social justice and speak the truth in love to the political and community power structures all the way up to the highest level of power in the world.

Empowering the local churches is one of the strategies, the church relates to the community primarily through the conversation of people and their nature in faith. The churches in Zimbabwe must understand that the work of changing lives makes a lasting impact in the community, and this is the most important way in which the church contributes the wholeness of the world. The local churches can embrace and start to promote the issues of social justice. The local church leaders can start with their special opportunity to guide the church on the issues of addressing social justice issues, they should bear in mind that their task is ultimately to help equip Christians in the local congregations for effective service. The churches must develop a sound theological and moral base as well as careful social justice analysis. Christians can join public interest groups that specialise in Christians promoting social justice. Gushee (2000:49) commented that “public justice requires equal treatment of all citizens, regardless of their faith.” In the same way the Christian institutes and local churches can foster responsible citizenship on the part of their members by encouraging them to participate in the public interest groups.

The church can network with the social justice activist groups in the community as a way of building bridges and expanding the circle of influence in terms of social justice. The church networking with the community can also provide public witness to more people who are willing, and they will be able to set aside their differences and come together for one purpose of promoting social justice. Therefore, the church networking with the

community can address critical issues, pooling resources together and impact the people in the community.

1.10.7 Chapter 7: Conclusions

The expected outcome of this inquiry is the development of a public theology relevant to Zimbabwe and Africa. Overcoming church public isolation in our communities requires a good public theology that requires people who appreciate the significance of others and offer a safe public space that promotes issues of social justice. Growing in understanding social justice and respecting others can develop and reshape Zimbabwe in terms of understanding God and have a peaceful and one united country. The importance of developing a good and contextually relevant public theology in Zimbabwe can teach the Christians and citizens to create a public space that patiently listens to God's voice, community's voice and to be humbly curious to learn God's ways and to be mindful of knowing more about social justice.

CHAPTER 2

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS: ZIMBABWE'S SOCIO-POLITICAL SITUATION 1980 TO PRESENT

2.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the literature regarding Zimbabwe's socio-political situation, beginning from the attaining of independence in 1980 to the present day, to establish the repercussions of land reform to the Zimbabwean people. The analysis of Zimbabwe's socio-political situation enabled the study to build the public theology and challenge the Christian institution and individuals that through history the church was there to create an atmosphere of peace and justice within communities. Zurlo (2022:318) asserts that the non-governmental organisations local and international, have reported human rights abuses in Zimbabwe including cases of violence against women and girls, restrictions of freedom of expression and widespread corruption. The emergence of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) brought about social inequality in Zimbabwe which traumatised the average Zimbabwean. According to Bowyer- Bower and Stoneman (2000:1)

Land reform is often viewed in moral and political terms, as a necessary means by which land may be redistributed, for example to the landless and poor to help alleviate poverty, as reward for struggle for liberation, to help redress population-land imbalances.

Given the above viewpoint, Zimbabwe's agrarian reform would seem a noble idea. However, the implementation model of the initially noble idea could have been self-defeating. The Zimbabwean government has often been accused of not taking firm action to investigate the claims of corruption and arrest or prosecute the offenders. It is believed for many years, most of the Zimbabwean citizens have been mistreated by the politicians through government sponsored violence and injustices (Sachikonye 2022:1). In addition, the right-wing patrimonial atmosphere and influence with ties to the ZANU-PF party leadership drove and influenced the system of land allocation and ownership during the time of land reform. In terms of land reform, it is obvious that Zimbabwe is in desperate need of social justice.

2.2 Post-independence socio-political situation in Zimbabwe (1980-2000) The Lancaster House Agreement was signed in 1979, marking the start of Zimbabwe's land reform. The land reform and resettlement program in Zimbabwe can be divided into two main phases. The first stretched from 1980 to 1997 and was based on a willing seller/willing buyer method in line with the government's aim of national reconciliation and the Lancaster House Constitution. However, the Zimbabwean government started a radical land reform process in 1997 that was based on extensive compulsory land acquisition and redistribution (Moyo S. 2004:19).

2.2.1 Gukurahundi -1980s

The government of Zimbabwe's initiatives to improve the standards of living for the underprivileged majority in the impoverished country have been centred on the need to grant land to the landless, community places which were overstocked and overused. Land was at the heart of the liberation war that resulted in the Lancaster House Conference Agreement, and throughout the conference, land acquisition and distribution were important points of disagreement that, at one point, nearly derailed discussions. In Zimbabwe, land has always been a major problem. Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980, during that time people were very happy with the new country and the new government. In the initial stages of this new administration almost everything was good, social justice was prevailing, education and health infrastructure were among the new government's priorities. There were great job opportunities, and the people were being employed in urban areas, mines, and farms. The citizens had decent living standards, having clean water and reliable electricity. In terms of politics the country was promoting unity and reconciliation without any racial discrimination and any political affiliation. The country's government was composed of both black and white members of parliament. This racial balance was promoted by the government's policy of reconciliation which it adopted at independence. Mlambo (2014: 195) contends that "Robert Mugabe announced the policy of reconciliation; he demonstrated his government's commitment to reconciliation by appointing a number of former Rhodesian white politicians to positions of leadership in the government."

At the dawn of the country's independence, a small group of white farmers made up of immigrants and their descendants owned about half of the country's land, including most of the fertile land. It believed that the communal land's remaining mostly less fertile lands were subject to access and use rights by the indigenous rural majority. Palmer (1990:68) claims that in 1980, it was evident that something needed to be done for the sake of both social justice and ecological balance due to the racial division of land, uneven population densities, and high political expectations. Mbe (2013:23) asserts that,

Within six months of Mugabe beginning his rule in 1980, he had signed a deal with North Korean President Kim Il Sung for his soldiers to train what would become the "Fifth Brigade" his own personal army. These were elite troops separate and distinct from the rest of the army. They had different codes, uniforms, radios, and equipment incompatible with that of another army.

For Mlambo (2014:196), it is thought that the conflict between Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe over ZAPU's 1982 policy of keeping military weapon stockpiles on farms and other properties resulted in the arrest of their leaders. The Matebeleland crisis, which occurred in the context of a long-standing rivalry between the present administration and the people of Matebeleland, was caused by the ZANU-ZAPU friction. ZANU stood for the political interests of Shona speakers and ZAPU for the Ndebele. The political outfit became more and more associated mostly with one of the two ethnic groupings. This rivalry is still present even today (Guzura and Ndimande (2015:7). Even the voting trends in national elections show that Matebeleland region is a stronghold of the opposition. Mlambo (2014:197) echoes the same. For him, given these long-standing rivalries and mutual suspicions, the discovery of arms at ZAPU-owned properties led to Gukurahundi. The Mugabe administration sent its Korean-trained Fifth Brigade into Matebeleland in 1983 to quell the uprising, branding the Matebeleland people who participated in the freedom war as dissidents and puppets of South Africa.

In 1983 going on, the situation in Zimbabwe changed because of Gukurahundi. Even today, the Zimbabwean citizens still have questions which need answers pertaining to that war. It is believed that the perpetrators of Gukurahundi were not held accountable for that war.

However, the ruling government believes that if they open to discuss the issue of Gukurahundi, it will open old wounds which may inevitably bring political instability in the country.

2.2.2 The Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) -1990s

ESAP was introduced in 1991 when the Government of Zimbabwe swapped its highly interventionist economic strategy for a market driven Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). The major objective of ESAP was the reorientation of the economy from the production of non-tradable goods to the production of tradable ones. Through a sustained depreciation of the exchange rate, the prices of tradable goods rise relative to those of non-tradable goods, thereby shifting the domestic terms of trade in favour of tradable goods relative to non-tradable goods. All other things remaining equal, the tradable goods sector becomes more profitable relative to the non-tradable goods sector. Following this shift in relative prices, producers are expected to shift from the production of non- tradable goods to the production of tradable goods, with output and employment growth expected to be faster in the tradable, relative to the non-tradable goods sector. However, the economic policy proved to be counterproductive. As Mhone (1994: 47-49) noted,

The decontrol of prices and the deregulation of markets have primarily resulted in an increase in prices of inputs and final goods and services, both of which have negatively affected the informal sector on the production, cost, and demand sides. In this respect, it may be noted that both the easy entry activities such as food vending and knitting, and the complex activities such as metal related and wood related activities, have been negatively affected. In the pre-ESAP period, the easy-entry activities benefited from their ability to buy commodities at controlled prices and sell them at black-market prices and since ESAP this economic rent differential has now been eliminated; and the complex activities benefitted from controlled input prices which now have been decontrolled.

By the mid 1990s, the hope for a happy life for everyone was quickly fading. It was replaced by an increasing sense of hopelessness due to rising unemployment and

inflation, falling household incomes, the development of informal economy, expanding poverty especially in urban areas, and severe lack of affordable housing for the urban poor. It is significant to note that the emergence of the powerful opposition party Movement for Democratic Change in 1999, which offered a challenge to ZANU PF's hegemony, altered the political climate in Zimbabwe. The country's economic and social status deteriorated due to claims of political violence and election cheating by the ruling party. The beginning of Zimbabwe's political polarisation also occurred during this time.

2.2.3. Fast track land reform program (FTLRP) – 2000

Before embarking on the FTLRP, it is crucial that the background to this contentious exercise be understood. The land issue in Zimbabwe dates back to the pre-colonial period and it is one of the issues that generated a lot of tensions at the Lancaster House Conference in 1979. The Conference resolved that land was going to be acquired through the willing buyer willing seller model.

2.2.3.1 The Willing Seller-Willing Buyer Model

The willing seller willing buyer model was the reigning paradigm from 1980 to 1992. This model was a product of The Lancaster House Conference where the Patriotic Front had accepted British demands only after the United States and British governments had promised to avail funds to pay for the land. The Lancaster House Agreement required the Zimbabwean Government to wait for a decade before starting to implement any land reform programme. It however permitted the government to purchase unoccupied land for resettlement purposes. As posited by Richardson (2005:25), the Lancaster House Constitution provided for a “Declaration of Rights” and these rights included the “Freedom from Deprivation of Property”. The other principles that were put forward at the Lancaster House Conference include:

- acquisition of land only on a willing buyer willing seller basis,
- compensation to be remittable in a foreign currency; and

- under-utilised land could be acquired for public purposes but at the full market value” (Stoneman and Cliffe 1989:1).

The willing buyer willing seller principle entailed that there was no compulsory purchase, and the Government would only buy land for resettlement that was offered voluntarily. Moyo S. (2014:1) views the willing seller-willing buyer principle as an exclusively voluntary transaction between a seller and a buyer, meaning landowners were not obliged in any way to cede their pieces of land.

This principle dictated that all land had to be offered to the Government first, and if the Government turned it down, a certificate of “no present interest” was issued allowing an alternative sale. According to Madhuku (2004:29) the Lancaster House Constitutional scheme severely limited the scope of any land reform based on compulsory acquisition.

Moyo S. (2014:1) further posits that the process of land reform in Zimbabwe officially began with the signing of the Lancaster House Agreement in 1979. The process was initiated as an effort to distribute land more equitably between the historically disenfranchised majority-blacks and the minority-whites who had ruled the Southern African country from 1890 to 1979. Moyo (2014:1) maintains that for the first two decades into independence, Zimbabwe’s land reform policy had gained international admiration and it had become a model of how land questions ought to be addressed. However, this much hyped scheme could not bear the anticipated results. Zimbabwe reportedly managed to acquire only 3 million hectares, a figure that fell short of the targeted 8 million hectares. So obviously this land redistribution trajectory was not a success. Its failure was attributed to a number of factors.

One of the chief reasons for the failure of this programme was lack of funds and capital to purchase the land. The financiers of this program, Britain and America cited corruption within government as the reason for not honouring their pledge. By 1990, Britain had only donated \$47 million out of a staggering \$630 million which had been pledged at the maiden independence. The donated amount therefore translated to 44% of what was required (Mabaye 2005).

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank also suspended aid for land reform in 1989 citing the same reasons. Moyo (2014:71) identified what he called the “enmity” between the blacks and the whites as responsible for making the principle of willing seller willing buyer futile. Moyo (2014:71) further alleged that,

Despite the agreement made by the former colonial government and ZANU PF government in 1980, that national healing and reconciliation should take effect, the majority of the blacks kept haunted by the memories of the injustices of their former colonial masters ... they were impatient of the progress affected by the willing seller, willing buyer.

This suggests that there was considerable distrust among the former antagonists, which impeded any efforts to amicably address the land issue. The former liberation fighters could have interpreted the delay in the redistribution of land as resistance by the former colonisers. Moyo (1990:203) argued that “the socialist, Marxist-Leninist, rhetoric of Mugabe and ZANU led many to expect radical redistribution of land after 1980.” These expectations were dashed by these prolonged delays. This therefore required a more concerted effort to deal with this outstanding issue. This led to the introduction of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme.

2.2.3.2 Fast Track Land Reform Programme: The Pros and Cons.

This was a radical stance which was adopted due to the challenges associated with the Willing Seller-Willing Buyer scheme. The limitations of this scheme required a paradigm shift. The programme was launched in July 2000 when the government formally announced it. It is important to note that the legislation which provided for the FTLRP was promulgated as a reaction to the rejection of the 1999 Draft Constitution. The Draft Constitution had sought to make provisions for the compulsory acquisition of land from white commercial farmers. Therefore, as a reactionary move, the FTLRP would naturally be expected to be chaotic. Zimbabwe's economic crisis was made worse in 2000 by the politically driven invasions of profitable farms, the ensuing disruption of farming operations, and the damage of expensive farm equipment. It is important to remember that the land problem was still open since the time Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980,

but the manner it was resolved had a detrimental impact on the political and economic situation of the nation. The commercial farm invasions that preceded the FTLRP in 2000 saw previously white-owned farms being divided into small farm units measuring six hectares, which benefited the landless indigenous people, according to Batisai and Mudimu (2021:373). This is referred to as the Third Chimurenga or Jambanja (a lingo meaning violence). The government took up land under the policy of compulsory land acquisition without compensation, whereby land becomes state property. Unfortunately, this had negative effects on Zimbabwe's agro- industry. The Fast-track land reform, which included evictions and invasions of white-owned farms by native Zimbabweans led by war veterans, is the most contentious political issue in Zimbabwe. Those who were ideologically connected to the ruling party for example war veterans, ruling party militias and some of the uniformed forces largely benefited from the program despite their lack of capacity to engage in productive farming.

Many white families were rendered homeless, some of them not even a needle to their name. They were not permitted to take anything from their agricultural property because many other goods had been grabbed and stolen. Farm employees found themselves unexpectedly jobless. During the land reform, it's thought that the police also declined to detain and warn those involved in land grabs. Political justification for the fast-track land reform programme included the idea that it would restore land to its legitimate owners, meaning that all commercial farmers- including those who acquired their farms after independence, often from the government itself were unauthorised tenants. Instead of requiring rhetorically, ZANU PF officially invoked a political justification that pointed to a historical wrong, "Where was the rule of law when the land was being taken away from black people?" (Bratton 2014:79). Additionally, it is alleged that this development negatively impacted on the society at large as justice and the rule of law were being gradually perverted. When the police were directed not to act against certain, specific crimes committed by certain people, the Zimbabwean legal system began to fall apart.

According to Bratton (2014:74):

Land was not only the ultimate revolutionary symbol, but also a valuable political resource for cementing political loyalty. Resorting to forcible land seizures, the party redistributed commercial farms, not only to land-hungry peasants but also to key members of the ruling elite, including cabinet ministers, senior civil servants, security forces commanders, judges, and parliamentarians.

Because land and other resources were treated as prizes of patronage, economic production and related social services suffered. The government passed legislation that effectively nationalised all white-owned farms without providing any kind of compensation for the land and that made it illegal for any farmer or farm worker to continue living on the farms, which happened to be their homes, without an offer letter, lease, or permit. It was possible to spend up to two years in prison for refusing to vacate a compulsorily acquired farm. Farms whose owners had to flee their houses were assigned to obedient black judges by the ruling party. It is nearly impossible for inhabitants of nations with functional judicial systems to imagine what it is like when their government purposely changes the law to evict the landowners from their houses and workers from their places of employment.

Most of the people went to stay in cities. Ironically, because of overcrowding and the resulting environmental damage, the government was compelled to relocate so many people to the communal lands. International isolation resulted from the disintegration of the rule of law. It is believed that a ministerial action group from the Commonwealth unsuccessfully attempted to persuade the ZANU PF leadership to agree to re-establishing fair procedures for land reform. Some of the farmers that stayed on the land were able to do so for a variety of reasons, including supporting commercial production and being allies of the ruling ZANU PF party. It is believed that the farmers who felt they could not handle the humiliation of losing their land moved to the neighbouring nations of Southern Africa.

Contrarily, it is said that migrants to South Africa, Zambia, and Nigeria were able to settle there and received a lot of assistance from their new host states. This indicates that justice may be pursued in a different setting, or rather, that the pursuit of social justice in the context of a land reform depends on the recovery of the land even in a new era. Ironically, Zimbabwe is today importing grain from its neighbours, presumably being produced by the same farmers who were chased away from the country. Although the Zimbabwean people's efforts to regain their land were justifiable, many observers and the international world still strongly disagree with how this significant exercise was conducted Chikuhwa (2004: 246). However, such a policy choice triggered an unheard-of economic downturn. The manner Zimbabwe's land reform was implemented was widely criticised both inside and outside of Zimbabwe, which plunged the nation into a severe crisis marked by food shortages, unemployment, and excessive inflation.

The land issue in Zimbabwe was intended to be resolved, but the violent and haphazard way in which it was handled worsened the economic situation and forced many Zimbabweans into unacceptably high levels of poverty. In 2000, for the first time in Zimbabwe's history, an opposition party with sufficient parliamentary support to thwart more constitutional changes existed. When ZANU PF's hegemony was threatened, its leaders turned to more extreme power politics strategies, including violence. They caused a disastrous economic and political collapse in the nation by disobeying the law and the fundamentals of wise economic administration. Additionally, organised violence was practised in ZANU PF strongholds in the Mashonaland regions. All these ruling government actions made Zimbabwe's political, economic, and social life deteriorate for both the local people and global world. The new opposition party, led by the late Morgan Tsvangirai, had brought up multi-party choices.

Zimbabwe's political division started in 2000, particularly following the country's division due to a constitutional referendum. The "**No Vote**" that resulted in the majority rejecting the draft constitution was attributed to the white population. As retaliation for "influencing" the public to reject the draft constitution, the government then launched a campaign to seize farms that belonged primarily to white commercial farmers.

Mamdani states that the "relentless pursuit of justice" that turned into "a vengeance and ended in revenge" was at the core of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (Gatsheni-Ndlovu, 2009: 207). When race entered the issue, some white people were killed by the so-called "jambanja."

2.3 Civil society and the development of political parties (2001–2018)

According to Manase (2019:8), Zimbabwe has generally had severe social, political, and economic instability since the year 2000. This instability can be attributed to ZANU PF's response to the 1999 formation of the Movement for Democratic Change, a potent opposition political party, and its cooperation with Civil Society Organizations like the National Constitution Assembly (NCA), the Zimbabwe Crisis Coalition (ZCC), and Woman of Zimbabwe Arise (WAZA) in the effort to improve the country's democratic conditions. A wide range of Zimbabweans, regardless of race, ethnicity, or political affiliation, were encouraged to participate in the carrying out and exercise of different personal, intellectual, and other freedoms during this time by civic organisations and opposition groups.

An extreme decrease in agricultural production, which severely reduced the amount of food that could be produced to feed the country, was a defining feature of the post-2000 economic environment. The production in the industries was also impacted by this drop in agricultural output. In the decades after independence, the ruling party politicised the land question and abused it as a tool for divisive political opinion. The fact that the land reform goes beyond the severe imbalance that caused by historical injustices, but still remembered, force and that was mainly safeguarded through complacency by constitutional rules. This imbalance also persisted a corresponding severe disparity in wealth and life possibilities. The land question has historical roots and the concept of land reform itself has a long history. Understanding the historical development of racial patterns of ownership rights and patterns of permanent distribution is essential to understanding the land reform. It is also believed that the communal forms that had already been rebuilt through conquest served as the primary political and social intermediaries for land ownership.

Between late May and late August 2005, the ruling government in Zimbabwe started razing informal urban “settlements” driving a lot of people back into rural areas and on to communal lands. The exercise was called “Operation Murambatsvina”. Numerous informal businesses, such as street and market vending, were damaged or shut down, in addition to a large number of residences, damaging livelihoods. Bratton (2014:82) articulates that,

The operation Murambatsvina (Clean out the Trash) in 2005, was designed to stifle the informal economy by ransacking business properties and punishing the opposition party members in the urban areas. This campaign in which some 700,00 urban Zimbabweans were rendered homeless or lost their livelihood, and up to 2 million were indirectly affected and it was condemned by the United Nations and other international agencies as a gross violation of human rights.

Due to shockingly high levels of inflation, which made determining the prices of commodities a daily habit, the value of the Zimbabwean dollar continued to decline at a startling rate. The few goods that were produced locally were sold at speculatively high prices, which resulted in the extreme impoverishment of Zimbabwe's average citizens. The economy was showing signs of severe stress, which included, among other things, ever decreasing production capacities of the productive sector given a variety of challenges. The vibrant informal sector and a new breed of black-market traders emerged because of the official economy's inability to satisfy people's needs and wants. These dealers secretly marketed the few goods produced locally on the black market at exorbitant prices. The few goods that were produced locally were sold at exorbitant costs, which caused Zimbabwe's common people to live in abject poverty.

Bratton (2014) asserts that “once one of the African most bountiful and promising lands, by 2008 Zimbabwe had descended into political violence, economic deprivation and institutional decay.” Manase (2019:10) confirms that between 2000 and 2008, we witnessed ongoing, intense disputes between the government's ZANU PF and the opposition MDC over control of the country's political sphere.

Invasion and takeover of commercial farms owned by white and black Zimbabweans who supported the opposition also occurred at this time, which is another feature of the period. According to the narrative of the current government, the opposition parties, community groups, and white and black commercial farmers whose land was seized during the land reform are working along with the British to overthrow the current government and then re-colonise Zimbabwe. As a result, the country started to experience the persecution of civic and opposition of all races, media censorship, severe police and military control of citizen movements and their social and private space, as well as the abduction of some of these individuals.

2.4 The second republic (2018-present)

According to the Second Republic doctrine, the church and its function in society are fully acknowledged. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, Mugabe's successor, completed the term for Mugabe from November 2017 to July 2018 and was sworn in as president of Zimbabwe in 2018.

It declares that freedom of religion and worship is a cornerstone of the constitution. The nation values that freedom highly for historical and constitutional grounds. It asserts that Zimbabwe's entire history has mandated cooperation between the church and the government. It condemns pointless conflict, which the government must put a stop to at all costs and resolve through continuous communication. In order to do this, the government's door is always open to the church. This move ignited hope among the citizens. As Helliker and Murisa (2020) posit, there was an air of excitement, expectation and hope that prevailed in Zimbabwe after the removal of former president, Robert Mugabe. This wave of optimism was, however, short-lived as all the hopes were dashed and replaced with a sense of despair. The second republic's image has been tainted by legitimacy challenges. Helliker and Murisa (2020) further observed that this new government failed to capitalise on the optimism that people had to devise an inclusive approach in dealing with the country's long standing socio-economic and political challenges.

Economic crises are rampant in post-November 2017 Zimbabwe, and even more so since the national elections in July 2018 which confirmed Mnangagwa's rulership. All major indicators reveal low levels of economic performance nationally, as manifested in shortages of fuel and power cuts; incoherent currency management practices; high levels of poverty, unemployment, and inequality; deindustrialisation, company closures and limited utilisation of factory capacity; and collapse of basic infrastructure. As well, there is runaway inflation (including for food commodities), with the year-on-year inflation rate for the month of December 2019, as measured by the all-items Consumer Price Index, standing at 525%, soaring from 66.8% in March 2019. (Helliker and Murisa 2020) The Second Republic expressed interest in 2000 in following the national constitution and paying white farmers for the infrastructure on their farms rather than the actual land. According to Mnangagwa (ALjazeera: 2020), "It brings closure and a new beginning in the history of the land discourse in Zimbabwe." The payment of compensation, according to Mnangagwa, is essential to healing fences with the Western continent even though the land reform cannot be undone.

The ruling party land reform programme is accused by detractors of wrecking the country's vital agricultural industry. Following the land seizures, economic output decreased by 50%, and the economy has been weakened ever since The Second Republic expressed interest in 2000 in following the national constitution and paying white farmers for the infrastructure on their farms rather than the actual land. According to Mnangagwa (ALjazeera: 2020), "It brings closure and a new beginning in the history of the land discourse in Zimbabwe." The payment of compensation, according to Mnangagwa, is essential to healing fences with the Western continent even though the land reform cannot be undone. The ruling party land reform programme is accused by detractors of wrecking the country's vital agricultural industry. Following the land seizures, economic output decreased by 50%, and the economy has been weakened ever since.

2.5 CCC's manifesto for Land Reform



Figure 1

A prominent political rivalry, the Citizens' Coalition for Change (CCC), which took part in the controversial August 2023 elections, released a manifesto discussing land, agriculture, and rural development. Rebuilding Zimbabwe was a key component of the CCC agenda, and transformation is the cornerstone of the opposition led by Nelson Chamisa. Knowing that land is essential to Zimbabwean politics and the party's ability to forge a genuine, personal connection with the subject and win over most voters, the CCC created the land manifesto. The CCC manifesto restated the familiar narrative that the sector has been experiencing a persistent food deficit due to the chaotic land reform. The CCC manifesto also argues that attention to land administration and governance must be given priority immediately. The CCC manifesto makes the argument that multiple farm ownership must be addressed, elite grabbing, corruption, and patronage must end, and that land must be removed from the political system of party control and favouritism and placed under an efficient administrative framework. It is important that honest and reliable individuals be appointed to positions of authority in order for them to fully resolve the land reform issue in accordance with ongoing discussions. People on the land where there

were many illegal allocations combined with a lack of clear border demarcation and an inadequate documentation system are thought to have lived there. Many recently acquired landowners lack official records, such as leases or permits attesting to their ownership. Given the frequently random and occasionally corrupt approach to land reallocation that occurred under the reform programme, there is a tremendous deal of uncertainty. The opposition party promised to give ownership deeds to farmers relocated under the government's restitution of land programme, as well as free basic education for all Zimbabwean children from grade one to grade seven. Hammar et al. (2003) note that although the land invasion was heavily politicised and backed by ZANU- PF and the military, its origins and participants were varied. While a limited group of organised war veterans participated in some of the invasions, most of the participants were impoverished local peasants from the surrounding areas. In Zimbabwe, politics and land are closely related.

Technocratic solutions alone are insufficient to break the current impasse; plans, models, audits, and laws are only a portion of the picture. Redress and redistribution must be included in a reframed discussion along with rights and obligations.

2.6 Zimbabwe's Land reform: A Global Perspective.

Land reform was not limited to Zimbabwe; it was also implemented in several Central Asian and Central and Eastern European countries. This study seeks to examine a few land reform scenarios and compare them to Zimbabwe's experiences.

2.6.1 Land reform in Europe and Central Asia (Bulgaria, Moldova, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan).

Changes to laws, regulations, or conventions governing land ownership are included in land reform, usually referred to as agrarian reform. It consists of appropriately distributed agricultural land that was redistributed on government initiative or support. It entails the transfer of ownership from the more powerful to the less powerful, such as from a relatively small group of affluent landowners with significant holdings, whether such transfer of ownership is done for payment. Food security is one of the main objectives of increasing agricultural output and is also at the core of sustainable development in the modern world. Land reform has been a recurring issue of great relevance throughout history.

According to Dudwick, Fock, and Sedik (2007:1), land reform can increase farm production efficiency by establishing secure individual property or use rights over land. Secure tenure rights can strengthen rural communities' access to finance, spur demand for land, and increase the potential for municipal tax income. These changes encourage the expansion of agricultural productivity, according to Dudwick, Fock, and Sedik (2007:2). If land distribution or restitution in rural regions is widespread, land reform can expand access to land for poor rural residents. In rural places, having access to land creates a social safety net that enables inhabitants to take responsibility for their own food security. Furthermore, land distribution can give rural residents with entrepreneurial abilities the resources they need to transition to commercial farming. Therefore, land reform can help reduce poverty by promoting sustainable, pro-poor growth in rural regions.

2.6.2 Land reform in Central and Eastern Europe.

Hartvigsen (2013) made an extensive study of land reform in twenty-five countries in Central and Eastern Europe. In his studies, he discovered that the approaches employed by these countries since 1989 were varied.

In all the countries where land reform has been applied, the political decisions were driven by considerations of equity and political justice, and yet there was a considerable variety in the design of land reforms. The paper shows that the land reforms have resulted in different outcomes, including quite different farm structures. Before 1989, the farm structures in the study countries (except for Poland and Yugoslavia) were dominated by large-scale cooperatives and state farms. The land reforms after 1989 have resulted in a complete breakup of these farm structures in some of the countries, while in other countries the farm structures remain dominated by large-scale corporate farms (often being the successors of the cooperatives and state farms) that now operate on lease agreements with the private owners of the land. The differences in the farm structures that emerged from the land reform process can, at least to a large degree, be explained by the chosen land reform approaches in each country. Though the approaches were varied, they were chiefly characterised by equity and political justice, an aspect which has been conspicuously lacking in Zimbabwe's land reform trajectory.

2.7 Musicians draws attention to Zimbabwe's political and social issues

According to Mangena, Chitando, and Muwati (2016: xi), music predates humankind. It's only one of the several artistic endeavours that give people a "second handle on reality." It penetrates all facets of human life and, in doing so, makes links with the persistent need for purpose in life. Music has served as a medium for articulating the various conflicts for identity, nation, and politics. For example, the political history of Zimbabwe is packed with perfect examples of how music has been operationalized to shape and reshape the nation, politics, and identity.

Following significant economic upheavals in the year 2000, the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANUPF) led the state in stepping up its efforts to create and regulate music.

This was one of several control mechanisms designed to create and maintain a discourse centred around the state. In the words of Bongmba (2001:151), African musicians offer an extensive range of materials for religious discourse that ought to be employed in constructing an original discourse that emerges from present frustrations, positive thinking, and vision. The invaders rejoiced during the farm invasion on the exterior of their vehicle, displaying their axes and machetes anytime they saw any white people, striking out of the sky in the black power ZANU PF acknowledged, and singing Chimurenga songs in their voices.

2.7.1 ‘Mwana weVhu’ Song (Son of the Soil)

Black Zimbabweans are represented by the identification characteristic of ‘*Mwana wevhu*’, or "son of the soil," which recognises them as the true landowners. The white community which will be viewed as not the real owner of the land, followed by their workers, the majority of whom originated from surrounding countries like Mozambique, Zambia, and Malawi. In the same breath, the identification prohibits access to other would-be citizens. Several songs on the 2001 “Mwana weVhu” (Son of the Soil), which was produced by Elliot Manyika, the then-Minister of Youth Development and Employment Creation, praised President Mugabe and ZANU PF. This inspired several campaign songs that complemented the emancipation rhetoric of the "Third Chimurenga." Under the "Third Chimurenga," ZANU PF planned to address the socio-political and economic issues that arose after 2000, Mangena, Chitando, and Muwati (2016: 105). To achieve its goals, ZANU PF was forced to implement a number of socio-political and economic interventions using the tools of anti-colonial redress and anti-imperialist critique. As a result, the post-2000 era is known as the “Third Chimurenga,” or another phase of liberation that marks the end of colonial supremacy.

2.7.2 Corruption, ‘Mamvemve’ and ‘Disaster’- Thomas Mapfumo

Thomas Mapfumo, a social activist, and founder of what is called Chimurenga music in Zimbabwe. He was born on July 3, 1945, in the small town of Marondera near the capital city of Zimbabwe, Harare. He was raised in the life of a farm boy, immersed in the African traditions and music of the Shona people, sharing in gathering and participating in rituals of his clan.

The major problem of Zimbabwe not developing is because of political corruption. Corruption is also known as dishonest or illegal behaviour has been the major hindrance to the development of Zimbabwe. Thomas Mapfumo was acting as one of the prophets of challenging the kings and rulers of the nation, his songs were viewed as a mode of art that constitutes critical interrogation of political corruption in Zimbabwe. Thomas Mapfumo's music was largely criticised by the government's failure to deliver as expected by the masses. Thomas' songs were commonly responding to changing financial, social, political, and material circumstances in the country. Thomas Mapfumo's music has been labelled as anti-government, since it largely criticises policies that are anathema to the interest of the people. Thomas Mapfumo's lyrics reflected the concern of the people around him, he sang about the hardship life of the people in rural areas, ill treatment of women, decries alcoholism, AIDS, domestic violence, Zimbabwean people devotion to foreign things and upholds Shona Zimbabwean Culture awareness.

In the song "**Corruption**" Mapfumo sang of the violation of the leadership code by the leaders themselves, whose moral decay is revealed in their treatment of women. Mapfumo managed to use the "free" space to sing songs that both celebrated independence and questioned certain state policies. Corruption song criticised the government of the late President Robert Mugabe's ruling government displeased with the criticism, this forced Thomas Mapfumo to run out of Zimbabwe and his music was barred from national radio and television of the country. Thomas Mapfumo portrayed the prophetic attribute of speaking the truth to power. As we know the prophets spoke to power structures as Thomas did to the President and his government, unmasked hypocrisy telling them the truth about corruption, and reminded the Zimbabweans of their past, he advocated for the marginalised and called for justice for all people. He moved his family out of Zimbabwe because he had been harassed by Mugabe's government, he relocated to Oregon, a state in the United States. It is believed that speaking a word of prophecy at times and often constituted an act requiring profound courage- courage to cut across the grain of society, and courage to risk life and limb to carry the divine message to the king, to other leaders, and to the people.

He basically made the decision that he was not going back to Zimbabwe and then applied for political asylum. It is believed that the corruption track was discussed in the parliament of Zimbabwe, around the same time as several government officials were indicated as part of a corrupt ring. Thomas Mapfumo by denouncing the corrupt government he took courageous risk as one of the prophetic themes. The corruption track was the first album labelled to be major in North America. Thomas Mapfumo has been a critic, first in the colonial time of the British government when Zimbabwe was colonised and called Southern Rhodesia. During the armed struggle, Thomas Mapfumo sided with the liberation war movement and in the time of dictatorship ruling of Mugabe. "Corruption" means the corruption of Robert Mugabe and his ruling government.

Thomas Mapfumo still has been viewed as a social critic who has kept his heart for the interest of the poor people and rural people and who become the victims of government, whether in the time of white and black racist Rhodesian time and in the corrupt regime of Robert Mugabe. He used music to complain about the people's suffering. Therefore, Thomas Mapfumo is one of the singers who portrays the historic sensibility as the prophets did. Historically, he managed to experience the wonderful liberation and freedom for Zimbabwe he was able to use that history to denounce the culture of *something for something, nothing for nothing* in his lyrics in the Corruption song during the ruling of Mugabe. Thomas Mapfumo is like the prophets Hosea and Jeremiah who exposed the sins and mistakes of their people's history. Thomas' use of the *mbira* in his songs places him in the authentic African traditional environment. In the Shona culture, the *mbira* is utilised to facilitate communication with ancestral spirits, causing ecstasy in the singer-songwriter. Thomas sort of bravely came forward and sang this song about corruption. Due to the corruption album the Zimbabwe opposition parties ignited the corruption thread and challenged the government to address reports of corrupt members of the parliament. Most of the Zimbabwean people appreciated the message of Thomas Mapfumo, he was then viewed as a visionary, social commentator, and political observer. Thomas Mapfumo is said to have focused more on the nation's leaders in the late 1990s since he felt that they did not care about the people across the country.

He described the Zimbabwe economic crisis as a **“Disaster.”** Thomas Mapfumo was pointing the finger at the leaders. He was saying you are corrupt, and you look after yourself. He was saying to them you promised people a good life, but you did not deliver. Disaster which stated the country’s predicament in no uncertain terms. In the song **Mamvemve** he sang that “the country you used to cry for is now in tatters.” He described the economic crisis in Zimbabwe in general is like a shirt in tatters (Mamvemve)

“Mamvemve ” and “Disaster” were like **“Corruption”** totally attacks on the failures of the Zimbabwean government. Thomas Mapfumo bemoaned the deteriorating living standards in the country. He sings the truth and people continue to love him for it. He also gives attention to the need of the working, in a corruption song he sang that, “I work so hard to make a living, every day for a little, every day like a slave every morning for my family.” Thomas Mapfumo songs were not in support of any political party or even of black people against white people. They were motivated by principles and values of promoting social justice.

In fact, that he kept making critical music, Mangena, Chitando, and Muwati (2016) claim that it was not embraced with the same passion as it would have if the musician had been living in his home nation and could personally relate to the circumstances there. Furthermore, live performances where performers and audiences interact are crucial to the livelihood of Zimbabwean musicians and other musicians as well. Mapfumo's "self-imposed" exile had a significant impact on this aspect of his musical work and its communicational power. As political and social critics, musicians modify power relations that are tilted against them through their artistic innovations. In Zimbabwe, they were able to maintain artistic agency in the face of official censorship, which attempted to institutionalise self-censorship, control public cultural space, and consign the populace to a culture of silence and the blind acceptance of a single national vision and imagination. Through the artistic endeavours of many musicians, weighty societal issues were brought to light, under governmental and private constraints. These efforts were made in opposition to the vested interests of some political figures, and to challenge notions of a “threatened” national identity.

2.8 Concerning area

People in Zimbabwe are currently facing challenges and a dilemma related to the land issue as a result of historically established structures and patterns, as well as modern post-independence and the land redistribution programme that was carried out. If the historical injustices at the core of the land reform is viewed. Then the restitution of lands to people who were evicted may be seen as the most appropriate course of action rather than redistribution. Therefore, in the current Zimbabwean context, the subject of equitable resource distribution is raised. Miroslav Volf's Public Theology, which denounces social injustice and the treatment of land as personal property rather than as something that belongs to God and should benefit everyone, is very resonant with the idea that those who are privileged to have more are holding those things as God's stewards, and that the fact that some people are getting richer while others are suffering. Despite the recent finding of minerals like diamonds and platinum in Zimbabwe, the country has generally continued to live in abject poverty in a land where "milk and honey" flow. It is interesting, however, that the precise number of Zimbabweans who have immigrated to other nations cannot be determined because most of them are undocumented.

The significant brain-drain that has left the nation short of skilled and seasoned professionals like doctors, nurses, teachers, and engineers is indicated by the high rate of relocation. It is crucial to stress that many of these immigrants are often used to providing cheap work because they do not have appropriate documentation. The health infrastructure has also been impacted, as evidenced by the departure of skilled medical workers to other nations and the scarcity of medications. The country witnessed a cholera outbreak in 2009 due to inadequate service delivery by the local authorities in metropolitan centres, which resulted in several fatalities, mostly from the high-density neighbourhoods where the provision of clean water is inconsistent.

In contrast, land was taken from skilled farmers in Zimbabwe and given to unskilled ones, which reduced agricultural output. Many black farm workers suffered greatly because of land reform, losing their jobs.

Zimbabwe's economy suffered greatly because of land reform after 2000, as evidenced by a food crisis, a drop in agricultural exports, and the lowest level of tobacco output in 50 years. The massive imports of finished food from its neighbours, primarily South Africa, showed that Africa's former "breadbasket" was having trouble feeding its own population. Once more, the Zimbabwean land reform programme was seen as a way of honouring war veterans for their contributions to the liberation struggle. Few people benefited, and wealthy black minorities took over many farms with fertile soils. Due to this, most of them now have more than one farm owned by everyone, which is against the government's land policy of "one man, one farm." They selected farms with the best agricultural land.

Due to a lack of commitment or many farms that are no longer operating to their full potential, many of these vast tracts of land are not being used to their full potential. They did not seize the land because they needed it, but rather because they wanted it. The process was not based on the achievement of independence victories; rather, it was employed to buy votes for the political party that was on the verge of losing control. Race was a factor in Zimbabwe Land Reform when the government started the FTLRP. It is also crucial to note that the FTLRP only helped a small number of black people who backed the government's plan to seize farms from the last remaining white colonial settlers; the majority of black people in the country continued to live in poverty. While most black people continued to plough unproductive land, a small minority benefited from the FTLRP as a result of their government assistance. These individuals also had some spare land. The struggle for control of the land in Zimbabwe is frequently marred by politics, class, racism, and ethical issues. Concern for social justice and equality underpins such struggles. The land situation in Zimbabwe has always been a matter of injustice, and resolving it calls for a just and theological approach, which undercuts high level politics now. Zimbabwe is in a transitional state, like many other Southern African nations, and requires strong institutions to address land issues. These institutions must be able to endure political fancies and the test of time. Black Zimbabwean landowners who are landless and other affected parties suffer most directly when appropriate land reform

procedures are not followed, and international commitments are not fulfilled. These outcomes can be severe and frequently fatal.

Detrimental policy recommendations and misguided land reforms are frequently seen as the path to corruption and unutilized land, rather than enhancing livelihoods or resource benefits. This is frequently caused by the complexity, dynamics, and realities of local corrupt leaders, which are not fully considered in reform plans and procedures. In developing nations, land reforms are essential to their political economies. The Zimbabwean government was unaware that proper land reform might affect the lives of those who depended on the land and promote sustainable resource management and economic growth by controlling resource access, use, and control.

2.9 Conclusion

With particular focus on development and socialism in the 1980s, ESAP in the 1990s, the land reform in 2000, and the height of the crises in 2008, this chapter has been able to provide an overview of the social, economic, and political issues in Zimbabwe. The chapter also established that the nation's economic problems were primarily brought on by political and economic errors, some of which have been mentioned above. The chapter also made clear that some of the primary effects caused by this crisis included poverty, unemployment, hyperinflation, a shortage of products, and the shutdown of companies. However, without the mutually supportive pillars of an urban salary and rural subsistence, many Zimbabweans are now much more dependent on the land for their survival and livelihoods.

Chapter 3

Historical analysis: Zimbabwe's church-state relationship 1980 TO PRESENT.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the historical progression, contemporary state, and contributions of Christian institutions to the cause of social justice and the response to land reform in Zimbabwe. The church must propose a solution because Zimbabwe's struggle for social justice and equitable land distribution will teach other African nations important lessons. We can better grasp Miroslav Volf's theological framework for addressing concerns of injustice, forgiveness, as well as memory and healing, by studying the history of the state-church relationship in this chapter.

3.2 A Brief Account of the History of the Public Concern Regarding the Church and State.

The work of Zvobgo (1996), the missionaries concluded in the 1880s that the Ndebele form of government needed to be abolished to make place for Christianity because they were unable to convert people under Lobengula's rule. For instance, on May 29, 1883, Father Prestige wrote, "Until the Matabeles are put down by brute force... they never improve." This demonstrates unequivocally that Zvobgo's study focused heavily on the actions and mindsets of missionaries in Zimbabwe. Further, Zvobgo (1996) explains and examines a number of missionary societies from various denominations, including Catholic, Methodist, Anglican, Dutch Reformed, Seventh Day Adventist, Salvation Army, and many more. These missionary societies started to compete aggressively for monopolies over territory and spirituality throughout Zimbabwe, creating "areas of interest" for individual missionaries. As noted by Chitando (1997), "it becomes evident that denominational allegiance made little difference at that time from an examination of the missionaries' attitude towards the local culture." As we can see, many of the missionaries at the time were always thrilled to introduce their culture. As a result, as the number of

missionaries from various denominations increased, some of them continued to maintain their existing relationship with secular leaders and their mindset of trying to undermine the traditional culture.

3.3 Church-State Relationship in Post- Independence Zimbabwe (1980-2000)

The church's interaction with the state has been put in black and white by various scholars. The scholars have looked at this relationship throughout the different epochs of the country's history, that is, the precolonial, the colonial as well as the post-colonial periods. Manyonganise (2020:4) observed that:

Zvobgo (1996) has analysed the church–state relations from the sixteenth century when the Mutapa Empire interacted with the Portuguese. Thomas (1985) examines the relationship between the church and the State in colonial Zimbabwe. While Ganiel and Tarusarira (2014) note that the missionaries accompanied the Pioneer Column when it entered Mashonaland in 1890 showing a close relationship between religion and politics, Thomas (1985) records that this relationship soured from 1962 to 1980 as the State moved to sideline the church due in part to the criticism that was coming from the church because of the ill-treatment of the colonised people. Tarusarira (2016) explores the dynamics of Christianity in the midst of oppression, repression and conflict in Zimbabwe, concluding that Christianity has been both an agent of oppression and resistance.

In African history, the church and the contemporary state are either products of colonial imperialism or permanent foes. It goes without saying that in our Zimbabwean context, the same is true. As a result, both institutions are tainted by this distinctive history and values, which frequently influences their traditions, ways of being, and reactions. The church plays a significant role in Zimbabwean history, particularly when it comes to the founding generation of nationalists. Joshua Nkomo, who was affectionately known as Father Zimbabwe, was a missionary lay preacher, as were Bishop Muzorewa, Reverend Canaan Banana, Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole, and the late President Robert Gabriel Mugabe, a devout Catholic raised under the auspices of Jesuits. Once more, the histories of the church and nationalism overlap. The church in Zimbabwe is known to have been a beneficiary of settler colonial land dynamics.

The past never truly leaves us. The intertwined histories of the state and the church in Zimbabwe are something we cannot ignore. The liberation movements' and the church's histories are seen as linked in Zimbabwe's history of conflict. It is believed that the state collaborated with priests, pastors, and other countless religious leaders, which included those from Independent African Churches that had split from orthodox churches who were opposed to African nationalism. The church sent a team to meet with the exiled administration on the eve of independence. In Zimbabwe, the church has a long history of operating schools and assisting the state in accomplishing its aim of universal education. Additionally, the church runs clinics and hospitals and works with the government to improve healthcare across the nation, even in outlying areas that have long been marginalised.

According to Baur (1994:318), the late President Mugabe's realistic strategy included socialist language for his independence combatants but found words of reconciliation for the political establishment and for the churches. According to Mugabe, the Commission for Justice and Peace's contribution alone would not face the same repression as it did in Mozambique. Mugabe admired the stance and strong moral backing provided by the World Council of Churches (WCC). With tremendous relief, the nation embraced and practised Mugabe's "forgive and forget" Christian philosophy. Maenzanise (2008: 81) asserts that Bishop Muzorewa believed that taking part in politics was both a secular activity and a Christian obligation. It is important to remember that many clergies helped educate Africans in Rhodesia about their human right to freedom. The clergy included pastors. Clergymen such as Canaan Banana (British Methodist), Paul Burrough (Anglican), and Christopher Chikasha (African Reformed) are notable figures in this endeavour. They stood in for several church figures that bravely denounced the Smith administration. The participation of these followers of God inspired Zimbabwe's struggling, oppressed, and poor populace. The church was viewed as a group that dealt with the people's real concerns. The clergy were leading the way in criticising the Smith regime's repressive laws and cruel system of racial discrimination.

Before Mugabe and Nkomo signed the Unity Accord many people had been killed in Matebeleland. According to a report published in 1997 by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) over 20 000 people were slaughtered between 1983 and 1987, These contributions to issues of social justice demonstrated that certain Christian institutions in Zimbabwe were feeling the suffering of the people. During the 2000 land reform, many people—especially farmers—were hurt or killed. According to Murambadoro (2014) in Chitando, Chikonzo, and Chivandikwa (2020:18), the Gukurahundi massacres in 1983–1987, the land invasions in 2000–2001, and Operation Murambatsvina in 2005 were all perpetrated by the government, and as such, those involved in the heinous acts were being shielded from punishment by amnesty provisions. The church must pursue this goal and keep helping people move past such memories and recover.

3.4 The Church-State Relations in Zimbabwe: 2000 to 2017

The preceding section has already shown the church's role in Zimbabwean politics from 1980 to 2000. Manyonganise (2020:39) has proffered an analysis of the public role of the church in post-independence Zimbabwe. In her analysis, she posits that the attainment of independence culminated in the church in Zimbabwe pulling away from the political stage to concentrate more on socio- religious issues until the year 2005. Manyonganise (2020:39) is of the opinion that the end of the Church's semi-retirement from the political arena was necessitated by the 'chaotic' land reform programme, which had started in 2000, and Operation Murambatsvina. Manyonganise (2020:39) has it that, Operation Murambatsvina was carried out by the ZANU PF government after the 2005 elections, in which ZANU PF lost the majority of urban seats to the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). Carried out under the guise of cleaning up urban cities, people's accommodation and vending stalls were demolished. In order to dilute the influence of the church in public life, the state resorted to co-opt certain religious leaders. Chitando (2013) argues that the year 2000 saw religion and politics at times investing in each other for mutual benefit. Often times the church has been finding itself between a hard surface and a heavy rock.

The polarization of the Zimbabwean society has made it difficult for the church to align with certain political parties without risking being labelled names such as Regime change agents, sell outs and so on. As such, church leaders have therefore competed with each other and at times even sought to outdo each other in bootlicking the political leadership of the day. Manyonganise (2020:40) observed that some Church leaders had to make sure they are visible at the ruling party's functions as a way of showing their allegiance. They, therefore, cannot turn down an invitation of influential political leaders. On the other hand, the religious leaders are forced to invite political leaders to their meetings and conferences where, in most cases, they pledge their allegiances and give promises of all their members voting for the political leaders. This usually happens when ZANU PF politicians attend African Initiated Churches (AICs). For example, religious leaders such as Nehemiah Mutendi, Ezekiel Guti, Emmanuel Makandiwa, and Walter Magaya, among others, have graced political functions, while figures like the late Robert Gabriel Mugabe, Grace Mugabe, Joyce Mujuru, Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, and Morgan Richard Tsvangirai, to name but a few, have attended religious meetings and conferences. The appearances of political leaders at these religious functions and the appearance of religious leaders at political functions speak volumes pertaining church-state relations in post-independence Zimbabwe.

3.5 The church and land reform

According to Magezi and Tagwirei (2022:2), the church was a significant beneficiary of the land that white settlers had forcibly took from the native population. While some churches supported white hegemony and others adopted a neutral stance, as it became clear that the colonial administration was routinely abusing the human rights of the native population, organisations like the Roman Catholic Church stepped in to defend the citizens. As noted by Chitando (2002:142), the church has been extremely cautious in its approach to the urgent problem of land reform. The church already benefitted from the missionaries; historically, it is thought that they argued that their converts were better able to live a Christian life inside the mission farms' sacred grounds. The church has already benefited the land in Zimbabwe.

For instance, the Catholic Church has many farms, including Chishawasha; the Anglicanism St. Augustine Farm; the United Methodist Church's African University Farm; the Salvation Army Mazowe Valley; and the Churches of Christ/Christian Churches in Dadaya, Zvishavane. However, the church's efforts to present a vision and to provide real leadership on the problem regarding land reform have been contaminated by their humiliation of being an elite landowner.

3.6 Responses to injustices and land reform in Zimbabwe through pastoral letters

In Zimbabwe, pastoral letters are important in addressing political and social injustices. Pastoral letters have played a crucial role in communicating key messages from the church leadership to the congregation and the government, according to Jere and Magezi (2018:1). Jere and Magezi use Zimbabwe as an example of a country in Southern Africa where the church has played a crucial role in informing its members of the gospel through pastoral letters. Since 1983, the Zimbabwe Councils of Churches have published numerous pastoral letters every Easter. In the 1980s, the Gukurahundi murder was the subject of some pastoral letters by the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop with the heading "Reconciliation is still possible." The Zimbabwe Council of Churches questioned the government on April 25, 2000, during the land reform programme, specifically pointing out that the value of democracy was missing. The pastoral letter criticised the government in the following ways:

We reiterate our support for an equitable and democratically managed land reform that is clearly defined and distributed fairly. Land ownership can only be democratised in this way; otherwise, efforts to redistribute and reallocate land will be ineffective and unjust. In Zimbabwe, the ownership of land was a source of conflict and bloodshed during the war for independence. The colonial-era imbalance is still present and must be corrected. However, if this is left in the hands of people or organisations, it won't result in the democracy for which Zimbabwe fought. The churches have a moral and spiritual duty to serve as a voice for all people, especially the weak, voiceless, and marginalised, and to advocate for and preserve their rights in terms of land distribution.

The late President Robert Mugabe was challenged by the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference with a pastoral letter in 2007 when there was political unrest. The president once remarked that the bishops had become political and cautioned that this was a dangerous course. Additionally, if they take a political stance, we will no longer see them as spiritual, and we will conduct our interactions with them as though we have to deal with political organisations. This is a very risky course for them to take.

Chitando (2013) and Manyonganise (2013) made a concerted analysis of a 2007 pastoral letter that was released by the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference titled *God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed*, and the 2006 *National Vision Discussion Document* (NVDD) titled *The Zimbabwe We Want: Towards a National Vision for Zimbabwe*. In his candid analysis, Chitando applauds the Catholic bishops for daring the political establishment while Manyonganise criticised the Heads of Christian Denominations (HOCD) for their failure to stay clear from political interference. Manyonganise (2016) further analysed the statements issued individually and jointly by the ecumenical bodies against the violence meted on the citizenry by the government. Apart from that, Manyonganise also critiqued the joint pastoral letter titled '*A Call to Conscience*.' Her critique mainly centred on showing how the pastoral letter serves as evidence of the three church bodies, namely the ZCBC, the EFZ, and the ZCC's early collaboration. She further analyses how the ecumenical bodies have related throughout history, focusing on the collaborative efforts which have existed among these bodies. Placing them into their proper context, she examined the contents of both the individual and the joint pastoral letters. In her analysis she applauds the church bodies for their standing up against the government that thrived on suppression and repression.

August 2020, at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) wrote a stirring pastoral letter entitled "The March is Not Ended", to highlight the Church's position on the declining political, social, and economic situation in Zimbabwe. In most Catholic-dominated countries, when the Catholic Church coughs the government takes a cold and is typically brought to order. It is considered that the church plays a role in maintaining peace and establishing nations.

The government of Zimbabwe has occasionally responded to those pastoral letters by claiming that it is open to discourse with all citizens, including those who belong to any social, political, or religious groups, through newspapers and other forms of social media. The government want to have a constructive discourse with the church, but the government think the bishops should retract their claim that the country's leadership has the knowledge, social skills, mental stability, and social orientation necessary to deal with the problems our country is currently facing.

The Vatican News of January 2019 highlights the Pastoral Letter, in which the Catholic Bishops of Zimbabwe criticized the military's continued influence over the country's governance system, denounced the shrinking space for unrestricted political activity, denounced political and social differentiation in the country, and lamented the waning of Zimbabweans' sense of hope. It claimed that:

We do not need a strong man or woman but strong institutions. We need to develop a new and challenging kind of politics, new cooperation and harmony based on reasoned argument, generous compromise, and respectful toleration. Zimbabwe is faced with a crisis that is not just political and economic but moral and spiritual. A new Zimbabwean politics needs to be more collaborative, inclusive and based not on one or two leaders, however effective and charismatic, but rather on strong democratic institutions that embody and secure the values of our democracy, regulate our politics, build trust and administer peace, truth and justice to all.

The bishops then drove home their point by highlighting the conflict in Zimbabwe between those who felt the fight had already been won and those who understood that it was still ongoing. By demonstrating that they strictly acted in the interest of national solidarity and had the best interests of Zimbabweans at heart, it appears that the bishops anticipated how the government would violently respond to their letter. This is supported by the fact that they were attacked shortly after the letter's publication. The influence of the letter may be seen in the fact that the government intimidated the bishops after it was published, before later on backing down, which shows that they (the national leadership and government) were made aware that the bishops were voicing genuine concerns

about maintaining national cohesiveness and fostering peace during a worsening political, economic, and social catastrophe. The letter's striking beauty is that the bishops were sincere in speaking up for the underprivileged while also pleading with the government to pay attention to the people and offering solutions of the problems to build consensus among the populace on what should make up a comprehensive agenda for a long-term solution to Zimbabwe's problems. The letter is still relevant and demonstrates that Zimbabwe currently has a way to foster national unity and peace via inclusive involvement, communication, and shared responsibility for change.

3.7 The Church in the second republic 2017 to present.

According to Anli Serfontein in *Church Times* of November 2017, churches should push for reforms to prevent a post-Mugabe Zimbabwe that is dysfunctional. She quoted Dr. Matata as saying, "Zimbabwe have deeper issues to address if we are not going to return to the dysfunction of the last 20 years or so." It is thought that both the church and the country were challenged to reimagine the Zimbabwe that we all wanted in the future. In a statement, the Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denomination urged five things: prayer, restraint and peace, respect for human dignity, a transitional national-unity government, and national discussion.

According to Temba P Mliswa, the central role of the church is even more important in Zimbabwe where politics has divided the people extensively. He said it's such a shame that most of the churches and church leaders have been found wanting as they do not have the capacity to do their duty. The churches have become mere mediums of personal aggrandizement and nothing more. "*Hameno henyu kana Mwari atsamwa.*" He echoed. Mliswa further opined that the church is supposed to drag the country from precipice, caution errant leaders and declare the proper way since it is the conscience of society. It was supposed to light on the hills, but instead, it has joined the darkness. (Mliswa, January 7, 2023).

The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Harare Robert Ndlovu also weighed in, telling congregates to vote for the people, not just themselves and cronies. He said elections in Zimbabwe are often characterized by political violence. (The Hawks 07/04/2023)

3.8 Examples of how Zimbabwean pastors have interacted with the government.

Throughout the late Robert Gabriel Mugabe's rule, Zimbabwe has been taken by the retrograde puppetry of partisanship gospel preachers and churches, which has been made worse by state persecution of individuals who oppose political injustices. Church and state relationships were damaged, and terror overcame most of the populace. The current scenario divided the church, resulting in unsettling polarisation as some pastors sat with authoritarian leaders and others sided with the disadvantaged. Government officials enslaved some gospel preachers to purify the "Second Republic" and demonise its opponents. Even though numerous studies on the relationship between the church and politics in Zimbabwe have been conducted, there is still uncertainty about how churches should interact with the government.

3.8.1 Government-opposing Pastors

Numerous pastors and members of the congregation have been pressured into compliance by the scope of church and political activity in Zimbabwe. As a result, the government is now free to repeatedly violate the rights of the people. But in a case of history repeating itself, the few pastors who have admirably grown in their bravery to raise their prophetic voices have been misinterpreted, misread, and mistaken for opponents of the state.

3.8.1.1 Catholic Bishop Pius Ncube

The church was allegedly accused of submitting to the late President Mugabe, and some pastors even openly endorsed his activities, not by Archbishop Pius Ncube, though. He was one of the few prominent personalities willing to criticise the late President Mugabe in light of the growing body of evidence of human rights violations. He frequently criticised Robert Mugabe, the president of Zimbabwe, suggesting that he should step down since he did not care if his people go hungry. Due to this, he received multiple death threats and had his phones tapped, putting his life in jeopardy. Ncube became a well-known human rights defender for the Zimbabwean people attributable to his boldness and outspokenness. However, church leaders like Pius Ncube were silenced for speaking out in support of the underprivileged and against the repressive regime.

The ruling party even infiltrated civil society by focusing on religious leaders like Lutheran Bishop Ambrose Moyo and Catholic Bishop Pius Ncube, both who were put under surveillance by the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO), after publicly opposing violence.

3.8.1.2 Pastor Evan Mawarire and # This Flag

Pastor Evan Mawarire, a Zimbabwean clergyman and founder of #ThisFlag Citizen's Movement. The movement was formed to challenge injustice, corruption and poverty in the country. This movement empowers the citizenry with the capabilities to hold government accountable. Through his viral videos, the movement organized a number of successful protests that sought to address unjust government policies. This resulted in his arrest and treason charges were preferred against him.

On April 19, 2016, the relationship counsellor and youth pastor, Evan Mawarire posted a Facebook video that served as the catalyst for the Movement. The phrase "I am not a politician, I am not an activist, I am just a citizen" would frequently appear in Mawarire's videos. He will explain each flag colour. He ended his videos by emphasising the need for "change." Mawarire was able to persuade Zimbabweans online to support their cause and speak out against injustice, poverty, and corruption by encouraging them to wear their flags anywhere they go as a sign of their message.

Pastor Mawarire was successful in organising a large "Stay Away Protest" known as #Shut Down Zimbabwe in July 2016. In order to protest the government's economic policies, the protestors asked the public to remain at home. After being detained, Pastor Evan Mawarire was accused of "inciting public violence." Many people, particularly Christians, prayed outside the courtroom on the day of his hearing, and he was eventually freed. Manyonganise (2020) summarised Mawarire's activism thus,

Using the Zimbabwean flag as a symbol of protest and resistance, he galvanised support from citizens who shared his views both within and out of Zimbabwe through the use of social media. When he was arrested for calling for a stay away that paralysed government, prominent Christian leaders like Tudor Bismack, founder and overseer of Jabula New Life Ministries, and Takesure Zama, leader of Worship Addicts, attended court on his trial.

They sang and prayed with the rest of the people who had gathered for the trial.

In a way, prayer and song were used to express public anger not only for Mawarire's arrest, but also for the government's failure to attend to issues that were being raised by Mawarire's social media messages, which resonated with the majority of Zimbabweans. Both the church leaders and the public were optimistic that the mode of governance would change after Mugabe was out of office.

A few days later, Evan made the decision to travel from Zimbabwe to South Africa. The late President Mugabe openly attacked Mawarire, accusing the pastor of being supported by an outside power seeking to topple his regime. In August 2016, Mawarire moved his family to the United States of America after being compelled to abandon his project due to rising tensions between the church and the government in Zimbabwe.

3.8.1.3 Pastor Tom Deuschle – Celebrate International Church

Tom Deuschle, the leader of Celebrate Church Ministries International, has referred to the pastors 4ED campaign as an abomination for supporting an oppressive government rather than one that upholds righteousness (New Zimbabwe :2023 January). Political ideologies that frequently talk and act in opposition to the word of God are being supported by pastors who have been coerced by the state. "I dare to declare that this pastors for ED are an obscenity. This is absurd. You are not allowed to be a pastor, 4ED". Deuschle reprimanded the pastors 4ED for aiding the ruling class at the expense of the oppressed people. "You are only qualified to serve as the pastor of our great shepherd, Jesus Christ. I am not a preacher, and I won't work for a political party as one. Political parties might be in power." According to a recent article, Christians are expected to respect the law—yes, if it doesn't conflict with their law—which is the almighty God and the written word of God," said Deuschle.

3.8.2 Pro-Government Pastors

“THE STRONG BOND BETWEEN GOVT AND THE CHURCH UNDER THE 2ND REPUBLIC WILL ENSURE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THAT LEAVES NO ONE AND NO PLACE BEHIND...”

PRESIDENT EMEMERSON DAMBUDZO MNANGAGWA



Figure 2

The Cartoon the government and church relationship, Source: Zim Daily 2 June 2023

Mujati (2023) retorts that when people misuse religion, as is often the case in Zimbabwe, the Church has become a dubious institution in terms of what it stands for. Church leaders like Guti, Mutendi, the Mapositori sect, Wutaunashe have for a long time, wined, and dined with the ruling party. We have also seen Kuda Tagwirei, a prominent member of the Seventh Day Adventist church serving the interest of the ruling party.

3.8.2.1 Father Fidelis Mukonori

Father Fidelis Mukonori was a Jesuit priest and former president Robert Mugabe's long-time confidante. Father Mukonori shot to international fame in 2017 when he mediated between Robert Mugabe and the military generals who had taken control of the country. The negotiations saw the removal of Mugabe, who had ruled Zimbabwe with an iron fist for nearly 40 years. Manyonganise (2020) summarised his role, In fact, Father Fidelis Mukonori, a Catholic priest, mediated between Mugabe and the coup leaders in a bid to ensure a 'bloodless' political transition. On the other hand, the people who had suffered during the Mugabe years anticipated that the new political leadership would change the trajectory.

Mukonori had been close to Mugabe for decades, having negotiated talks in the 1970s between guerrillas and colonial ruler Britain that led to independence in 1980 and saw Mugabe's transformation from rebel leader to prime minister and president of Zimbabwe. Father Mukonori officiates at state functions such as the burial of national heroes and Independence Day celebrations. His proximity to the corridors of power has limited his role as an advocate of peace. His association with ZANU PF has muzzled him to such an extent that he has remained mum on the social injustices that have characterized the Zimbabwean society since the formation of the opposition MDC.

3.8.2.2 Uebert Angel: Spirit Embassy

Uebert Angel, whose real name is Uebert Mudzanire, is a self-styled Zimbabwean “prophet,” preacher and entrepreneur based in the United Kingdom. He is the founder of Spirit Embassy, a church with branches in several countries including the United Kingdom, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Uebert Angel is President Emmerson Mnangagwa’s envoy and ambassador at large to Europe and the Americas. He has been portrayed as a central figure among powerful gold smugglers from Zimbabwe to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in Al Jazeera’s ‘Gold Mafia’ documentary.

The 44-year-old British Zimbabwean appears to be close to President Mnangagwa’s wife Auxillia and his niece Henrietta Rushwaya who is also the president of the Zimbabwe Miners Federation. Given his privileged position, Angel has managed to amass a lot of wealth and thus, he has remained oblivious of the plight of the generality of the populace, members of his congregation included. As the popular adage goes, ‘you cannot bite the hand that feeds you’, the cleric has not voiced any prophetic word against the social injustices bedevilling the Zimbabwean society. Prophet Ubert Angel was designated as special representative and at large to Europe and the United States by Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangangwa in 2021, according to Josephine Olakanye, a news reporter for Diadem News (2023: March 27).

It is thought that Eubert Angel, who consistently asserts his prophetic status and altered the name of his church from Spirit Embassy to the Good News Church, with branches across 15 nations, would arrange a plan to exchange unexplained wealth for gold in Zimbabwe.

The gold recipient might then turn it into clean money by selling the priceless mental for accepted currency. Pastors have been utilised for this kind of activity instead of exercising their prophetic vocation and abstaining from bribery and corruption.

3.8.2.3 Pastors 4ED



Figure 3

Pastors for ED- Pastors for Economic Development but literally meaning ED - Emmerson Dambudzo: Source Herald, 7 December 2022

The creation of several parallel structures that naturally adopted the “4ED” slogan increased throughout the nation in 2022. These included the pastors 4ED, a grouping of pastors which promised to back President Emmerson Mnangagwa in this year's crucial elections when they were introduced in several provinces. 10,000 Zimbabwean pastors will train at Chitepo School of Ideology, according to recent reports. Idiraishe Dongo, national chairperson for Pastors 4ED, stated that the movement aims to develop patriotic pastors.

3.8.2.4 MaZion nevapostori for ED (White garment churches)



Figure 4 Mapostori for ED – (White garments churches for ED) Source: Herald June 2023

In Zimbabwean politics, the alliance between the white garment churches (Vapostori) and the ZANU PF party is very strong. Chitando (2020:99) asserts that it is clear the Zimbabwean government has a deeper relationship with the churches of African Independence than it did before the relationship with mainline churches and western authority collapsed in 2000. The dominant administration came under fire from the mainline churches for repressing the rule of law and abusing human rights during the divisive land redistribution programme that gained traction in 2000. The relationship between the Vapostori and the ruling party in Zimbabwe served as a political mobilizer of support for ZANU PF. Politicians in Zimbabwe regard the vapostori as a rich hunting zone for expanding their political leadership, which is why they go to the shrine to get support and get re-elected to their positions. Musoni (2009:5) said that Mnangagwa's assurance of Vapostori churches' freedom of worship throughout his administration as Zimbabwe's elected president is significant. Every election season sees a strengthening of the assurance.

Similar to the period of the late President Mugabe, when Robert and Grace Mugabe, as well as Mnangagwa and his wife, Auxilia, were spotted posing as the Vapostori Church in order to get support from the two most well-known church groups in Zimbabwe, the Johane Marange and the Johane Masowe Church, accordingly.

The vapostori have a constitutional right to participate in Zimbabwe's political system, according to Dube (2019:4), but he disagrees on the grounds of hero worship, politics, and politics of hero worship. Instead, to create a system that is focused on political and social fairness and does not depend on transient individuals. Vapostori must create a system of political retaliation that is based on equitable social treatment.

3.9 Churches' dilemma in addressing and engaging with social issues.

Most church officials believe that ecumenical organisations should lobby the government on the church's behalf, but others believe that numbers matter and that grassroots voices from individual denominations should be heard in addition to those of representative bodies. On the other direction, there is a group that feels the church should stay out of politics and concentrate solely on salvific missionary work. As if navigating such a conundrum weren't difficult enough, the church has been plagued by poverty and corruptibility, which has made it harder for her to actively participate in politics. This is based on the late former President Robert Gabriel Mugabe's administration, who in 2006 invited a few church leaders to dine with him at State House. Mugabe appeared to have taken the clergy's opinions on the kind of Zimbabwe they wanted, so he bought some of them off by giving them access to unlimited public funds so they could construct churches (Dombo 2014:144–146). As "the light of the world" and "the salt of the earth," the church, in line with Koyama (2015: 98), should not support the government's military goals. Rather, out of love for the well-being of all people and in accordance with the higher standards of Christian conscience, the church should play the role of correcting and criticising the policies of their nation.

3.10 Conclusion

In order to divide, undermine, and silence the church as well as maintain its grasp on power, the government divided church leaders by consciously supporting partisan

members and disparaging independent ones (Chitando 2011:46). The church also lacks the hermeneutical abilities to engage the state meritoriously, according to Chitando (2011:47). Therefore, to ensure that justice is done, the church must study biblical scriptures in their proper context.

Chapter 4

The Public Theology of Miroslav Volf in relation to Zimbabwe's Land Reform and Social injustice

4.1 Introduction

This chapter makes the case that Zimbabwe needs to engage in a deeper and longer-lasting national healing and reconciliation effort. This can happen if the significance of the events in the affected areas better understood in the context of Volf's public theology and if all Zimbabweans' concerns are considered. The way Zimbabwe handled the land reform offers important lessons for other nations in the region. Southern Africa was negatively affected by Zimbabwe's radical land policy.

4.2 Public theology defined

In the view of the majority of scholars, "public theology" is widely acknowledged among contemporary theological academia and churches, however individual interpretations of what it implies vary. Forster (2022:3) claims that professors at prestigious institutions like the University of Stellenbosch and the University of Pretoria are largely for the push for public theology in South Africa. Markham (2020:180) notes that "Public theology is the explication of, witness to, and agency toward vision that God intends for social life within the parameters of the Christian tradition." Public theology is defined by Kim and Day (2017:40) as the critical, reflective, and reasoned involvement of theology in society for the purpose of bringing the kingdom of God, which is for the benefit of the underprivileged and marginalised. Public theology is a by-product of theology's involvement in the political and economic domains, which was later extended to civil societies and other facets of public life. "Public theology" is a relatively new phrase that refers to a theology that critically reflects on social and political issues in addition to the Christian tradition, according to

Dreyer Y (2004:919). Both society and theology are thought to benefit from this dialogue. In line with the above,

Resane (2022:1) views public theology is the voice of theology in the public. Since public theology is a theological idea that derives from civil religion, which concerns ethical ways of life, it can be posited that public religion, Christian ethics, and public theology are connected and in some texts are used interchangeably. It has developed into the area of religion that speaks to every type of science. It is a theology that is centred around the horizontal relationship with God and the gods as well as the vertical relationship with political or public authority and society, Volf and Katerbery (2004: 22). An equally lucid understanding of this domain comes from Jurgen Moltmann (1999:5-23)

It is the responsibility of the Christian community to uncomfortably remind the civic community of God's righteousness and justice as well as the impending arrival of his kingdom through speech, deed, and presence. The church is not a separate group that exists for its own purposes. It is present in this earthly world for all people and for nature. As a result, the church cannot act politically just to further its own interests. Above all, it must stand up for justice, which is the spirit of Jesus and is first and foremost concerned with the weak and the impoverished. The cause of the kingdom of God is the only "public claim" that the church has it suggests God. Its job is to set the stage for the coming kingdom, not to "churchify" the world. Christianity cannot be non-political. The contemporary assumption "religion is a private matter" was really decided upon politically. Therefore, theology plays a prophetic role to bring justice out of disorderly conduct when it emerges from its context of telling the truth in power and expresses itself in public. Volf (1996:10) set out to address the subject of conflict in a profoundly personal manner. His fundamental query is, "How does one remain loyal to the gift of forgiveness that the Crucified offered the perpetrators and to the demand of the oppressed for justice?" Most people "would agree that public theology is social, political, and practical in nature," according to Dreyer (2018:2). "Public theology understands itself as an academic reflection of a Christianity that has become aware of its limitations and its particularity in the context of a pluralistic society and world and on this basis strives to contribute to the

common good in dialogue and collaboration with others,” as argued by Volf (2015: 72). As stated by Bongmba (2001), the academy's point of view is necessary to give an accurate evaluation of theological ideas in modern society and prevent the academy's theology from becoming irrelevant to the people in the religious communities. Moreover, rather than being governmental institutions, faith-based gospel churches typically function as the pastors' own businesses.

De Gruchy has posited seven elements of public theology which are outlined by Youn (2017:66). It first attests to the values that Christians think are crucial for the welfare of society. Second, it creates a vocabulary that is both related to Christian heritage and understandable to those who are not Christians. Third, it analyses, assesses, and criticises from a theological position while being knowledgeable about public policies and issues. Theological transdisciplinary technique is developed in the fourth way. Fifth, it prioritises the return to justice as well as the viewpoints of the victims and survivors. Sixth, it demands that worship groups be nurtured by theological and biblical reflection. Seventh, it calls for spiritual growth that is fuelled by a desire for justice and completeness as well as a resistance to everything that is not what it should be prevents wellbeing.

This study will use three De Gruchy's public theology elements. The third element will be employed as Zimbabwe's socio-political situation and land reform informed knowledge of the public policy and issues will be analysed, assessed, and criticised from Volf's public theological perspective. To restore justice in Zimbabwe, the fifth factor will be used to give importance to the viewpoint of victims and survivors of injustice and land reform. Volf (2011:82) asserts that “church enters into compromises with the world in order to try to shape it in accordance with God's will.” This study will employ the seventh element by urging Zimbabwean Christians, leaders, and institutions to develop their spirituality by becoming aware of God's desire for justice and wholeness and by turning their backs on anything that threatens people's well-being.

Tracy (1981:7) calls for theologians to engage "three distinct and related social realities: the wider society, the academia, and the church." Although he does not use the term "public theology," it is obvious that he is following this trajectory. Tracy further splits the

project into three when he describes what it means for a theologian to address a larger culture. He claims that the organisation and distribution of commodities and services fall under the purview of the techno economic system. The profession and stratification systems of the society are formed by this structure, which also makes use of contemporary technologies. The second area is the polity, which is concerned with the proper definitions of social justice and the use of power. In order to realise the specific ideas of justice embedded in a society's traditions or its constitution, this entails the control of the legitimate use of force and the regulation of conflict. The third is the area of culture, which is primarily, but not exclusively, concerned with symbolic manifestations in art, religion, and contemplation on it in various kinds of cultural criticism, philosophy, and theology. Tracy, just as Miroslav Volf then, believes that public theology is a complete theological engagement with all of the major facets of society, including the economic, political, and cultural ones.

Speaking in public and addressing public concerns for the benefit of or in the interest of the public. is always public theology. Public theology sees the Christian life as a way of being a part of humanity that is oppressed by secular and unjust systems. Kusmierz's (2016:5) definition of public theology is highlighted and encapsulates its function in the African setting as a discipline that endeavours to: interact with current socio-political challenges critically and productively in the public sphere. It critically examines the public function of churches in a democratic society on a meta-theoretical level. It investigates the means, conditions, and limitations of such involvement in a democratic, secular, and at the same time multi-religious, multicultural setting as it examines possible contributions of churches to the improvement of democracy and common life. It assumes that this interaction with the secular world is a crucial component of Christian theology and religion. Integrating religious or theological perspectives on issues of public significance is a simple definition of public theology. Zimbabwe's land programme will be used in this study as a topic of public concern. The application of ethical concepts and Christian beliefs to the impact of Zimbabwe's land crisis will be the focus of this study. Public theology will be employed as a tool to provide a Christian and moral viewpoint to the discussion, aiding in

the creation of public discourse guidelines and promoting social well-being. Since the early days of missionary work in Zimbabwe, public theology has been linked to Christianity. In the words of Opuni-Frimpong (2021:193), human rights, education, health, economic success, good governance, and interfaith harmony are among the subjects that have drawn the interest of religious perspectives in public life. A manifestation of the church's comprehensive mission is found in public theology. It is believed that many African Christian leaders use their religious perspectives to address public issues when ministers are tasked with establishing positive relationships with the public. As noted by Moltmann (1999:5-23), theology must uphold the concerns about God's future kingdom in a way that is "public, critical, and prophetic by presenting its reflections as a reasoned position." Using Miroslav Volf's public theology and land reform programme as an example of public concern, this study aims to contribute to the theological construction of public theology in Zimbabwe and African Christian theology. Volf (2013:815) attempts to explain four fundamental cultural aspects of the Christian faith, which we attempt to characterise as follows: first, the Christian faith is a prophetic religion centred around the conviction that Christ is the key to mankind and creation. To comprehend Zimbabwe's land reform, a prophetic theology that is fundamental to mankind and creation must be developed. The second characteristic of the Christian faith is that it must assert universal truths about what is right and true for all people. A genuine theology of land needs to be researched with fairness and truth for both the program's beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in Zimbabwe. Thirdly, the message at hand must be embraced and accepted from all viewpoints regarding people's ideologies and religious beliefs in Zimbabwe, where transnational religious communities are embodied. This acceptance should not be directed towards groups, but rather towards individuals, and it should affirm people's freedom to accept or reject their way of life. Conducting research that adheres to the fundamental ethical tenet of the golden rule the idea of reversibility is the fourth feature.

In the words of Forrester (2014:6), public theology prioritises the well-being of the city over defending the church's rights to proclaim the gospel and administer its sacrament. Public

frequently embraces "the world's agenda" or aspects of it as its own agenda and aims to provide the resources of faith to support the creation of a decent society, the repression of evil, the lowering of violence, the building of national unity, and public reconciliation, among other things. According to Stackhouse (2004:277), public theology rejects the idealistic views of political theology while also attempting to examine and change the principles that guide civic religion. It takes this position since it acknowledges the possibility of reform, additionally to the misuse of authority and the development of self-interest. Political and social theories may be used in public theology, but they should aim to serve society, not the other way around. The central concern of public theology is how to explain the depths and wisdom of the gospel of Jesus Christ to a range of audiences in the setting of the church, state civil society, business, and academia in a way that is both believable and understandable. Within the confines of the Christian tradition, Markham (2020:179) defines public theology as the exposition of witness to and agency towards the vision that God intended for social life.

Public theology, according to Markham (2020:180) is "the explication of witness to and agency towards the vision that God intends for social life within the parameters of the Christian tradition." This study provides an explanation of how Zimbabwean residents desire justice in their lives and how social order can be brought about by discussing the truth and providing an explanation of true Christian teaching. In the public square, those who are seeking justice and those who have witnessed injustices must communicate their shared vision of the social order. A few institutions need to assist individuals in getting around and establishing social order. Volf contends that Christians cannot and do not need to prevail in the struggle of public life, Christians, however, must play the game as best they can despite the possibility that they will lose, according to Rubio (2013:774). In the opinion of Volf (2011:6–9), Christians have a responsibility and a right to present society with a vision of human flourishing that is prophetic and derived from their own tradition. Catholic social teaching also upholds the social consequences of Christian faith that are unavoidable. As noted by Volf (2011: 15), Christians who choose to follow this calling need to be welcomed at the political table with everyone else without needing to

reframe their views in terms of something secular. Volf's argument, which links any faith position at all to uncomfortable politics, that the most valuable contribution religion can make is a vision of human flourishing, would be far less controversial than more focused forms of political campaigning. Religious groups are by their very nature societal, yet inside them exist people whose spiritual growth can be explained, argues Bongmba (2001:146). Volf effectively addresses the core question of how theological involvement with social realities should go. Any social or economic structure that regards wealth accumulation as something extremely desirable must be seen by Christianity as wrongdoing towards people who must not just accept its objectives but also succeed in reaching them. One of the main arguments made by Volf is that the church should be regarded as a complete social, political, and economic entity unto itself. Theologically informed public debate regarding matters addressed to the church, synagogue, mosque, temple, or other religious body, as well as the greater public or publics, argued in ways that may be assessed and judged by public warrant and criteria, is what Breitenberg (2003:66) characterises as public theology.

The public sphere has been described by Benington (2011:43) as the network of places, organisations, rules, information, and other cultural resources that individuals share through their daily commitments and actions and that are trusted by the state and public institutions. As described by Volf, Krieg, and Kucharz (1996:113), Volf's concept on public theology:

A vision of a public theology for a public gospel: looking through the spectacles of its own culture, it sees the city whose builder and architect in multiple relations of power, it advocates the weakness of the Crucified as new form of power; dwelling on the margins, it seeks to bring the reign of the triune God to bear on all domains of life.

As defined by Benington (2011: 43) the public is something that is constantly created and constructed; as such, part of the role of government is to take the lead in forming as well as reacting to people's thoughts and perceptions of the realm of the public at this moment in time and space, and what contributes to and detracts from public value. This is accurate

in Zimbabwe, where there are and ideologies in the public realm, making it highly contested territory. A clear definition of public theology is provided by Doehring (2015:190), who claims that public theologies are both historical and contemporary theologies developed in particular situations to make sense of public events and establish religious accountability in public spaces. She gives the example of a prayer session or memorial service that considers the personal, inherited, community, and social implications of the tragic event in relation to how and why it occurred.

4.3 Public theologies and public theologians of today.

4.3.1 North America, Europe and Global South

We will examine a few significant public theologians to gain an understanding of what public theology is. This will allow us to find out whether other public theologians reflect Volf's understanding of public theology. In doing so, it will provide strategies for public theological practice.

Public theology has gained greatly from the work of Martin Marty, a well-known American Lutheran theologian and historian. Martin Marty is credited with coining the term "public theology" (Markham, 2020: 180). He begins by explaining that "the main strand of American religious thought has drawn together the work of various figures who have interpreted the nation's religious experience, practice, and behaviour in the light of some sort of transcendent reference," though he does not define the term explicitly. Marty (1974: 332). Based on Marty, this has been carried out both inside and outside of the church. Marty's notion of the "public church" highlights the church's obligation to interact with the general public, tackling matters of public interest and advancing the common good. The relationship between religion and public life in America is examined in Marty's work on civil religion. For Marty, public theology is an interpretive approach that aims to comprehend the intricate connections among religion, culture, and public life. Marty highlights how crucial it is for the church to continue to speak truth to power, speak out against injustice, and defend human rights. The significance of the public church, civil religion, pluralism, interfaith discussion, and prophetic voice have all been highlighted in

Martin Marty's contributions to public theology. Public theologians are still motivated to address the intricate issues of our day by his work.

Public theology has benefited greatly from the work of the well-known German philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas. According to Habermas (1989:11–12), throughout the period of feudal rule, the church, the prince, and the nobility who were the bearers of the representative publicness disintegrated in a process of polarisation, ultimately dividing into private and public aspects. Public theologians have been motivated to investigate the function of faith in the public arena by this idea.

Because of the Reformation, the church's position was altered, and the first area of individual autonomy was historically established by religion's craving for supernatural power, the church itself maintained a corporate entity under public law, one among many. Public theology has been influenced by his primary writings. Public theologians have been motivated to investigate the function of faith in the public arena by this idea. Habermas has made a substantial contribution to public theology, igniting fresh ideas about the function of faith in public life, the character of religious discourse, and the significance of the church's public presence. Public theologians are still influenced by his work, which challenges them to consider the relationship between a free society, secularism, and faith.

Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, another German Lutheran theologian, has made important contributions to the study of public theology. By stressing the connection between God's existence, the world, and human society, Bedford Strohm's work highlights the significance of a Trinitarian approach to public theology. In the view of Deane-Drummond and Bedford-Strom (2011:4), religion and theology must also explain how to reorient political and economic life. The ethical dilemmas that must be explored through the debate about political contexts and religiously motivated models for reorienting the political, economic, and legal frameworks that underpin it. Public theology needs to create a vocabulary that empowers religious communities to participate in public discussions about ecology and act as social agents. Bedford-Strohm also emphasises ecclesiology and public engagement. He contends that the church ought to be a public institution that

actively participates in society and promotes human rights, justice, and peace. Bedford-Strohm bases his public theology on the Reformed tradition, especially

John Calvin's theology. His writings examine the relationship between economics and theology and make the case that economic systems ought to be assessed according to how they affect the welfare of society as a whole. Bedford-Strohm has written a great deal about the difficulties posed by the refugee and migrant crisis, highlighting the necessity of a theological response that places a high value on justice, hospitality, and compassion. A Trinitarian approach, ecclesiology,

Reformed tradition, economic justice, migration, climate change, interfaith cooperation, and public debate have all been highlighted in Heinrich Bedford-Strohm's contributions to public theology. Public theologians are still motivated to address the intricate issues of our day by his work.

The Global South a prominent figure in the field of public theology is the Brazilian theologian, Rudolf von Sinner. Von Sinner's writings focus a lot on contextual theology in relation to the unique social, cultural, and economic circumstances of a particular area. The emphasis on interaction with the larger social and political setting in public theology has been influenced by this method. According to von Sinner, public theology is a way to promote human rights, justice, and peace. As stated by Jacobson, von Sinner, and Zwetsch (2013:22), churches, universities, and other social institutions can find a role in helping these peoples fight against their marginalisation and exclusion from society and for a universality made up of all peoples. They can also help them maintain their dignity and boost their self-confidence so that they can engage in cross-cultural dialogue on an equal basis. Theologians should take part in public discourse and policy debates because this advances public theology, which exists for the good of all. In regard to social injustice and violence, von Sinner also supports peacebuilding and healing. For public theologians striving to advance harmony and peace in divided countries, his work provides insightful guidance.

4.3.2 Africa

Public theology is benefiting greatly from the work of South African theologian and public philosopher Tinyiko Maluleke. The significance of placing theology within the unique cultural, social, and economic realities of Africa is emphasised in Maluleke's writings.

He has had a significant influence on the development of public theology in Africa, emphasising the necessity for theologians to address the intricate problems the continent faces. In the words of Maluleke (2021:3), public theology aspires to address contemporary social, political, and spiritual concerns. That is what all progressive theologies ought to accomplish. That is what all theologians who are involved in society ought to accomplish.

However, we must be wary of the frequently unsaid imperial aspirations of public theology, its propensity to eradicate difference for example, by fitting liberation theologies into its own prefabricated frameworks and its propensity, whether intentional or inadvertent, to eradicate the agency of those who practise theologies that function on the margins. In his work, Maluleke examines the relationship between democracy and theology and makes the case that theologians ought to participate in democratic processes in order to advance equality, justice, and human rights. He has been a fervent supporter of economic justice, contending that theologians ought to oppose economic oppressive structures and advance alternative theories of economic growth. His writings examine the complex connection between politics and theology and make the case that theologians ought to participate in political processes in order to advance the common good. The significance of contextualisation, democracy, economic justice, African culture, interfaith dialogue, and prophetic voice has been highlighted in Tinyiko Maluleke's contributions to public theology. Public theologians in Africa and elsewhere are still motivated by his work.

Public theology has benefited greatly from the work of South African theologian and public intellectual Dion Forster. By emphasising the necessity for theologians to address the intricate issues confronting the continent, Forster has significantly influenced the development of public theology in Africa.

His writings examine the relationship between theology and development, making the case that theologians ought to get involved in development initiatives in order to advance equality, justice, and human rights. His writings also examine the relationship between theology and technology, making the case that theologians ought to consider how technical developments affect human society.

Forster has been a fervent supporter of public involvement, contending that theologians ought to interact with the general people through public discourse and various media platforms. As noted by Forster (2005:12), the discourse of a theology of development demonstrated that there are several degrees of bearing and witnessing to hope, ranging from addressing the most pressing needs in society to engaging with policy.

This public theological discussion led to the obvious conclusion that in order for any of these church forms to effectively serve as messengers of hope, they must confront the realities of the contemporary social and demographic landscape. He stresses how crucial it is to place theology in the unique cultural, social, and economic context of Africa. In his contributions to public theology, Dion Forster has highlighted the significance of contextualisation, theology and technology, economic justice, interfaith dialogue, reconciliation, and public participation. Public theologians in Africa and elsewhere are still motivated by his work.

African public theology has benefited greatly from the work of Zimbabwean theologian and public Neo-Pentecostalism scholar Collium Banda. In his numerous works on the subjects of democracy and governance, Banda makes the case that theologians ought to uphold democratic principles and hold political leaders responsible for their deeds. His writings on public theology are heavily influenced by the current political and socioeconomic climate. In the view of Banda, the Christian institution in Zimbabwe has to adopt a public theological viewpoint that emphasises the challenges of evangelism as a means of changing the undemocratic Zimbabwean setting (Dube 2023:28). Since poverty is so pervasive in Africa, he calls on public theologians to take on a prophetic role by defining poverty in a way that allows the church to address it, taking a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach, and addressing poverty in the context of God's promised eschatological hope.

Numerous scholars, including David Tracy, Max Stackhouse, Dirk Smit, Charles Mathewes, George Hunsbeger, Nico Koopman, and Vuyani Vellem, have made significant contributions to the study of public theology. These scholars helped theologians understand the purpose of public theology.

The shortlisted academics were chosen for this study because they share topics with Volf's literature on public theology. Miroslav Volf's vast experience in social justice, forgiveness, and reconciliation makes him an outstanding fit to be Zimbabwe's leading public intellectual on the land question. Volf is ideally suited to address the intricate problems pertaining to social justice and property ownership in Zimbabwe because of his work,

which centres on the relationship between faith, justice, and reconciliation. Furthermore, Volf's focus on the value of reconciliation and forgiveness in the face of injustice is in line with Zimbabwe's requirements, a nation still dealing with the effects of colonialism and persistent social inequality. He is ideally suited to discuss the land question and social justice in Zimbabwe because of his dedication to examining various aspects of justice, love, and forgiveness

4.4 The Life of Miroslav Volf

The history of Miroslav Volf is diverse. He was born in 1956 in Osijek, Croatia, but spent the most of his early years in Novi Sad, Serbia (both were then parts of Yugoslavia). His mother belonged to the Czech minority, while his father, Dragutin Volf, was half German (Oppenheimer 2003:18). He embodies the multicultural background of many ex-Yugoslavs in this way. But his upbringing as the son of a Pentecostal minister was more peculiar. It was challenging to identify as a practising Christian at all, and it still is. It was much more unusual to identify with evangelical Christians as opposed to the historical Serbian Orthodox or Croatian Catholic churches. Volf clearly found the associations odd and difficult, as per Garrison's (2008) testimony. Nevertheless, Volf's exclusion from the communist system and status as an outsider gave him a unique perspective that affected his later publications. Major impacts on Volf's knowledge of Christian actions regarding injustice come from his family's reactions to the hostile communist regime as well as to

the personal tragedy of his older brother's death at the age of five. He has stated that his writing is in some ways a religious response to the way his parents lived and reacted to these situations.

The formation and direction of Volf's public theology are heavily influenced by this encounter as well as others. Volf has spent his entire life dealing with the fundamental concerns of justice and forgiveness, coexistence with the enemy, and outreach to the weak and the wrongdoer. Volf's public theological views on the same topics have depth because of this extensive history of analysis and lived solutions to such trying conditions. Volf managed to be the Dean of the Evangelical Theology Faculty in Osijek. That probably gave the impetus to Volf's initial theological endeavours.

After earning his BA in 1977, Volf went on to earn his MA at Fuller Theological Seminary in 1979, and then his PhD at Tübingen under Jürgen Moltmann with a 1986 completion date that was centred on a Marxist theory of work (Miroslav Volf's *Curriculum Vitae*: 2012). While comprehending Volf's concerns and influences from his past is crucial, Moltmann might be considered as having had the greatest theological effect on Volf. The systematic Trinity and eschatology of Moltmann forms the foundation of most of Volf's literature. In many ways, Volf's writing might be considered "after Moltmann," picking up where Moltmann left off (Bauckham 1999:231-257). He maintained close ties to Croatia throughout his further study, visiting there from 1984 to 1991 as a Lecturer and subsequently a Professor of Systematic Theology. He climbed the career ladder fast and returned to Fuller from 1991 to 1998 to teach. He had job offers from Heidelberg, Duke, and Yale and was also considered for the position at Harvard due to his high demand. The Henry B. Wright Professor of Systematic Theology and Director of the Centre for Faith and Culture at Yale positions were chosen by Volf in 1998 (Reimer 2000:8). He appears to have selected this position in part because it gave him the freedom to carry on with his theological research while remaining actively engaged with culture. His devotion to keeping theological reflection current is exemplified by his well-read pastoral writings in *Christian Century* and his participation in the creation of the document titled "*A Common Word*," which encourages good and peaceful relations between Muslims

and Christians (Volf, Yarrington and Muhammad 2010). This reflects Volf's conviction that theology is not merely an intellectual pursuit but rather a means of directing, encouraging, and advancing the practise of faith in daily life. According to the Yale Centre for Faith and Culture, studies on workplace religious tolerance, peaceful coexistence in a globalised world, and Christian-Muslim understanding were conducted. The biography of Volf may explain why he is hard to classify. Volf "has the catholicity of a refugee," says Oppenheimer (2003:18). He is hesitant to side with any group, be it the military, the ethnic, or the intellectual. Volf is difficult to categorise theologically. 'Reformed evangelical Michael Horton, a professor at Westminster Theological Seminary in California, describes him as "eclectic." says (Oppenheimer, Mark 2003:1).

And in a time when systematisation is seen with suspicion, his eclectic borrowing from several traditions affords him some benefits over more traditional school theologians. Despite having grown up a Pentecostal, he is critical of its ecclesiology. Although he is obviously not a Calvinist, his writing does contain certain Reformed theological themes. Volf has undoubtedly distanced himself from the Pentecostal moniker. He continues to be largely characterised as an evangelical and has attended the Episcopalian Church while living in the United States. However, he would be hesitant to categorise himself because his theology relies on a variety of ideas. In a lot of Volf's work, perspective plays a significant part. He appreciates discussing many points of view and makes use of philosophers one might anticipate him to reject. In many ways, this talent appears to be connected to his experiences as a stranger. Volf's major life experiences have undoubtedly shaped his religious interests. His experiences are unusual for a theologian, which may imply that rather than their impact being extraordinary in and of themselves, it is only underlined how they have affected his theological work. Like how his contact with Moltmann and their ongoing conversation over several years

4.5 Miroslav Volf: Reflections of a Public Theologian

In addition to his native Croatia, Miroslav received his education in Germany and the United States of America. He obtained his doctorate and post-doctoral degrees from the University of Tübingen in Germany with the highest honours.

More than 20 books and more than 90 scholarly articles have been authored or edited by him. According to some accounts, Volf is a public theologian whose "lived theology" following theology as a way of life with all the customs and rituals that entail really comes through in his writing. As described by Volf, it is a supplement to a Christian's everyday existence. In a big way, theology is both a way of life and a means of achieving a way of life. As stated by Davila (2013: 759), he considered Volf's work to be both challenging and encouraging in addressing these questions raised by public issues. Redirecting the conversation about religion's valuable impact on the public sphere away from divisive partisan and political debates and towards a more communal and democratic context is Volf's suggestion that religions define the ideal life based to a supernaturally rooted understanding of the person.

Davila (2013:759), however, makes the argument that Volf presents the most valuable contribution that numerous religious traditions can make to public conversation: the fundamental knowledge that the welfare of a community rests on how it treats its most marginalised members as well as those who are deemed to be outsiders. Christians feel obligated to participate in the public sphere with the appropriate Christian imaginary, which aims to provide as comprehensive and broad an understanding of what is good for everyone as possible, due to the privileged position of those in need and vulnerable as well as other aspects of Christian ethics. Volf writes from the viewpoint of an ethicist dedicated to the socially and culturally diverse but religiously pluralistic land. Volf additionally wrote on the preferential treatment for the poor, a concept that is fundamental to Christianity and other traditions' contributions to the quality of human existence in society and is seen as such by all Christians. In theological circles, social injustice in regard to God's created resources, like as land, has shifted from the margins to the centre in Africa. The COVID 19 pandemic, social unrest in Russia and Ukraine, poverty, corruption, political elections, and social injustice in communities around the world have all recently occurred. The majority of Volf's readers are Christians, though they also include secularists and readers of other religions. Volf makes it very obvious how Christians should approach their faith in the public sphere in order to allay their concerns

about Christians who are not sure about some political issues, public issues, and the respect of religious plurality in the realm of public life.

Volf has written a lot of books, including; *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation* (1996), *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of Trinity* (1998), *The End of Memory : Remembering Rightly in a Violent World* (2006), *A Public Faith: How followers of Christ of Christ Should Serve the Common Good* (2011), *Flourishing: Why we need religion in a globalized World* (2015), *Public Faith in Action: How to Engage with Commitment, Conviction, and Courage*(2016) *Life Worth Living : A Guide to What Matters* (2023) they are enduring works. Volf aims to raise the concepts of forgiving, including, and embracing by bringing the Christian religion and societal challenges together.

He lists a variety of forums where Christians can discuss their problems and attempt to find public solutions. Volf suggests that everyone, regardless of their religious affiliation, engage in public life on an equal footing and for the benefit of society as a whole while applying their unique expertise and religious convictions and practises. Whatever you do to yourself, do to others are the golden rule, and it must be practised in public. He stresses the prophetic nature of Christianity in all of his writings. He maintains that Christianity has an impact on all areas of life.

Volf also discusses human flourishing, in which he describes himself as a person who has been accepted by God as a beloved child of God and who loves both God and neighbour. Volf is a strong proponent of treating everyone with respect, including those who are even radically different from you. He exhorts the church to avoid a false harmony in which disagreement in the public sphere is seen as acceptable. Arguments, disputes, and confrontations in public can continue with respect. The role of the church in politics and elections Volf urge Christians to be aware of their differences and to hang onto them; the government and the church must not be complacent in seeking the common ground and good for all. Because memory is essential to the conflict, Volf also writes about it. Volf teaches communities the proper way to recall the violence they have experienced. Volf desires that theology should examine pressing contemporary challenges in the context of

the gospel. Theology must promote a life that is truly conducive to the development of humans by fostering knowledge of and love for God and neighbour.

The more Christians who sincerely and truthfully cooperate with other people, the better the situation appears to the general public. The church must learn from Volf how to dispute in a way that respects both listening to the other side's argument and presenting one's own perspective in a way that considers the hopes, anxieties, and aspirations of the audience. Volf's public theology emphasizes on seeking the common ground, which is a manifestation of truth-seeking, is the foundation of public theology. Institutions like the church and the government must be publicly committed to their spiritual beliefs and should celebrate any discovered truth.

People have suffered injustice; some have emerged victorious, while others have fallen victim. The people of Zimbabwe must learn to guide their communities towards a better future. How are we going to coexist following our social interests being crushed and miscommunication? Is there a more just way to coexist than the unfair land reform programme in Zimbabwe? Can the Matabeleland Gukurahundi bloodshed be put to rest? The demand for public theology and social justice in Zimbabwe has grown as a result of these circumstances and the country's historical context. A specific theologian may be found wanting by the church, particularly in Zimbabwe and around the world, and may be give new ethical guidelines and public theology that explore social justice: Miroslav Volf.

4.6 Miroslav Volf's public theology of exclusion

Dorman (2016:141) noted that Zimbabwe has transitioned from "the politics of inclusion" to "politics of exclusion" between 2000 and 2008. Following the 2000 constitutional referendum, the late President Mugabe's administration increasingly used an especially overt form of nationalism to defend the acts of violence and intimidation aimed at its opponents. Violence came to rule the game, supported by the distribution of rewards to certain groups, and supported by a revived, exclusive nationalism. Socially and politically "excluded" people and groups who were unable to demonstrate their allegiance also faced violent assaults in their residences and businesses. This division penetrated farms, communities, churches, and educational institutions. Volf (2015:132) observed that.

Political exclusivists of all stripes—secular and religious—are on a collision course with one another and with the processes of globalization, because these processes pull and push people of diverse faiths and secularists to live in the same political society.

Political exclusivists find the prospect of such a “mixed household” unacceptable, for they are committed to a single vision of the good life and to imposing it on all citizens (some even want to force their view on the inhabitants of the entire world). As a consequence, they assault people’s dignity, perpetrate violence, and threaten the world’s prosperity. Perceived political antagonists in Zimbabwe suffered from exclusionary tendencies and they were either deprived from partaking in the land reform program or they actually lost their land to perceived sympathisers of the Mugabe regime.

It points out, drawing on the work of Miroslav Volf, how people always resort to different forms of exclusion in order to cope with diversity because they are unable to sustain the creative tension between difference and oneness. During Zimbabwe's land reform, the practise of exclusion illustrated the divisions among its residents, which dehumanise certain individuals and fuel injustice and suffering for the entire nation. People in Zimbabwe are currently suffering as a result of exclusion, which paved the way for poverty and was sustained by the government through abandonment and apathy.

According to Volf, the problematic ideas of distinction and identity are motivated by a wish to be excluded. Volf asserts that, exclusion occurs whenever solid boundaries are put up to impede a creative meeting with the other. Volf identifies three areas that lead to exclusion. The first reason is when a person decides to break free from the web of interdependence and pursue absolute independence. The other then becomes "an enemy that must be pushed away" if this happens. Volf (2006:57) propounded that, those who have driven the others from the land and out of their communal construction of themselves will be the sole owners of the land. In Zimbabwe, the land belonged to everyone without any distinction based on the landowner, whether they were white or black farmers, or based on their political membership. As noted by Chitando (2005: 223), the ruling party creatively revived the land issue in response to an electorate that was losing faith in the nationalist agenda. The claim that whites had taken blacks' land was at the heart of its defence.

It actively encouraged gangs of followers of the ruling party and black peasants to invade farms held by white people. Land invasions by farmers and veterans of war were justified politically by ruling party officials as an effort to reclaim stolen ancestral lands.

The nationalists were essentially rewriting the history of the conflict and simplifying it to a single issue of land. Everyone was included, including the nation's agricultural industry. Some people were excluded from the land reform programme due to political concerns. The land reform was implemented in such a severe manner that "it drove people away rather than bringing them in" (Volf 2006:59).

Volf asserted that one crucial factor in the advancement of "inclusion" rejoice in modernism. Volf's ideas are becoming more and more relevant and vital in the contemporary setting of Zimbabwe, which is becoming an increasingly polarised nation where individuals categorise each other and label some as simply "other" due to political, theological, and cultural differences. Learning to interact more positively with people who are different from us is becoming more and more difficult, especially when those people we believe represent the antithesis of what we value most. We frequently forge our identities in conflict with those people! The life and teachings of Jesus serve as the foundation for Christians, according to Volf. His argument is that we should approach the "other" from the perspective of the crucified Christ and that the only way to bridge the gap and bring about hope is through self-sacrificing love.

As stated by Volf (1996:24), "All sufferers can find comfort in the solidarity of the Crucified; but only those who struggle against evil by following the Crucified's example will discover him at their side." In the words of Volf, the important quality of our Christianity that speaks most into our conflict with individuals we disagree with is our capacity to forgive our enemies, or those who have harmed us. Forgiveness lies somewhere between exclusion and welcome. What relevance heart of its defence. It actively encouraged gangs of followers of the ruling party and black peasants to invade farms held by white people. Land invasions by farmers and veterans of war were justified politically by ruling party officials as an effort to reclaim stolen ancestral lands. The nationalists were essentially rewriting the history of the conflict and simplifying it to a single issue of land.

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We must be firmly grounded in the life of Jesus and certain of the kindness, beauty, and truth of the gospel, that we can be open to interaction and conversation with the outsider, the sceptic, and perhaps even the blasphemer.

The other person may no longer seem to be as crucial to one's dependence, but Volf emphasises that they become entirely useless to the self. This is another reason for isolation. Zimbabwe's leadership sought power without considering how its actions would affect the people it was dominating. Instead of listening to advice from other nations and international organisations, the ruling party governed the public for the sole aim of managing the populace. They were ruling with violence.

Volf emphasises that being judgmental is a major factor in exclusion. The act of passing judgement led to the justification of actions like killing native people after perceiving them to be savages. When it came to land reform in Zimbabwe, the current administration was critical of white farmers because they were former colonisers and the black farmers who were evicted from their land supported the opposition party. According to Volf, any such exclusion must be denied. This is a bad way to treat people wherever, according to Volf, who makes it abundantly obvious that both the Old Testament and the New Testament writers of the Bible teach this. We are convinced that there are solid grounds for believing them. A theology of human identity, according to Volf, must come first.

There is a great lesson to people and countries that cannot be reduced to the exclusion system, the people and countries needs the system to make it “breathe” with hope and come up with ultimate idea of embracing. Volf recommends much his passion for reconciliation stating that no one should ever be excluded from the will to embrace because at the deepest level, the relationship to others does not rest on their moral performance and therefore as Christians we cannot be undone by the lack of it. Volf expresses that the core of the Christian faith lies on the persuasion that “other” need not perceived as innocent to be loved, but ought to be embraced even when they perceived as wrongdoers (Volf 1996: 85). As Christians we need to go back to the fundamentals of Christianity which is based on Christ Jesus as our identity and who made us a new creation.

As Jesus the source of our power we are guided by God's future as Volf (1996:51) states "The Spirit unlatches the doors of my heart saying: 'You are not only you; others belong to you too.'" The Spirit of God enable us as Christians to anticipate that the final judgement of Christ is against evil by themselves choosing to judge all evil that seek to exclude.

In the opinion of Volf (1997:38), the development of the global economy and contemporary communication tools have made our planet from a collection of independent tribes and nations into a multinational city. The idea of the human race's unity is no longer theoretical. The nation's experience of diversity gets stronger as humanity's togetherness grows.

Both the state and the church have a duty to offer the ministry of presence to everyone, to ensure that everyone has access to resources and faith, and to reconcile conflicts in politics and religion. In areas of diversity and inclusivity, the Zimbabwean government and church alike must encourage equity in the distribution of land.

4.6.1 Exclusionary Violence

Volf (1996:30) refers to the "violence of exclusion" and says that to mend the rifts that separate us, we need to examine "the powerful, contagious and destructive evil of exclusion." Exclusionary behaviours have their roots in our family and interpersonal experiences. Like weeds in a garden, they flourish when our identity is only perceived through the prism of our tribe or culture, when we become oblivious to the culture, and when Christianity's selfishness of self-absorptions keeps it from acknowledging the historical reality of other people. Volf describes four types of exclusionary violence that might be examined through an analysis of Zimbabwe's land reform initiatives. When people in the same country have the legal obligation to go looking for someone else within the country when they begin to claim that you are "other," rodents, animals, or filth and that you do not belong in the human family. The exclusion of expulsion is also present in prejudice in the workplace, in white suburban areas, in the country, in educational institutions, in prisons populated by individuals rendered impoverished by systems that benefited from economic inequality, particularly the distribution of land.

4.6.1.1 The Violence of Eviction

When we declare that "they" don't belong or purposefully and frequently violently banish others from our group, Volf makes this very apparent. We give violence a justification when we objectify the other. Because they were the country's colonisers, white people in Zimbabwe were classified as not belonging during the land allocation.

In the words of Volf (1996:74), inciting hatred in others is a necessary component of some of the most horrifying practises of exclusion. Expulsion reaches its highest point when "the other" is eliminated, like in the case of historical events like land allocation, when many white farmers perished. The way the land was distributed encouraged exclusion rather than expulsion.

4.6.1.2 Assimilation-related Violence

This is distinguished by a less drastic method of erasing the other person's individuality, which takes place when we accept them as part of our reality. The other by erasing their world and entering ours. The assimilator constructs the lens through which the other exists to make them more like themselves. Repression or denial are swallowed up by distinctiveness. Drawing on Claude Levi-Strauss, Volf (1996:74) asserts that assimilation-induced exclusion is predicated on an agreement to let us swallow you up in exchange for our not throwing you out. This is seen in the unity agreement between ZANU PF and ZAPU throughout Zimbabwe's history. Those who could support the government were included in the system even during the land reform.

4.6.1.3 Dominating the other

In line with Volf (1996:75), we should not label others as inferior in any way before using or taking advantage of them to gain more wealth or boost our egos. To seize land from its rightful owners, the Zimbabwean government, particularly its ministers, denigrated white people and members of opposition parties during the land reform era. This was based on the theory of scarcity, according to which individuals deny others access to resources, whether they be social, psychological, or economic. Because of this exclusion, people in Zimbabwe have become corrupt and live in poverty. The ruling party declared its intention to be the nation's protector by engaging in acts of domination.

4.6.1.4 Exclusion caused by abandonment's indifference

The distinction is in acting as though we are blind. When it came to the land distribution process, the Zimbabwean government and the church saw that something was wrong, but they chose to ignore it. Both the government and the church maintained their distance so that those who were abused on their farms could not make a claim against them. During that period, the Zimbabwean government focused on other matters, like supplying seeds and farm equipment and winning the elections. While some churches were able to voice their opinions and take action, they were unable to do much more than push from consciousness.

With the exclusion of indifference, the "other" grows like mould in an elephant home, becoming anonymous or invisible to us. Volf (1996:77) reminds the church that inaction can be even more devastating than hatred when people live apart. The Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe was an act of exclusion that laid the groundwork for patterns of disconnection and fostered the belief that we are not to blame for the majority of unavoidable social problems, such as racism, violence, war, ecological destruction, homophobia, and rising economic inequality in the nation.

4.7 Miroslav Volf's public theology of inclusion

The Mugabe regime's inclusive politics in independent Zimbabwe were characterised by social demobilisation and silence. Social groupings are incorporated into the ruling nationalist alliance through the creation of acceptance. This potentially diverse union is built upon alliances that vary in their reliance on shared ideologies, mutual interests, and the potential danger of using force. Projects outside the authority of the ruling party were all unimaginable and profoundly impossible to achieve because of the rhetoric of inclusion's closure to other social and political space. However, this inclusive politics is dependent on the regime giving alliance members access to economic and social resources.

As stated by Dorman (2016:33), from 1980 to 1987, Zimbabwe was utilising "the politics of inclusion" when it was the breadbasket of Africa. Building was characterised by inclusionary politics, but coercion was present as well.

Relationships between the ruling party and its opponents were only one aspect of unity. A minimum was implemented, agricultural buying points were expanded into former tribal trust territories, and the government was concentrating on deracializing education and health services while rebuilding the nation primarily for the rural population. According to Volf (1996:63), the moral of the inclusion story is that "keeping out" is bad and "taking in" is good.

Volf outlined a few methods that might be applied in the Zimbabwean context for resolving issues with exclusion, identity, and otherness. Volf (1996:20) contends that, there must be a universalist option. Land reform and justice in Zimbabwe were intended to stop the unrestrained spread of differences and to foster fairness and justice and equal land distribution in line with universal values.

Present-day problem issues in Zimbabwe include an uneven distribution of land and a lack of universality in legal systems. People will live in peace, coexist, and respect one another's differences if there is a universally accepted land distribution policy. Without shared values, Zimbabwe will see more social upheavals and disorder than rich and productive diversity.

The Zimbabwean government was expected to use the Volf-proposed communitarian alternative. The government was expected to foster communal distinctiveness and promote heterogeneity among commercial and indigenous farmers to bring the country's people together and use the universal values that bring about peace and prosperity. Volf also suggests a postmodern option that the Zimbabwean government can employ to move towards a better community with new agricultural and governmental systems by acquiring new identities and shedding old ones.

In the opinion of Volf (1996:20), these recommendations will produce social arrangements, the kind of society that should be set up to allow for people to freely build and deface their own identities. Volf (1996:21) noted that theologians should focus less on social structures and more on "fostering the kind of social agents capable of envisioning and creating just truthful, and peaceful societies and on shaping cultural climate in which those agents can thrive".

A lot of social agents are needed in the Zimbabwean environment right now to assist the citizens in creating healthy social structures that advance peace, justice, and harmony in the nation. Only when the process values and takes into account the opinions and aspirations of all stakeholders can a competent justice system and fair distribution of land be accomplished in Zimbabwe.

In the words of Hutchison and Bleiker (2013:18), reconciliation is crucial to establishing peace because it attends to the conflict's deep-seated scars.

Government policymaking must be inclusive of all parties, including but not limited to, the church, civic community, citizens, government, academia, media, traditional leaders, and the global community. Before putting new policies into effect, the Zimbabwean government must make thoughtful decisions and demonstrate the capacity to consult with many stakeholders on important matters like land reform.

To comprehend politics, the Christian must take into consideration Volf's (1996:19) assertion that there are two disparities. It is based on fundamental arguments that are the first to suggest that a person's identity is inextricably shaped by the specifics of the social environment in which he or she is born and raised. Most people in Zimbabwe were born during the same period when the late President Mugabe and the ZANU PF were in power, therefore they were unable to understand what democracy was. Additionally, distribution was employed as a means of mass control, and this is still the case in Zimbabwe.

Second, our sense of identity and recognition is affected by the social context in which we live. The ruling party has consistently accused the opposition party and civil social organisations of betraying Zimbabwe's struggle for independence. The Zimbabwean government keeps using propaganda to subjugate the populace with false distortion and a diminished state of being. The government's shortcomings are still being attributed on the west and the imposition of sanctions for disregarding the rule of law. Some Zimbabweans are even unaware of what sanctions are.

Volf (1996:49) highlights that at the beginning of any conflict, there is an act of exclusion. He uses one of the metaphors of ultimate exclusion looks like ethnic cleansing. He states that "exclusion is often the evil perpetrated by the good and barbarity produced by civilization."

Some scholars underscore exclusion as “not simply a matter of repressive ejection but of productive formation.” An act of exclusion takes place because of an unwillingness to “depart from one’s own culture.” According to Hardesty (1987:15), attempting to speak in a more inclusive manner helps us as individuals recognise our racism, elitism, nationalism, classism, ageism, homophobia, and other prejudices in addition to our sexism. In keeping with Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31, Christ gave us the Golden Rule, which states that we should "do unto others as we would have them do unto us."

People in Zimbabwe must fully understand that attempts to promote inclusiveness should go beyond issues of race, religion, and politics. Zimbabweans from all walks of life ought to be able to unite and feel a connection to one another through values that have been collectively formed and embraced, even in terms of social justice and land distribution.

The church and the people of Zimbabwe must realise that they cannot be separated by the misguided agendas of a small elite group or jeopardise the fundamental rights of those who are marginalised due to their colour, ethnicity, gender, ability, or age. The Zimbabwean community needs to understand how important inclusion is. The church and state should actively participate in inclusive discourse and action to comprehend and respond to the needs of diverse citizens and religious backgrounds by not only providing for their needs but also by openly confronting injustices that can result in social exclusion.

4.8 Theology of embrace by Miroslav Volf as a theological metaphor for Zimbabwean national healing and reconciliation

According to the *Cambridge Dictionary*, to embrace is "to accept or continue in a difficult or unpleasant situation." An embrace first draws our attention because it shows a close encounter and a relational involvement. Embrace can be portrayed or expressed in a multitude of ways, such as tightly holding someone in both arms to show affection, a preference for them, or sympathy, or while greeting or saying goodbye... Volf’s views embrace as an alternative to the problem of identities built upon exclusion. The issue of embrace is essential in theology because it tells us how human being are created in relation to one another. Volf’s views exclusion as sin while the act of embrace represents human participation in the life and mission of God.

Volf's concept of human embrace is focused on what human interactions and relationships should be rather than giving the account in which they are supposed to be. We can observe that the practice of embrace must be established based on one's identity and relationships with others. As defined by Volf (1997:10), embrace refers to more than just giving "others" credit indeed, it goes beyond reconciliation. Reaching out to "others" and creating a space "inside ourselves as individuals and civilizations for "others" while keeping true to ourselves is what embrace signifies. In the words of Volf (1997:40), the "theology of embrace" is centred

on theological reflection on otherness. If this endeavour is undertaken in a way that marginalises the issues of oppression and liberation, it would be a betrayal of both God and the oppressed people. Embracing people for who they are in their otherness requires releasing them from oppression and allowing them to be themselves.

Volf (1996:140) outlines the steps of embracing, he wrote about the "drama of embrace" as having four "acts", in this study we will call them steps. The first step is about opening the arms, the most vulnerable gesture that someone could choose to make; that's means that one must possess the desire for the others as Volf echoed, "I do not want to be myself only, I want to be part of the other." (Volf 1996: 141). The first step of the offer to embrace must be open arms as a message that we want to engage the other in a positive and constructive way. The call to embrace must also be free and unconditional. Volf goes to recommend that; you will be part of "the pain of absence and the joy of anticipated presence that underscores the fact even before the self opens its arms the other is in a sense already part of it." (Volf 1996:141). This concept of self is the foundation of Volf's view of the conception of identity. Volf's view of desire for the other is also helped by a sense of the self as incomplete without the other. The New Dispensation government in Zimbabwe was meant to be inclusive of all. Opening hands for everyone, embracing all things from the past, attempting to confront them, recognising their mistakes, and pleading with those who were affected by Gukurahundi, the Land Reform of 2000, and Murambatsvina for forgiveness. The church and the government can make all these things happen.

The opposition party, civil society organisations, and farmers who lost their farms because of land reform were among the groups that the administration was meant to embrace in terms of politics. Since the church in Zimbabwe is told to put every circumstance of their lives, whether happy or sad, in the framework of our relationship with God, the church has a history of welcoming and opening hands of relationship. Zimbabwe's government and society must recognise that our identities as people are constituted as humans in relationships, with the community and church serving as our neighbours and as a source of consolation, support, accountability, and companionship throughout our entire lives.

The second step is that of waiting, this is giving the other time to choose to embrace without any kind of pressure or manipulation. Waiting for response from the other, the point at which the actual practice of embrace is likely to stand and continue. Waiting sometimes is frustrating, however the spirit of waiting on the other must not be abandoned.

Volf informs us that there is a waiting moment as we approach one another. We wait out of respect for the other person and because we could get a bad response from them. We can see that we respect each other's individuality by the way we wait. Volf (1996:142) asserts that, "the self has 'postponed' desire and stopped at the borders of the other after making space and emerging from itself. It must wait for the other to become desirous and for their arms to open before moving forward." The Zimbabwean government must be conscious of the people's waiting period in order to create a transformative relational encounter of justice and reconciliation without interfering with any system. For Zimbabwe to succeed, it must get rid of any systems that encourage exclusion, crime, violence, or other behaviours that rekindle hostility.

The third step of closing the arms, "it takes two pairs of arms for one embrace; we will either have merely an invitation to embrace or taking in one's clutches (Volf 1996:143)." This third step is all about reconciliation, the goal of the church is reconciliation, according to Bloomfield (2006: 6), reconciliation is a continuous process that helps tense parties mend their strained relationships. Particularly those who were severely impacted during the time of the land reform, the church in Zimbabwe has a significant role to play in bringing the people of Zimbabwe together.

Gathogo (2012:74–91) suggests that, both on a personal and collective level, reconciliation actually mends the damaged or broken link of friendship between God and humans and their fellow beings. "Reconciliation does not necessarily involve forgiveness; forgiving implies the healing of the psychological and spiritual scars of past suffering," wrote Carles Villa-Vicencio. There is undoubtedly a big need for people to come together in Zimbabwe.

We can infer from the studies that reconciliation refers to healing an imbalance in a friendship or connection. According to Heltzel (2008:81), our church's purpose of reconciliation is inherent.

The theological concept of reconciliation strengthens the eschatological perspective of the restoration's theme while affirming its Christocentric orientation. The ground for the reconciliation of individuals within the church is provided by the reconciliation of communion between humanity. A set of terms that can reinterpret the best elements of the restoration concept is provided by reconciliation.

The restoration concept can be retrieved and reinterpreted through reconciliation. True forgiveness and love between adversaries are necessary for expensive reconciliation. At the cross, both victims and offenders reconcile and join the fight for peace and justice as it has been described by Volf.

The fourth step; to open the arms again, as the arms are released, identity of the self has been enriched by the presence of the other. We believe and hope that, there may be more embraces that become necessary in the future, so the open arms are also a reminder of how the process of reconciliation began. Volf comments that, "the opening of the arm underlines that, though the other may be inscribed into the self, the alterity of the other may not be neutralized by merging both in an undifferentiated 'we'... the other must be let go so that her genuine dynamic identity may be preserved Volf 1996:144)." Volf is constantly aware of the problems of exclusion based on people's differences and through attempts to embrace the other into the self.

Volf's work of embracing can be used to bringing unity in churches, politics, and the whole world.

The concept of embracing portrays the mission of God and character of God's engagement with human beings, embracing of humanness and calling, loving, and welcoming everyone. Volf (1996:85) highlights that, "no one should ever be excluded from the will to embrace, because at the deepest level, the relationship to others does not rest on their moral performance and therefore cannot be undone by the lack of it." In our Zimbabwean perspective, Volf's (1996:100) assertion that "God's reception of hostile humanity into divine communion is a model for how human beings should relate to the other" has a resonance. It suggests that using God's embrace as our model for embracing means admitting that God's acceptance of an antagonistic humanity into His divine communion appears to be the reason why the horizontal viewpoint of action, which is equivalent to the embracive measurements between myself and the other, must be grounded in the vertical dimension of God's transforming embrace.

According to Volf (1996:145), an effective embrace in hostile circumstances has four distinguishing characteristics. Volf describes the "fluidity of identities" as a feature.

The people of Zimbabwe and all of Africa must comprehend that "all culture is hybrid" in the nation, where Ndebele, Shona, and white people live side by side. All people are citizens of the nation, but we are internally differentiated by the various roles that people play, the ways in which we communicate, and the communities with which we identify. In all social circles, they will always be outsiders in the nations and communities that contribute to the advancement of the economies, civilizations, and way of life of the populace. Even now, groups and individuals in the country still refer to other people as colonizers and landowners. Africa needs to understand that we live in interconnected social domains, that leaving our home changes us forever, and that the things we encounter outside become a part of what is "inside." In every aspect of life, diversity is always essential. In its campaign for the harmonized elections in 2023, Zimbabwe's ruling party is using the slogan "*Nyika inovakwa nevene vayo, ilizwe lakhiwa ngabanikazi balo*" (A nation is built by its owners). The nation must understand that its existence is a result of others, and that variety and international cooperation may restore Zimbabwe's greatness beyond only its own citizens.

“The core of Christian faith lies persuasion that “other” need not loved, but ought to be embraced even when they are perceived as wrongdoers.” Volf (1996:85). In the view of Koyama (2015:90), no nation is accountable to itself alone; rather, all states are required to uphold universal laws of political morality to maintain their own sovereignty and defend their relationships with other nations. Zimbabweans must promise to uphold their country's honour to achieve their lofty objectives of equally distributing all their riches, including the land. This initial point is crucial. It conveys the spirit of national reconciliation and repentance. It conveys Zimbabwe's yearning to begin anew. The people of Zimbabwe must let the past bury the past. It needs to be buried in the current public dialogue. Examining the past in all its ugliness must consider the public engagement and the Messianic understanding of Christ for all people.

Zimbabwe's future is in the Messianic perspective of Christ for all humanity. For the Zimbabwean people to achieve the goals and objectives of including and sharing resources with others, they must pledge allegiance to their country.

Volf discusses the "no symmetry" of the relationship. In order for a nation or a family to function effectively, the metaphor of an embrace must be used since it suggests that "the self and the other belong together in their mutual alterity" (Volf 1996:146). Zimbabwe needs to build positive relationships with other nations and its own people if it is to restore its decent governance and achieve peace. Although the Second Republican did a fantastic job of introducing the slogan "Zimbabwe is open for business," they should have started by saying "Zimbabwe is open for good relationships and justice." "Embrace includes not just the other who is a friend, but also the other who is the enemy." Volf (1996:146). The Zimbabwean administration was expected to comprehend that despite disagreements, conflicts will be supported by a desire to embrace one another in return. Volf teaches us that when we embrace, we risk "under determination of the outcome." The leaders did not consider embracing everyone in terms of exercise prior to the land reform. The results of the programme were not carefully monitored by the authorities, who also underestimated such results. The programme caused the nation to experience famine as well as issues with corruption, endemic poverty, and public hatred.

Now the nation must realise that "we can never know in advance how reshaping of the self and the other will take place in embrace" if it is to overcome all of them (Volf 1996:147). Zimbabwe must anticipate equality in the future, with a result based on social justice and just land redistribution that embraces and benefits a wide range of people.

Volf encourages that people who want to embrace one another make official agreements. According to Volf (1996:152), the inability of people to uphold their obligations to one another threatens modern societies just as much as the inclination of despotic governments to breach their commitments to them. Even in the Bible, God made covenants to his followers, asking them to keep in mind and uphold their commitments in daily life. According to Volf (1996:153), putting the new covenant at the centre of theological reflection on social issues requires Christian theologians to consider how the crucifixion and the covenant are related. Volf learned from the cross how to restore shattered covenants, renew broken covenants, and prevent covenants from being completely undone (Volf 1996:153).

Zimbabweans, the government, and the church must learn from Volf's teachings. God promised to "make space in God's self" as part of their agreement. We must understand that God endures human cruelty because He does not desire to be a God apart from humans. Zimbabwe must be able to use social covenants to bring its citizens together. Together, people need to embrace one another and respect social and human existence. In accordance with Volf (1996:154), "Sustaining and renewing covenants between persons and groups requires the work of mutually "creating space for the other in the self" and of re-arranging the self in light of the other's presence." As an example, the Government of National Unity (GNU), which was facilitated by former South African President Thabo Mbeki, engaged in negotiations with important political figures seeking cross-party political solutions. The availability of food and jobs in the nation today are all signs that the GNU restored peace and sanity in Zimbabwe. Volf discusses the need for self-giving in rejuvenating covenants. Leaders in the church and in politics must enter into agreements based on serving others and acting in their best interests without regard to personal gain or political considerations.

Volf makes it quite obvious that the embrace and convocation should not be taken for granted because they have eternal significance. According to Volf (1996:155), "God's self-giving on the cross was a consequence of the "eternity" of the covenant, which in turn rests on God's inability to give covenant partner who has broken the covenant." Most politicians make promises they can't keep in order to get votes and get elected to power. Government representatives need to be aware that their commitments also have eternal implications. We must take note of Volf's new covenant. The social aspect of the new covenant is our manner of embracing one another under the conditions of enmity, and God's embrace of humanity, which continues violating the covenant, the inside side of an embrace is covenant and covenant is the outer side of embrace Volf (1996:156).

4.9 Miroslav Volf's theology on oppression and justice in relation to land reform and social injustice in Zimbabwe

Volf provides an understanding of justice which is good in terms of procedures and ethical theories of justice. Volf suggests that failure of justice in practice is because theories of justice are based upon practices which are fundamentally unhealthy. In Volf's view, human justice does fail and by its very nature will always fail. Volf goes on to provide some critiques of justice theories using scholars like John Rawls in political liberalism and Immanuel Kant (Volf 1996:199). Rawls, for example named his theory of justice "Justice as Fairness." The theory consists of two principles. The first principle concerns political institutions, and Rawls posits that each person has the same and inalienable claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme of liberties for all. Rawls (1971: 92) this principle means that everyone has the same basic liberties, which can never be taken away. Thus, curbing the liberties of an intolerant group that intended to harm the liberties of others may be justified. Rawls' second principle pertains to social and economic institutions which he said should be attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; and are to be to the greatest benefit of the least- advantaged members of society. (Rawls 1971:11) his second principle focused on equality. Rawls realized that a society could not avoid inequalities among its people.

Inequalities result from things such as one's inherited characteristics, social class, personal motivation and even luck. This theory, as Volf views it, is not adequate to address the scourge of social injustices in society. Hence, we can discover that his main point is to address that the philosophical theories of justice are inadequate for Christians. Volf's public theology can provide broader definitions of justice that can be applied to the uniqueness of injustice in Zimbabwe. To show the inadequacy of dominant justice notions, Volf and McNally-Linz (2016:176) contend that:

But justice isn't entirely about arranging things well in the world. It's also about the sort of people we are, what sort of character and dispositions we have. This is justice as a virtue, less popular today but no less important an aspect of justice than these others. For the justice of a society depends considerably on the justice of its members

Volf talks much about embrace, he states that "There is no justice without the will to embrace (Volf 1996: 220)." We can observe that we see embracing as both justice and superseding justice. Volf asserts that, "Embrace is part and parcel of the very definition of justice (Volf 1996:220)."

Embrace is about more than forgiveness. Both the Zimbabwean leaders and Christians should understand that to embrace is the acknowledgement of justice's demands but a refusal to pursue what is due and a will for the other to enter embrace. As we can learn from Volf, embracing is a state of justice or right relationship with others. Volf helps Christians to understand that in the relationship of justice and embrace we must reconsider first the deconstructing human notion of justice and then reconstruct justice based on Christian values.

Volf makes the strong claims that justice which permits injustice is not justice. He goes on saying that "Justice is impossible in the order of calculating, equalizing, legalizing and universalizing actions. If you want justice and nothing but justice, you will inevitably get injustice (Volf 1996:223)." This suggests that people have different perceptions of justice, their conceptions of justice depend on cultures and traditions. The Zimbabwe citizen should understand that peace depends on justice between cultures.

However, assumption continues to be there that violence between cultures will not end. Volf highlights that the ultimate true justice is that of creating a community which depends on hope to live and flourish as human beings. “Justice creates a sphere of mutual obligation that extends through the whole community, rulers no less than subjects, rich and powerful no less than weak and poor, one culture no less than the other (Volf 1996:196).”

As Christians the whole world including Zimbabwe, we must know that the love of God is greater than all things and sins, we must create a community that frees one to see her/himself in the light of God’s justice and recover from his/her own sinfulness. In terms of reconciliation and forgiveness we must start with justice because justice results to fairness and embrace for peace and unity.

Volf makes it apparent that "justice and then reconciliation" is the first step towards rapprochement. According to Volf (1996:220), "there can be no justice without the will to embrace." Justice is defined in terms of both acceptance and equality. The Zimbabwean government was required to consider providing "justice" to all of its citizens, civil social groups, and the opposition parties as its opponents, notwithstanding the history and injustice of land reform.

As is well known, most African nations, including Zimbabwe, have a long history of internal political struggle. Both the government and the opposition consider themselves as the victim and the other as the culprit, which gives them both good excuses for trying to resolve the dispute by other means. As Mudzanire and Banda (2021:5) note regarding the present president, Mnangagwa's assertion that he was chosen by God to lead Zimbabwe has a fundamental flaw in that his rule is still marked by oppression, casting doubt on his assertion that he was chosen by God to lead the country. Ironically, Mnangagwa's messianic assertions that he has been chosen by God to lead Zimbabwe do not demonstrate a dedication to God's requirement that leaders uphold justice. Because a sizable and powerful portion of the Zimbabwean church can be said to have been "co-opted" by the authoritarian state, Mnangagwa's attempt to biblify the political landscape in Zimbabwe has been successful.

The residents of Zimbabwe might employ the principle of "justice first, then reconciliation" by requesting that the government emphasise justice more than reconciliation. When justice is established in the nation, the questions of forgiveness will then be handled. Here, forgiveness simply refers to the decision to stop allowing an injustice that has been sufficiently atoned for to negatively impact one's connection with the offender. The church must know that God is initiating reconciliation to return the world to God's purposes. The church and the government must both support reconciliation as a gift, taking part in God's plan for world peace and harmony.

Volf learned that both parties must refrain from revenge in order for justice to be done properly. When it comes to their interpersonal relationships, Zimbabweans have experienced several challenges.

Political parties and ethnic groups both share common experiences and differences, but justice cannot be served by revenge. The justice of oppression "must be fought with the creative "injustice" of forgiveness, not with the aping injustice of revenge," argues Volf (1996:122). The inhabitants of Zimbabwe must understand that revenge is an inappropriate course of action. The people of Zimbabwe must understand that forgiveness neutralises the influence of remembered wrongdoing, exceeds the assertion of upheld justice, and puts a stop to the vicious cycle of vengeance. This forgiveness is socially significant.

Volf (1996:196) emphasises that without justice, meaning could succumb to absurdity, social order is threatened by chaos, and peace is threatened by violence. This is the situation in Zimbabwe today. In this nation, justice is crucial because it promotes peace and equality for all. Justice is dependent on the ability to embrace the other, and justice in and of itself will remain unfair as long as this is not the case. Building strong relationships is essential to enforcing the law in the nation (Volf 1996:197). The African leaders must put these principles into practice by letting justice reign. Justice must be served to everyone, not just selected people. "If God is the God of all people, the justice of God must be the justice for all people. According to Volf (1996:197) universal peace will be the fruit of universal divine justice."

In the words of Volf. J. and Volf (1997:5), the politics of equal value and dignity aim to create "an identical basket of rights and immunities" that are universally accepted. Occasionally, these politics are paired with what are known as the "politics of equal wealth." Zimbabweans need to adopt a politics of equal wealth, wherein everyone in the nation benefits not just the politicians in positions of authority, particularly when it comes to the redistribution of land. In accordance with Volf. J. and Volf (1997:5), individuals try to create an equivalent basket of goods and services to establish rights and immunities. As the word equal simply means equal worth, equal wealth is universal in all circumstances.

4.10 Volf's perspective towards disagreement

Zimbabwean political parties need to practise what Volf calls "*Enlarged thinking*."

He claims that if we do not have high expectations, it facilitates reflection on the issues with justice. The majority of disagreements in Zimbabwe occur elections period, when individuals fight and murder one another over political disputes. In the words of Volf (1996:11), "we need to look for ways of resolving them without recourse to either the power of gun or the brute strength of the democratic masses."

There will always be conflict in any society or political system. Even within churches, there is conflict in both our interpersonal relationships and our private life.

When considering how to live our lives as individuals, collaborating with others, and most importantly serving in God's kingdom, having a solid understanding of the reasons why conflicts arise and how to handle them is crucial. We must view the church as a system in order to be able to overcome the various problems we face in life and ministry. Understanding how systems operate should be the foundation of how we understand the church.

Zimbabwean residents must be sought out by the church and the government for fair consent in an unrestricted moral preservation. In order for peace and justice to rule the nation, this can be accomplished through making use of the relevant tradition and resources. Through "enlarged thinking," people will come up with new ideas for how to advance justice and cooperate in bringing about peace (Volf 1996:213)

Although "enlarged thinking" cannot be used to defend our understanding of justice, it is crucial for enlarging and correcting both our understanding of justice and how we perceive what is or is not right.

4.11 Volf's perspective on deception and the truth

Volf examines the difference between memory and history. Volf expresses that history, as a critical reconstruction of the past, and memory as the identity shaping remembrance of the past both must be addressed with truthfulness in mind. Volf contends that "first, we remember what we want to remember because we know what we choose to know. Second, we do with memories what we want to do with them because they themselves do not dictate what ought to be done with them Volf (1996:239)" Volf suggests that these boundaries we have in our communities are there because all historical reconstructions and shaped by identities and interests. Volf challenges us that the memory of a wrong may prolong hatred.

Volf encouraged much about truthfulness and embracing by performing that it's a form of a truthful life in love which means the practice of nonviolence. Our day- to-day life requires truth, and truthful life is certainly nothing new to the tradition of Christianity, as such, we must continue to do that. Volf makes use of the New Testament scriptures and the challenge for individual saying truth begins "in you" and spread to others, "before you can search for and accept the truth, before you can unmask deceptions and ideologies, the truth must be "in you Volf (1996:256)."

African political and Christian leaders especially in Zimbabwe must learn from Volf that there is no peace without truth between people and without the will to embrace one another. The communities must have good relationships if they embrace the truth. This will help them to continue to sustain. The community with deception can be easily destroyed. Deceptive communities continue to fight and show division in all spheres of life. we must uphold Jesus's words that "the truth will make us free," we must tell the truth of our history, experiences and in our current lives. Speaking the truth and acting morally gives people the ability to make positive decisions and even alter their way of life for the better.

Volf (1996:246) asserts that, "truth" thereby increases the power of the powerful. A power creates truth in order to exercise its authority. It serves as a weapon in social conflict. Volf must serve as a lesson to the state and the church in Zimbabwe that power does not come from ruling but rather from expressing the truth. According to Volf (1996:249), in the world of human affairs, "Truth itself is not powerless, it holds sway over people," therefore in order to know reality, we need to wish to wield power properly. Leaders' ought to communicate the truth in love, act without lying, and avoid abusing their position of authority. Because their leaders are lying, most African nations are not progressing, according to Volf (1996:258). "The idea that truth sustain community while deception destroys it is woven into the very notion of the truth that we encounter in the biblical traditions, there can be no truth between people without the will to embrace the other" Once more, the truth brings people together so that they can coexist peacefully. The challenge is that it is meaningless and deceptive for the church to criticise the government's actions on the land question if it has not yet begun to make amends for its own crimes towards African people.

4:12 Volf's perspective on violence and peace

As noted by Volf (1996:277), when violence breaks out, oppression and deception will rule, leading to new power imbalances and the perpetuation of significant conflicts over what is true and what is just.

Zimbabwe has experienced conflict and violence in a variety of forms, including colonialism and the liberation struggle prior to independence, the Matabeleland Massacre (1982–1987), electoral violence, violence associated with the fast-track land reform programme (2000–2003), Murambatsvina (2005), and ongoing tensions. Zakeyo (2016:22) said that ZANU PF once more committed violence on opposition activists and ordinary civilians prior to parliamentary elections in June 2000 in order to thwart challenge from the new opposition party, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). During the 2002 presidential elections, which placed the late President Mugabe against his fierce adversary, the late President of the MDC, Morgan Tsvangirai, the pattern of election violence escalated. Pre- and post-election political violence is still occurring in Zimbabwe.

Chitando (2002:141) echoes the same, the unrest among the peasant population, the traditional foundation of support for the ruling party, led to an increase in nationalist language in Zimbabwe's discussion of the land issue. White commercial farmers, who were perceived as the main backers of the opposition, came under fire after the MDC won the urban vote in the 2000 parliamentary elections. Political thuggery, violence committed by veterans of war on farms, and careless language used by hopeful politicians were among the minor incidents that international media networks grasped and joyfully sensationalised for an audience of confused viewers.

It is crucial for Zimbabwe's church and government to recognise that coexisting peacefully with one another is a manifestation of our humanity, which is a gift from God. As we cultivate our own identities and take care of our own wellbeing, Christians are not meant to live in isolation from others but to engage with them. For Christians, Jesus Christ's example of God's love serves as the primary motivator for being open to not only coexisting with others but also lovingly accepting them. Because He loved all people, Jesus Christ gave His life in order to save them. Through Him, we are obligated to love all people without distinction, including enemies as well as friends.

4:13 Religion's role in public life

According to Baker (2010:98), Volf is a theologian who characterises "embrace" as a reaction against exclusion brought about by theological difference.

We are not who we are because we are different from those standing next to us, but rather because we are both different and connected by both bridges and obstacles, as Volf (1996: 66) points out. In fact, Volf contends that the moral justifications for practicing embrace are supported by the bounds provided by religious traditions. Volf, in a book titled *A public faith* that was published in 2011, asserts that "religion is very alive today and it is a force not only in the private but also in the public lives of people in the world." Religious people of all faiths, including those of other religions, must cooperate and participate in shaping governmental policies. According to Volf (2011: ix), "many religious people seek to influence public life in accordance with their own conception of the good life." There are religious institutions that must be able to have a vision that impacts not only on political

benefits but also influences some religious groups. Volf (2011:x) “religious people ought to be free to bring their visions of the good life into the public including politics as well as other aspects of public life.”

Based on Shoko (2006:5), there has always been a direct connection between the people, the land, and religion in Zimbabwe. The area has a deep historical connection to the chiefdom, the current chief, and the ancestral spirits that still reside there. Ancestral spirits, also known as *vadzimu*, are the 'kingpin' of Shona society and are the spirits of deceased relatives. They have an impact on the daily routines and lives of the community's surviving members. Politics and conventional religion become closely related. However, one may contend that the Zimbabwean government has incorporated conventional religious worldviews into its political system.

As noted by Volf (2015:77), Globalisation is changing how world religions relate to the state. Religion can assist to integrate society and give its government a legitimising ideology when a religious community is coextensive with a society.

The majority of Zimbabweans are pleading for justice, however there are not many well-established religious institutions that promote peace and harmony. Volf (2011:4) extols the virtues of the Yale Centre for Faith and Culture, which he directs. The centre's mission is to "promote the practise of Christian faith in all spheres of life so that what is broken in our individual lives and cultures can be repaired and we all can flourish as God's creatures,

finite, fragile, flawed and all this glorious." To have prophetic faith in the community, that is what we believe the church in Zimbabwe ought to be doing. Volf (2011:78) advises that it is understandable that Christians always want societal influence. Volf further states that Christians in Zimbabwe must seek influence in all spheres of society. It is a result of the commitment to loving both the one God and neighbours that the church has a duty to "mend the world" and serve the common good. This duty is ingrained in the very nature of Christianity as a prophetic religion.

Volf observes hostile he is cautious to point out that the acceptance of force in Islam is a minority position within that religion and is one sort of "malfunction" to which socially involved religious groups are vulnerable. 110

The opposite error, which is equally inappropriate for Christians, is a complete withdrawal from culture or a compulsive need to conform to its dominant values. Coerciveness happens when we use intimidation or violence to coerce belief and obedience in order to further the purposes of the Christian religion. Such tactics frequently prevail in places where religion has been reduced to the basis of victorious tribalism, which is unsuitable given that God is a parent to all people. Volf helpfully clarifies that, in contrast to the secularist perspective, exercising one's faith in a country's public life does not represent a forceful violation of democratic principles. Volf contends that our understanding of the true origin of compelled faith is misguided.

Volf cautions against authoritarian forms of religious participation in public and would disallow a political campaign in the nature of a culture war; his appeal for any public engagement at all will be contentious among young adults who are becoming more and more disenchanted with religion. Reasoning from any faith at all to politics is unpleasant, so Volf's claim that the most valuable contribution religious people can make is a vision of human flourishing would be significantly less controversial than the more particular types of political campaigning with which they are much more experienced. As noted by Volf (2001: 40), "Think" and devoted practise will create and maintain a culture of peace; "Think" but enthusiastic practise of the Christian religion is likely to engender violence.

4.13.1 Religions' absence of engagement with the community

Volf (2011:17) "The work of medical professionals and trash collectors, business executives and artists, stay-at-home parents and scientists need to be inserted into God's story of the world for Christian faith to be idle in the world." To have an impact on the national and individual lifestyles, the influence must permeate all spheres of public life. Religious people have long been excluded from local government meetings in Zimbabwe where policies are made. The church is accused of being so silent on community issues because it believes that all local problems are political in nature and should be handled by elected political officials.

As stated by Volf (2011:18), "while the mere fact of speaking in a religious voice in the public arena is not oppressive, the way religious people bring faith to bear on issues of

common concern can be, and often is, oppressive." The state and religious organisations in Zimbabwe must create their own meaning within their local communities. As noted by Volf (2011), our job gets a deeper dimension of meaning when we labour for the well-being of communities rather than when we work solely for ourselves. Then, in addition to being purely selfish, we are also acting in others' best interests. In Zimbabwe, where people avoid politics because they wish to profit off the populace, the same must be expected to occur. Only the ruling political party of Zimbabwe and its supporters benefited from the land reform.

According to Volf (2011:41), holding to the idea that there is only one God entails holding to the idea that God is the only true God. Since such a claim to the reality of God's moral and metaphysical nature must be universal, it is unavoidably public. General public claims can lead to conflict of either a specific or general kind. Given that God is present in all religions, religious organisations must develop universal solutions for the community.

The Christian communities are urged by Volf (2011:83) to take part in local influences. Christian groups have limited control over the outcomes of their contacts and can only make sporadic inroads into modern society from inside. Christian communities in Zimbabwe should be aware of their place in modern society and work for the betterment of everybody.

In order to assist people "grow out of their petty hopes as to live meaningful lives, and to help them resolve their grand conflict and live in common with others," Volf (2011:100) advises all religious groups in the globe. In order to avoid violence, Zimbabwe's religious communities must learn to communicate their theological knowledge in a way that promotes social justice throughout the nation.

Few other thinkers make this connection, which has the potential to more forcefully allay the fears of individuals who are troubled by the idea of Christian political advocacy. In political discourse, whether on the left or the right, Christians often come out as zealots, which is a problem according to our study. This makes reasonable considering that, as Volf (2001: 72–74) notes, Christians are unable to disregard the issues surrounding how the public sphere affects human flourishing due to the teachings of the Christian faith on love of God and neighbour.

4.13.2 The Volf's perspective about migration

With the spread of technology and human migration, the world is becoming a global community. For Zimbabwe's economy to expand, its people, government, religion, and residents must be able to accept individuals from other countries and continents. When our neighbour is a "stranger," loving them unconditionally is what love of neighbour looks like (Volf and McAnnally-Linz 2016:125). This welcome love is the fundamental Christian commitment that should guide public discourse on migration. Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:118) suggest that "God is welcoming and just toward all humans, so our societies ought to be welcoming and just toward migrants. We should care especially for those who have been pushed from their homes by violence or dire poverty."

This relates well to the Zimbabwean situation where an influx of migrant labourers from neighbouring states during the colonial era. Most of these migrants were later on affected by the land reform which left them homeless and subsequently fell victim to Operation Murambatsvina.

Volf and McAnnally (2016:127) encourage the church to participate in political debates about migration and refuge issues in destination countries because these debates often only take into account economic interests and maintaining cultural integrity rather than welcoming embrace and promoting justice. The church must participate in these processes of welcoming and showing hospitality to people from other countries. The church and the state should support and treat immigrants well. The main principle that should guide Christians' public engagement with migrants, according to Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:128), is to embrace and have justice.

4.13.3 Volf on Good Policing

Christians are urged by Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:134) to support policing strategies that do not benefit or permit the wealthy and powerful. The politicians in Zimbabwe have created numerous policies that often work in their favour, this started during land reform. The minority of Christians work as police officers instead of attending meetings. The majority of people believe that politicians' jobs include both employment and creating policies. The main issue in Zimbabwe is that the police have been taken hostage by those

in-power, which denies justice to the populace. There are numerous instances where the Zimbabwean police have detained opposition and civil society figures without them having committed any crimes. As noted by Makwerere, Chinzete, and Musorowegomo (2013: 130), governments in many Southern African nations are failing in their basic responsibility to ensuring that the public has access to an honest, effective police service that upholds the rule of law and fosters a secure environment. The only type of policing that is acceptable is that which contributes to the development of an atmosphere devoid of fear and supportive of individuals exercising their human rights.

It is significant to remember that many countries' current police structures are the result of colonial control and have been influenced by post-colonial history. A major concern is that the country could turn into a nation where the police are used as a resource to create a totalitarian state, as was the case during land reform in Zimbabwe. It is now a common belief that the police are being used to further partisan political interests.

As stated by Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:136), law enforcement personnel should regard the lives and well-being of everyone they encounter. There is a lot of corruption among police officers in Zimbabwe now, much of it is linked to the country's dominant political party. They frequently claim that political solutions work better than national laws for resolving political problems. Based on Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:138–139), the Zimbabwean government can adopt the following effective methods of competent policing:

1. Police personnel should protect citizens' lives, not to engage in fighting. Mbe (2013:23) noted that when police were told not to act against specific crimes committed by certain people during the land reform in 2000, the Zimbabwean legal system began to fall apart. Police weapons should be appropriate for this use and not replicate military equipment.
2. Police should receive training in non-coercive community protection techniques. This is crucial if a society looks to the police to address social problems like mental illness and homelessness. People in Zimbabwe never police because they do not defend the community but instead seek bribes and engage in conflict with members of the community.

3. The police cannot be positioned against the residents of the community by the law. Too many laws and regulations in Zimbabwe criminalise the entire populace, for example by using fines from little infractions to finance local government and then punishing the poor with increasing severity when they cannot pay. With such legal frameworks, virtually everyone becomes an "offender" to the police, and the police become a threat to everyone's means of subsistence.

4. Without providing blanket protection to police officers who break the law or disregard basic protocol, public policy and police agency cultures should support officers as needed. The Zimbabwean government must understand how crucial it is for officers to believe that, even when they make a mistake, their freedom and livelihood will not be in danger. However, it is also crucial that officers who engage in serious misconduct be held accountable and that communities are shielded from additional suffering at their hands.

4.14 Embracing community

The people of Zimbabwe must live in an accepting country and community. In the words of Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016: 24), a good community "embraces even the enemy" and denounces injustice in addition to having unshakeable forgiveness. In a welcoming country, the government works to bring people together rather than being harsh and killing immigrants and civilians. Instead, then using weapons to argue, they converse with the populace. As noted by Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:25), the demonstration demonstrated an understanding that having Jesus Christ as the centre and norm in public interaction requires not just a commitment to following Christ but also the development of a particular kind of character.

Due to political, religious, and cultural differences, individuals in Zimbabwe are increasingly shunning one another and referring to others as simply "others." Zimbabwean citizens are struggling more and more to learn how to interact positively with others who think differently, especially those who oppress others and take advantage of the country's circumstances. Based on Volf, we must practise fairness and love one another when building communities. Christians are challenged by Volf to build strong senses of community identity centred on following Christ. Christians need to understand

that othering is a negation of the virtues that Christ displayed by his acts of love, embracing and even teaching.

4.15 The Church and Culture of the Country Zimbabwe

Volf (2001:93) demonstrates how Christianity's nuanced relationship with society is supported by theological truth.

"Christianity identity in a culture is always a complex and flexible network of small and large refusal divergences, subversions and more or less radical and encompassing alternative proposals and enactments, surrounded by acceptance of many cultural givens." While Volf (2001: 132) acknowledges the church's witnessing role, he also holds that being faithful entails working towards "public engagement" to "heal the world." The world needs the wisdom of the church to find solutions to its challenges. Christians should help repair the world, but they should also avoid accommodating liberal or pro-government churches, as well as becoming passive or coercive within sects

(Volf, 2001: 78). In Volf's words, "Christian difference should always remain internal to a given cultural world" (Volf:2001:89), this is highlighted. Christians will have to settle with being "just one many players" in today's cultures but they can choose to embrace certain aspects of culture while rejecting or changing others. In the words of Volf (2001:93), "becoming a Christian is thought to mean diverting without leaving." This implies that Zimbabwean Christians have a big duty to change the country's culture. Political, social, and personal engagement are all things that Christians may foster (Volf2001:97). As suggested by Volf (2001:108, 100, 113), Christians should demonstrate "neighbourly love" by "pointing to a way of life in which themselves participate" and serving as "channels through which God imparts wisdom." This is a commendable manner for Christians to teach wisdom. Christians are not to be businessmen or tyrants; rather, they are to be "witnesses" who are constantly willing to pardon and accept. Christians should embrace "pluralism as a political project" and speak in their own language when engaging in public, according to Volf (2001: 106).

Christian communities in Zimbabwe ought to prioritise strong local government and action over well-spoken politics. Within Christian communities, the focus has primarily been on

personal or political issues, with little attention paid to the areas in between. Volf's appeal for a modest acceptance of the postmodern world's plurality. Its consistency with the kind of loving, forgiving witness that Volf sees emerging from the core of Christian theology is equally significant.

Christians in Zimbabwe do not need to retreat from the world or (foolishly) seek to completely alter it. Instead of going back to politics, it might be able to find means of effectively witnessing to a more comprehensive vision of human flourishing at the level of culture. In accordance with Volf (2011:126), Christians should embrace pluralism as a political endeavour and speak in their own language when engaging in public life. Volf's concept ought to cause Christian communities to prioritise good local action over good political speech. In Zimbabwe, the Christian community focuses its efforts primarily on the promises made by political leaders, neglecting the areas in between. Modern Christian philosophy needs to start shifting and attempting to assist from the bottom up in local communities. Rather of continually relying on political solutions, the church needs to be able to develop methods to strongly witness to a wider vision of human flourishing at the level of culture.

4.16 The Graceful Theology of Volf

The idea of giving and forgiving in the context of a culture that frequently lacks a profound knowledge of grace is explored by Miroslav Volf in his book "*Free of Charge and Forgiving in a future stripped of Grace*". In order to address the land reform in Zimbabwe, the government and church there need to understand the theology of grace. Clearly stated, "there is no future without forgiveness" according to Volf (2005:125). Volf uses South Africa as an example of a nation that is still working to recover from the atrocities of apartheid. Volf articulated a Croatian proverb that goes, "People talk about what they have." People live in a sentimental but forgiving culture, thus he urges people to talk about forgiveness.

Throughout all of Zimbabwe's experiences with injustice and mistreatment over land reform and how government policies are not actually assisting the people. The people of Zimbabwe should try to cooperate and accept the spirit of forgiveness.

Rather than seeking to punish and obtain maximum compensation, the government and the church should endeavour to mend relationships. Justice and forgiveness are issues that the church must be concerned about since they belong to the same nation. It is said by Volf (2005:130) that Forgiveness is special kind of gift. When we give, we give, we seek the good of another, not our own good, or at least we do not primary seek our own good. The same is true forgiveness. We forgive for another's sake, though we too may benefit from the results. But there is also an important difference between giving and forgiving. We give then we delight in others or others are in need; by giving we enhance their joy or make up for their lack. We forgive when others have wronged us; by forgiving, we release them from the burden of their wrongdoing.

Volf highlights the significance of comprehending and adopting a "grace" theology. In Christian theology, grace is the term used to describe God's undeserved favour and kindness. In the words of Volf, having a correct understanding of grace is essential to influencing our attitudes towards forgiveness and generosity. Understanding the conflict Volf describes between a society that frequently functions based on reciprocity and the radical idea of giving without expecting anything in return is crucial for resolving land-related concerns. That must be the way the people of Zimbabwe live, not like the politicians who are always looking out for themselves. They should be individuals who want to learn more about grace. Volf makes a case for the value of forgiveness, generosity, and grace in interpersonal interactions. He talks about the difficulties and barriers that people encounter while trying to show grace to others and investigates the transformational potential of these deeds. Volf invites the church to explore the nature of God's grace and how it can be manifested in human relationship as it explores the theological and ethical meditation on generosity.

Volf challenges Christians to consider the radical character of grace and how it affects both individual and community life. Volf demands that grace be lived out in the real world. Under the idea of grace, it merited for every one of us, the land in Zimbabwe was meant to be equally distributed to all people for the benefit of all. Volf, however, urges Christians to confront the difficulties of living by grace. An honest public theology that offers a

Christian viewpoint on engaging each other in border philosophical and cultural discourses is needed to be reemployed.

This theology should urge community members to reflect on their attitude towards giving and grace. The New Testament reveals a grace dynamic that extends beyond moral precepts. Grace is defined as a form of strength that is given to Christian through sources outside of their selves. It is a power of undeserved acceptance that is just as costly as the suffering that Christ endured on the cross.

4.17 Concerning area

Hopewell Chin'ono (X:com,2023) a Zimbabwean and holder of the international journalist award, commented on Patrick Locch Otiena Lumumba's speech in his lecture as a Pan Africanist scholar, regarding the current decline of the ZANU PF propaganda. He observed that the only thing that any reasonable Zimbabwean or African was ever against was violent takeovers when parliament might have approved legislation instead.

Sensible individuals opposed offering land to partisan groups and preferred to give it to those who could use it. Land reform has not yet been fully accomplished when carried out appropriately and based on merit. Zimbabwe will bounce back because only an effective government can do so. A country with a competent administration will be prosperous.

Former Deputy Prime Minister Mutambara expected another violent land reform. Mutambara asserted that the late President Robert Mugabe had little faith in the land reform initiative and frequently hinted that the next generation will oppose it. The only people who gained from that land, according to Mutambara, were the ministers, judges, and army generals who were able to secure title deeds for the farmers. When the ruling class at that time became ruthless about great need of wanting the farms, they compelled the farmers to release the title deeds by manipulating the system to drive out farmers, particularly white farmers. In Zimbabwe, the majority of the general public lacks land title deeds, therefore if the government wants the land back, they can't get it.

Land reform is a great objective, but the technique used to acquire it has fundamental flaws and is blamed for the nation of Southern Africa's acute shortages of essential commodities, such as food, gasoline, and electricity.

Problems with land reform include a lack of a security interest, poor educational opportunities in agriculture and preparation for new farmers, a lack of irrigation, infrastructural issues with roads, electricity, schools, and hospitals, and inadequate inputs.

Local viewpoints on land reform show that, despite the many arguments for and against it, the initiative is primarily a political and religious one. Although it can be politicised, its religiosity can be confirmed.

However, the land question still ranks among the most difficult issues Zimbabwe has ever faced, dividing the government against the people. Numerous religious leaders in Zimbabwe are currently choosing to leave the fight for social justice and basic human rights or to fully join the government ZANU PF in exchange for financial rewards. Church leaders in Zimbabwe have had a tough time demonstrating how the ruling party has manipulated the morally acceptable idea of land redistribution for political survival. It is still unclear why black Zimbabweans and migrant labourers from Malawi, Zambia, and Mozambique, who were the benefactors of the scheme, should die in the land conflict.

The opposing parties and members of civil society are still having a hard time defining who they are and where they fit in alongside the government. The new dispersion administration continues using exclusionary tactics to target racial groups, opposition party members, non-profit organisations, and church leaders who are left open to assault.

4.18 Conclusion

This chapter has identified some of Miroslav Volf's ideas about preference options for justice that, in some ways, are relevant to the current situation in Zimbabwe. The chapter has established that Miroslav Volf's primary themes of preferential option for justice addressing the root causes of injustice, the idea of property, and empowerment have some bearing on the situation in contemporary Zimbabwe.

Chapter 5

Volf's Public Theology as Matrix for Social Justice in Zimbabwe

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores how Miroslav Volf's public theology might support the Zimbabwean church and government in their efforts to combat historical social injustice and land reform, create a just society, and engage the general public. Some academics tend to view these events as significant government choices made during a transitional period. The Zimbabwean government must be critical in its assessment of the country's past, present, and future in order to choose what to do next. The people of Zimbabwe can continue to remember and recall memories of their past experiences. Expanding on Volf's public theology and experience, recalling the right thing can help people to get stronger and can be beneficial for their moral exploration. By dissecting a number of incidents that happened during land reform and in the context of social injustice, this study will take Volf's request to consider experience for the goal of theological interpretation.

5.2 Miroslav Volf's theology of memory

Volf's *"The End of Memory"* opens with a graphic description of the terrifying memories he had of being interrogated by "Captain G" in Yugoslavia. When discussing his experiences with "Captain G," who interrogated him during his required military service in the former Yugoslavia, Volf recognizes the significant impact that experience may have on Christians and people. Volf (2016: 10), says he included these examples from his life because of how they affected him: "In looking at the kinds of questions that arise when a victim seeks to remember in accordance with the commitment to love the wrongdoer, I will refer throughout the book to my own interrogations, since in large measure, these have been the crucible for exploration of this topic." Volf asks his listeners to ponder how we ought to remember those who have cruelly and unjustly wronged us throughout this life. The climax of Volf's book switches to a different question: What will happen to the memory of those horrific events at the end of time? The government, the opposition

parties, the farmers who lost their land during the Land Reform, and the farm workers who lost their employment have a story to tell about Zimbabwe. Each of these individuals has a slightly unique story to tell. There are various perspectives on social injustice and Zimbabwe's land reform programme.

The topic that Volf (2016:9) draws attention to is the memory of wrongdoing endured by a person who chooses to love the wrongdoer rather than to detest or disregard him or her. This may seem like an unusual method to approach the issue of remembering wrongs that have been done to you, but if you embrace the core of Christianity, you will be drawn out of your comfort zone and into the dangerous region designated by the vow to love your enemies. Being right-minded is important. The residents of Zimbabwe must be aware that how we create our memories and pass them down from one generation to the next has significant implications for identity, value clarification, and soul care. People need to be aware that our memories affect how we understand the world around us, how we act out our values, how we make decisions, and how we define our purpose. Denis (2016:4) argues that through emphasising the past, people may give the present context. The churches, ecumenical organisations, religious groups, and theological institutions all use different methods to express their memories. When the context changes, memories can be lost, found, challenged, or marginalised. In the church as in society, memories that were oppositional at one time can become dominant at another.

In the words of Buttica and Norelli (2018:79), memory is a broad term used to understand how the past and present are related to one another. It is defined as an exceptional career. Memory also has a significant influence on public discourse on critics' involvement with their own history and the significance of the past for comprehending the present in politics and the media. Memory teaches people how a country, a society, or a religious community view itself; hence, the past takes on significance when it is remembered in the sense that it is understood, honoured, and ritualised. Even while memory refers to individual recollections, it should be distinguished from public memorial celebrations. In order to access the past in the present, memory depends on the preservation and transfer of the remnants from the past.

In the opinion of Volf (2006:28), the interpretive implies a person conducts with memory is what healing means. Therefore, remembering is a necessary component of salvation as well as personal healing, but remembering alone does not guarantee restoration. Truth telling is the only way to bring about healing. The truth is ready to be openly admitted by Chitando, Chikonzo, and Chivandika (2020:17), both individually and collectively. Every survivor has a right to the truth and information about how abuses affected them. For instance, many Zimbabweans experience shakes at Gukurahundi time. It is made worse by the continued mystery and denial surrounding the Gukurahundi era, which is bad news for national healing and reconciliation, not to mention the pursuit of justice. To remember is to participate in the past, to experience the past, to experience the past as a part of the story of a community's present, and to inspire the community's imaginations regarding its future, according to Cockayne and Salter (2021:275). The idea of actualization, which refers to the process through which a ritual or story enables the community to relive historical events, is essential to this corporate religion's sense of memory. Then, people might consider how to apply these biblical notions of memory to modern practise by considering contemporary study on psychology and philosophy of memory.

Given that memory is such a fundamental ethical and religious idea, Vosloo (2017: 5) contends that we should legitimately consider whether speaking of an art or even a responsibility of forgetting is consistent with our theological notions. Most of Zimbabwe's recent events have been purposefully untruthful because politicians have taken charge to advance their own agendas. In the culture of "just memory," as described by Vosloo (2017:14), the emphasis ought to focus on the need to remember. This duty to remember should be utilised to criticise the unfair promotion and glorifying of forgive and forget and emphasise the obligation to recall circumstances of historical injustice. Volf and Vosloo can be viewed as public theologians who were interested in a thorough defence of forgetting in all its complexities and ambiguity.

The church must understand that it develops into a community that is both reconciled and reconciling. It is evident that if the people do wrong some actions has done and that they have committed an offence when judgement is rendered as a moral discriminatory act.

In this way, judgement helps both the person who was hurt, and the perpetrator remember the offence correctly. Three main principles of remembered right are identified by Volf (2006:96): remembering the truth, remembering to heal, and remembering to draw lessons from the past. Even though Volf is explicit about how memory might be distorted to preserve the innocence of the rememberer and lost over time, it is still necessary to recall as accurately as possible.

Denying the perpetrator's identity or the severity of the damage they caused is a significant obstacle to victims' ability to heal. Zimbabwe's government and church need to realise that acknowledging the wrongdoing honestly helps victims recover from their trauma by avoiding denial. Denial isolates offenders from the full consequences of their actions and prevents them from growing from their transgression. Sincere recollection gives offenders the chance to reflect on the effects of their actions and learn from them in order to make changes. The Zimbabwean government needs to stop living in denial and accept that what they did during the Gukurahundi, the Land Reform Programme, and Murambatsvina's mistakes were genuine.

5.2.1 Retelling Zimbabwe's stories of social injustice and land reform

Awareness of oneself and other awareness are fundamentally based on memory. As stated by Volf (2006:24), "when we sever ourselves from memory, we lose our identity particularly the part of our identity that is rooted in God." Volf continues by stating that to remember the Exodus is to be a Jew, and to remember the death and resurrection of Jesus is to be a Christian. Memories bring individuals together and aid in self-understanding. According to Volf (2006:96), "when they think of Christ, they think of themselves as members of a group of people who have died and risen with Christ and whose fundamental identity is this spiritual connection with Christ. They recall the life of Christ not just as his life but also as their life and the life of every human being." Denis (2016:5) echoes the same that "memory is a theological theme." In Zimbabwe, communal and national memories are primarily what constitute the sacred memories of land reform and social injustice.

People still remember events like Gukurahundi, Land Reform, and Murambatsvina, and to a greater or lesser extent, the victims of such events can pass on their memories and tales from one generation to the next. As Volf (2006:100) points out, "Take away a community and sacred memory disappears, take away the sacred memory and the community disintegrates." Its capacity to influence how the nation and its people will develop in the future is the source of what we have encountered in life. Zimbabwe in particular has to understand that our "memories" of the past serve as the foundation for our hope for the future. If Zimbabweans' memories are rooted in instances of dependability, trustworthiness, and love, the nation should anticipate these same virtues in future to come. Pirner and other (2018: 14) states "reconciliation is the belief that unity is insufficient. We have histories of conflict and division, which has resulted in sorrow and bitterness. We also have memories of wrath and fear, as well as sentiments of resentment, suspicion, and alienation." Zimbabwe is experiencing all of these feelings as a result of the brokenness that occurs both within and amongst individuals. Even unity in Zimbabwe will remain on the surface if people there do not find methods to deal with these histories and memories of brokenness and resentment. Christians must maintain the belief that the church has been given the mandate to preach and practice the ministry of reconciliation. Through Christ, Christians have already experienced peace with God and one another.

5.2.2 Zimbabwe remembers its land reform and social injustice.

In the view of Denis (2016:7), all memories are positioned on a continuous interaction between individuals and shared memories, but recollection is still an individual act that is influenced by the context. The difficulty of "remembering rightly" is a topic Volf writes on. People in Zimbabwe frequently forget things and mistakenly believe they are recalling facts when they are not. The majority of Zimbabweans have covertly helped their deteriorating memory so they may unintentionally pass off fiction as truth. Christian and political leaders need to be aware of how memory helps us connect our current selves to our past selves.

Falsehood can penetrate the space between now and then, and imagination can fill in whatever gaps in "memory" that exist. Most stories do contain some truth, but it is usually truth that has little to do with what actually happened.

Sometimes people will tell themselves a made-up truth. Volf (2006:47), asserts, "The truth about the past is merely the story we find most compelling, either because it is attractive and useful to us or because it has been imposed upon us by some social constraint or subtle persuasion." The stories that the nation talks about its past must be understood by both church and state officials to be fictionalised recollections of some significant event. Because they have been moulded over many generations of narration and interpretation, the majority of the Zimbabwean stories told in Gukurahundi, 2000 Land Reform, and Murambatsvina are exceptionally complex. The interpretation of facts that the original storytellers placed on the victims, the government, civic society, church, and political opponents shapes the myth of land distribution in Zimbabwe.

The fictionalised narratives of social injustice and land reform from various groups in Zimbabwe have been influenced by how they have been used by the intervening generations and ultimately by how we choose to tell the story today. Political leaders and Christian institutions in Zimbabwe must work together to help the nation re-examine its history and reframe its central narratives. The interpretation must respect the veracity of what occurred (as accurately as we can piece together that veracity) and mould the memory's presentation in a way that elevates national ideals while incorporating crucial new values as necessary.

People in Zimbabwe must first express their past emotions and have the capacity to forgive the wrongdoers in order to reunite and move past the changes in their lives. In accordance with Volf (2006:9), the memory must be directed by the pledge to be kind and helpful, even to the wrongdoer. Many victims consider they are under no responsibility to love the perpetrator and are likely to assume that if they did, it would betray rather than fulfil their humanity. As defined by Denis (2016:6), memory is the capacity to encode, store, and retrieve information. The process of remembering involves numerous interrelated parts of the brain.

As we are all aware, when you repeatedly portray a group of people as one thing, they end up being that thing. This is what happened in Zimbabwe during the land reform. "*Rambai Makashinga*, (Continue to endure)" is a song (jingle) that the Zimbabwean government introduced. The topic of land and its redistribution was raised in the song. According to Sibanda (2004), these songs conveyed an ideologically articulated support for land reform, which served as the focal point of ZANU PF's election campaign and selling point, in both an overt and covert manner. Sibanda (2004) provides an eye-opening number, noting that one jingle, "*Rambai Makashinga*," was broadcast on all four radio stations 288 times per day and 72 times per day on television. Land was a recurring motif in the music created during that time. Most often, it is necessary to permit those in positions of authority to rewrite our memories. The past must be understood by the government. The future is uncertain, and the present is cloudy. This circumstance may encourage an unhealthy connection with the past. As noted by Chitando (2005: 224), the President and Cabinet, which were led by a pro-government critic, were in charge of postcolonial propaganda campaigns. A department of twenty religious themes were created in the last quarter of political activities and were frequently broadcast on radio and television. The setting was set by a deep narrator whose voice was similar of most biblical documentaries: "In the beginning was the land." On the land were the people. The land belonged to the people. It will always be the same as it was in the beginning. Greetings from Zimbabwe. We are reasonable people."

5.2.3 A quest to inform correct stories in Zimbabwe about social injustice and land reform

Volf (2006:15) "In memory a wrongdoing frequently spreads over and colours the character of the one who committed it, rather than remaining an isolated stain in his character." People's thought processes frequently change as they gain experience. The people of Zimbabwe must work on the issue of having a genuine goodness in trying to find ways out from under the wreckage of their mistakes before deciding who is right or wrong in terms of land reform. It's possible that they were engulfed in political influences and structures to prevent others from speaking the truth.

The Zimbabwean administration has to understand that the fight of the populace is connected to public memory, and that people need to hear more about the fairness of some of the issues that have been discussed in public and disseminated around the country.

Volf (2006:18) In the case of public remembrance, "so it happens, the protective shield of memory frequently transforms into a vicious sword, and the just sword of memory frequently sever the very good it seeks to defend." The Zimbabwean leadership must consider the history of wrongs committed in order to put an end to social unrest and other concerns of social injustice. Even now, ordinary residents continue to call for justice for those who lost their land. If we can recall things clearly, then we can help people, as Volf challenges us to do. In the words of Volf (2006:42), "learning to remember well is one key to redeeming the past is nestled in the larger story of God's restoring of our broken world to wholeness." Volf (2006, 74–75) is deeply concerned about the ways in which the interpretive process can lead to memory distortion, particularly in light of what he thinks occurs when therapists advise clients to process traumatic memories through narrative. According to what he writes, would retelling the interrogation's tale in a different way actually aid in healing, as opposed to people truly being healed when they are able to live their lives without restriction and with a sense of peace regarding what transpired? A study by Sachikonye (2011:13), political conflict has its roots in pre-colonial times when conflicts over land and chieftainship were the main causes of violence. During the colonial era, conflicts over land and ethnic supremacy were the main causes of conflict. In the post-colonial era, conflicts over political dominance and hegemony were the main causes of conflict. Rewritten memories shield from the incident and increase the likelihood of ongoing inner anguish. They are not a real approach, but rather a persistent disease's symptom and a way to deal with the two sides of a corroded coin.

5.3 Area of concern for theology of memory in the context of Zimbabwe

Volf discusses the topic of how Christians ought to remember wrongs done to them. In the words of Volf, memories must be forgotten in order to make way for new ones. He also contends that this process offers a public theology of memory, which holds because these memories have a significant influence on the future personality.

Volf's theological reflection on memory is set against the backdrop of his traumatising experience. How can Zimbabweans recall correctly after going through so much adversity is the key question. Should they recall mistreatment, detention, and injustice as people devoted to forgiving the guilty and defeating evil with goodness? People are aware that it is difficult to remember all of the wrongs committed against them, including the loss of their land and the abuse they endured. Volf is conscious of the suffering's anguish and the challenges it presents for Christians trying to act in accordance with God's purposes for the world.

We do not live with the events that make up our lives; rather, we exist with the stories that we tell ourselves about these events, according to Volf's truth about memory. In a dynamic relationship between self and memory, we shape the memories that mould us. Volf (2006:26), assert that "what we do with our memories will depend on how we see ourselves in the present and how we project ourselves into the future." Zimbabwe's future is defined by its past experiences. This suggests that Zimbabwean citizens require healing. According to Volf (2006:28), "healing will not simply result from viewing a remembered incident in a new way. More broadly, remembering your suffering is a requirement for personal healing but it's not a cure in and of itself. The meaning of healing is the interpretive work a person does with memory" Christians in Africa need to practise "remembering well" as one of their key life skills. Thus, according to Volf (2006:55), "the duty to remember truthfully is fundamentally a duty to act justly, even in such a seemingly straightforward act as "identifying" what one person has done to another." How may theologically be reflective on social justice and land reform in Zimbabwe by benefit from weaving these theological strands together? The natural tendency is to try to make sense of events when Zimbabwean citizens go through crisis or trauma. Making sense of many kinds of unpleasant experiences may be simple, but in instances of abominable evil and unjust suffering, Volf contends the public theology that provides the most profound meaning. Regardless matter how the one who suffers fare, we may count on God's steadfast justice to triumph perhaps not in our lifetime, but at a moment of God's choosing, or the victims of the land reform may turn to their faith in the things that will matter to help

them make sense of the tragedies they must endure now. We will one day be "changed from glory into glory," and then we will see Jesus, and nothing else.

5.4 Biblical perspective on memory from Volf

Volf talked about how victims of heinous evil should remember what happened to them, how remembering helps people heal, and how it's necessary to recall wrongs that are a part of bigger stories. The biblical framework, according to Volf (2006:103) is based on the idea that "the call to truthfulness in remembering was underwritten by God's final judgement of grace, which is itself an extension of the way in which God treated human sin as God delivered Israel from oppression as Jesus Christ hung on the cross." Volf argues that victims would not have to consider the wrongs that have befallen them when God recreates everything in the new heaven and new earth. He calls this "non-remembrance of wrongs suffered." Not that we will have forgotten the difficulties we have faced.

According to Volf, we will be so absorbed in God and his perfect love that we would not even need to think about the wrongs we have done in the past. God's love will just flood into us. We shall go through a "not-coming-to-mind of sufferings." As we become more like Jesus Christ, even our memories will have undergone a makeover. In the case that our wrongdoers are, they will also undergo transformation through the work of the Holy Spirit and the crucifixion of Christ, joining God's family. According to Volf, being in God frees our lives from the tyranny the irrevocable past wields with an iron fist of time. God does not erase our past; rather, God brings it back to us in pieces, with the tales reimagined, our true selves fully redeemed, and people who were once divided now live in peace (Volf 1996:201). Volf also discovered that he came with elements of memory healing that are a new identity, new possibilities, and integrated life story in Exodus and Jesus Christ.

5.4.1 Exodus Memory of Volf as motif of liberating and redeeming

As noted by Volf (2006:105), the Israelites treated their own slaves and aliens differently than how they were treated in Egypt because they accurately remembered their servitude and liberation. As Volf (2006:107) noted, the Exodus event can be linked to the

Zimbabwean setting two drives lesson.

The first is "deliverance," which is an act on behalf of the oppressed and weak, much to how God acted on your behalf when you were weak and afflicted. The Exodus motif can be utilised to reassure Zimbabweans who are seen as weak and who have experienced oppression that God is for everyone and that the right time for deliverance will arrive. The second lesson teaches us to confront oppressors and punish those who have oppressed others in the sake of unbending retributive justice. As noted by Volf (2006:108), "the memory of the Exodus suggests that in a just and violent world, the deliverance of the oppressed requires unrelenting struggle against their oppressors." Volf (2006:112) aptly puts it: For the Israelites, properly remembering their slavery and liberation involved treating their own slaves and aliens differently from the way they themselves were treated in Egypt. Their model was the redeeming God, not the oppressing Egyptians. Emulating the Egyptians was to return to Egypt even while dwelling in the Land of Promise. Emulating God was to enact the deliverance God had accomplished for them.

Liberation and redemption are therefore things that should start from within the individual and then be reflected outwardly.

5.4.2 The memory of Jesus' death and resurrection in Volf 's theology

As stated by Volf (2006:111), "the memory of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is central to Christian identity". Jesus Christ's passion frees and seems to liberate all of mankind from the slavery of sin by means of forgiveness and may even bring us back together with God and one another. Zimbabwe still has the capacity to forgive one another since they are all its citizens. Instead of arguing over points of agreement while having regions of difference, Zimbabweans must cooperate where they have a shared interest and where they can agree. A study by Volf (2006:119), victims can be entirely emancipated and healed from the pain of wrongdoing only if the perpetrators truly repent and the two parties are reconciled. Bond in preserve bond with wrongdoers by having suffered at their hands. Both the injured and the wrongdoers have been made right with God, themselves, and each other through Christ.

5.5 Applying the Volf's five Christian faith proposal in Zimbabwe

Both Christian and political leaders in Zimbabwe might apply the questions laid out by Volf (2006:43). Zimbabweans need to ask themselves: Who are we as a nation, as people, as communities, and as humans as a whole? Why are we in this place? What is our destination? Volf offers five arguments for the Christian faith that are applicable to Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe, which prides itself on being a Christian nation, can use God's wider redemptive story to remember its suffering rather than relying just on personal experience. As Zimbabweans, we must comprehend what God has done in the past, how God engages with us today, and what God means to accomplish in our future as part of the redeeming story of God. Volf (2006:43–44) lays out the five propositions, the first of which is that "God of Love created each of us along with our world." As Zimbabweans, we must base our love on God's creation of the world and humanity. The value of each person's life cannot be underestimated. Everyone must be treated with respect as a human being. The second is that "God created us to live with God and one another in communion of justice and love." Zimbabweans need to realise that they were made for a world of justice and love, not self-serving desires, where they could coexist with God and one another. All things must be distributed equitably among everyone, including land, resources, and judicial fairness. Third, "God entered human history and through Christ's unchangeable atoning work on the cross, made us right with God and with one another." We can say that people harmed God's exquisite creation. However, God entered human history through the death of Christ on the cross, and as a result, we are now at peace with both Him and one another. We must recognise that Christ is there for us in the context of Zimbabwe and that we are not left to clean up our own messes.

Fourth, according to Volf (2006:44), "God will make our frail flesh imperishable at the end of history and restore true life to the redeemed, so that we may forever enjoy God and each other in God." God, who took on our finitude in Jesus Christ, will do this. As Christians in Zimbabwe, we must be aware that, at the end of the age, we shall undergo a change that will allow us to live with God and one another in Christ for all eternity. Fifth, "God will make wrongs clear, denounce every evil deed, and redeem both the repentant perpetrator

and their victims, bringing them to peace with God and each other." Because social injustice and land reform are the focus of our study, it is crucial that we understand this idea. When God exposes injustices, condemns immoral behaviour, and reconciles repentant perpetrators with their victims.

5.6 A prophetic community and an image of hope

The work of Volf (1993:12), *The Protestant Reformation* rediscovered the prophetic features of the current ministry of the entire church, in contrast to Middle Ages theologies that sought to confine prophets to the past by thinking of them only as forerunners of Christ. Volf uses Zwingli as an illustration when he talks about "the universal prophethood of the Christian Church." The Zimbabwean Christians need to reaffirm their commitment to allowing the biblical prophets to speak out against social injustice. "Only prophetic communities can truly worship and only prophetic communities can truly be prophetic," continues Volf (1993:13). By speaking the truth to authority in the biblical traditions, the majority of the prophets in the Bible gained reputation.

As defined by Volf (1993:14), prophetic ministry is based on the Bible as it was revealed in God's mighty acts throughout salvation history and in the relationship with people of God for the benefit of all people. Its goal is to apply the Bible to the major issues facing the world today. The prophets of the Bible were frequently required to communicate a word from God to everyone in the community and the people in positions of authority. The prophets correct those in positions of authority by their words. Volf (1993:15) continues by stating that making Christian social critique more obviously theological will restore its standing as a serious topic of discussion with the general public.

In the opinion of Volf (1993:22), the prophetic proclamation must contain both the call to be friends with God and the mandate to uphold justice. It implies both revealing the unfair and oppressive social structure and outlining different social- life situations. The Old Testament prophets had been far more than just social critics who were inspired. They cared deeply about justice and kindness, as well as Israel's relationship with God. Christians in Zimbabwe are urged to raise their voices in opposition to the current abuse of power. Good prophets, in accordance with Volf (1993:24), are masters of the Christian

socio-ethical art. Only in the classroom of the Spirit, which brings prophets into God's zeal to identify suffering, is the craft taught.

Based on Volf, Christianity is a strongly prophetic faith. And as he points out, "Prophetic religions aims to transform the world in God's name rather than to flee from the world into God's arms as do mystical religions." For Volf, Christians have a prophetic responsibility to present society with a vision of flourishing for humanity that is rooted in their tradition. Volf contends that Christians pursuing this calling should join everyone else at the political discussion table without needing to explain their faith into secular terms. Volf's view on the role of religion in public life sounds acceptable in its assertions regarding the rights and obligations of religious people to advance a vision of goodness and what it advises them about leaving ahead in a foreseeable way.

5.7 Theological imagination in Volf's reflection

Though the effects of land reform in Zimbabwe have gotten worse over the years, crafting a compelling narrative can aid in the nation's recovery. The humiliation grows worse the longer Zimbabwe's true story is not told. It is necessary to correctly recall the damaging incident in order to cure a psychological or spiritual wound. Volf (2006) states that the following components must be present for a painful previous event to be properly remembered:

1. "Remembering as truthfully as possible" Because there are so many different accounts of social injustice and land disputes in Zimbabwe, it is impossible to rebuild an objective truth. However, it is crucial to recount a recollection from reconstructed facts as factually as feasible for Zimbabwe's therapeutic purposes. Unjust recollections are memories that are not true.
2. "Admitting the mistake that was made" Zimbabwe's administration needs to own up to its mistakes. If the wrongdoing is not remembered and is never publicly identified, it remains invisible; nevertheless, if it is publicly identified, it will remain visible, and people will continue to demand an explanation. "Its victim is not a perpetrator; both are misperceived because the suffering of the one and the violence of the other go unnoticed," said Volf (2006). When the initial deed is carried out and then disappears, there is a twofold injustice.

3. "Putting the remembered experience in a fresh perspective." When we reflect on the problems of social injustice and land reform as Zimbabweans, can we demonstrate how the power of narrative has brought about healing and redemption? Perhaps we discuss the lessons we have taken away from the successes and failures of all these issues and how to work with clearer boundaries, the care with which the church and the government handled the story of the victims of social injustice and land reform in Zimbabwe, how we dealt with our shame as a nation and developed through the experience, and how the ordeal made God's grace and mercy tangible to every Zimbabwean citizen.

4. "Shielding victims from additional pain and violence" Leaders of the church and the government in Zimbabwe must recognise that preserving the memory cannot add to the agony of potential victims. In Zimbabwe, victim identities must remain secret unless the victim specifically requests that their name be revealed. Christian and political leaders must take caution when preserving the memory to avoid endangering additional unidentified victims.

The most crucial thing is that Christian institutions and government must support and be able to encourage listening to the unique stories of our nation, Zimbabwe, and aiding people in telling their stories in meaningful ways. The leaders can inspire confidence in the local leaders to also connect to their stories of their local areas, and by relating those stories of their country and the biblical stories they will have greater significance to them. In this way, in the midst of the worldwide financial meltdown, in which Christian institutions and government must promote and be able to encourage listening to one another and promote peace.

5.8 The Public good of justice

In their book *Public faith in Action: How to engage with commitment, conviction, and courage*, Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016) encourage Christians to be engaged, thinking contributors to the life together in the church and society. These authors asserted that it "offers a Christian perspective on issues of interest in many parts of the world." Theologians and Christians are challenged to practise "both exclusion of religions from public space

and saturation of public space by a single religion." Christians in Zimbabwe should take note of Volf and McAnnally-Linz's refusal to distinguish between their personal and public lives as Christians. "The public is life as it is seen as living together in society" People do not exist in a vacuum; rather, they are a part of the community. Therefore, Christians must take part in every programme that has the potential to impact society or their moral character. Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016: xi) "You would not be completely escaping from public life if we today decided to give up on "politics," to stop voting, to stop reading the headlines, to studiously avoid conversation about your business as best you could."

Justice, according to Pirner (2018:14), is the conviction that unless ongoing consequences of inequality, injustice, and oppression from the past are also addressed, togetherness, reconciliation, forgiveness, and embracing will remain temporary and constantly in harm. In the words of Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:192), social structure and particular actions play a role in the issue of justice. The Zimbabwean government and the church need to grasp that a society's sense of justice is greatly influenced by its citizens' sense of justice, which is in turn influenced by the people and their leaders. Justice must be fair to everyone. The individuals who have the power to affect positive changes in how a society has justice that functions well are state and municipal representatives, court judges, who represent the entire society and regulate the affairs of the society. According to Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:196), the message of God's justice is not straightforward. Justice demanded that we pay everyone their dues.

In the view of Volf (1996:196), justice creates a sphere of reciprocal obligation that permeates across the entire community, and it applies to everyone, regardless of wealth or status. Without justice, meaning is in danger of becoming nonsensical, social order is in danger from disorder, and violence is used to maintain peace. This implies that everyone must abide by the rules, which must be rules. The elite in Zimbabwe, on the other hand, occasionally breaks the law and exclusively targets a select number of people, particularly those who do not get along well with the elite group. In the opinion of Volf (1996:223), justice cannot be achieved through calculations, equalisation, legalisation, and universalization of practises. Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:192-3) notes that.

Justice is the virtue of being disposed to give people what is owed to them, whether that is punishment or a reward or simply leaving them in peace. Justice, understood as giving people their due, is a central political virtue. Justice (giving people their due) is not opposed to righteousness but is part of it, we cannot be righteous if we fail to give people wages, they deserve.

The majority of the Christians in the Zimbabwean society make a demand for development that goes beyond the scope of typical development. It affirms our belief in the true worth of every person. Christians ultimately need to provide more to a community than just economic viability. Christians must convey a sense of justice, honesty, and morality. The Zimbabwean government can employ the following Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:193-194) good public justice features:

- i. Justice excludes a common way of understanding democratic politics, the “interest adjudication” model. A framework in which individuals and groups can advocate for their own private interests. Justice seeks not to maximize what I receive but to ensure that all receive their due.
- ii. Justice draws attention to the many goods we share with others think of roads, schools, potable water, food-safety requirement, stable currency, clean air and so on.
- iii. Commitment to justice counters the temptation to let the laws of the land determine our judgement about what is right. Justice is the measure of laws, not the other way around.
- iv. Justice counters the human tendency to show partiality toward the powerful, a wrongdoing.

As stated by Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016: 171), it is essential to promote everyone's right to participate equally in public life with the visions of human flourishing and the common good that they draw from their respective faiths or philosophies. Establishing religious and political institutions that uphold national law and social justice should be understood as a joint responsibility of the church and the government in Zimbabwe. Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016: 196) tries to conclude that, God's justice involves care for all, its lesson is not the simple conclusion “Justice requires that we always give everyone the same wages”.

5.8.1 Public engagement

Volf (2011:96) defines engagement as to being engaged into the world with your whole being, engagement is not a matter of either speaking or doing, not a matter of either merely making manifest the richness and depth of interior life or merely working to change the institution of society, not a matter of either only display alternative politics as gathered in Eucharistic celebration or merely working for change as the dispersed people of God. There is a critical need for public engagement because the world is developing into a global community where people of all races, colours, and ethnicity groups are now coexisting. However, Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016: xiii) claim that in order to participate in public life as citizens of contemporary democracies, we must understand the impact that Christianity has on all facets of life. Everywhere they go, Christians must now live out their faith. Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:3) noted that "Christ must be the centre and norm for Christian public engagement because Christ and his Spirit are at work, not just in our hearts, families, and churches, but also in our nations and the entire world." This is something that Christians in Zimbabwe should take note of. Before extending their influence on the national level, Zimbabwean institutions and individuals must first have an impact on their small local communities.

In the view of Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:7), the church is a community with public significance. It engages in public life to a higher extent than other communities and works to resemble Christ's teachings and rules more closely. The church in Zimbabwe must recognise that Christ is the cornerstone of all these commitments if it is to interact with the community. Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:19) advise Christians that "Jesus is the norm of Christian public engagement Christian engagement for common good" while attempting to involve the public in addressing issues related to society. As followers of Christ, our dedication to civic engagement compels us to use the Bible as the yardstick for spotting Christ at work (Volf and McAnnally-Linz 2016:7).

Christians must be able to relate to settings to engage the community. In order to design a strategic plan for the church and society that will promote social justice and an equal distribution of land in Zimbabwe, this study will rewrite and apply these contexts.

The first context is "the context of the gospel narratives within scripture," which Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:19) termed "canonical context." To comprehend the theology of land and social justice, a proper understanding of the Bible is essential. The second is the contemporary context "the context of our own lives, the particulars of the current situation," which the church must comprehend in order to be relevant in the community. Zimbabwe continues to be a politically unstable nation as long as old traumas go unresolved and are ignored by politicians as Chitando, Chikonzo, and Chivandika (2020:22) echoed. The mainstay of Zimbabwe's political fights has remained the resolution of political conflicts. Zimbabwe may use three features to deal with the current situation and compare their way of life to that of Jesus and the authors of the Bible. McAnnally-Linz and Volf (2016:22) posit that the first feature is "the Democratic ideal". The people of Zimbabwe must understand what the "democratic ideal" is. Politics was allegedly changing throughout the period of the bible, and "political change was no longer simply a top-down affair but rather a responsibility of all adult members of the community." In Zimbabwe, both the church and the government must be aware of their obligations to uphold social justice and advance national sovereignty.

As stated by Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:26), a faithful public involvement demands more than just a set of qualities because a person who aspires to be like Christ must consider what their faith entails in relation to these concerns. So that the community might benefit from their example, the issue of the state and church leaders' moral character must be upheld. Aspects of Flourishing In accordance with Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:13), "Living a life well concerns how you conduct yourself in the world; flourishing is "the excellent life" or "the life worth living." Volf and McAnnally-Linz aid in our understanding of what flourishing is and how people can coexist peacefully. According to their definition, "living a flourishing human life involves sharing with others from our surplus or, in hard times, from what little we have." The first of their three aspects of flourishing are that "leading a good life involves how you behave in the world." The citizens of Zimbabwe are challenged to live a good life that is fully devoted to Christianity so that others may follow.

As the second aspect by Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:14), "life going well means, roughly, that one's circumstances are genuinely good." The Zimbabwean people have reason for optimism even though social injustice exists in a world outside of their control. Christians must keep encouraging people that life goes on despite the unfairness of land reform. In the view of Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:14), the idea of peace, interpreted as well-being, good fortune, the cohesiveness of the community relationship to relatives and their state of being, and whatever else regarded necessary for everything to be in order, is associated with a life that is going well.

In the opinion of Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:15), the third facet of thriving refers to the "affective dimension of human flourishing". Zimbabwe's church and government need to realise that everyone can prosper, not only those in positions of power. The church must see growth as a source of delight for everyone, not just a select few. African leaders must live exemplary lives in order for others to prosper. "Christ does not merely lead a good life as an example for others but actually draws people into the goodness of his life and empowers them to flourish," write Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:16).

The second feature is "Complex social systems", the people of Zimbabwe must be aware that there are various social systems. People were having their own norms, dynamics, and objectives in biblical times. According to Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:23), in order to have a faithful public engagement in the face of these features of the contemporary context, we must be aware of the restrictions they impose while maintaining a strong faith in God's ability to work in unexpected ways to usher in foretastes of the kingdom where we would least expect them. The third feature is about "technological development"; this is the topic of public opinion and participation, which encourages Christians to exercise judgement and behave appropriately in the face of evolving situations. Zimbabwe's circumstance, where just a small number of people those with political power are the only ones flourishing. In accordance with Volf and McAnally-Linz (2016:32), God's plan for a flourishing human existence, as seen in the life of Christ, includes taking advantage of the abundance of creation. Church and state in Zimbabwe must see land as God's creation that must be shared without any restriction.

The way that people view land, including the state and the church, is incorrect (Volf & McAnnally 2016: 35). Instead of being an expression of our humanity and an improvement to our lives, wealth creation has been perverted, and the distorted methods of creating wealth and enjoying misconstrued wealth have been shown to be detrimental to the well-being of people, communities, and their natural habitats. In Zimbabwe, land has been used as a political tool. In order to live a fulfilling human life, we must give to others from our plenty or, in hard times, from what little we have (Volf & McAnnally- Linz 2016: 79).

Health issues are crucial to people's well-being everywhere, but particularly in Zimbabwe. Most often, problems with justice, peace, honesty, and spirituality have an impact on one's health, according to Oslo (2010:3). For example, the land reform program affected people economically, emotionally, mentally and physically. In such a scenario, it is natural that these adverse effects will take a toll on one's health. Given that the Zimbabwean economy is agro based, any deterioration of agricultural production has direct effects on the national fiscus and thereby negatively impacting public service delivery, health provision included.

The majority of the population struggles to access adequate healthcare services, while the elite travels to developed nations. Based on Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016: 102) Christian public engagement with local, national, and international health reflects these beliefs about health and disease. According to Myers, Hunter, and Voss (2015: xxi), theology-based arguments can be made that the lack of health services is a result of social injustice, economic inequality, and a breakdown in solidarity. For effective public engagement, the church, particularly in Zimbabwe, must empower its members to take ownership and responsibility for their own health and, to the greatest possible, their communities' health as well as their own. The churches are obligated to acknowledge that social, economic, and spiritual factors contribute to disease in the world, in addition to biomedical ones.

5.8.3 Torture

In the words of Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Banyera (2015:9), any mechanism and mythology used for attaining justice and reconciliation needs to be able to engage with the violent

and conflictual legacies of history without impeding efforts to build a strong nation. As defined by Volf and McAnnually-Linz (2016:159), torture is the deliberate infliction of substantial and frequently repeated physical or psychological damage on individuals with the goal of destroying their sense of humanity and their capacity to fend against the tormentors' desires. The majority of African nations regularly torture citizens in order to maintain their authority and hold onto power. Since the launch of the land reform programme and the founding of the vibrant opposition political party in Zimbabwe in 2000, numerous issues regarding torture-related human rights offences have been recorded (Sachikonye 2022:33). Many university students, human rights activists, members of non-profit organisations, and opposition organisations who strive to raise awareness about Zimbabwe's living conditions are allegedly beaten and tortured by the government due to political divisions inside the country's ruling party, ZANU PF. Both the victims and the torturers are rendered less human as a result of torture. It also violates both parties' rights to dignity and integrity and weakens the moral fibre of the society that condones it.

From Volf and McAnnually-Linz (2016:163), the church and the government must both realise that torture is against fundamental human rights and should be prohibited by any means, whether carried out by private citizens or public servants. Furthermore, democratic governments that abuse their subjects in the name of their constituents are participants in the heinous crime of torture. Citizens cannot suffer damage in a nation with effective justice and police forces. In the words of Volf and McAnnually-Linz (2016: 163), the church must maintain that "when we support torture in our names, we fail to be faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ in our public lives."

The majority of the political figures, members of civil society, and clergy who favoured social justice above land reform were questioned. According to Volf and McAnnually-Linz (2016:164), one of the main topics in the debate about torture is whether or not interrogation techniques treat people as little more than manipulatable objects and whether they are a part of a plan to diminish the humanity of the interrogated.

5.8.4 Courage and love in action for public life

The research of Palmer (2018), "fortitude" is a synonym for courage.

Thomas Aquinas used the Latin word "*fortitudo*" to describe bravery in the 13th century and believed that it was a disposition necessary for all other virtues. That was before the Latin word "*cor*" or the French word "*coeur*," both of which mean "heart," were combined to mean "strength of heart." Zimbabwe needs "strong of heart" and courageous leaders in the church who would stand up against the nation's corrupt systems. The nation and its communities must fortify its citizens with all forms of support and compassion in order to confront unjust individuals and to provide them with the courage to act on their convictions for the benefit of all.

It is said that in order to face challenges brought on by injustice, one must first have the courage to open the door to truth. According to McCain and Salter (2004:13), courage can be attributed to a variety of deeds that are certainly praiseworthy. Church and political leaders in Zimbabwe must understand that it takes courage to remain on the side of realistic thinking, justice, and fairness while remaining active in society and vigilant. The capacity to face danger, fear, intimidation, discomfort, or uncertainty is referred to as courage. A lot more courageous leaders who oppose the ruling party and point out that what they are doing is completely unacceptable are needed.

One of the biggest issues is that the church is perceived as having no voice in many social issues. In their statement on courage, Volf and McAnnually-Linz (2016:178) claim that it is "of all the virtues, perhaps the one most obviously suited for public life." When there is social inequality and unequal distribution of commodities and services in Zimbabwe, the church is linked to trivial matters and is unable to criticise the government there. According to Volf and McAnnually-Linz (2016:179), "in public engagement there are situations which need courage. The church needs to speak the truth in both power and love to help those around them and the community to have a better life."

In line with Volf and McAnnually-Linz (2016:180), the church must exercise courage when people are aware that the proper decision would necessitate a course of action that would cost them money. For instance, during land reform, people benefited free of charge from the homes, farms, and animals owned by others. The land reform program was characterised by the wrongful seizure of another person's property without compensating them.

At a time when the communities scarcely even examine the significant links that should be directing them, the church was supposed to act with boldness. When there is injustice, it takes fortitude to speak up for moral commitments to support individuals who have lost their land and jobs. In terms of love Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:179), quote one of the historical church fathers, Augustine, a North African church father “love readily bearing all things for the sake of the object beloved.”

In addition, the church needs to be courageous enough to take action whenever necessary so that it can avoid destruction and avoid being linked to any politically incorrect decisions. If the church in Zimbabwe wishes to engage the public properly and effectively, they must have bravery in doing so. The church needs courage when we know that the right decision would necessitate a course of action that would cost us money, according to Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:180). When the majority of those around us family, the powers that be, and "everyone" support injustice, we need courage. The church needs to be courageous in light of the fact that our communities virtually ever give weight to the important beliefs that should be their compass.

Christian and political institutions must work together to address the significant, difficult problems of social injustice, as well as to teach about human rights, accept responsibility for the suffering of others in the country as a whole, and guarantee that people live fulfilling lives and uphold the rule of law. The heart-to- heart connections that foster compassion in a society and a nation must be encouraged by the church and the state. In Zimbabwe, it takes courage to speak out against impoliteness and civility and to step in to stop legislators from abusing the system. People who take initiative and work for peace, compassion, and justice for all are considered courageous leaders. 5.9 Volf's Theology of humility in public engagement

Understanding the humility is public and Christian virtue is important for both the church and the state. Humility seems particularly out of place in the arena of politics, where nations and their leaders compete with one another for glory repeatedly, according to Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:184). As Christian academics like St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas have argued for it, it is thought that humility is at the core of religion.

As explained by Dennington (2016:27), the concept of humility and its importance for leading a Christian life. In the words of Augustine, humility is primarily the acceptance of extreme confidence, which is the will to receive another's generosity with all of one's existence and the will to entirely sacrifice oneself for another. The humility of Christ, as described by Broughton (2021:7), runs throughout the entire discourse of Christology. Through Jesus' nonviolence teaching of enemy-love (Luke 6:27) to the disgrace of the crucifixion, there is an atonement. The orthodoxy of Athanasius, Augustine, and Aquinas all upheld the humility of Christ. Christ was humble, according to everyone from the apostles to Luther, Bonhoeffer to Sobrino. Even though he existed in the form of God, he did not see equality with God as something to be attained (Philippians 2:6). Both political and religious leaders in Zimbabwe must comprehend that true humility requires them to be dependent on God, the world, and other people in order to make room in their lives and hearts for others. It is helpful to be humble in order to give up self-promotional behaviours like pride and hubris. Embracing Christ on his path of humility is still desirable since the common good for all is necessary.

However, the New Testament exhorts believers to possess humility, just as Christ did. We would joyfully transform our public participation if we were to lead this call ("If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their sin and will heal their land"). The church and state must return to the fundamental scriptural framework of 2 Chronicles 7:14. Christian and political leaders in Zimbabwe must be able to demonstrate humility. Being humble means that one, especially a leader, does not think more about themselves than about others. In the view of Broughton (2021:7), the Christian theology of the Trinity is where humility is found theologically. God has always been loving and understanding the fullness of what that implies helps us better comprehend who we are and how we interact with others. Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection make clear the extent and significance of God's love as well as the crucial role that humility plays in this. Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:186) provide two examples of humility: the first is about putting Christ and his purpose before our own popularity and position, while the second is about being realistic about our limitations.

The true characteristics of Zimbabwe's political and Christian leaders today are arrogance and pride. Basing on on Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:187-89), the current situation in Zimbabwe is accurately portrayed: Humility prevents us from becoming drawn into the crazy competition for attention, renown, and prestige that permeates so much of our public life. For instance, the entire electoral process today in Zimbabwe consists of marketing candidates "selling" themselves to voters while competing for the biggest popularity and best favourable ratings. Humility concentrates on the tasks at hand and welcomes foretastes of the kingdom wherever it finds them, even among the former adversaries, in contrast to politicians and journalists who treat politics as a zero-sum game were admitting that the other side has done even a little undermines one's standing and accomplishment. For authentic public discipleship, it is essential that one be willing to humbly admit that oversights and injustice exist both "out there" and "in here." It encourages honesty and creates a road map towards peace.

People and leaders who are modest are necessary for effective community participation in relation to some of the public concerns; humility allows us to be open to the possibility of new insights from unexpected sources. It promotes genuine conversation for Zimbabwe's peace and unity as opposed to shouting matches for control and the advantage of common people. It motivates people to reflect on their own behaviour, which can help them make less careless mistakes. (Volf & McAnnally-Linz 2016:189).

5.9 Respect: an essential public virtue

Regarding land distribution in Zimbabwe, there was meant to be respect and inclusivity. It is believed that the ruling ZANU PF party believes that taking land for personal gain is part of the national plan and closely relates to nationalistic teachings on black pride, dignity, and nationalism. All sorts of violence, including murder, were prevalent during the land reform, yet some churches chose to remain silent. It was incapable of even condemning the cruel way the exercise was carried out. Therefore, it was believed that the church was complicit in political brutality and torture. The general public was expecting the church to stand up and denounce the crimes committed during land redistribution in the deception of empowering blacks. The expression "*Mwana wevhu*" (son of the soil),

which was created during the Liberation Struggle to grant the right to land and resources to indigenous Zimbabweans, was revived. Those who benefited from the land were expected to jealously guard it against perceived adversaries, in this case the Western powers and the people associated with the opposition party. People are urged to support the government in every election by saying, "Vote for ZANU PF *nyika isadzokere kuvapambi vevhu*" (vote for ZANU PF so that the country cannot be re-colonised). The *Mwana Wevhu* mantras is used to evoke memories of the British colonisation of Zimbabwe and the oppression of the people who were freed by means of a bloody (*ropa re magamba* – the blood of the heroes) fight that gave rise to and led to the liberation of Zimbabwe.

According to Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:200), respect can be divided into two categories: "appraisal respect" and "recognition respect." While recognition respect is prompted by the value someone has simply by being who she is, appraisal respect comes when someone's accomplishment or virtue is evaluated. In the public domain, there is a lack of mutual respect between political and religious leaders since most of them are cynical and power-hungry. As stated by Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:200), respect is valued highly in business, science, technology, sports, political engagement, and religion. The respect that humans deserve on account of their humanity must be seen by both the church and the state as the other side of recognising respect.

Respect is an attitude towards others that is taken proactively rather than just as a feeling. Zimbabweans need to understand that showing respect for one another can help close gaps and promote productive communication. The public sphere places disagreements, differences, and frequently misbehaviour front and centre, which makes respect difficult to achieve. Strong conflicts over the land reform process, social exclusion, and political election campaigns are currently dividing Zimbabwe. The history of injustice in society, harm, corruption, insults, outstanding grievances, and demands for redress, land reform issues are part of daily issues in Zimbabweans' social and political life, which leads to constant conflict between the perspectives of the country's citizens.

Respecting one's right to reside in the community, possess land, and coexist peacefully

with others is crucial because it enables peaceful coexistence. Inconsideration towards others is harmful to society as a whole and to the common good in a community or nation. Violence, torture, and tyranny are the effects of a political community that disregards the life of another person. No public engagement for the common good, according to Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016:203), can be achieved without unconditional respect for others, even when we are unable to respect their points of view and practises. Zimbabwe is struggling with the issue of the ruling party engaging in violence, looting, and lawlessness. The majority of the country's leaders are not either loyal to or respectful of the law. A holistic approach to healing is required to take into account the psycho-social, political, economic, and spiritual lives of those impacted by social injustice during the land reform programme. Some of the alienated citizens may find peace with the state and be able to enjoy all the privileges that come with being a citizen. Zimbabwe needs mental agility and practical insights that show sensibility to happiness and encourage sincere regard for each person's human value, talent, and respect for the greater benefit of humanity.

5.11 Public virtue of compassion

To behave properly in public with others, people require the right emotions. Compassion is one of the feelings, and it is essential for people to live moral lives in a society where social injustice exists. People must have compassion wherever they are if they are to come together and equally distribute their resources. People can become enemies for life if they don't learn compassion. To engage the public faithfully, you must have compassion. Compassion means acting morally and addressing concerns of social injustice. Theologians and philosophers have recognised three aspects of virtuous compassion: feeling, thinking, and action, according to Volf and McAnnally-Linz (2016: 209). Love for the poor and others who get unfair treatment is the emotional component of compassion.

5.12 The importance of public space in developing an awareness of community

As stated by Volf (1993:22), social institutions must fulfil the demands of justice, including both compensatory and communitarian justice. People must also learn to show compassion to one another. For without individual displays of love, a civilised community cannot exist.

People who are a part of one another and who share the same needs and beliefs as one another are said to be in a community.

Public areas like playgrounds, community centres, bus stops, clinics, hospitals, and even churches may help raise community understanding of social justice. Genuine public spaces are open to all groups of people and offer education about justice, fairness, and loving one another as well as a sense of community. In the opinion of Carr et al. (1992), a good public place should support democracy, be relevant, and attend to fundamental human needs including comfort, passive and active engagement, and exploration. People must be able to engage in public areas.

5.13 Participatory Church

"On person and community for the construction of the ecclesial self are significant; it is a self that is always "inhabited" or "indwelt" by others," writes Volf in ***After our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity***" (1998:3). The book exhorts Christians to function as a church that aids in creating socially adept persons. According to Volf (1998:5), his goal is to become a constructive theologian who works to create an ecclesiology that will enable the social implementation of the gospel in a way that is both attentive to and critical of culture. In the words of Volf (1998: 5), "a theologian must always start with what is already there." Understanding the social structure of a moving church in a shifting cultural environment requires assistance from theology. In accordance with Volf (1998:11), the church must adopt the slogan "*We Are the Church!*" since it conveys the socially conscious tenets of the institution. In order to advance social justice in Zimbabwe, the church must work together and refrain from taking new political sides or requesting additional land. As noted by Volf (1998:14), one must consider this specific social evolution when determining the role of the church in contemporary cultures.

Volf (1998:17) exhorts Christians to engage in a thorough search for modern humans in communities that look for those specific forms of socialisation where they one another are taken carefully with all their faith-based and social demands and where they can participate in a structured manner. Zimbabwe's church must be able to answer the call and participate in resolving the nation's social problems. As noted by Volf (1998:18), the

ordinary people of God were employed to carry on the task rather than priests, pastors, or scholars, even in the earliest days of the early church.

The church in Zimbabwe must understand that every citizen can advance social justice, not just the man of the cloth. As stated by Volf (1998:18), a key presumption for both outsiders and members in identifying with the church is the participation nature of Christian communities, or the capacity for all believers to become subjects to express the same thing from the viewpoints of the individual. Ratzinger, quoted by Volf (1998:30), stated that the communion between the human "I" and the divine "Thou" in uniters ally common "we" is the essence of the church in the arc between the self and whole. Volf says that we should guard against the individualism of contemporary pluralistic communities to preserve the Community of humans and with God. The general secretary of the Philippine National Council of Churches is quoted by Jenkins (2006:138), land grabbing resulting in landlessness is one of the main issues facing national minorities. The land is revered because it provides the national minority with a place to live. Minority groups inside the country cannot lay claim to the land because it provides for them. Rather, the land is the one who claims them. Therefore, land cannot be divided up among individuals or organisations. It cannot be transferred to someone else like a piece of real estate. Everyone must share the land.

When someone declares their faith, they give themselves up to the personality of Christ as it is reflected in the theology and organisational framework that comprise the Christian community. As a result, having faith is both an individual act and an institutional act of the church. On the other hand, conversion is entirely passive on the side of the believer. Volf (1998:36) states that engagement would just serve to validate the old self, failing to bring about a change in the self. Considering Volf claims that the Spirit is the one who brings forth a confession of faith, collects the community, and provides gift of grace upon it, his ecclesiology could be said to as pneumatologically.

5.14 Conclusion

This study serves as an invitation to a discussion about a strategy that can both challenge the community and the need for a strong community of participation for social justice in the areas.

When people properly converse and think with one another about the consequences of shared faith and the common good, both the nation and the church prosper. In order to recognise the role of Christian institutions in promoting the common good for everyone, the struggle to achieve social justice in the nation should be holistic and all-encompassing. There is a foundation for the ideas of inclusion, fairness, embracing, confession, and forgiveness in both the religious and secular spheres.

Since the land reform was the catalyst for all of Zimbabwe's current difficulties, it stands to reason that these issues cannot be resolved without addressing the causes. To heal the historical wounds, social tensions, political animosities, and economic pains we still bear today, it is imperative that we return to the recollections of the social imaginary that was fundamentally different from what it is today. Zimbabwe should be urged to thoughtfully consider the inclusiveness approach in its efforts to prosper, embrace, uphold social justice, and unify Zimbabweans. Achieving social justice in Zimbabwe will require considerable contributions from the church, public society, and other parties. Since there is no one way to bring about justice and peace in the nation, the strategy of listening to the afflicted is crucial. To have a peaceful nation, the approach must be influenced by context, public-centred, and people-centred.

Chapter 6

Strategic Perspective: Steps to Public Theology of Engagement

6.1 Introduction

The journey of public theology is entirely infused by and integrated with the context of faith. It begins with action and eventually leads to action. Action, advocating for justice, acts of compassion, transformation, church revival, and societal change are all influenced by public theology. Focusing on the biblical understanding of land question provides us with a clear perspective that can be applied to Zimbabwe's present-day challenges.

6.2 The relevance of Volf's public theology

It is important to highlight that Volf's insights on public theology can be relevant to resolving Zimbabwean issues since they offer some entrance points in the effort to further clarify some fundamental principles relating to social rights. The treatment of humanity as an expression of injustice has become an urgent issue in contemporary discourses due to the unprecedented levels of social injustice and poverty that have characterised the nation of Zimbabwe since the year 2000's Land Reform, which has left most of the Zimbabwean population impoverished. Without any success, the many players, including both government and non- governmental organisations, have attempted to address the issue of injustice. Can the people of Zimbabwe learn anything useful from Miroslav Volf's observations and ideas regarding the issue of social injustice?

This strategy by Volf to address the enduring social injustice is very applicable and relevant in the present situation in Zimbabwe. Therefore, the topic of what caused the nation to be in the crisis it is currently suffering is crucial and necessitates an honest and objective investigation and evaluation. A similar inquiry was put forth by Volf in response to societal injustice. In the view of Volf, Croasmun and Mc Annally-Linz (2023:183), in order to fight injustice, one must recognise its reality and comprehend its causes. Not all forms of injustice are created equal. Context is important. The agonising fusion of tragedy

and beauty should bring us together so that we can support one another through it. The diagram below depicts Volf's primary themes for this study:

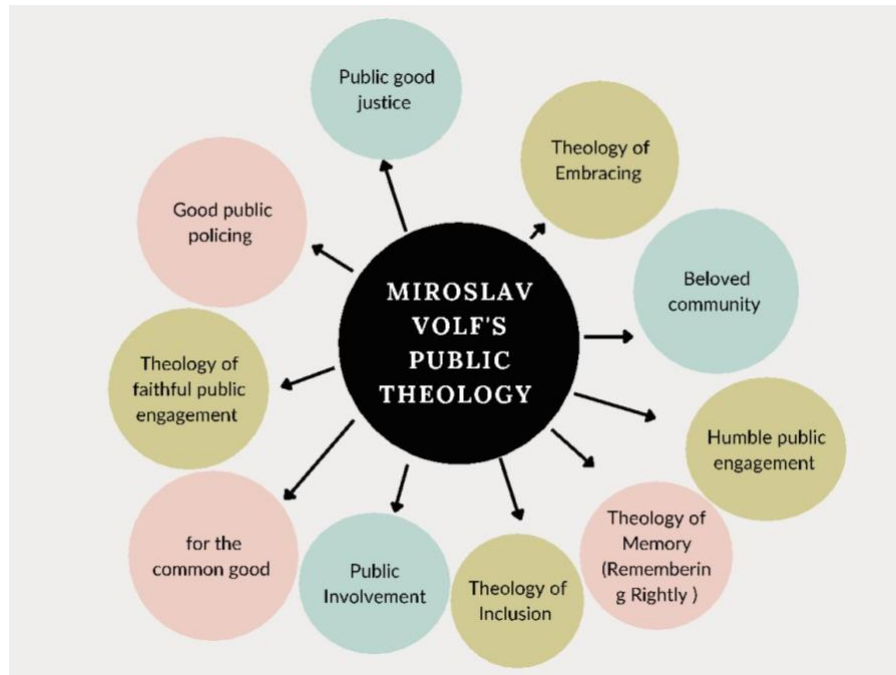


Figure 5

The relevancy of Miroslav Volf's Theology

The figure above explains Volf's public theology and shows how Christians can interact with their communities to address social challenges and strive to find answers. Volf undoubtedly teaches the government and the church how to engage in informed theologically Christian political advocacy for social justice. Volf exhorts Christians to be engaged, considerate participants in the lives of those in their societies. The church's inability to intervene in cases of serious injustice. The impacts of the land reform of 2000, which was characterised by the transfer of land and resources from the white majority to the black political minority, are to blame for Zimbabwe's current economic challenges. Enormous commercial farms that produced enormous quantities of crops were forced to turn over productive land to individual farmers with no farming capacity.

War veterans began protesting the governing authorities' capitalist life because of the slow pace of land reform in the first half of the 1990s, which stood in opposition to the socialist ideology that the regime consistently propagated to the populace (Nyathi, 2004). In November 1997, the government of Zimbabwe granted the war veterans their unbudgeted rewards in response to their protests and criticism of the government, which marked the beginning of the end for the Zimbabwean currency. It is remarkable that the government's failure to solve the land issue, which affects an equal distribution of resources even after the restriction clause in the Lancaster House Agreement, is one of the main causes of the economic crisis and social injustice that has overtaken the country. To effectively solve the issue of injustice in Zimbabwe, the land issue must be addressed without politicising it. It is important to underline that the land issue needs to be resolved once and for all with a fair distribution of this resource, eliminating the problem of multiple farm ownership that has benefited a select group of people while side-lining the majority. Another contributing reason to the Zimbabwean crises should be linked to Operation Murambatsvina, considering Volf's notion that recognising the roots of injustice could alleviate the suffering of those who have been treated unfairly. The execution of all these operations had a detrimental effect on social injustice, economic growth and, as a result, an increase in unemployment. Basic commodities' prices also skyrocketed, sowing the seeds of the unjust crises, corruption, and poverty that have recently overtook the country. It's interesting to see how passionate Volf is about addressing issues of exclusion, inclusion, embracing, remembering right when someone wrongs you, and thriving in community. It should be noted, though, that Zimbabwe was not the only nation to implement this land reform. Other nations also undertook this program, but they are not confronted with the same difficulties that Zimbabwe is facing, demonstrating that it is not possible to attribute the Zimbabwean crises to just Land Reform, but it is important not to undervalue the part that land reform made in planting the seeds of injustice in Zimbabwe.

6.3 The church's inability to intervene in cases of serious injustice

In Zimbabwe, the religious community has also been quiet in its opposition to the injustice carried out by the government.

Even though Zimbabwe prides itself on being a Christian country with many churches being filled, the church has traditionally shown no interest in justice-related concerns. Church leaders do not give sermons on how to respond to injustice in a Christian manner. Church leaders rarely make public declarations about unacceptable, pervasive government injustice. It is no doubt that serving in the Zimbabwean church of today can be quite challenging. The church has become an arena of disagreements over doctrinal concerns, political and social problems, ecclesiastical and theological issues, and other concerns. They can even be concerned about what they need to be uneasy about at times. Sadly, those disagreements have taken away some Christians' joy and dedication to Christ.

6.3.1 Fear

Volf (2020) argues that "fear is infectious and deeply contagious, but the culture of fear weakens our immunity to it, leaving us surrounded by threats unknown." Fear is the main impediment to Christians and anyone speaking out against injustice. Fear grows large and knowingly over the people of Zimbabwe, both externally and internally. All courage is paralysed by fear. War makes people fear. Due to the extremely contentious ecclesial circumstances and the fragmented beliefs of the congregation, it is thought that the church is reluctant to engage the public on social justice concerns. More so, some Christians are reluctant to denounce the prevalent social injustices for fear of being labelled an enemy of the state. But situations like this require a considerable degree of courage. Volf and McAnally-Linz (2016:177) give different situations where courage is needed;

- We need courage when we are quite sure that the right judgment would imply a policy that would cost us something.
- We need courage when people around us such as family members, and authorities are in support of injustice.
- We need courage when our communities are disregarding the important convictions that should be guiding them. (Volf & McAnally-Linz 2016:177)

There is simply no physical explanation for Africa's hunger; it is not a result of any physical elements at all. Africa's politicians and corrupt culture are to blame for its hunger. There

can be no justice, logic, reason, God, or goodness when there are lies. It is simple to become entangled in the web of lies if one lacks confidence. Fear also makes it very simple to violate one's morals.

6.3.2 A failure to be honest with political leaders

The second cause is that Christians allow themselves to believe a theological falsehood because the truth does not penetrate them strongly enough. Christians typically believe that the church should not become involved in politics and that fighting injustice is political action. Some Christians in Zimbabwe hold the view that they should simply accept evil and refrain from interfering with it. Political leaders are God given and ordained must not be challenged. As a result, several high-profile church leaders such as Guti and Mutendi have declared their support to the ruling party.

6.3.3 Discouraged

Christians feel discouraged, which brings us to the third cause. In Africa, where there is a great deal of injustice and little awareness of the rule of law, Christians eventually fall to the awful disease known as negativity. Because Christians worship the God of all hope and who breaks every chain, Christians must constantly have hope that they can change the world.

6.3.4 Quiet and content

Christians have grown too busy, quiet, and content, which brings us to our fourth point. Christians believe they have no time for social issues. They are not really convinced that God had ordered them to act. Some would like to go by the Pauline theology that every person be subject to the governing authorities for there is no authority except from God. Some Christians therefore believe that those that exist have been instituted by God. As such, they are careful not to resist the authorities for fear of resisting what God has appointed. However, such Christians fail to understand the same Paul who says, "The kingdom of God is not food and drink, but justice and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17). Volf and McAnally-Linz (2016:191) observed that this passage regards justice as central to the Christian faith and subsequently to Christian public engagement.

6.4 Steps to Public Engagement

The Zimbabwean dilemma must be resolved urgently, especially the land question and fairness in society. The root of injustice is the violent, demonic impulse to rule and dominate people at any costs, as well as greed, selfishness, and pride. Racism, nationalism, lawlessness, and violent oppression are examples of how it appears. The crushing impact of institutional sin that is demonic and evil in origin within countries needs to be addressed effectively by the church. The public must be included by the church if some of the problems from the past are to be resolved. This study provides a roadmap that can assist from the past are to be resolved. This study provides a roadmap that can assist the nation in resolving its issues, as seen, and as illustrated by the diagram below:

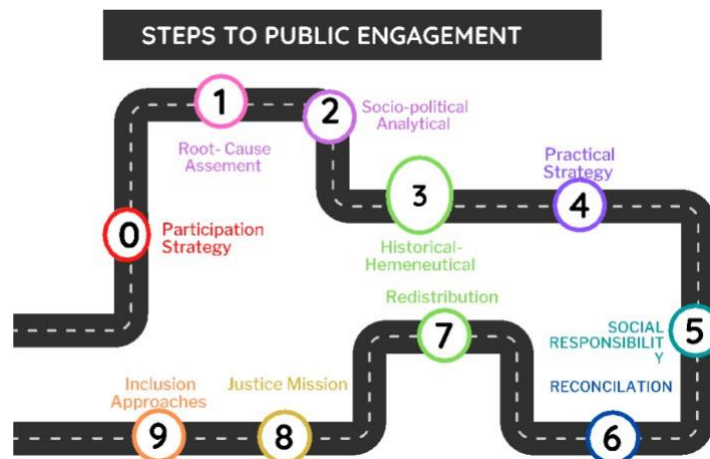


Figure 6 Steps to public engagement

6.5 Step Zero – Participation strategy

Public participation in actions aimed at influencing decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions is necessary. The church must take part in the effort to put pressure on the government to address any unjust or harmful conditions impacting community members. By advising and educating people on what it means to occupy the land and how to use the land so that the supply of food is not jeopardised, the church should play a significant role. Churches in Zimbabwe should participate in public debates because doing so requires prophetic messages to reach an understanding that will be

advantageous to all Zimbabweans. Being involved in council, rural base communities, being active in trade unions, taking part in communities, participation in the meetings which have to do with land and social justice. The church in Zimbabwe must establish a framework of belonging because its residents tend to feel alone in organisations and communities. The church needs to find a method to transcend these established cultural factors to build a location that works for everyone in respect of age, race, gender, and social status. Additionally, the church and the government must foster a sense of safety and goodwill in the country, particularly among those who wish to visit and invest. The church must foster a sense of community which provides a feeling of belonging and encourages individuals to recognise their connection.

To behave as an investor, owner, and creator of the place is to belong in a country. Giving without expecting anything in return is generosity, while hospitality is the act of welcoming strangers. People to People engagement that places focus on the well-being of the whole person at each step is the essence of creating an alternative just future. The church must take an active role in the discussions that foster relatedness because they frequently arise through public participation, where individuals demonstrate choice, rather than systemic life, where people manifest obligation. Small gatherings can be used as the foundational unit of reform and the setting for the feeling of belonging.

Participating in historical narrative conservations serves as a form of recovery and healing for the country, and lessons that emphasise justice and the future help to rebuild it. The church must collaborate with the government to position the country as one of potential rather than one of challenges. The church must educate the nation that its identity and sense of belonging come from the contributions, benevolence, and responsibility of its people. It is not characterised by its anxieties, loneliness, or desire for violence. The church needs to get involved in creating communities that are built on values like social justice and human experience that come from dialogues that people have among themselves. Peace, reconciliation, and the social structure of any country produce the history, economy, social justice, and culture of that country. The church has a role to play in encouraging people across the country to take care out for one another and accept responsibility for one another.

A productive country is one where there is no hurtful speech, corruption, or division. The country's stories of violence, crime, injustice, and wrongdoers must be informed to the people in truth and authority as a means of therapy and healing as well as a means of remembering the past in a way that fosters forgiveness. The church must be at the forefront of this effort. The willingness to finish and draw the meaning from the existing narrative that we have in Zimbabwe and in Christian communities might be seen in this sense as restoration. This provides a chance to develop a fresh social narrative. A brand-new narrative built on the principles of a healing society that values possibility, care, and accountability. The church needs to take the following steps to engage the public in discussions on social injustice:

- from conservation discussions regarding challenges to ones regarding aspirations.
- from beliefs about fear, discouragement, and fault to beliefs about plenty, compassion, and care.
- from an offer on the rule of law for the chosen people, oversight of injustice, to a preference for fostering social cohesion and responsibility, caring Christians, and responsible citizens.
- from focusing on leaders to focusing on becoming good citizens
- from viewing the business community and government as central to change to considering the common good life as central.

6.6. Step One - Root-cause assessment strategy

The church and the state can both see through collaboration that centres on thinking through potential fundamental causes of issues with injustice and land reform in Zimbabwe. Imagining the core cause is helpful since the nation is too quick to treat symptoms without considering what might be the basis of the issue. As they converse with community members who have experienced social injustice as well as with civil society practitioners, partners, and scholars, the church may find out more about root causes. The fact that Zimbabwe knows what the main causes of its difficulties are one of its difficult

problems. The diagram below attempts to show how the church may identify the problem's core cause while the state ignores it and acts as if it is unknown:

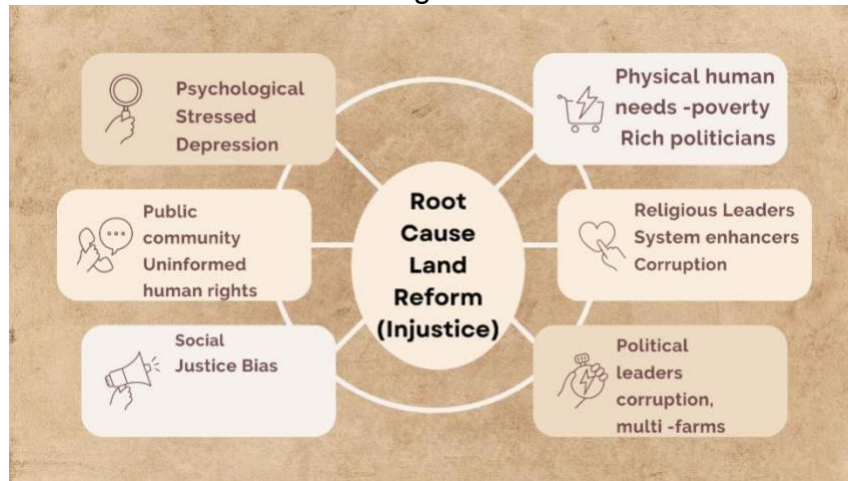


Figure 7 Root-cause assessment strategy

The church in Zimbabwe as a whole can then proceed to concentrate on gaining more precise insights regarding causes and reactions within the framework of the social-political situation with a larger grasp of potential root causes. Understanding potential fundamental causes to a community or nation requires consulting with local partners and community members.

6.7 Step Two – Socio-political analytical strategy

The people of Zimbabwe must understand that they are not independent thinkers who choose to get together in society only when it is necessary to do so to safeguard their individual rights and freedoms, but rather that rights for everyone must always be understood in the context of society. The ethical obligation of each person to advance the common good is fundamental to that responsibility. Because each person discovers their own meaning and identity as a member of that human family, the goal is the good of the entire human family. Land disputes have historically been closely linked to politics in Africa and are deeply rooted in the continent's religious traditions. It appears to also have theological overtones, though. The concept of land appears to have been discussed theologically to date in two contexts, as indicated by Wacker and Wainwright (2007:8), namely the context of socio-ethical settings and the framework of ecologic-theological questions.

The church needs to analyse the land situation as it affects the country as a whole or the area where one is working. It should encourage both the urban and rural people to stand up for their rights concerning land and social justice. It needs to see how individuals experience their problems and how they resist oppression or organize their resistance to it. One of the issues facing Zimbabwe is the crisis of land ownership. The country's limited land resources are being concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, and an increasing number of people are being driven away from their homes and left without a claim to the land that their ancestors had long since carefully farmed or walked freely.

In Zimbabwe, it is thought that one of the key attitudes dictating how people interact with their land is greed. Unbridled greed is the driving force behind certain people's interactions with the natural world. For these people, acquiring property and riches derived from the fruits of the soil is of utmost importance. The mind-set of greed is fundamentally secular and anti-social: God's supreme dominion is disregarded, and the owner's desires are passionately sought for at the expense of the pressing requirements of other people of the human community. Land must preserve a moral and mutual connection. Humans must understand that all life on this earth with people are valuable in God's sight and legitimately entitled to our respect and protection. All life was entitled to rights.

The socio-political analysis is extremely beneficial to this research so that the church can comprehend the actual situation. The socio-political climate of the nation, which generally reflects the people's situation, can aid in the development of potential solutions. The Zimbabwean social class is depicted in the diagram below:

6.7.1 The Pyramid of Zimbabwe Society

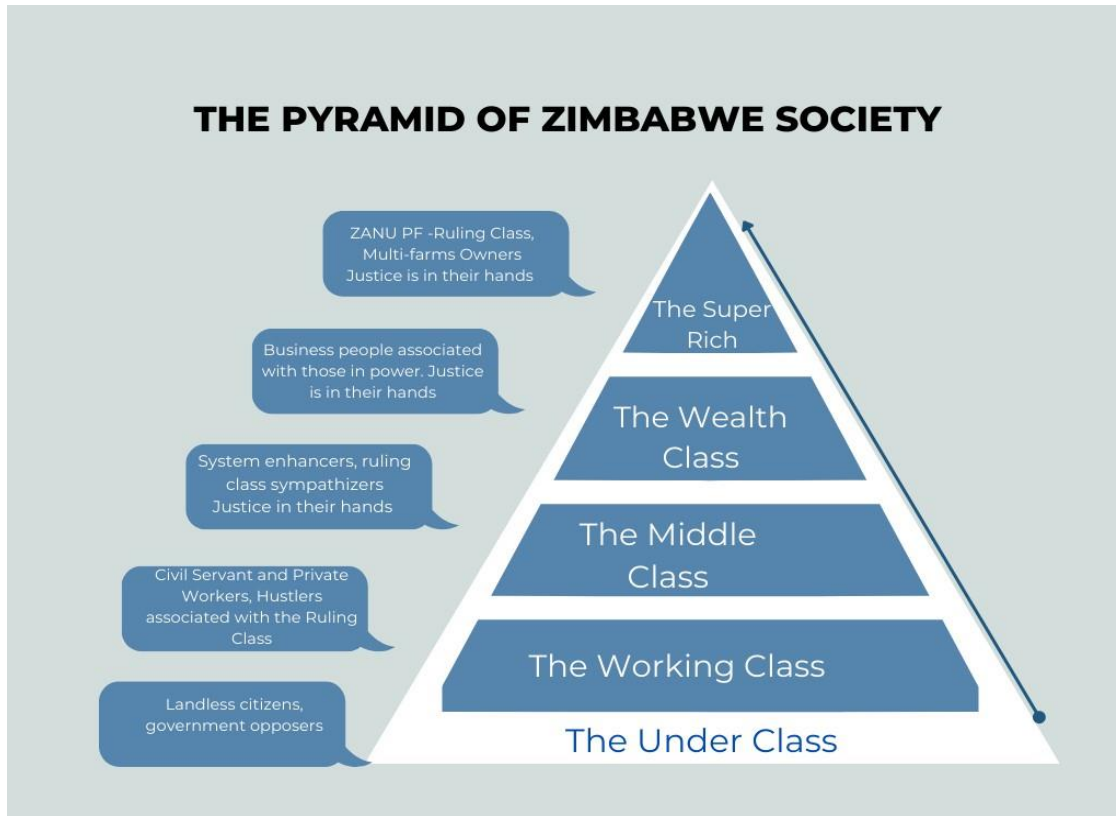


Figure 8: The pyramid of Zimbabwe Society

6.7.2 The Super- Rich

Zimbabwe is a country that resembles the one described by the prophet Micah: "But hands are ready to do evil; the ruler requires gifts; the judges accept bribes; the powerful dictate what they wish; they all conspire together." (Micah 7:3). Micah, however, rejects the way things are. He exclaims "As for me, I am filled with power, with the spirit of the Lord and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression, to Israel his sin" as he becomes animated and fired up (Micah 3:8). Government officials and senior government ministries that assist leaders of other ministries make up The Super Rich. They own several farms. These Super Rich are very few. They are the aristocracy. Typically, these are the governing class's cabinet ministers and the ruling party's members of parliament. Despite being a small population, they benefited from the land reform and have numerous farms. Even though they are guilty in terms of justice, they are free to act however they like in the country.

6.7.3 The Wealthy

The group of wealthy individuals known as "the wealthy class" is very confined. These guys can effectively design the regulations and then present them to the "Super- Rich" for approval because of their position of power. Despite not necessarily possessing a military or governmental post, the wealthy elite controls the country. Kudakwashe Tagwirei is a well-known name in this category in Zimbabwe. They have access to as many farms as they want. These have turned the nation into an oligarchy forgetting that God intends for all human beings to enjoy the abundant goodness of creation and that He desires no one to live in involuntary poverty. As such, the poor above all those without adequate land, food or shelter should be catered for. As Volf and McAnally-Linz (2016:68) assert, "top goal of our public engagement must be to ensure that nobody is condemned to live in abject poverty"

6.7.4 The Middle Class

These enhance the system. The political process is not run by these men and women. They have an impact on policy through the political positions they have in society. Through bribes and budget cuts, the class finds methods to go around the rules, but they do not alter them. Free land can be offered to them as a bribe. This group typically supports the government. In addition to making money from caring for the sheep, men of cloth, prophets, priests, bishops, and prophetesses also support the Super Rich because they are gaining from the system. This group includes judges, senior military officials, and police officers. People like Eubert Angel, who are complicit with senior government officials in the Gold Mafia scandal.

6.7.5 The Working Class

People with jobs can be found in this class. They can be found in the public, business, and government sectors. As experts, they give their knowledge to the Super Rich, Wealth Class, and the Middle Class. Some of the government employees in this class are not trained professionals. They are merely relatives and politicians who the state has nominated. Some working-class persons make a living as hustlers (self-employed individuals), working for themselves. The hustlers do not work for the government.

Some government employees from the working-class own land.

6.7.6 The Under Class

Those who are not actively working make up this class. This category encompasses impoverished subsistence farmers. The majority of those in this group work on farms owned by the Super Rich, Middle Class, and Working Class. Most members of this class lack access to land, and occasionally they carry out tasks for free. Most of them are critics of the political system. They have been imprisoned even for petty offences; therefore, the law is upon them.

Most of the land for agriculture has always been kept in a communal basis under the control of the leaders of the ruling party. The land that the community farmers occupied during the 2000 land reform has never been officially transferred to them through title deeds or any other means. They thus have a very difficult time obtaining credit because they own anything of value that could be used as collateral for a loan to improve their land. If the landowners want to keep their property, they must abide by the dictates of the local chiefs, traditional authorities, and political hierarchies. Landowners in Zimbabwe currently lack the personal independence necessary to run their own businesses.

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6.8 Step Three –Historical- Hermeneutical Strategy

Regarding injustice and the abuse of authority, the Bible is extremely explicit. What do we do as Christians when injustice is committed? We responded to the injustice occurring in Zimbabwe in the same way that a secular person could, particularly considering government initiatives like the Land Reform, which involved the systematic destruction of hundreds of thousands of people's farms, homes, and businesses. Tragically, the church did not oppose the policy of land reform, which destroyed people's farms and resulted in murders of people. Few churches made forceful statements to the international media. The churches did not welcome the farmers who had been victimised by the land reform and became homeless. Additionally, a wider awakening to the terrible acts of injustice occurred. People are said to be concentrating more on their own personal survival than trying to resolve the matter itself when an unfair pattern persists for a long time. Concern for one's own safety takes precedence. 165

The idea of dignity and rights for humans has its roots in the Judeo-Christian doctrine of the sanctity of human life, which holds that each of us was uniquely made in God's likeness and is beloved by an all-powerful, all-loving God. Vosloo (2017:21), a South African theologian posits that any attempt to create the space for positive claims concerning the art of forgetting must additionally take into consideration both the ethical and religious significance of memory when expressed from context influenced with memories related to historical injustice, and the plea and more in particular the responsibility to remember and the implicit need to fight towards forgetting are rightful. Evaluating how populace faces up to the land question based on its religion and faith, Volf (2016:70) asserts that, "Commitment to public engagement as disciples draw us to scriptures as the touchstone for discerning Christ at work." This study attempts to assess how the Bible views land in terms of how it is a gift from God, a promised land, a picture of the future kingdom, and a resource that may be used for everyone's benefit. figuring out how religious tradition, particularly as articulated by the church, relates to this land conundrum, and how the church might assist the public in understanding common ownership and the non-mercantile nature of land.

In accordance with the work of social ethicist Dieter Hessel (1992:97), those who interpret the Bible must create a social hermeneutic for their reading to be more socially transformational. At this point he claims, "is a method of interpretation which makes clear the liberating meaning of bible text for human-social existence today," which is of particular interest. Hessel (1992:100) advises leaders of bible study groups to ask people for both a personal-private and a social-corporate reading of a biblical passage. Christians are supposed to consider these questions: What injustices can we identify from the past and how can we correct them? What exactly can we remark about the social structure we currently live in? What can we do? In the view of Volf (2016:19), all Christian engagement needs to be for the "**common good**," and we should interpret the Bible considering the gospel narrative, our own personal experiences, and the distinctive features of the time we live in.

This is known as "contemporary context." In the opinion of Wacker and Wainwright (2007:108), regardless of ancestry or history, all people share a connection to the land. Humans are an essential component of the globe as works of art, not as owners who received the planet as a gift from God. Humans should be made from its soil, which is not limited to human territory. It is time to pay attention to the voice of the earth and the land, to enter a covenant with all of creation, and especially to uphold our commitment to the land on which we currently reside. It is time to acknowledge that people live on land.

Biblical language uses the word "Adam" as a play on words to signify that humans are tied to the land. Humankind and the land are thus bound in a covenantal relationship, like the relationship between men and women. A competent public theology must respect established public relations. The dominant land ethic in our culture denies that connection at great cost to not only the environment but also to humankind.

Israel's conception of land holds that the land is given to the entire community as a gift from God, according to both the conquest tradition and the truth provisions. Israel's conception of land, which is strongly entrenched in liberating traditions, collided with other ideas and practises that viewed the land as a traded good rather than as a gift, trust, or inheritance. Clans and households possessed land as individuals in the community. Brueggemann (1977:47):

The land to Israel was a gift. It was a gift from Yahweh and binds Israel in new ways to the giver. Israel was clear that did not take the land either by power or stratagem, but because Yahweh had spoken a word and had acted to keep his word. The reflections of land boundary affirm that the land is a gift of his word.

It is unusual that land has previously received such little attention given that it is such a prominent theme in the biblical witness. The Bible tells the story of God's people as well as it is in Zimbabwe at this very moment. According to biblical history, the land was seen as a gift. "And I will make myself their God, and I will give you and your descendants after you the land of your wanderings, all the land of Canaan"(Genesis 17:8). It was a gift from God, and it ties Israel to the sender in fresh ways.

The Israelites could see that they had not conquered the land through force or cunning,

but rather because God had spoken it, and it had been done. Israel's founding myths repeatedly emphasised that the land was a gift to them all. The Psalmist says “The earth is the Lord’s and it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it” (Psalm 24:1). The land is portrayed as a life-giving expression of God's message since it is how his word comes to Israel fully and powerfully: “When the Lord your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant then you eat and are satisfied (Deuteronomy 6:10-11).”

In Zimbabwe, the state, and the church both need to be aware that the land is there to feed everyone, not just a select few. For Israel, satisfaction should be a strong memory and expectation, much like it is for people in Africa. It is a covenanted land that has been given. God-filled land brings responsibility, and those who live there prosper. People have a responsibility to use the same land that is given to them freely and share its riches equally. Many Christians have been unable to comprehend that significant and expensive attitude regarding biblical interpretation of the land. Christians should assert that their interpretation of the Bible, which claim that land is a gift from God for everyone to use. Brueggemann (1977:66) goes on to say that:

Land is for sharing with all the heirs of the covenant, even those who have no power to claim it. Something about land makes one forget them, makes one insensitive to them. Israel at the boundary believed the new land is precisely for caring for brothers and sisters. Israel had the hope and vision at the boundary that covenantal relations can still operate in the land. Israel refused to think that being landed and covenanting were inimical to each other. Land is an opportunity to pervert justice (Deuteronomy 24:17-18, Amos 5:10-12.)

Christian leaders must interpret the land motif, which calls for people to comprehend that land has always been managed as a gift, not as something to be taken for granted, and land must be managed as a platform for justice and freedom. Christians have learned that land is never just about land, and it is never simply land that is owned and governed.

Land is always a place of promise and gift, a promise made by the Promiser, who in the history of Israel was God, and a gift given when it could never be taken, grasped, or seized. The land is in danger when the vision of justice is disregarded. Zimbabwean citizens therefore do not own the land; rather, they are part of it.

The land concept is relevant to how we interact with political opposition claims in Zimbabwe. It demands complete accommodation from Christians so that they might become conscious of the contact with unsolved and unsolvable problems in fresh ways. Burge (2010:128) contends that:

The principles of biblical theology, the land is never just unclaimed territory that a proprietor can use or occupy. God made vows in this land, which gives mankind their spiritual heritage's foundation. People can come to understand land as their own hope and redemption.

Alternatives among Christians are suggested by some hermeneutical ideas: Alternatives among Christians are suggested by some hermeneutical ideas:

- The Bible's emphasis on land raises the challenging question of how cultivation and consumption relate to trends of justice and morality.
- How unbelievable it could still be if we are forced to consider the improbable possibility that land cannot be organised according to utility but for the common good.
- The discussion of the gift or seize problems serves as a caution against using utility as the standard for land use. Land as God-given gift.
- Christians are urged by pure historical hermeneutics to read the Bible critically and to challenge what is commonly unaccepted.

The shortcomings and drawbacks of the current social system must alarm Christians, who frequently place a greater emphasis on organisational and liturgical differences rather than public problems and the needs of the individual.

A solid historical hermeneutics will inspire Christians with bravery and give them the strength to alter the social order. Due to the prevalence of poverty, landlessness, and hopelessness today, churches serve a crucial role in the communities in which they are located. The welfare of the impoverished owing to landlessness is one of the areas that

the church ignores. In order to create a peaceful and effective nation, the church must play a significant role in advocating for the rights of the impoverished. This research will examine how the Old Testament prophetic tradition identified the impoverished, providing the modern church with a means of assisting the impoverished and the landless. The church must develop new relationships with the impoverished and landless to be present in communities. Myers (2011: 105) asserts that it is never safe to refer to someone by a label. We sometimes lose sight of the fact that the impoverished are real people with names, who are created in God's image, have counted hair, and for whom Jesus died. People who reside in impoverished places are just as valuable, loved, and respected as those who do not. But because the poor are perceived by the outside world as a defenceless bunch, we allow ourselves to act as gods in their life. In the opinion of Myers (2011:106), the impoverished lose their identity, which encourages us to view them as objects of our compassion and something for whom we may act in the most morally responsible way. Typically, we give them names like marginalised, working poor, homeless, hopeless, and so forth. The impoverished are either social groupings to be organised or the state's stewards, subjects of specialised research. Beginning with the knowledge that the impoverished are real persons, to whom God has given gifts, and with whom and among whom God has been working before we ever know them, is how we approach a Christian perspective of poverty.

"The Old Testament prophets provide a veritable chorus of calls for aid to the poor," claims Bemby (2018:81). Bemby (2018:81) lists three Hebrew terms that characterise the impoverished. Bemby points out that the Hebrew Bible uses the word "*ebyon*" to describe impoverished people; it is frequently used in prophetic works such as Isaiah, Ezekiel, Amos, and Jeremiah. According to the law, Exodus shields the "*ebyon*" from injustice perverted Exodus 23:6. "*dal*," which frequently occurs in the poetic parallel with "*ebyon*" in the Hebrew Bible, is another word that was used for the impoverished. "*Dal*" is mentioned multiple times in the prophetic writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, and Zephaniah, according to Bemby (2018:11). Biblical prophets used the word "*ani*" as a third word to refer to those who were impoverished, faced hardships financially,

and were legally protected. Israel's handling of the *"dal"* is occasionally used as a barometer for how well the country administers justice and upholds fairness. Genesis 22:16. The spectrum of connotations that these words convey is clarified by the Hebrew phrase for the impoverished.

Bembry (2018:11) suggests that although the terms "poor," "needy," and "afflicted" denote financial difficulties, they also imply social and legal vulnerability. This is a crucial point to keep in mind when we turn to the prophets' statements. It just makes clear that, like people in other countries, the Israelites picked their monarch and violated their bond with Yahweh during the Old Testament era. But Yahweh sent prophets to warn the rulers and to condemn the injustices done to most of the people. The classical period of biblical prophecy, according to Pixley (1989:81), "corresponds to the time of the monarchy, from the tenth to the sixth centuries BC." The prophets preserved the idea of Yahweh as the God who spoke up for the underprivileged in a society run by a ruling class reliant on the monarchy throughout the centuries of monarchy. The prophets, in my opinion, also condemned the current social structure for failing to uphold the ideals of Israelite people. One of the greatest, Amos, was in the struggle to defend the rights of the underprivileged. According to Hayes (1998:1), Amos' brief prophetic journey to Israel occurred in the waning years of Northern state. By the time Amos lived, Israel had passed its heyday. Amos gained notoriety for his prophetic words from steps of a foreign temple, when he forewarned the people of that nation that if they continued to act in an unjust manner towards the poor, they would face God's anger and certain destruction:

This is what the Holy one has said, for three transgressions of Israel, for four, I will not call back the punishment: Because they have sold the righteous for silver. And the poor for a pair of sandals. They trample the heads of the poor. Into the dust of the earth. And pervert the course of the humble! Father and son both go to the same girl, so as to profane My holy name. They lie perversely by every altar. On garments they took in pledge, and in the House of their God, they drink wine bought with their fines. (Amos 2: 6-8)

Amos denounced the wealthy for their mistreatment of the underprivileged. The wealthy were nasty rather than kind to the underprivileged.

According to the prophet Amos, the wealthy "abhor him that speaks forth uprightly," "turn aside the needy in the gate from the right," "oppress the poor and crush the needy," and "take a bride." The scripture mentioned above demonstrates how the wealthy abused the poor, manipulated fictitious trade balances, and bought off judges to get decisions in their favour in court. The revelation that there was also the selling of individuals into virtual slavery came as an unpleasant surprise.

Isaiah was among the prophets who fought for equal opportunity for the underprivileged. Isaiah was "the only eighth literary prophet to live in Jerusalem," according to Doorly (1992: 1). When examining the factors that contributed to the spread of Isaiah's oracles, we cannot overlook the role that Jerusalem played in the favourable treatment that his oracles received during the reign of Josiah and afterwards, both during and after the exile. Isaiah addressed the people's concerns in a way that was believable. Soggin (1987:304) is correct when he asserts that, for instance, Isaiah 1:4–9 depicts the circumstances in Jerusalem during or shortly after Sennacherib's invasion in 701. In keeping with Isaiah's message, many people were wealthy in gold and silver, owned horses and chariots (Isaiah 2:7), elegant clothing and jewellery (Isaiah 3:18–23), and homes and other possessions. Isaiah 5:8. However, they mistreated widows, orphans, and the impoverished, just as they did in Amos' day in Israel Isaiah 1:17. Isaiah chastised the powerful and wealthy for taking advantage of the weak.

The Lord has taken this place to contend, he stands to judge his people. The Lord enters into judgement with the elders and princes of his people "It is you who have devoured the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor?" says the Lord God of hosts. Isaiah 3:14-15.

When so many believed that Judah's wealth was an indication of God's favour, religion flourished. But according to Isaiah, this is meaningless religion. 1 Samuel 11:11–13; 5:7. Indeed, God had tended to Judah in the same way as a farmer tends to his or her vineyard. Judah, however, had produced inedible wild fruits rather than pleasant fruit (Isaiah 5:1–7). Additionally, according to Isaiah 1:2–3, Judah had to face judgement since he had acted like a disobedient kid and was more foolish than an ox. Isaiah 3:16-4:1, 2:12–22.

In the Old Testament, the wealthy exploited people who were impoverished because they lacked resources and were weak. As the voice of the impoverished, Isaiah used his words to criticise the social injustices committed by the populace and the ruling class. He also emerged as a champion of the weak and destitute. According to Jon Sobrino (2004:93), in order to establish a church of the poor, we must go beyond a segmented approach in which the impoverished are viewed as part of the whole and as coexisting with other, non-poor groups, as well as beyond a purely inclusive and ethical perspective on God's people.

In society, the impoverished in general have no ability to influence significant political and economic decisions that could improve their lot in life. They bear the consequences of the decisions and actions made by those in charge of the ruling class and the institutions of power. Lack of revenue because of land reform, which would allow the family to purchase needs of life, is the primary cause of poverty. It was found that the competitive, profit-seeking market economy in Zimbabwe, family-owned institutions, private property, and relational employment opportunities all contribute to opportunity inequality and deprive many people of access to fundamental necessities like a decent place to live, health insurance, and means of building wealth. The political structure of Zimbabwe appears to favour those with influence over the poor, close doors to the underprivileged, and keep people stuck in a cycle of poverty. As a result, we attempt to make sense of what we perceive by using a wide variety of lenses to collect information. Christians, to see the poor and their circumstances more accurately, we must be honest about our presumptions and seek God's assistance. A list of derogatory adjectives that can be used to characterise the impoverished typically consists of terms like filthy, illiterate, lethargic, defenceless, hopeless, superstitious, ineffectual, and many more. also emerged as a champion of the weak and destitute. According to Jon Sobrino (2004:93), in order to establish a church of the poor, we must go beyond a segmented approach in which the impoverished are viewed as part of the whole and as coexisting with other, non-poor groups, as well as beyond a purely inclusive and ethical perspective on God's people.

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As stated by Johnstone (1994:244), the urban poor have begun the great march into the kingdom and are the most receptive group. However, they are also the least evangelised. This was accurate even back in Acts. Being aware of our prejudices is a crucial practice. "The cutting edge and spirituality of the church are often blunted when rich and powerful because of Christianity!" We can only deconstruct the transformational spectacles we employ when we take this action. To have eyes to see and ears to hear the problems of the impoverished and landless, we must cut the log out of our eyes. Christians should be the first to take on a heartless attitude towards those who are homeless and landless. First, Christians occasionally employ Scripture selectively, supporting a perspective of the impoverished and landless that they either already hold or have been given from another source.

Secondly, it would seem more productive to create a conceptual framework for the underprivileged and landless that incorporates all these pictures and leaves none out. The impoverished bear God's image. They have collapsed. Christ did utilise

the impoverished to represent both himself and the necessity for us to help those who are struggling. Thus, the development programme and justice for the people are enhanced by the gospel's growth. Therefore, it is true that those who are homeless and landless require education, training, and access to the gospel. But restricting one's comprehension of poverty to this paradigm also leads to some very important issues. Therefore, if poverty is the lack of things, then providing them is the answer. In today's society, there is mounting evidence that the rich are getting richer while the poor are being impoverished. This is taking place everywhere in the world, not only in Zimbabwe. This puts us under pressure to examine the situation, determine why it is occurring, and determine whether there is a problem with our systems of existence.

People used to own some of the means of production. This includes industries, land, equipment, and many other things. In addition, they had a wealth of natural resources, including coal, cotton, oil, and minerals; people laboured and produced food. It was easier for them to live that way if they had more than they required and could trade it for other items. The church "has all but lost its voice in the public square," according to Galindo (2004:15). Vulnerable to its immediate setting, the church has lost its prophetic voice and is ill-equipped to handle the needs of a deteriorating neighbourhood. It is the responsibility of the church to assist those who are homeless and landless in whatever way possible rather than ignoring the issues. The Old Testament prophetic traditions did not represent the only experiences with the poor and landless; in the New Testament, Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom of God was centred around his concern for the disadvantaged, socially outcast groups, and marginalised individuals. "Jesus' vision of the Kingdom is good news for the poor and all the oppressed and marginalised groups, it is, however, usually perceived as bad news by those who enjoyed power, riches, and privilege of the present order," as stated by Segundo in Folk (1991:101). Unlike Jesus, the prophets advocated for justice and accountability for the underprivileged and landless, in addition to forgiveness.

As Segundo (1985:211) points out, "Jesus' miracles were performed for the benefit of the poor for the most part." Bosch (1991:27) provides support for this claim,

stating that "Jesus reached out to all people - the poor, the hungry and blind, the lepers, the weeping and the mourning; sinners, tax collectors, captives, and prostitutes; the demon-possessed and persecuted; the 'little ones, the last and the least.'" Sanders (1985:164) describes the interaction between Jesus and the impoverished people of his day, stating that a disproportionate percentage of the impoverished were likely among the crowds that surrounded him and listened to everything he said. Women were undoubtedly one of the marginalised groups in Jesus' day, along with the ill, those in need, the tax collectors, the public offenders, and the Gentiles. Folk (1991:103) states, "He extended his hand to the marginalised women, the impoverished, the disabled, the ritually unclean, lepers, and other sick individuals, children, and external visitors." This insight is advanced by Dube (2003: 51), who states that,

Jesus' association with the less privileged is also evident in his relationship with women. Women of his time and society, as in most of our societies, were denied economic, decision-making, leadership, and legal power based on their gender. Jesus began to fight for gender justice by befriending women John 11, allowing them to follow him Luke 8:1-3, allowing the unclean bleeding women to touch him Mark 5:24-34, sending them to preach John 4:39-42, 20:11, thus giving them public leadership roles. He also insisted that the law should apply to and protect both women and men John 8:1-11

As a result, Jesus "deeply challenged the morals and taboos of his society regarding the place of women and the relationship between men and women," according to Segundo (1985: 104). When Swidler (1979: 164) states, "Jesus often used women as central figures in his stories and sayings, always in a positive way," it lends credence to this. Therefore, the greatest way to comprehend Jesus' compassion for the underprivileged is to read a chapter from Luke's Gospel in the synagogue on the Sabbath day. The biblical verse found in Luke 4:16–19 attests to Jesus' prophetic mission. The verse emphasises Jesus' commitment to his ministry, which includes speaking out against social injustice and declaring the poor, the captives, and the sick to be free. Jesus is simultaneously giving hope to the despairing by announcing the year of the Lord's favour.

Given the foregoing, Jesus' message of liberation was good news for the oppressed and that it represented the real arrival of God's Kingdom, which Jesus understood to be the dismantling of the previous, oppressive social structure. Therefore, the core of Christ's teaching, mission, and ministry is liberation. In this sense, the social, political, theological, and economic climate of Jesus' day influenced his conception of God's Kingdom. "God's rule is breaking forth here and now, overthrowing oppressive religious and political oligarchies and social orders and establishing a new community of mutuality and solidarity in the midst of the old," is Folk's (1991:95) interpretation of Jesus' message of the Kingdom. Folk's reading of Jesus' teachings makes it very evident that Jesus opposed the powerful and repressive political and religious establishments of his day. He urged a fundamental shift in the way that people think and behave, particularly regarding the underprivileged and the landless. Jesus' emphasis on the marginalised groups, then, influences the Church's pastoral response to vulnerable groups by motivating the Church's knowledge of the circumstances facing those who were poor and disadvantaged of its time. In the words of Orobator (2005:2009), the Church of God needs to actualize this option historically because God has chosen the poor. The enigma surrounding the incarnation is comparable to this heavenly precedent. The poor Messiah becomes poor and becomes an inevitable example for the Church he created, signifying the incarnation. Therefore, the prophetic role of the Church is to make known God's presence and activity in all spheres of existence, especially those spheres that dehumanise God's people.

"The Church has to recognise the fact that the responsibility of redressing the plight of the poor is fundamental to biblical faith," according to Bakare (1993:93). Consequently, the impoverished, on the other hand, turn to the Church for assistance and motivation in their fight against repressive systems that cast them into a state of uncertainty and fear. Christ teaches the church. He gave poor people sermons on the gospel. He said that this proved he was a messenger from God. The church has always been dedicated to both the gospel and human advancement. The church has much to contribute as an authority on humanity. The church lives to proclaim the truth, just like Christ did. The goal of the church's founding was to establish the earthly equivalent of Heaven's Kingdom.

In the past, the church has long been involved in meeting the social needs of people worldwide.

It has a demonstrated history of helping those in need that goes back more than 2,000 years. It has addressed problems related to poverty, education, health, refugees, and war victims, among other social issues. The Church has learnt to react to the cries of the disadvantaged, widows, and orphans because it is informed by the gospel and led by the Holy Spirit. It has established a custom of being a real neighbour to people who are among his world's crooks.

As noted by Bemby (2018:93), the Old Testament law and prophetic texts contain recurring references to the impoverished. Prophets demanded support and protection for low-income individuals who had no social standing against those who exploited them or chose to overlook their situation. The church, as a Christian community, must mobilise its resources to motivate people to work towards a community where everyone's fundamental needs are satisfied and where the impoverished live in hope and without fear in order to practise justice to the poor and walk in the prophetic tradition concerning the poor.

Churches need to work together or launch initiatives to address specific injustices faced by less fortunate people in their areas. The prophets consistently urge the people to help the poor, the vulnerable and needy, widows and orphans, oppressed individuals, strangers, and those without legal rights throughout the prophetic literature. This is the core subject that the prophets raise up. The prophets prescribed fairness and impartiality in justice. The prophets urged reverence for every human life as well as for other people's possessions. The problems faced by the impoverished within communities necessitate the church to take a mediating love approach. The church lies beneath the cross as well. As believers of God, we have a duty to share with the lowest of the poor the love that Jesus has for them. The church needs to be seen as a representative of the powerless the prophets of today. The prophets served as spokespersons, able to call out the powerful and the public to stop any acts that led to social injustices. It is evident that the impoverished were unable to advocate for themselves, but the prophets felt secure in their denunciations of the ruling class.

The prophets spoke for half of the dissatisfied people who were unable to speak for themselves when they angrily attacked the wealthy, rulers, and the royal class.

The prophets called for reforms to the social structure. They seek these modifications, which are guided by divine wisdom. Christians now need to speak up in their communities in favour of the swift social transformation that the poor, landless, and vulnerable are anticipating.

Instead of taking up all the political power, Christian leaders should be obedient and a source of inspiration for the populace. When it comes to sound exegesis and hermeneutics, Hosea is a model. When Hosea (4:4–5:7) originally emerged, Israel was enjoying prosperity and peace. According to Landy (2011:56), Chapter 4 presents the major body of Hoseanic prophesies; subsequent chapters do not contain any narratives. People are supposed to remain silent in the face of the accusation: verse 4 states, "Let no one dispute, or reprove anyone." In the absence of truth, knowledge, or *hesed*, all disagreements are merely logomachy and are untrue. Hosea 4:6 compares the accusation of the people as self- interested and profane to the arguing priests who, driven by money and power, convert sacred order into disorder. The hostile atmosphere that threatens the divine word with silence is the backdrop against which God orders discord so that his charge can be heard in silence. Similar circumstances exist in Zimbabwe, where pastors and other influential figures are leading the charge in inciting unrest among the populace. Christian leaders are the ones that support the nation's corrupt and unfair administration.

Hosea 4:4,6,8,12, according to Garrett (1997:114), uses the term "*my people*" to refute accusations made by priests of official malfeasance and neglect of duty. He refers to the peasant people as "*your people*" here, and their superstition and lawlessness serve as ample evidence that the priests are failing in their duties. In verses 4, 6, 8, and 12, Hosea makes three references to the term *Lo- Ammi*, which means "not my people." In verse 6, he says that "my people," or "*ammi*," perish because the priest does not teach them well. In verse 8, he says that the priest feeds on "my people." Finally, in verses 4:11–12, he claims that the religious life of "my people," or "*ammi*," is based on the most outdated kind of superstition.

The last verse that's verse 4 asserts that "**your people**" (that is the priest's people) can rightly blame the priest for their condition. The overall meaning is clear, that the ordinary man and woman of Israel who should have been the pious people of God, had lost that statue due to the greed of priesthood.

As the nation increased, so did its sin, according to Hosea. This is a typical eighth-century prophetic concept. As the rich grew richer, the disadvantaged classes suffered the more. As the prosperity of the nation increased, so did the satisfaction of the people same as today. The welfare of the nation was probably attributed to the Baals by many of Hosea's fellow citizens, - idolatry then became even more rooted in Israelite society. As a result of their desecration of the covenant tradition, God declares that he will exchange their national glory for shame. They are to fall from the heights of economic prosperity to a position of having nothing, as they bow to their oppressors and leave their homes for the humiliation of the captivity. If the text is interpreted as a literal account of misbehaviours by priests, one reflecting on the present-day situation might find Hosea's disapproval relevant. Nowadays, people who are supposed to be trustworthy religious leaders, those who ought to be beyond reproach, commit a very unsettling kind of corruption. We hear about allegations of financial thievery, sex scandals, divorces, and corruption among pastors. Religious authorities functioning as nonreligious authorities - "Like priests like people no different". Abuse of authority and the desire to be corrupt are the roots of every wicked nature. It can be applied to both extremely excellent and extremely bad ends. Hosea's criticism of religious authorities is relevant today. It exhorts Christians to think carefully about their lives as pastors and Christians.

Like Hosea in Hosea 4: 4-19 he reminded the religious leaders of the covenant of God that Israel had brought into the Land of Promise from the desert, which could be severely threaten by Israel's insensitivity to the ethical demands of her religion. This speaks of the mission of prophets like Hosea. With his prophecy of judgment, he challenged the religious leaders and state of the society which must also be done to Zimbabwe as well. Israel subjected to cultic and political institutions along with their political and theological options, criticism, Hosea could not hesitate to announce the misbehaviours of the priests and people

of the whole Israelite state in the name of God. Hosea called the attention of the people to the need to return to the teachings and instructions as rooted in the word of God the Torah.

6.9 Step Four – Practical strategy

Dreyer Y (2004:920) points out that "the task of a public practical theology is threefold: to include the public as one of the audiences of practical theology; to include everyday concerns and issues in its reflection; to facilitate a dialogue between theology and contemporary culture." The goal of theology, according to Volf (*Curating Theology: 2019*), is to "distinguish, articulate, and commend visions of flourishing life in light of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ." The primary goal of theology should be to promote the flourishing of all God's creatures, including humans, in God's presence. This is God's first care for creation. Stressing the value of social justice and organizational structures, unions, cooperative, or other movements publicizing the need for real land reform to be brought about by those who owned land and land audit. Making a choice of banners under which fight, linking with other forces, forecasting possible consequences, possible allocation of tasks.

Threatening suspected wrongdoers and then enacting those threats as acts of retribution is the only way the state can carry out its God-given duty of upholding social order. Christian people must refrain from taking revenge in their private life. The church in Zimbabwe needs to help create places where people are welcomed in all their terrible vulnerability and given the opportunity to be recovered and changed into something greater than they could have ever imagined. People desire feelings of affection and growth. To demonstrate genuine empathy and affection for others is a part of what it means to be a Christian. Christians must try to change public policy for the better. Christians must be accountable for producing lawful, caring, and ethical and accountable citizens. The church ought to speak out and try to create a society that protects all its members from acts of violence.

Given that it has been revealed in the scriptures, the church is in a unique position to know what is morally lawful and what is morally forbidden. As a result, the church ought to be practical and speak out against the obvious moral inequities of the time.

The reality is that because the church benefits from the system, it is so quiet and does not speak out against any peculiar forms of injustice in Zimbabwe. When societal objectives are being pursued using unethical and immoral means that will have an impact on the future of the church, the church, the church must speak out.

6.10 Five – Social responsibility strategy

Christians view the social responsibility idea of business as subversive since it prioritises the public good over the interests of the individual. The theology of the land initiative must be approached by Christians within the framework of a comprehensive social ethics system. The best uses of the land must be for profit- seeking, boosting productivity, safeguarding each person's human rights from interference by the state, and rewarding deserving parties. In a religious nation like Zimbabwe, churches and other spiritual institutions are expected to be highly significant in inspiring and influencing the social, political, and economic lives of the people in their community. Every civilization has some form of religion, and churches have a big impact on people's lives all around the world. Weber and Bruggemann (1987:37) asserts that:

Land ownership involves significant social responsibility. The evolving concept of social responsibility is within a framework of an emphasis on basic human rights and that we might want to use it in a way that begins to bring elements of a new social value system into the heart of contemporary discussion of economic policy and land use policy. The concept might allow us to move away from emphasis on individual rights toward an emphasis on the common good.

People in Zimbabwe must understand their responsibility to consider how their activities affect other members of society. No one exists in a vacuum; thus, Christians should always work to spread the word about the causes that have the biggest positive effects on other people's lives. The Zimbabwean government must realise that if society is focused on making sure that everyone has the necessities of a life with dignity, then its political and economic institutions must be set up in a way that ensures that people have access to jobs and enough food. The government is not viewed from the standpoint of a public theology as the enemy of the church and society. The Zimbabwean government must be

viewed as a very important player in providing direction and guidance for economic activity and the distribution of wealth. It is the duty of society and the church to ensure that the scarce resources are used with judicious stewardship. Planning and directing must be done in large part by the government. In the end, everyone should share in society's wealth and benefits; they shouldn't be given out based solely on a person's skin colour, political affiliation, or membership in an elite group. A just society is one in which the basic needs of all citizens are addressed through the equitable distribution of resources. a solid public theological conviction that resources are available for the good of all.

It is not determined that the Church has responsibility for good citizenship. It is not an incidental duty either. It is a duty that has its roots in the core of the Christian mission, as demonstrated by the life and teachings of Jesus, the early church's practices, and the highest levels of Christian conscience. Due to deeply held religious beliefs that influence how and why one should live, the well-being of the entire community and everyone within it is a priority for him. The church and social responsibility offer thought-provoking evaluations of the issues pertaining to human relations in the modern world, each of which is followed by suggestions for solutions. The churches have a greater obligation to address social issues by focusing on developing solutions that address the underlying causes of social discontent in human nature.

The church in Zimbabwe needs to realise that there needs to be a responsible society in which every individual freely acknowledges his or her responsibility to God and to neighbour, and where those in positions of power recognise their responsibility to both God and the people impacted by their actions. Politicians and theologians need to understand Christianity as a community of individuals so closely interconnected that each person's existence and well-being are inescapably linked to the well-being of the group as a whole.

6.11 Step Six – Reconciliation strategy

In the opinion of Volf (1996:110), social reconciliation should be understood as more difficult than just making friends because it requires the self to be willing to accept the

other into itself and re-evaluate its own worth in view of the other's change. This is as reconciliation to the other can only be successful if the self is prepared to do so, guided by the story of the triune God.

Volf suggests that the Christian religion would have to give up if it were to give up on the possibility of an ultimate reconciliation a reconciliation that is neither surpassable nor undone. Volf (1996:110) provides three succinct disclaimers. Firstly, the triune God, not humans, is responsible for the ultimate reconciliation. Second, it is the messianic new beginning world rather than the catastrophic end of the world. Third, because it is based on a God who is nothing more than perfect love, the ultimate reconciliation is not defined by self-enclosed "totality". The expectation of a "non-totalitarian" ultimate reconciliation serves as a foundation for Christians to fight for peace in the face of injustice and hostility. When change does occur, reconciliation will take time and require the participation of the whole Zimbabwean population. Zimbabwe needs to take a lesson from South Africa's peaceful democratic transition and make reconciliation a national priority. As the most ambitious commission of its type and a model for future truth commissions across the world, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) oversaw the process of healing a traumatised and wounded populace. Despite the horrible legacy of apartheid, South Africans were able to come together, and the people of Zimbabwe can do the same as they work to resolve issues of injustice and land reform.

When it comes to achieving reconciliation, Chavunduka and Bromley (2010: 375) advise fostering faith in the political system. Reconciliation must encourage communication and harmony among all residents, not just the main political parties. Crucially, in order to foster confidence and cooperation among Zimbabweans of different racial, political, and ethnic backgrounds, some government initiatives will need to include a strategy of national healing and reconciliation. Large amounts of wealth will need to be invested in farms of all shapes and sizes. In order to put underutilised land back into production, both white and black farmers who experienced their farm assets seized and should be resettled and have quick access to money. Infrastructure, social services, and extension services are necessary.

Any type of social reconciliation demonstrates unity. A united community demonstrates the presence of God there. God uses reconciliation to reconcile people to one another and to Himself. Loving your neighbour as you love yourself is what reconciliation means.

We trust each other when we share life together. In Zimbabwe, reconciliation is difficult even in the best of conditions. It calls for wrongdoers to be held accountable for their actions and to stick to their commitment to changing their ways. Because most of the populace does not trust the government, that is the current situation the Second Republic is in. It requires the affected parties to be willing to take a chance on loving and trusting once more. Many will decide that their wounds are too deep to heal.

When the offender is unable to accept responsibility, the affected party may still want to make amends. When there are no legal connections keeping the two of you together, a lot of people find it simpler to let their relationship end than to try to get back together. What factors support a fruitful reconciliation? People who have been wronged need to be reconciled, and they also need a network of people to lean on when things are unfair. Christians can be friends, pastors, counsellors, and partners in prayer. The church needs to educate its people on how to reconcile in a way that benefits both the offender and the victim, the oppressed and the oppressors, the opposition, and the governing party in the long run. Even when a partnership experiences minor failures early on, this kind of dedication is not abandoned. When theologically aware Christians work with persons who have experienced injustice, reconciliation is the ultimate and ideal objective, and it endures if there is evidence of transformed behaviour.

The political and governmental leadership in Zimbabwe needs to understand that God's gift of reconciliation gives rise to the duty to offer apologies. It is an extreme and profound dedication to the requirements of God's restorative justice. Reconciliation requires pain to be attained. In addition to accepting the enemy and bearing the price of forgiveness, reconciliation entails actively mending the injustice and suffering caused by wrongdoing. True reconciliation encompasses both justice and reconciliation, and it places obligations on both wrongdoers and victims. Despite letting political influence and power get in the way or neglecting the justice that comes with reconciliation, the church ought to take the

lead in fostering interpersonal relationships that advance reconciliation within the Christian community.

Christians must learn how to forgive and do it consistently and successfully, according to the gospel (Matthew 6:12, 18:21-24).

But this forgiveness does not mean Christians have to stop up seeking legal repercussions or making amends; rather, it means they must let go of all anger and embrace the offender or enemy in their love. The church is used to voicing strong opposition to hatred in its declarations of reconciliation. Along with the wrath against the perpetrator, or the actual offence or the justice produced by the offender's behaviour, comes the need to let go of affective hatred, which frequently lingers in the heart of the aggrieved person. In the empowering influence of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ continues his mission, which includes reconciliation. As such, it is a component of every Christian's ministry as well as the mission of the church.

6.12 Step Seven – Redistribution strategy

Zimbabwean land redistribution motivations must take efficiency and productivity goals into account in addition to the obvious necessity to address social justice and equity concerns. A substantial restructuring of the land is necessary. Through either moderate-sized holdings or community holdings, land must be redistributed such that control is as widely distributed as attainable. In order for the soil to regenerate and take care of the coming generations of lifeforms that depend on her, land must be managed in a way that carefully preserves and restores it. Building confidence and restoration of the rule of law, according to Chavunduka and Bromley (2010: 373), the current state of the economy will not improve unless there is a renewed dedication to the Constitution along with an independent court and parliament. After 1999, land invasions became more frequent due to the selective application of the law across political, racial, and class divides. The idea of a society founded on the rule of law has been weakened by constitutional revisions, which are perceived as a setback for impartiality. The legal climate is now even more vulnerable due to the lack of an independent Judicial Services Commission. In order for other African nations to contemplate land redistribution, their judiciaries must be impartial and uphold the rule of law during the process.

6.12.1 Possibilities for state action

To accomplish these goals, the following actions could be taken:

- Meaningful national budget expenditures for land reform are intended to first help Zimbabwe's poorest citizens while discouraging affluent individuals from investing in agriculture.
- To implement an inclusive land policy that would support medium-sized farms and improve the redistribution of land for those able to engage in large-scale farming.
- To encourage farmers to source most of their income from agriculture.
- The assistance of the government in the form of low-interest loans for determined new farmers.
- Aid the current farmers who are having challenges.
- The accessibility of both foreigners and locals on agricultural land
- The preservation of wetlands, national parks, seashores, and forests.
- Public ownership of natural energy resources like lithium, copper, gold, and coal, which were created by their creators for responsible use by many people rather than reckless abuse by a select few.

Accepting native peoples' sovereignty and fairly resolving their treaty- related claims.

6.12.2 Preferred church action

As soon as the church starts to get involved in public issues and gatherings, the action step is put into action. Oosthuizen (1968:21) asserts that, “the church should stop planning within the context of the church; her mission and her obedience should be in the context of society and the world.” As the church begins to explore for a solution, its leaders communicate the possibility of resolving conflicts through trust and continuous input on the issues that the parties have already agreed upon and experienced harm from. Christian leaders need to assess each person's behaviour towards the other parties to identify possible difficulty spots. Every person needs to always be conscious of their own communication style and overall demeanour. Lastly, everyone involved needs to keep an eye out for fresh problems and search for useful fixes. The church needs to take part in problem-solving church and some public issue. As indicated by Root (2022: 81):

The church is central for its theology, because this theology is not concerned with the concept of God (the theology of the university) but with God who is. A God who is spills over all categories and concept and therefore can only be found in the context of the world. The church does not simply gather around a concept of God and seek to survive as an institution or defend religion against cultural misappropriation. The church is called to help those in world, God is acting, speaking, judging, healing, and electing.

In real life, the church should work to develop an informed conscience, which will give rise to sensible laws and treaties and without which new legislation will be meaningless. One of the most important avenues for putting principles into reality that the church in Zimbabwe must do is interpenetrating with the local and national government systems. The Christian community itself should be the starting point for the church's participation in human rights advocacy initiatives. The church must represent the "inclusive" deeds of Jesus. This all-encompassing aspect of love culminated in his kind actions towards his own adversary. Even when political groups turn against one another, Christians must encourage acts of love. Love action ought to prevail over exclusive national concerns. Jesus was able to demonstrate the triumph of God's righteousness in the eyes of the Gentiles and Jews who shared the same moral standards. God was not partial to any one nation. Jesus acted in accordance with his moral desires. In the same way that Paul saw racial, national, socioeconomic, and sexual differences as completely meaningless in the face of God as He has shown Himself through Christ, so too did he understand this broader viewpoint. Following are some land- related practises that Zimbabwean churches have incorporated into their liturgy to express their respect for God and awareness of their obligations to both God and their communities:

- To conduct yearly land stewardship church services throughout Zimbabwe to remind Christians that they are guardians of God's land.
- To dedicate Land to God annually to glorify God as God Given Gift for Everyone
- An ecumenical approach to native people's spiritual leaders and the creation of liturgies with them.
- Respect for traditional faiths and a willingness to learn from them.

The understanding that human disengagement from the natural world is a serious problem on a personal, societal, and ecological level is one aspect of the requirement that both the church and the state teach that human rights of possession of nature are real. Zimbabwean churches may investigate the psychological, spiritual, and moral aspects of this issue of land and social injustice. Education on Zimbabweans' rights to use nature, especially land, could be another factor. Zimbabwean schools might begin by teaching students about basic human rights. The Zimbabwean government must restore access to land for those landless families who want it, as well as for those prepared to live there and make investments in the land.

The Zimbabwean church must start by addressing the areas of its life in which it has fallen behind "secular" methods. It must first implement the procedures required to mend fences either the government or the land reform victims. Facilitated talks are essential organisational tools for the church. Second, it needs to develop the abilities required to express regret and ask for forgiveness from those who received no justice during the land reform. Third, it should use ethical instruments, such as appreciating individuality and interpersonal connections, to develop a unified social ethic for living with people, farmers, and communities. Fourth, the church needs to build relationships using conflict resolution techniques like middle-level social agents of change and justice promotion to forge stronger ties with both white and black farmers as well as the government. The Zimbabwean church must realise that while each of these strategies is required, taken they only provide a portion of the solution to the needs of justice and the necessity of reconciliation. The study's main point becomes evident when the Zimbabwean community's justice is restored."

The church fails to recognise that its congregation is not the only audience it serves all humans are expected to be reached. In keeping with Stanley (2012:207), the church operates under the presumption that everyone is either interested in promoting political justice or is already aware of the importance of doing so. The church needs to "engage" everyone right away. The church needs to be involved in all facets of people's lives, including social, spiritual, and public spheres. The church must "involve" people in another

way. The church needs to “include” individuals in its programs do not coerce them into participating and include them in some public concerns.

It is common knowledge that churches have the power to engage their members emotionally and physically. Along with the people, the church needs to "challenge" its members. It is against the established order of things to challenge someone before they are involved and engaged. Speaking the truth is the church's or church leader's primary purpose, therefore involving and interacting with people is crucial. Zimbabwe's church and government need to be aware of who they believe to be looking out for their best interests. Mutual respect and the common good are prerequisites for trust. Empathy is a prerequisite for trust.

6.13 Step Eight - Justice Missions strategy

Church participation in the "*Missio Dei*" has meant that Christian outreach has always been contextual and will continue to be so. The connection between the message of the gospel, church, the mission, and culture are a topic on which Miroslav Volf frequently theologizes. His theology has consequences for us as we work to comprehend the church from a missional perspective. According to Miroslav Volf's (1994) work *It's Like Yeast*, the church needs to consider how it interacts with society. It is impossible to relate to a culture in its whole or even to its prevailing ideas in a single correct way. There are only a lot of ways to change, reject, embrace, or replace different parts of a particular culture from the inside out. This is exactly what it takes for a Christian to be an intrinsic part of a certain culture. The Church in Zimbabwe should remain devoted and concentrate on God's Mission as the essential manifestation of the Christian faith in its theological study as it faces the challenge of addressing social justice. The goal of God's mission, which is to reconcile people and the world to God, is peace. God has continuously called individuals to seek "justice" and "righteousness" in the world and shown concern for these things for thousands of years. Christians must understand that God has sent them on a mission for his kingdom; they are to pursue the kingdom of God, his righteousness, and “justice” actively and purposefully in whatever they do in this world. In order to compel other people and nations to turn to him, God invited the people of Israel to serve as witnesses

to his "justice" and "righteousness." For help to reach communities in the fight against injustice, churches must form a justice mission ministry. As stated by Steyne (1992:286), the church has always had to balance her Lord's command with the authority of Caesar (the state). Caesar frequently supports the development and support of oppressive, degrading structures.

Churches must have groups engaged in justice missions if they want to truly fill the gap left by failing governments. To work for justice in our communities and our countries, prayer groups should be praying and requesting God's wisdom rather than human wisdom. In Exegeting 1 Peter, Miroslav Volf (1994) writes, "*Soft Difference: Theology Reflections on the Relation between church and Culture in 1 Peter.*" Volf asserts that God calls the church to soft difference. Hard difference operates in the mission to bring about change through threats, persuasion, and implicit or explicit pressure. On the other hand, choosing a mild difference requires a boldness that 1 Peter constantly exhorts his readers to adopt (3:14; 3:6). Individuals can let people be who they are without feeling the need to judge or subjugate them. Those who exemplify the "soft difference" view mission primarily as an invitation and a witness. They try to win others over without using pressure or deceit in certain cases, even "without a word" (3:1). Individuals who possess self-assurance or, more precisely, faith in God, can embrace little differences without experiencing nervousness.

In Volf's view, the "soft difference" refers to the need for the church to keep sharing and exemplifying the message of the gospel, a fresh beginning, new humanity as a whole reconciliation, transformation, universal embrace, and regeneration. The church needs to demonstrate that justice, grace, and reconciliation are central to its mission. In Zimbabwe, the church must permit people to heal, reconcile, and forgive while they are still thinking back on their previous experiences. Because mission is carried out holistically, the church is responsible for every person's well-being. Taking care of their health, communities, spirituality, and the greater social and natural ecosystems must be the main priorities. Through this, the Zimbabwean church will find the Spirit walking before of them. By renouncing the temptation to turn into just another social organisation that upholds, defends, and promotes political agendas, churches must embrace both

confidentiality and transparency. An alternative vision fashioned by God's present and future dominion must be presented by the church.

The culture that God has surrounded the church with subverts, confronts, reflects, and transforms it. By doing thus, the church works towards the very purpose that forms the basis of its identity. Christians need to think about the connection between identity and diversity. What matters is not how much emphasis is placed on diversity, but rather the foundation upon which Christian identity is built. must resist the temptation of politicians to join the corrupt for the sake of personal benefit. Volf presents challenging observations on the interplay between church, mission, and culture. These extend an invitation to new connections, activities, and theologies. These extend an invitation for Christians to participate in God's work by developing soft-differentiated identities and behaviours.

However, because the church can maintain both its distinctiveness and its solidarity with the world, Volf's free-church ecclesiology serves as a paradigm of "soft difference" within the Christian community and the wider society, affirming its purpose and witness. The Christian community is also able to live a different kind of life in the current social context because to Volf's "soft difference," which changes society from the inside out and prevents sectarianism from becoming irrelevant.

Jesus sent Christians to love one another, therefore evangelism and justice are both essential components of Christian ministry. Christians in Zimbabwe can seek the kingdom of God precisely where they are by giving their lives to God in thanksgiving and by living lives appropriate for God's people, which involves loving others and pursuing the well-being of those around them in whatever way Christians are able to achieve that. Churches in Zimbabwe must be involved in ministries that deal with issues of violent injustice as well as tangible needs, rising to step in when abuse against the most vulnerable members of society goes unchecked. The church must start to emerge on the scene against injustice in all its manifestations, including police brutality, unexposed politicians, torture, illegal incarceration, and land exploration.

On behalf of the underprivileged and most voiceless people in the world, God's people must start to mobilise. Embracing justice and righteousness entails actively yearning for

individuals to be adopted into God's family and for those who are going through pain due to oppression and injustice to be released from it. The goal of Christians must be to uphold the truth to lessen suffering. When Christians witness injustice, they should consider the victim. What harm has occurred? How can we assist? How do we identify the offender so they cannot harm the next victim in the same way? Can somebody assist me? Religious organisations need to have groups engaged in justice missions if the church is to truly fill the void left by failing governments. To act for justice in Zimbabwean communities and our nations, prayer groups must pray and beg for God's guidance rather than human wisdom. To comprehend the spirit that underlies the structural evil, wisdom must be sought. To believe that God's might is greater than evil's power, one must have faith. However, the epidemic of wickedness and corruption will keep spreading as a cancer in the entire country of Zimbabwe if godly people refuse to accept responsibility and play their role in changing communities of injustice. The fundamental principle of the church's global mission is its shared solidarity with the world. According to Resane (2020:122) It is expected of the church to be both the messenger and the agent of peace for Christ. This is the epitome of a missiological incarnation. The church is a missionary channel in a world in need, travelling on an eschatological journey. It frees oppressed and marginalised societies when Christ is not the ultimate ruler through proclamation. Her preaching of the gospel is not a demonstration of human wisdom or grace.

Since Christian religion is action, it must collaborate with local authorities to develop policies that align with the church's values and everyday operations. The church exists in both its organised communities of prayer, teaching, planning, and action as well as its dispersed existence of Christian involvement in political organisations, non-profits, and the global economy. When the church supports the government, it will protect Christians functioning as peacemakers in the world as well as the church itself as it promotes social justice and peaceful communities. The globe and God's world are the beneficiaries of social justice and peacekeeping in the country and church. The church must inspire its members to take up nonviolent civil disobedience to protest particular acts of injustice.

6.14 Step Nine - Inclusion approaches and strategies

The church should not struggle to come up with the ideal housing strategy to aid those in Zimbabwe who are being victimised by social injustice. The church needs to figure out how to define and implement its intention to be "inclusive" in terms of interacting with society in terms of social justice. It is crucial for church leaders, especially those who are new to a society with social injustice. Most churches lack the necessary skills to create a strategy of cooperation with the secular government to advance justice, peace, and a just division of the nation's resources. In theological communities, there are many different approaches to helping those who have experienced social injustice.

6.14.1 Personalised strategy

6.14.1.1 Handling the victim

Zimbabwe's government and the church need to work towards bringing the separated things back together. In the wake of Zimbabwe's land distribution, victims and offenders are isolated from one another, as well as from their families, social networks, and communities. Communities are also divided against one another. The church must support the Zimbabwean government in its efforts to heal these divisions by restoring wholeness to the individuals, relationships, and communities affected. Changes made to and requested by the individual are referred to as the personal component. This covers every aspect of the human experience, including mental, emotional, perception, and spiritual, over the duration of a crisis. Conflict during land reform, as we all know, has an impact on people in both positive and negative ways. For instance, during the land reform era, decisions made by individuals had an impact on their physical health, sense of self-worth, emotional stability, accuracy of perception, and spiritual integrity. In line with the prescriptivism, the church must work towards the intentional intervention of people's transformation to minimise the negative consequences of societal conflict and optimise the opportunity for personal development on all fronts physical, emotional, and spiritual. To support those who have experienced injustice, the church must adopt a personalised strategy. The church must provide people a chance to share their personal accounts of

experiencing injustice; in general, this is the preferable way for the church to accommodate hearing about some of the public issues. Gudorf (1992:5) contends that: It is true that in both Hebrew scriptures and Christian New Testament we find stories and sayings demonstrating God's priority for victims, beginning with the liberation of Hebrew slave in Egypt, and extending through Jesus' actions on behalf of those who are blind, or lame, people with leprosy, the woman about to be stoned, and the despised poor of his society. In both the prophets and the gospel, we find denunciation of some of the methods of victimization, especially the use of power or wealth to rob the lowly of their rights, property, and dignity. And we find again and again, from both God in Hebrew scripture and Jesus in the gospel, the command that we accept as our own God's priority for needy victims.

In a chapter titled "*Original Crime, Primal Care*" that he wrote for the book edited by Lampman and Shattuck (1999: 17–35), Volf makes the following claims:

God's primal care in response to the original crime fits the complex inner dynamics of the crime. God cares for victims and therefore condemns both the crime and the criminals. God does justice. An order without justice would be an unjust order; a peace without justice would not be peace but an oppressive calm, suffused with the suffering of the innocent. As God does justice for victims, however, He does not give up on criminals. He seeks to bring them recognize the gravity of their deeds. And even in punishment, God does not cease to extend grace. (Lampman and Shattuck 1999: 33)

Volf warns that no crime that can possibly exist could keep the offender from being under God's protection. Christians have an obligation to push the populace to demonstrate that God's grace surpasses God's justice. Even if Zimbabwe's land distribution was and still is unequal and the country lacks a functional legal system, people need to understand that God's justice is an inherent part of God's grace and not an unpredictable exception. The form of God's primordial care that is fitting for the unequal distribution of land in Zimbabwe is His just grace. Lisa Lampman echoes the same challenge:

The 'Church is, unfortunately, little difference from society in its perspective. If society is enthralled with evil and power, in a sense, the Church is well. We do not like to hear the stories of wounded.

We recoil from dealing with wounded hearts, their struggles, and questions. We want to deal with the power. And until we, as a church, get back to healing and ministering to the wounded, we are not a church. (Lampman and Shattuck 1999: 33)

Regarding personal strategy, in Zimbabwe, the government and the church need to show respect for the people who were harmed by the land reform. Several the more divisive components of modern restorative justice theory and practice include these people's needs and the critical role that forgiveness plays in them. Zimbabwe's capacity to identify misconduct has deepened thanks to therapeutic analysis and instruments. For wrongdoers and supporters to hear the victims' stories, the church must have a role in empowering them to do so. While it is unfortunate that the media and governmental obsession with publicly shaming wrongdoers has been fuelled by the naming of wrongdoing, the witness of religious traditions has convinced some victims that forgiving one another is an essential step towards healing and reconciliation. The Zimbabwean government must also recognise that victim testimonies form a crucial part of the reconciliation process. Both the perpetrator and the sufferer are treated with respect. For Zimbabwe to attain peace and long-term healing, the truth needs to be spoken with an open mind and a willingness to forgive. The victim of land reform usually pays a price for this kind of forgiveness. Forgiveness is contingent upon the accurate identification of wrongdoing. For wrongdoers, such naming frequently comes with a price. Therefore, reconciliation is impossible to attain without holding forgiving and naming together.

However, Volf (1996:79) discusses the victims' lack of innocence. It contains possibility and reality to many senses. The victim and offender roles are interchangeable, therefore in a committed relationship, the individuals frequently switch between the roles of victim and offender. It is not always obvious who should be charged with a particular offence. In Zimbabwe, the authority to enact laws varies, and the ruling party often controls most the Africa's judicial systems. It is impossible to declare the victim of an offence innocent insofar as they have committed offences against the perpetrator. However, Volf had a more detailed and logical notion in mind. In the opinion of Volf (1996:84), victims of crimes harbour hatreds, resentful desires, and anger that tarnish their memories of the incident

and undermine any chance of reconciliation. Deeper down, though, none of us are innocent, and this impure state affects all attempts at judgement:

We should expose as inherently sinful the world built around exclusive moral polarities here, on our side, "the just, the pure, the innocent, the true, the good," and there, on the other side, "the unjust, the corrupt, the guilty, the liars, the evil "in the name of the one truly innocent victim and all that he stood for, the crucified Messiah of God. And then, driven by the understanding that the economy of unmerited grace takes precedence over the economy of moral deserts, endeavour to transform the realities in which justice and injustice, kindness and evil, innocence and guilt, purity and corruption, and truth and deception crisscross and overlap. In the context of widespread non-guilt, the reconciliation process should start with the premise that, even in cases where an individual's behaviour is deemed repugnant or even demonic, no one should ever be denied the opportunity to be embraced because, fundamentally, a person's relationship with another person is not dependent on their moral performance and cannot be destroyed by it.

Volf is accurate in pointing out that many victims' reactions to the transgression are not innocent, and that there is inherent non-innocence in the human situation, as well as ways in which this non-innocence obstructs reconciliation. But how this is interpreted in relation to the initial criminal moment affects how both victims and offenders deal with the trauma and move past it. If land reform is not properly handled, it will affect future generations, particularly those impacted farmers who will pass it on to their offspring. The offender needs to act for forgiveness to help mend the relationship. The relationship cannot be repaired by an offer of forgiveness that is turned down or by forgiveness provided without any sort of contrition. Relationships demand reciprocity on both ends; they are not one-sided. In order for forgiveness to be effective in mending a relationship, both the victim and the offender must actively participate in it:

Those who are forgiving spare those who deserve it and free them from the chains of their transgressions. Of course, in order to be granted this relief, wrongdoers must first receive forgiveness for their transgressions, just as any recipient of a gift must accept it

before it can be delivered. Criminals must accept responsibility for their acts, disassociate themselves from their crime, and, if at all feasible, return to their victims the things that were taken from them in the first place. Ignorance of this would not lead to the withholding of forgiveness; it is an unrestricted gift. However, it would cause forgiveness between its kind provider and its intended but unreceptive recipient to be suspended. Volf (2006:121) Forgiveness is an act of optimism since it is oriented towards the future. It is impossible to predict what will happen after you forgive someone, and there are no assurances that it will mend the relationship. Forgiveness comes with a risk, but victims who are willing to forgive do so in the hopes that such rebuilding may occur. Furthermore, Volf (1996: 131) makes the case for a redemption of memory, or a new kind of remembering that he characterises as a non- remembering which is not very much forgetting:

If those responsible remember correctly, the memory of their wrongdoing will help restore their guilty past and turn it into the soil on which a more hopeful future can grow. If the victims remember correctly, the memories of past inhumanities will protect them and all of us against future inhumanities. However, while we must keep an eye out for wrongdoings in order to stay safe in a dangerous world, we also have to let go of their memory in order to be fully saved. The only people who can truly recall are those who are willing to let go in the end.

6.14.1.2 The role of the church as justice agents

Volf's (2006: 121) remarks make it apparent that forgiveness does not imply that nothing has occurred: However, the practice of unconditional grace does not negate the demands of justice; rather, grace acknowledges them as legitimate and sets them aside in that exact manner. The only reason this tense decision is feasible is because the Lamb of God took on the sin of the world. It honours justice while also going beyond its bounds. By doing thus, he approved of the proclamation of justice as well as the offering of unrestricted grace.

Considering the argument up to this point that forgiveness and unconditional grace are the fulfilment of justice viewed biblically, Volf's use of the word justice for defining what is set aside distort the issue. To the extent that Volf uses the phrase to allude to the way

forgiveness overrides punishment, it seems that he had in mind a punitive kind of justice. Unconditional grace, or forgiveness, meets the requirements of justice as defined by Scripture by accepting the legitimacy of punishment and putting it aside. Kujawa-Holbrook and Montango (2009:2) assert that “skilled pastors will have the ability both to recognize and analyse the impact of oppression on individuals and faith communities and to know how to utilize their prophetic role to bring healing, voice and wholeness to the marginalised.”

6.14.2 Intellectual strategy

The persuading, realistic, and experienced depiction of social justice's reality. Discussion for spreading the gospel and justice. Gospel and justice message being preached between two people, yet there is also room for discussion in groups. Paul used the prophetic writings and the deeds of Christ as support for his arguments and teachings in Acts 19: 8–9. Although the intellectual approach is wonderful, people still want to question, discuss, and obtain evidence. The benefit of communication is this. For instance, a bible study on justice or a community event advocating social justice.

6.14.2.1 Biblical study on justice

It is always appropriate to examine the Bible for the definition of social justice and theology of land. Scripture study materials on land use and social justice must be prepared by the church. The study of social justice in different religious traditions is often welcomed in churches and can lead to new insights. Examining works on the theology of the adversary helps further advance the research of what it means to "love your enemy".

6.13.2.2 Seminars on justice

The church must start holding seminars on justice. Beyond simply avoiding conflict and promoting peaceful coexistence, social justice seminars entail much more. Creating harmony and reconciliation, together with relationships with God and each other, are all components of peace, according to Christianity. For the Zimbabwean church, seminars that symbolise the infinite serenity that emanates from God are vital. It is the belief that Christians have a responsibility to be peacemakers in their own homes and places of employment, dispute resolution, mutual respect, and establishing an example of love for

young people and kids in their lives that all contribute to the promotion of peacebuilding. In order to give congregational leaders in Zimbabwe the chance to reflect on how they are or could be peace activists in their particular situations, the church has to host seminars and provide materials that explain why the church is called to be defenders of peace. Though discernment is crucial, the church needs to have facts readily available to them as they navigate an anxious society. It is more important than ever to discover and experience the power of the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ as the source of true peace.

6.14.2.3 Symposium on justice and land reform

The symposium's distinctive cast of participants, which includes ecumenical representatives, scholars, human rights activists, the media, and others in a variety of storytelling positions, must be introduced by the Zimbabwean church. Justice is not about working for people; it's about being with people. Being with means that our interactions are marked by mutual respect, friendship, and a readiness to spend time listening. Christians in Zimbabwe need to exercise justice in ways that give communities a voice in decision-making, provide victims of injustice agency and dignity, and unite people in standing and working for one another. When doing this, it is essential to pay attention to and absorb knowledge from individuals who experienced injustice during land reform as well as those who possess in-depth understanding of the subject. The church needs to practise being with the victims by obtaining the knowledge and wisdom of individuals who have first-hand experience if it lacks first-hand familiarity with some of the concerns.

The church must conduct symposium on the theology of the common good must be emphasised by the church, and it must conduct its business in a way that can only be advantageous and not cause harm to others. Sometimes one must relearn beliefs that the church once considered to be true in order to learn from others who have experienced injustice. In order to practise justice, the church needs to support its neighbours both locally and globally, especially those who have been the victims of injustice first-hand. Part of the humility that Christians need to develop in their communities is being honest and realistic about what churches can offer and stand for. The Zimbabwean church must not realise how small and powerless it is, nor that it has the resources needed to effect change.

6.14.2.4 Youth Programs and Church Programs

Youth programmes can be created to demonstrate how a Christian religion gives rise to a sense of personal purpose for the benefit of society. To assist the young people in examining the projections of their lives, vocational discussions are necessary. Youth may be referred to social justice and land reform institutes and programmes. Experience the creative thinking of the larger ecumenical church, especially for the youth. In this kind of congregation, the job of advancing justice through the development of human resources can flourish. Research on land reform, social justice, and mission education funding opportunities can all be increased. One of the best ways for Zimbabweans in this church to widen their perspectives is through mission programmes. The globe is a concern for the social justice church.

6.14.3 Hospitality Strategy

The Zimbabwean church must implement a hospitality policy that is understood as a show of solidarity with those who have been mistreated by the law, particularly during the land reform. The church needs to build a caring, trusting relationship between people so that they can fight together for dignity, empowerment, and a complete life. The church's mission is to stand in solidarity with oppressed people, to welcome those who Christ welcomed, and to cultivate a community where individuals of all social classes, religious backgrounds, genders, races, and sexual orientations are united in Jesus Christ. It is the gift that goes beyond actual differences by being a part of the church's purpose and ministry to mend brokenness. Russell (2009:19) defines hospitality:

Hospitality is a form of Christian spirituality and is basic to the biblical message, the practice of the biblical injunction for hospitality has fallen into disuse in our churches and society. Hospitality is the practice of God's welcome by reaching across difference to participate of God's actions bringing justice and healing to our world in crisis.

According to the definition given in the Volf podcast (2021) with Krista Tippett, hospitality is a virtue and a social art that humans have developed with such intricacy and complexity for bringing the best in other people into the space. As noted by Miroslav Volf, "having been embraced by God, we must make space for others and invite them in even our

enemies." Treating strangers like insiders and attempting to connect with them is what is meant by hospitality. Privilege is extended across differences through hospitality. Following the path of early church hospitality, Hershberger (1999:186) said:

True hospitality, a hospitality that balances receiving people for who they are and presenting these same persons with our own values and faith, must be practiced as a key component, an integral part, of evangelism. The early church finds ways of receiving people without controlling and confronting without judging.

The act of extending communal privileges to individuals who lack the right to expect them, particularly those who are at risk due to their unfamiliarity, is known as hospitality. In the early church, hospitality served as a foundation for evangelization. The Christians' unique brand of hospitality proved to be one of the main factors in the gospel's dissemination across the Roman Empire. When it came to influential people, the ancient Romans often reserved their hospitality for those who could reciprocate. However, the Christians gained notoriety for welcoming everyone, even the most impoverished. This had a major role in the early Church's reputation for love. Outsiders were treated with compassion and acceptance in the early Church. God's prophets in the Old Testament warn Israel and Judah that their treatment of widows, orphans, and strangers will determine how well they are judged by God that is, how much they extend to strangers the rights and advantages that belong to community members. According to Koenig (1985: 10), the New Testament definition of "hospitality" is that it serves as a fertile environment in which it might grow and flourish. That is, where and a time are necessary for the reciprocal strengthening of guests and hosts. Paul encourages his readers to "take up share" in the needs of the saints by practicing hospitality (Romans 12:13). Paul wishes to visit the Romans, the majority of whom he has never seen, to trade spiritual gifts. By showing hospitality to one's fellow believers including those one does not yet know new opportunities for the provision of goods and services will arise under the direction of God's providence. Jesus showed hospitality throughout the New Testament and got it in return. He dined with tax collectors and sinners. Embracing their hospitality meant more to him than merely having dinner together; it meant forming an identity with them and including them in his group, something

the Pharisees hated and understood. The love that the Zimbabwean church has for those who suffer injustice must be the driving force behind their evangelism. A community is a vital component of the Christian religion, and hospitality contributes to its creation. Scripture calls the church to be a collected community of people who listen to and confront one another, seek accountability in common celebrate together, forgive, and heal together.

Being sociable is part of the hospitality strategy. Christ conducted various home services and ministries across the villages of Galilee, serving as an example of the group method or household outreach. Outreach efforts to those who have experienced injustice in their lives. Christians can gain a lot of insight on justice from this method of being hospitable and feeding people. Christians could always use this chance to spread the message of justice to others to change the neighbourhood. One strategy is to always bless the food, and, in that blessing, you can share some biblical truths about justice and how God has blessed them. Giving to the needy, attending public meetings, and assisting at funerals are a few examples of public engagement.

Some of the procedures used in restorative justice practices today bear elements of the hospitality tradition. However, the practice has not been explicitly recognised as the way of the Christian community because it has been mainly ignored and because it goes against many modern principles. The Christian community extends hospitality to both those who violate and those who are harmed by them. Shared possessions, systems, and places are all part of hospitality. As it is the way of Jesus Christ, the Christian community's restoring and reconciling justice is the most compelling kind of justice. It is the merciful judge's and the rescuing victim's enemy-love. Justice is served as the people finds reconciliation in the embrace of the living, crucified, and rising One. Theologically speaking, enemy-love is crucial to fulfilling the duty of post- reconciliation justice, as well as holding together the demands of justice and reconciliation. The duty to make apologies becomes more evident from this restored relationship when the other party is loved to the point that it becomes a neighbour, a guest, or even a friend. Christians have a recurrent pattern that shapes them over time: the practice of hospitality, especially the practice of

hearing to one another's experiences during communal worship and social life. This pattern offers a model for extending hospitality and love to those who are not part of the community.

6.15 Strategies to a public theology of the land

In the view of some people, theology still has something to say about critical issues that affect society, such as disputes over land. People should be motivated by the theology of land to understand that there is a close connection between the land and what one's ancestors leave for subsequent generations. Land is a critical problem that undoubtedly affects many people's human rights worldwide. Of fact, a person's identity, and their rights in terms of culture and society are closely related to their relationship to the land. In Zimbabwe, land has turned into the main point of conflict between those who are greedy, use it as a means of obtaining power, and take advantage of others. The ruling party and veterans of the battle have grown passionately attached to the issues of land.

In the past, disagreements over land have also existed within the church. This is because both those who received benefits from the land and those who did not have benefited from it were members of the church in one way or the other. While the indigenous churches are currently attempting to gain from it by supporting the government, the mainline churches, who previously benefited from colonialism, are opposing land reform and injustice in the country. This has resulted in a polarised Christian community. This problem in daily existence cannot be separated from the Church in Zimbabwe. Theology must address global concerns including land, peace, social justice, and engagement with society. The church community must publicly endorse a cause or recommendation that is free from bias or partiality.

6.16 Strategies to a public theology of the social justice

One of the Bible's most often discussed subjects is justice. The church functions as "social agents" of justice in society. A theology of welcoming necessitates introspective reflection in which one deliberates about and assesses one's standing relationships with other viewpoints that are different from one's own. There is no question about the church's importance in this national catastrophe. The love of Christ the Messiah for all people must

be manifested and incarnated by the church, according to theology. The church exists to advance justice because social justice and human dignity are interwoven with the land. In many ways quite different from now, biblical thought on justice takes place within a theological and socio-political framework. Israel existed throughout the biblical era in such a way that their connection with God was built on God's commitment to justice and loyalty. In Zimbabwe, the church is obligated to intervene in any ongoing injustices; it cannot merely accept or tolerate them. Christians must realise that they cannot accept the nation's problems and that they must instead work tirelessly in God's service to achieve justice in the present moment, trusting that God will ultimately result in the restoration of good social justice. The Zimbabwean judicial system appears to favour the ruling party. In some cases, justice demands objectivity, fairness, and a rejection of any favouritism. Depending on the situation, justice can be both fair and unfair, biased, and unbiased, equitable and unjust. Where severe rights of humanity have been violated, the church must intervene. Christians should put in a lot of effort to alter society's institutions and structures for them to properly reflect God's holiness. In Zimbabwe, both the church and the state must comprehend that every citizen is held to the same standards, must receive the same treatment, and is entitled to a fair trial and judgement.

6.17 The Chilean Church Land Reform Model

Among the Latin American nations most affected by societal unrest, divisiveness, and bloodshed is Chile. Political tension has historically been a defining manifestation of social tension, which is an inevitable consequence of poverty.

According to Baum and Well (1997:59), agrarian reform and socioeconomic inequality were prevalent in rural Chile. It is thought that social unrest brought on by inequality escalated throughout Latin America in the 1960s. In those days, only 15,000 families owned the other 81.2% of Chile's arable land, which was administered by a small number of people. In addition, there existed most tenant farmers who toiled in the land barons' fields without possessing a single square metre of land or their home.

The historical perspective supported by both church-sponsored social teaching and Marxist theory. It's thought that the dominant Roman Catholic church led to apathy towards the agrarian reforms.

In the words of Baum and Well (1997:59), the church bishops Raul Silva of Santiago and Manuel Larrain of Talca made the decision to move on with the reform, dividing certain church lands among tenant farmers and small landowners. It is thought that other bishops and religious groups copied the gesture after it created a lot of controversy. In their joint statement, the bishops made a concerted effort to inform Catholics about the need for these modifications as required by justice and equity. For years, the landless tenants had been denied proper compensation for their labour; this was justice. Additionally, it represented equity for an entire social class as the campesinos were granted a fair portion of the land that God had created for everyone.

Bishops and other Christian leaders ought to act in the same manner as the Chilean bishops did regarding the Agrarian Reform. The church in Zimbabwe possesses a large amount of land since it profited from both the land reform programme and the colonisation process. In Zimbabwe, the church has to lead by example in order for others to follow and for the government to imitate. To the benefit of all, the church in Zimbabwe has to exist and work towards promoting equity and justice for all. The actions of the Chilean church served as a model for how to approach reconciliation. As the church in Chile accomplished, the church in Zimbabwe may likewise clear the path for reconciliation.

6.18 Conclusion

The people of Zimbabwe must understand that land is more than just a piece of property or a valuable resource. Even more than a resource, it is. It serves more purposes than only advancing human welfare. It is important to value a piece of land for its own unique reason. Valuing the land does not prevent people from using it. But it does imply that we should only utilise land in the same context in which we should use people. It is moral to use someone only in a way that is beneficial to them, does not harm them, and gives something back to the person being used.

In the language of Immanuel Kant, one would say we should use the land not only to our ends in itself.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Introduction

Using Land Reform as an example, the last chapter tries to connect the conclusions of this thesis to the topic of justice. Miroslav Volf offers a theological framework to comprehend concerns of injustice and embracing as well as public involvement and remembrance. The elite in Zimbabwe who have accumulated land for themselves have forgotten the unpleasant recollections of the struggle for land for all people, and this is an awful reality. The wealthy have lost sight of the suffering of the landless rural people, some of whom have nowhere to call home. Land is not to be kept for one's own security, but rather as a shared resource among the generality of the citizenry. It is not a monopoly or the exclusive possession of a single historical generation. Beyond this shared ownership of land, Zimbabwean tradition recognises the one who created it (*musiki*), as the sole and supreme owner of his creation. As human beings we only hold this precious resource in trust. It does not belong to individuals. It can only belong to the community.

7.2 Findings

Even though aggressive land reform resulted in the deaths of numerous farmers and farm labourers, up to now justice has not yet been served. It is considered that the land reform had a significant negative impact on Zimbabwe's social, economic, and political status and that its resulting social injustice greatly influenced everything's collapse in 2000. The judicial system in the nation has deteriorated, which has caused social unrest and corruption. Hunger, and food shortages have ravaged the society resulting in an unprecedented migration of citizens to neighbouring countries as well as overseas. As former Deputy Prime Minister Arthur Mutambara (2023) stated, the land reform in Zimbabwe will be a generational challenge because only ZANU PF leaders have title deeds to the farms, they seized during the land reform. Future generations have been excluded from partaking in the natural resource.

This means that these generations will inevitably oppose the land reform initiative. In fifty years, people will be questioning the way the land was distributed under the FTLRP. There is a dire need to turn the tables and include most members of the population. The only people who benefited from the exercise were politicians, system enhancers, judges, top security and military authorities, and their close relatives and allies.

A great deal for the land reform initiative that was supposed to help ordinary Zimbabweans and veterans of war who battled for freedom and land. War veterans, individuals hired by party administrators, retired soldiers, or not on duty police were the first to occupy these farmlands after the land reform of 2000, but the ruling elite soon acquired control of the farms from the first occupants. The ruling elite made sure that they allocated themselves the most fertile and productive pieces of land while the public would be either side-lined or be pushed the unproductive soils. Numerous small-scale farmers were given small pieces of land from the disorderly land reform. Most of the productive land owned by Zimbabweans is seized land, which is classified as state land for which regular ownership documents are not easily accessible, thereby making the while land reform process problematic. Farm infrastructure has kept on deteriorating because those who acquired the land under the 2000 land reform programme are registered as licensees who do not have full ownership of the land. As a result, these beneficiaries are not making the necessary maintenance and developments due to insecurity.

It is a big challenge that most Christians believe that serving in a public office is being unfaithful, worldly, and impure. Citizens are required to follow and abide by the laws that their government enacts. The government's goals are to make living conditions better for everyone. Government works for the development of the nation, hence there is nothing intrinsically dirty about politics, it only becomes dirty when dirty people are left to dominate the arena. It is high time we dispelled the myth that working in government is dirty since it has become all too widespread. Both religious and political issues address how society is structured. Government regulates a wide range of activities, including taxation, arms, national resources, goods and services, and education. Many people's lives are changed for the better by the government. In this sense, the work of the government really furthers God's agenda.

The gospel is essential for people's public life because it is concerned with people's lives, filled with love for God. To think that certain churches should not be active in politics and governance is an illusion. What some people fail to understand is that in politics inaction matters as much as action. As such, by refraining from political affairs one is contributing to a certain outcome. Hence by remaining silent, the churches will be in a way promoting and endorsing government policies and actions. The church has a responsibility to free people from bonds imposed by corrupt governments, social injustice, and policies that impede people from living complete lives.

The church has a responsibility to examine the root cause of violence, promote peace, and persuade people to restore their broken relations. This study supports the idea that faith has a significant role in resolving disputes. Land is a universal gift from God and hence land reform must be addressed theologically. Christian citizens and Christian affiliated organisations can play a significant role in advancing social justice and reconciliation, and this can serve as a foundation for peace-building initiatives. In the modern world, it has the potential to be a powerful tool for preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts. This study found that the influence of Christianity on national and international governance, as well as public opinion, is not growing.

Instead of attempting to guide the church towards justice in the nation, many pastors in Zimbabwe are guiding the church in the opposite direction, towards injustice and they are doing this to gain political leverage. All-encompassing link to the divine spiritual power that was with the prophets from the Old Testament who endangered their lives to speak in opposition to governmental systems of social injustice is no longer in the Zimbabwean pastors, this has undermined their mandate to ensure the prevalence of justice in the society. This has been evident through the conduct of some preachers especially in African Independent Churches (AICs) who have found it more attractive and beneficial to serve as politicians rather than prophets who advocate for social justice.

Judging by the findings, it is abundantly clear that church has turned a deaf ear to the injustices and has become so unfocused and weak in its thinking that it has allowed itself to be acquiescent to the status quo. The church has been coerced by political parties to

keep quiet about politics. Whenever election time comes around, politicians visit churches to solicit votes and are then returned to power.

7.3 The Biblical Frameworks

When the church engages in public affairs, it must first consider God's concern for the hurting populace. This instruction is given throughout the Bible. According to the wisdom tradition, "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute." Proverbs 31: 8 NIV. The church in Zimbabwe must assume a prophetic role, like the Hebrew true prophets who did not seek to please the crown. They were just concerned with obeying God, thereby speaking the divine will. Their impartiality was subjected to varied interpretations. To some people, especially the ruling elite they appeared like spreading outdated religion. To, however, they appeared like the opposition, who sought to challenge the established quo. As it stands, our society needs prophets even more than the ancient Israelite society did. When Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–1968) stood out against injustice, destitution, and war, many people turned against him, yet he was just doing what he was called to do preach the gospel of social justice. Even when they urge us to return to the long history of Christian pacifism, anti-war prophets are branded as radicals. The passionate compassion of Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1910–1977), who was despised by many conservatives, for those who are impoverished is rooted in the same love of Christ as Dorothy Day's (1897–1980) gospel simplicity. Nelson Mandela (1918–2013) spent 27 years in prison fighting for social justice in South Africa during the apartheid era.

The prophets of the past and the present first invite us into that encounter with God's love, which fundamentally transforms how we see ourselves and how we approach life. We worry about trivial things that ultimately don't matter far too often. The prophets are telling us to wait for something excellent from God. God should take the lead. Experience God's love and presence for yourself. Christians should not be shocked if they start to fall in affection with their cultural norms and desire to fundamentally alter the status quo. Christians must understand that the reality is changed as they enter the understanding and love of God.

In their capacity as God's prophetic representatives today, the church would strongly inform the rulers of the land that they have disobeyed God, have disregarded the underprivileged, and have treated the populace unfairly. The two guiding principles of the gospel are to love God and to love people. The church might cease to love, which is wrong, if Zimbabwean politics turn brothers and sisters into enemies. The church has to fight elements of societal injustices, including xenophobia, racial prejudice, discrimination against women, and other wrongs like unfair land distribution.

There is no question that Christians have spoken against social injustice practises in each generation. However, the church has never completely been free from ties to the outside world. Instead of concentrating on what will benefit them personally, the church should be actively involved in social issues, restoring, elaborating on and pursuing the general good. Most African nations have insufficient and inefficient regulations, but Christians must go to the Bible for theological guidance on how a country's policies affect its citizens. The issue still exists, and it dates back to the land reform of 2000, when the wronged farmers could not get any assistance from the police.

It is thought that the New Testament more specifically suggests a theology of policing that is frequently disregarded by the public, the church, and even academics. Paul makes the case for subordination to the state itself in Romans 13:3–4.

For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

This passage makes it apparently clear that the authorities that govern are not a threat to those who behave well, as Paul claims in verse 3. Paul addressed the current structures of power that individuals must be contend with in the New Testament. Citizens in Zimbabwe have had to deal with social injustice that is based on institutional and corporate corruption and is exacerbated by the state's inability or reluctance to enforce the law.

7.4 Evolving Towards African Public Theology on Land

In African culture, land is extremely important. There is no denying the importance of land and its wealth of resources for human well-being and economic growth. Since the beginning of time, people have utilised land to advance human and economic growth to the point where over half of the world's population is a farmer who works the land for a living. For the good of the current generation as well as those who will be conceived in the future, all natural resources should be dealt with a common understanding of their sacredness and the interconnectedness of the past, present, and future. This reflected the traditional mind-set of the African people: the nation owns the land and all its cultural heritage; hence they are included in the whole. In the past, different African nations, ethnicities, genders, and social groups have been able to rule over and exercise influence over one another through the ownership, distribution, and usage of land. Nations and empires were built and destroyed using land. The divide of race, colour, and ethnicity within Africa became entwined with the land question. Every African indigenous individual has the right to land in traditional African societies. There is a communal aspect to it, as everyone in the community is required to contribute its resources, particularly in rural areas, under the guidance of some traditional authorities.

Based on an African perspective, traditional authority is crucial and significant because, even though it serves as a unifying factor, the community leader is regarded as a steward with supernatural authority over the land. Because land is seen as a gift from God and ancestors, Africans feel obligated to take care of God's resources, particularly communally owned land. The umbilical cord of a new-born baby is buried in many African families. In certain cultures, the foreskin and blood are buried along with the youngster who has undergone circumcision. The fact that people bury their deceased on Africa's land adds to its holiness. Land is highly valued as a source of livelihood as well. The earth yields water, which sustains life, and food. In Africa, the land serves as a vital food supply and a hunting area where vital skills are handed down from one generation to the next.

In Zimbabwean social structure, the concept of "land" has a variety of meanings that all contribute to a comprehension and understanding of it as an enduring reality from the perspective of African heritage. The wards, groups, regions, districts, and territory are all names for land. People may identify as being from a certain *dunhu* (land). *Kumusha* (home) refers to a village, geographical area, region, or homeland for many Zimbabweans. Land (home) is consequently a place of direction and connectedness to mother earth, where one's roots are, where one's umbilical cord has been interred, and where one's forefathers are buried. People commonly refer to themselves as belonging to the country they were born or are from, and if they wish to be more particular, they will add a description of the nation, region, district, or the community they are born.

The land can refer to a designated area where a house can be built, a field used for cultivation, or an ancestral part of ground set aside for a particular use, such as a burial place. Land consists of hills, mountains, plants, animals, birds, as well as air and weather. For Zimbabweans land is made up of both measurable and non-quantifiable components. It is essential and offers them with a sense of belonging, historical events, and livelihood (Bakare, 1993:46).

Regarding the way Zimbabweans view land, which is more than just a physical feature of the earth's surface and instead determines their identity, history, and means of subsistence, it serves as a store for connections between the living and the living-timeless, dead people who remain alive in the remembrances of their loved ones as well as the unborn. Given that it belongs to the entire community; the land is sacrosanct. What is holy or sacred cannot be held by a person; to do so would be to diminish it or take something away from it that is holy. What is sacred, (*nzvimbo inoyera*) is communal; it could be a cemetery, a holy tree, a hill, or a structure. Land is considered sacred because it is held in custody by the king or his chosen representatives, whose responsibility it is to distribute it to those in need.

Our African setting must be understood by the church and the state. The self requires other UBUTHU regarding HUNHU (what that means in the context of teaching). For better or worse, the strength of our interpersonal connections with people determines how

important they are in shaping our spirits and whole lives. Our very connection to Christ, our Lord, Saviour, guide, and commissioner. Freeth (2011:8) assert that:

The incomprehensible greed, appalling lack of compassion, and unspeakable cruelty demonstrated by the Zimbabwean elite contradicts the classical Africa concept of ubuntu the essence of being human. Ubuntu speaks particularly to the fact that you cannot exist as a human in isolation since we are all interconnected. The spirit of ubuntu is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished and when others are tortured or oppressed.

Theological discourse encourages Zimbabweans to engage in conversation with both the possessed and the dispossessed in order to establish fair justice and peace. Theology abstains from worry, jealousy, prejudice, and rage in discourse Theological discourse encourages Zimbabweans to engage in conversation with both the possessed and the dispossessed in order to establish fair justice and peace. Theology abstains from worry, jealousy, prejudice, and rage in discourse The desired results ought to include putting one's reliance in the Lord, acting morally, peacefully residing in the land, rejoicing in the Lord, being devoted to the Lord, keeping composed and calm before the Lord, and trusting on the presence of the Lord. None of these instructions are coercive or oppressive. Theologically speaking, mankind is called to consider seriously the facts of landless Zimbabweans and the mistreatment of both black and white farmers. The land should be guaranteed to the landless and impoverished, rather than going to the possessors who may enjoy short-term wealth and privilege.

7.5 Miroslav Volf is relevant for Zimbabwe theological solutions

The only requirement for the ecclesiolatry of the church, according to Volf's attempt to overcome ecumenical impasses, is Christ's presence inside the gathering community, as stated in Matthew 18:20, "for where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them." Christianity must be mindful that as friendly societies grew, they would eventually challenge churches as powerful forces for social change. This must contribute to one component of a contemporary secular society: the progressive decentring of local churches. Perhaps the triumph of public Christianity is its downfall. The Christian community should not only speak about individual religious beliefs and practices but also

about the major events occurring in the nation, the globe, and the country, and Christians should speak out on these matters. The church must frequently and earnestly preach on issues of peace and conflict resolution. The church in Zimbabwe must have the courage to discuss current events openly and to debate them in the context of the Christian faith. The coming of a new day must be spoken of by the church. For Christians to identify where God is calling them to participate and serve in the world, the church needs social activists to be thoroughly founded in spiritual practices and to act in the world, as well as to use the Holy Spirit's power, which is far stronger and bigger than our own. The church in Zimbabwe can encourage its members to volunteer the work. The church must start with direct engagement with and concern for marginalized people. And be able to develop a readiness to speak out publicly in support of the more significant issues and worries brought up by that first-hand interaction. The church must re- evaluate its own lives and consider what they may need to give up furthering the interests of everyone.

Participation, even in a small group, is the first step; it is important to recognize that the journey starts small. Because a person's entire worldview frequently starts changing by means of that first-hand interaction with one another and the reciprocal exchange of life stories. Participants in Christian education programmes are urged by churches to focus more on what a biblical passage means for them personally than on what it might signify for society, the country, or the entire globe. The church needs to be more courageous in acknowledging to God and to one another our concerns, our opposition, and the areas where we disagree if it is to be honest in engaging the public and working for social justice. Christians must stick together or sever ties so that we do not forget that they are all God's cherished children. The church acknowledges people's doubts, resistances, and areas of disagreement with God and with one another. The church needs to adopt its inspiration from the Old Testament prophets who say the truth with power and love. Churches now need leaders who can present a different future that people can believe in and embrace, while still emphasizing social justice. Christians can establish bridges between state policy and civic engagement in their communities in addition to building bridges between congregational history and it. The church must be engaged in some form of ministry to

reduce suffering, injustice, and corruption in local communities and the wider globe. The church will try to establish a connection between mission involvement or justice and the more significant social and systemic ills that the public may address. For instance, a church should think about starting a ministry that educates members on the topic of Zimbabwe's just and equitable land distribution.

According to this study, congregational life offers a wide range possibility as well as knowledge that shape how church members engage in public affairs and form their political views. In fact, it is believed that it is impossible to fully comprehend how and why congregations have such an impact on their members' political life. The church is now more important than ever to proclaim the word that shows the way of Christ and to provide the embracing relationship for the healing of the whole country at a moment when people are moving into deep waves of emotion, tackling complex issues of social injustice such as land reform during rising tension of citizens, and laying out foundations of future nations.

For them to be able to talk now and sometimes use spoken word to clearly convey justice, tolerance, and human dignity, the church in Zimbabwe must be strong in their faith and wisdom. The ministry of reconciling individuals and groupings separated by race, creed, political thought, or rich and poor is called for by the church that believes in public issues. The church in Zimbabwe does well in the areas of education, medicine, and to a lesser extent, agriculture, and community development, but it should be given more responsibility in the areas of social organizations, trade unions, and political news coverage. The church must exhort its followers to serve in public office, whether it is as a judge or as an all-powerful Christian leader. The governmental system exists for the benefit of the people, but its legitimacy comes from God's will rather than just the will of people. Zimbabwe's government must believe that God has granted it the authority and power it holds today. The Zimbabwean government must understand that a government where the leaders continually track public opinion, as if viewing over their shoulders, is likely to fail just as much as a government where the leaders abuse their position to further their personal interests. The people should elect the leaders of any good government,

and they should utilize that power to pass laws that promote righteousness rather than popularity. Christian leaders in both the government and the church must keep in mind that their main responsibility is to carry out God's will.

Zimbabwe's administration must understand that it exists for the benefit of the people, not for its personal interests. Politicians and church leaders must also remember that the term "ministers," which is a term of servanthood, is frequently used to refer to the country's senior officials. People with a strong sense of right and wrong and a servant mentality who have learned to put the welfare of their fellow citizens before their own personal requirements should carry out the actual work of government.

To understand the significant contrasts between the structure and operations of the government and the church, study is greatly necessary. This study suggests that to understand things fully, it is worthwhile to lay them out as an order of comparisons.

- Within its geographical boundaries, the government has a responsibility to each member of the community, and every citizen of the society without a single exception. One way the government like Zimbabwe might exercise this control is by using the land as a weapon to enforce its will and win elections. On the other hand, the church exclusively embraces a certain community group and is an autonomous organization or combination of associations. Everyone must feel welcome in the church, and inclusion is encouraged.
- The individual country is restricted to its own national borders and is concerned with both its interactions with other sovereign nations outside of those borders as well as the governance of people who live within them. To promote justice and a fair distribution of resources, a good government needs to maintain excellent relations with both its own population and those of other countries. The church, on the other hand, is a global organisation that transcends national boundaries and is concerned with God's plans for the entire globe. The church must advocate for social justice around the world given its significant influence in the world.
- In a world filled with evil, the government is mandated to uphold justice, protection, and some sort of well-being for sinful men and women. Social injustice must be

encouraged by the government. The church has a mandate to share the good news of redemption from sin and evil, as well as to show how these things can be overcome in community. The church has an enormous opportunity to advance social justice and peace.

- The government must address the most pressing problems in a shifting environment, and as a result, its political choices must consider a specific concrete situation. The long-term prospects of the people must be considered when making decisions that impact the entire nation like the land reform. However, the church is mandated to bear witness to eternal truths. Its standards cannot be changed to accommodate shifting circumstances because they were established by God Himself. To confront the current crisis in the nation, the church must take part in the community.
- The government must deal with people's overt behaviours because it mainly deals with creating a societal basis for the good life. To do this, it may employ the law and, if necessary, use force. An enjoyable existence must be available to everyone; effective government does not display favouritism. The church's characteristic strategy is patient persuasion and, if necessary, suffering since it primarily deals with the inner sources and motivations of the virtuous life. The church has been encouraged to approach individuals using both an interior and exterior framework.

This study makes it very evident that Christians must comprehend the distinct roles of the government and the church to acknowledge that both are divinely appointed institutions. The state works by the will of God as part of his means of dealing with the situation at hand, and the church exists by the will of God. Both are dealing with a world where individuals who are selfish and sinful are likely to take away one another's life. The individual Christian is a part of both the government and the church, each of being a structured group that welcomes the participation of its members in the accomplishment of its goals. Everyone has a responsibility to uphold God's commandments as both an excellent citizen and a good Christian.

In the context of Volf's public theology, the government that establishes civic structures has a duty to determine what is just, correct any injustices, and make the system right.

Holding these rulers or elected authorities accountable for the deeds of their employees and agents is our civic obligation. A Christian Theology of Persons also informs Volf's perspective on law enforcement. People are reminded by this religion that God is their creator, and the state is merely an agent of preservation or caretaker of them. Considering this, people are doing what the Christian God commands them and reminding the state of its limitations. The Zimbabwean government has a history of failing to safeguard its citizens, and it continues to do so. Guns, intimidating language, and continued instillation of fear among the populace have been employed by both churches and civilizations for years. When taken as a whole, the public theology of Miroslav Volf and the theology of policing both urge the government and its officials to utilise their power to defend the weak. Volf emphasises the significance associated with the Exodus motif. Because the narrative so readily relates to the problems faced by Zimbabweans, the story of the displacement has left a lasting impression on the people of Zimbabwe. True compassion motivates individuals to act for the sake of the oppressed even at the risk of their own lives.

7.6 The Public Theology Framework

The silence of the church in political affairs is rejected by the public theology framework. According to the public theology concept, Christians must critically analyse social justice, socioeconomics, and the realities of politics. The public theology approach essentially holds that Christian ethics and churches must have an impact in political life, much like the essential good of policing and engaging in political discussions and policy making. In the words of Bedford-Strohm 2008:150, it "clearly affirms the public role of the church as an agent in civil society."

The public theology framework thereby engages social and economic real life, rooted in historical, theological, and moral convictions as well as socioeconomic status and political thought, with the goal of promoting a peaceful society that improves people's flourishing and the prosperity of the economy as a whole (Bedford-Strohm 2008:151). Chitando and Manyonganise's (2011:101) believe that Zimbabwean church clergy describe the task at the hand of the church narrowly, are quick to call upon supernatural intervention, and avoid engaging in a critical examination of social and political realities. Chitando and

Manyonganise (2011:102) use the fact that most church leaders in Zimbabwe have a limited understanding of politics as support for their claim. According to them, "most pastors in churches do not have a knowledge of how things work within the realm of politics and hence consider it difficult to interact with politicians" (Chitando & Manyonganise 2011:102). Church leaders must establish a solid socioeconomic and political philosophy to engage in meaningful Christian engagement and advice (Bedford-Strohm 2008:151). The political awareness of many leaderships in Zimbabwe must be raised, based on Chitando and Manyonganise (2011:102).

Unacceptable levels of unfairness have been present in Zimbabwe, which was made necessary by the country's ongoing economic crisis, which began because of the Land Reform of 2000. This analysis revealed that a wide range of factors played a role in the current crisis in Zimbabwe. Like the issues that Miroslav Volf contended with in his own life and writings, social injustice, which includes but is not limited to high rates of unemployment, a lack of products, and an unequal distribution of resources, is the primary cause of the issues that Zimbabweans are experiencing.

Christians in Zimbabwe should concentrate on the unborn, minorities, women, the impoverished, and other victims of injustice, as well as those who are marginalised and persecuted in society. The Christian perspective on taking part in public affairs and supporting the few must not be entrenched in for a few groups' security, wealth, or national identity either black or white superiority is incorrect.

7.7 Recommendations

- In Zimbabwe, the land question is a social, economic and political problem that is, in large part, the root of the country's current issues. Therefore, the issue of land must be resolved by all parties involved, not just politicians. To address the problem of multiple property ownership and ensure that this valuable resource is given fairly to everyone, regardless of gender, race, or political affiliation, a proper unbiased land audit needs to be conducted. The government could equip the agro-financial institutions to look at financing the relocated farmers according to what they can provide, or those who benefit should be empowered with the right skills that will allow them to use the land effectively

and given title deeds, so they could obtain financial assistance from banks. The level of joblessness will in some ways be reduced by using land in a way that would eliminate the current shortage of food.

- Therefore, the church's prophetic obligation regarding Africa is to keep an eye out for indications that lead to unjust arrangements like ownership of land. The church will be able to relate to the experiences of the landless in terms of God's justice and love by drawing attention to these unfair arrangements. The discriminatory land reform initiatives and unequal land distribution in Zimbabwe should be denounced strongly by the African church since the initiatives did not address the plight of the landless poor. The church needs to speak out against any unfair tactics used in land redistribution or reform initiatives.
- Additionally, the exportation of raw minerals ought to be stopped. Because the country gets up importing the final product that is processed from Zimbabwean minerals, refining all the materials domestically and just exporting finished goods will save a lot of money for the nation. The export of raw minerals is equivalent to the export of jobs because the local population will be employed if the raw minerals were to be processed locally.
- The need to constantly remind oneself that the task and witness of the Christian church includes modest example and day-to-day living for all of humanity. As social agents of justice in the society, the church has a responsibility. It must offer a community that is devoted to Christ's way, well-organized, and genuinely pursuing justice for all. By demonstrating in its own lifestyle, the kind of daily existence that is God's ideal for society as an entire, the church may best serve the government at large. Christian individuals and the church must own their respective shares of responsibility if the church is to be able to caution the government for its faults and failings.
- Keeping all of this in mind, it becomes clear that land in Zimbabwe, like in the Bible, has been a source of conflict because authorities always want to appropriate more than the generality of the populace, who are supposed to have a fair share since land is their only means of livelihood. If the gospel fails to address such basic problems, it will be of little help. All people are given land as a gift from God, and it should be distributed fairly

for the good of all people. God is the rightful proprietor of all land; it has never been and will never be a commodity that any one person can monopolise. Everyone should be aware that they simply serve as stewards of their small areas of land.

- Effective pastors must be able to identify and assess the effects of oppression on people as well as religion groups. They must also understand how to use their professional position to provide the marginalised with healing, a voice, and wholeness.
- Public theology must include public values, moral principles, and the formulation of public policies that govern how members of faith groups and individual pastors interact with other religious traditions and the larger society.
- Land should remain the property of the community or country, but to promote investment, creative thinking, property care, and economic growth, chances for individuals and groups expressing interest in owning a portion of the land and resources should be provided.
- The study also suggests that the land's use rights should now be registered, as opposed to being passed down orally and belonging to a political party.
- The study rejects the complete commercialization of land in order to preserve Africans' right to unrestricted access to their land and its riches.
- Given that we are all citizens of the same country, it is therefore necessary for the church to assist the politicians in finding a common ground for the "common good" and to embrace one another in our efforts to rebuild and restore democratic values, peace, harmony, and solidarity.

Last but not least, it is advised that more research and study be done to ascertain how the church may collaborate with the government at broad in a Christian theology of policing and fundamentally a theology of freedom whereby sharing the true doctrines of Scripture in a relevant way, and simultaneously improving the activities of the church to be successful in dealing with both the spiritual and physical components of the daily lives of the members and actually the society as a whole in general, in a holistic way. While the church should stay free from error and heretical inclinations, its emphasis should shift to

promoting the welfare of the individual (believers), which is arguably a significant responsibility of the church, rather than just on teaching spiritual, or transcendent notions.

7.8 Conclusion

The Zimbabwean church must acknowledge from away that fostering peace and reconciliation are essential components of the Christian calling for churches, Christian groups, and Christian people as a whole. This study concludes that the core of land reform in Southern Africa involves redressing historical injustice and inequality in land distribution, while guaranteeing efficient and sustainable agriculture practices, assisting developing farmers and preventing violent land grabs and unstable economies.

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