

The Role of the Church in the Struggle for Democratic Change in Zimbabwe

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research investigates relations between Church and State in Zimbabwe and goes back to the colonial period. Understanding the crisis in Zimbabwe, particularly the current repression and intolerance, requires a focus on the role of Church in fighting for a democratic space in every arena of public life.

This research maps the religious organizations in the country and their involvement or lack of it in the democratization process. The aspects of Church activism are explored in this research as a way of locating the Biblical imperatives that justify the Church's socio-political responsibility. It contends that Christians in Zimbabwe do not agree on the relationship between politics and religion with some playing the legitimating role while others play the watchdog role.

From a Biblical perspective it is clearly demonstrated that Christians have an obligation to proclaim liberty, peace and justice for the good of God's creation. This is primarily because God always takes the side of the victims of injustice (Amos 5:11-12). Our theology, therefore, draws insights from the biblical story of the liberation of Israelites from the Egyptian captivity and the theme of the Promised Land. In this context, Rev Francis J. Grimke (quoted in Garret 2000) says:

God is not dead... nor is he an indifferent onlooker at what is going on in this world. One day he will make restitution for blood; He will call the oppressors to account. Justice may sleep, but it never dies. The individual race or nation which does wrong, which sets at defiance God's great law, especially God's great law of love, of brotherhood, will be sure, sooner or late to pay the penalty. We reap as we sow. With the measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again

The church cannot afford to be indifferent and isolated in the face of glaring socio-political and economic decay that is enveloping Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean crisis has forced the Church in Zimbabwe to awaken to the demands of the Great Commission in ways that have created new hope, new possibilities and a new resolve for Zimbabweans (Matthew 28:19-20). The research points out how the progressive Zimbabwean Church is also deploying all its resources in order to affectively and efficiently confront this crisis head on.

Methodology

This book employed multi-dimensional methods of study such as the historical analytical approach, the social analytical approach, and the theological critical approach.

The historical critical method is interested in the development of events and the behaviour of the main players behind the identified events. The merit of this approach is that it dwells on the real life experiences of the Church and people. The social analytical approach, also called the scientific approach recognizes the fact that events happen in a

dynamic social context. The approach therefore employs sociology, psychology, anthropology and economics to better understand the Bible (Holmberg 1978:43). Such a sociological approach appreciates the fact that Christianity exists not in a vacuum but in a society that has its own challenges and successes. The social analytical method acknowledges the society's values in the growth and impact of religions ideals. The theological critical approach clearly states that theology promotes clear socio-cultural values which enhance quality life (Schreiter R.J. 1992:180). What this method contributes to this study is the allusion to the fact that theological institutions operate under human will, power and limitations hence the need to question certain issues that the Church does or fails to do. The method therefore assesses the conditions in which the Church operates in, the Church's relevancy and authenticity to the historical social context of its mission (Beavan 1992:31) A variety of research tools such as: interviews, newspapers visits to the Church archives and use of published sources were employed to give the research a contextual base.

Chapter 1

A MAPPING OF THE CHURCH GROUPS IN ZIMBABWE.

Munetsi Ruzivo

Introduction

Relations between Church and State in Africa go back to the colonial period. In many parts of Africa, Christianity has always been a factor in Africa's democratic processes, as in the case of Zimbabwe's politics from the 1960s to the present. The Church castigated and challenged the repressive government of the Rhodesian Front Party (RFP). After independence the same Churches challenged the government of the Zimbabwe African People's Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF), a sure sign that the Church has endeavoured to live its prophetic call of being a custodian of a moral and just society. In order to achieve its goal, the church made use of its para-church agencies or organisations to engage the state on economic, political and social issues. This chapter endeavours primarily to give a general survey of the religious organisations in the country that have been involved in the democratisation process. It is in the context of this survey that this chapter will examine the role these agencies have played and may play in the democratization process in Zimbabwe.

It would be a mammoth task, if not an impossible one, to give a mapping and an outline of all churches and their vision programmes. This research will treat the vision programmes of the churches, and the way they relate to various components of the Christian body and to the state, via their ecumenical agencies beginning with the Zimbabwe Council of Churches. The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) is an umbrella body representing more than 25 churches and a number of others with observer status (Verstraelen 1995:189). The ZCC was founded in 1964 as a fellowship of Christian denominations and church related organisations. The ZCC emerged as a result of a largely inspired African movement to create a forum where Christian leaders from different denominations could tackle matters of their mutual concern in an increasing tense political atmosphere (Hallencreutz 1988: 52). The Rt. Rev. Jonas Bishop Emeritus of the Lutheran Church and former president of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) says:

The ZCC was formed as a result of disagreements among the black and white leaders in the former Southern Rhodesian Christian Conference (SRCC) in 1964. Some white church leaders felt that it was not the duty of the Church to speak against the government on political matters. It was then decided to form another organisation called the Christian Council of Rhodesia (Gundani 2001: 80).

The founding of the ZCC constituted a turning point in the Christian perception of Church-State relations as well as in the overall responsibility of the Church to society and its *modus operandi*. There had been tensions in the SRCC that resulted in the formation of the black dominated ZCC. More so, its period of formation coincides with decades of high African nationalism, when many party organisations were formed. The political struggles and the changes that were taking place in the local ecumenical field precipitated the founding of the ZCC. The ZCC was inaugurated on the 29th of July 1964 at St. Cuthbert's Hall in Gweru. About 15 members and 3 Christian associate organisations

were represented when it was launched (Verstraelen 1995:190). It is really interesting to note that the first president of the ZCC was Bishop Skelton of the Anglican Diocese of Matabeleland who later resigned from his post as Bishop in protest against the Rhodesian racist policies. The ZCC set out to achieve the following objectives: 1) to increase mutual understanding and to develop more effective ecumenical witness and action on local, national and international level; 2) to foster closer unity among Churches through joint action and service and by ecumenical studies in faith and order, life and work; 3) to coordinate the work of the churches in Rhodesia in order for them to live to their prophetic witness; 4) to encourage ecumenical initiatives and the reunion of denominations (Hallencreutz 1988: 56).

The ZCC at present has about 22 churches with full membership status. Verstraelen (1995) says that the majority of these churches belong to the Protestant body. Some of these Churches are Methodists, Anglican Church, Central Africa Presbyterian Church, Church of Christ, Dutch Reformed Church, Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, the Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, Salvation Army, the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa and United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe. There are also three African Initiated churches that became members of ZCC, namely, the Christian Marching Church, the Independent Africa Church popularly known as Muchakata, and the Ziwezano Church. Furthermore, two Pentecostal churches have become associate members of the ZCC. One of the two is the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God, Forward in Faith. In 1996, there were three churches with observer status and these were the Roman Catholic Church, Assemblies of God and Fambidzano, an ecumenical body representing African Initiated Churches. There are a number of church related organisations that are affiliate members of the ZCC: the Young Christian Women's and Men's Associations, the Zimbabwe Women's Bureau, the Bible Society in Zimbabwe, the United Theological College, and the Ecumenical Arts Association.

The ZCC has the following departments that are designed to provide efficiency for such a big organisation: Justice, Peace and Reconciliation; Church and Development; Leadership Development; and the Ecumenical University Chaplaincy. The ZCC is directly linked to the Ecumenical Documentation and Information Centre for Eastern and Southern Africa (EDICESA), and the All Africa Conference of Churches (ACC). It is also an associate of World Council of Churches (WCC).

EDICESA produces a monthly magazine called *EDICESA News* that covers social, political, economic and religious issues in the region. The newsletter has been covering and reporting fairly well on the Zimbabwean crisis (Chikuku: 2008 20 May). After independence, the ZCC arrogated to itself the task of national reconstruction of the country, beginning the engagement of the ZCC with the political leadership of the country. In the eyes of government officials, ZCC was suspect because some of its members had supported the Internal Settlement in 1978. The Rhodesian Front and the opposition political parties, that did not have armies fighting for the independence of Zimbabwe, initiated the Internal Settlement. This was an internal national initiative to

stop the bloody liberation war. The goal of this settlement was to curb internal support for liberation forces operating from neighbouring countries.

In post independent Zimbabwe, the ZCC has participated in the democratisation of the country mostly through its agencies and through Heads of Christian Denominations. Indirectly, ZCC supported the formation of the Forum for Democratic Reform which was launched in May 1992 as a pressure group in Bulawayo and was later reorganized as a political party. The pressure group was led by former Zimbabwean Chief Justice Enoch Dumbutshena. Heads of Christian denominations were visible in this pressure group that was designed to challenge the hegemony of the ruling party. Also, ZCC has made a notable contribution to the widening of the democratic space in the country by founding the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) in the late 1990s.

The NCA was a brainchild of Tawanda Mutasa who was an employee of the ZCC. He discussed his ideas with Lovemore Madhuku, Depros Muchena, Tendai Biti, Welshman Ncube, David Chimhini, Everjoice Win, Priscilla Misihairahwi, Dr. John Makumbe, Morgan Tsvangirai, Mike Auret, Brian Kagoro and many others including his own superiors at ZCC (Kagoro 1999:6). Originally, the idea that Tawanda had was to create a Civic Education Trust to educate the citizens on the need to conscientize people about constitutional reforms and the issue of human rights. Through wider consultations, a meeting of twenty non-governmental organisations was held on 20 May 1997 (Kagoro 1999). At this meeting, a steering committee was set up to look into issues that could be debated. Welshman Ncube headed the committee. About ten members from institutional bodies such as the ZCC, CCJP, ZCTU, MISA, WAG, ZWLA, youth groups and media groups were selected to represent their organisations in the steering committee (Kagoro 1999:7). At its inception, all the secretarial work was done at the ZCC offices and ZCC was responsible for financing and personnel. The ZCC's Department of Justice, Peace and Reconciliation headed by Mrs Kowo was responsible for the overseeing of this noble task. The advisory team and the secretariat were responsible for the day-to-day running of NCA. Both were ultimately accountable to the General Assembly. Politicians, leaders of civic and religious organisations were invited with the intention to discuss the framework of the constitutional reform debate. Seventy delegates representing different organisations charted an operative framework for NCA. An extensive awareness campaign was bankrolled and several meetings were held countrywide. The NCA made representations to parliamentary caucus committees. On 31 January 1998, the NCA was officially launched (Kagoro 1999:7).

There are certain theoretical premises upon which the NCA was founded. In the words of Brian Kagoro:

The founders of the NCA realised that there had never in the history of Zimbabwe been a popular, broad based and comprehensive discussion of the constitution of Zimbabwe, that the Lancaster house constitution had not been born out of a broad based popular input by the masses. It was also realised that although there had been 15 amendments to the Lancaster House Constitution, none of these had been subject to public discussion nor was there an extensive debate in parliament itself on the amendments in question. The founders of NCA were also cognisant of the fact that a constitution embodies the ideas and perspectives of the people on how the country should be governed. That it

should, therefore, register the people's collective concert to the existence of institutions of Government.... (Kagoro 1997: 8)

The NCA had four objectives when it was founded: 1) to initiate and engage in a process of enlightening the general public on the current constitution of Zimbabwe; 2) to identify shortcomings of the current constitution and to organise debate on possible constitutional reform; 3) to organise constitutional debates in a way that allows broad based participation; 4) to subject the constitution making process in Zimbabwe to popular scrutiny with a view to entrenching the principle that constitutions are made by, and for the people; 5) generally, to encourage a culture of popular participation in decision making process (Kagoro 1999: 8).

The principles on which NCA was founded included that its members were encouraged to participate in all meetings of the Assembly, as well as debates and discussions arranged by the taskforce. All members were encouraged to speak on NCA issues with open minds. It was also stated clearly that the NCA was supposed to be turned into a forum for individual political agendas and ambitions. NCA members were encouraged to actively participate in the constitutional debate (Kagoro 1999:8).

At the third General Assembly of NCA the ZCTU led by Morgan Tsvangirai was elected to head the taskforce and the CCJP was elected to the Vice presidency. ZCC retained the Chair and the secretariat with Mr Densen Mafinyane as its secretary. The Vice President of ZCC Rev. Peter Nemapare was elected moderator of the General Assembly of NCA. Between 1998 and 1999, NCA became more independent from the influence of the Church relegating ZCC to the status of an observer within the movement. The moderator, Peter Nemapare, was replaced by the retired Supreme Court Justice Manyarara. The NCA adopted its own constitution that was approved at its 8th General Assembly (NCA minutes 1998).

In the year 1999, the government high jacked the agenda of National Constitutional Assembly of rewriting the national constitution. The ZCBC and CCJP were invited to submit their views. The ZCBC did submit its views but rejected the idea of a Christian state that had been mooted by the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ). Evangelicals wanted to imitate their co-religionists in Zambia who had declared Zambia a Christian nation without formal state recognition.

The role of the ZCC in the initial formation of the NCA was a major contribution by the churches to the broadening of political participation in the democratisation process of Zimbabwe. Making notable gains as a civic organisation, the NCA launched a vigorous campaign against adoption of a government-sponsored constitution in the 2000 referendum. Since then, the NCA has staged numerous demonstrations in the country calling for a democratic people-driven constitutional making process. NCA leaders and members have on several occasions been arrested, brutalised and detained without trial.

In the foundation of the NCA, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference was remotely involved through its Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace. Founded in 1969,

ZCBC is an association of local ordinaries other than the vicar generals, coadjutors, auxiliaries and other titular bishops who perform a special work entrusted to them by the Apostolic See or the conference itself (Randolph 1978:12). The Conference has up to 12 commissions, each chaired by a bishop: Catechetics, Clergy, Laity, Seminary, Marriage, Liturgy, Communications, Education, Social Services and Development, Justice and Peace, Theology and Ecumenism. In this chapter, the focus will be on the Commission for Justice and Peace, a mouthpiece of the ZCBC, was formed as a result of the Second Vatican Council of Pope Paul IV in 1967. The Catholic Bishops in Zimbabwe followed suit in 1972 by establishing a local branch that is their organ and mouthpiece. Its objectives are:

To give visible witness to the churches concern for justice and peace, to inform the conscience of people on the social teaching of the Church, to recommend reforms- both radical and intermittent- to social structures, and to investigate allegations of injustices and publish its findings.(Hallencreutz 1988:452-453)

Before independence the CCJP became a protagonist of justice for Zimbabwe by documenting and collating cases of human rights violations in the country. Most of its members were either detained or exiled. After independence, the Bishops had to review the role of the CCJP in a new Zimbabwe and issued a pastoral statement, *Welcome Zimbabwe* on 17 April 1980. The roles of the church and the state as two distinct entities were highlighted. Another statement, *Socialism and the Gospel of Christ* was issued in January 1980. It attacked the atheistic philosophy of Marxism but contextually qualified the understanding of Marxism in the country.

Immediately after independence, the political environment did not change much. Almost the same instruments that Smith had used to oppress the indigenous people were used by Mugabe to suppress any voice against his rule. The Central Intelligence Organization (CIO), the police, and the soldiers were made to operate as ZANU PF cadres if not Mugabe's (Nhema, 2002). In Matabeleland, these forces particularly the North Korean trained Fifth brigade was used to quell the menace of the 'dissidents'. But in the process, ordinary people were indiscriminately brutally murdered. It is estimated that from 1983-87 more than 20, 000 innocent lives perished during the Gukurahundi onslaught (Nkomo, 1984). Their biggest crime was to speak the same language, belong to the same tribe and area as Joshua Nkomo, the suspected leader of the dissidents. Those who remained alive were raped, tortured and had some parts of their bodies mutilated. Some were thrown into disused shaft mines; some were thrown into wells, into flooded rivers, and crocodile ponds, etc.

The turning point in the relations between the Catholic Church and government was 1987 when the Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) and the CCJP published and serialised a document called, *Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace*. The document gave chilling evidence of the horrific massacres that took place in Matabeleland. The background to what transpired in Matabeleland is that long standing differences between the two liberation movements that degenerated to a point of conflict. Suspicions abounded between the two parties. Many senior members of ZAPU were arrested, detained and tortured. Joshua Nkomo, the president of Zapu, was forced to go into exile. Battles

between the two liberation movements raged at Chitungwiza, Entumbane and Conmara. These areas had army barracks. A number of army officers deserted from their duties with their guns. The deserters paid allegiance to tribal rather than national inclinations. Government responded in a heavy-handed manner in an attempt to crush the rebellion. The rest of the story of what happened is well chronicled in *Breaking the Silence*. Within two weeks, two thousand people were killed. Entire families and villages vanished. There were summary executions of both the guilty and the innocent.

A high-ranking Catholic cleric met with the then Prime Minister Robert Mugabe to brief him on the deteriorating situation in Matabeleland. Further follow ups presented the prime minister with a dossier of evidence on the activities of the Fifth Brigade. A statement, *Reconciliation is Still Possible* was issued by the ZCBC in 1983:

We entirely support the duty of Government to maintain law and order even by military means. What we view with concern are the occasions in which certain influential people have influenced the situation by their words, instead of seeking to pacify it. We appeal to Government to put an end to the excesses and to appoint a judicial commission charged with responsibility for establishing the truth.

Atrocities declined as a result of the prime minister's intervention. The prime minister offered reconciliation and pardon to all "rebels" should they lay down their guns and rejoin the regular forces. Nevertheless, he castigated those who criticized him as a band of Jeremiahs which "included reactionary foreign journalists, non governmental organisations of dubious status in our midst and sanctimonious prelates." The prime minister did set up the Chihambakwe Commission whose findings until today have been embargoed. Some of the senior ministers in government continued to make inflammatory statements that were not helpful. Arrests and tortures went on for some time until the end of 1985 elections. The mayhem came to a halt with the signing of the Unity Accord between Mugabe and Nkomo representing their two parties, ZANU PF and PF ZAPU respectively in 1987. Although ZAPU PF and ZANU PF reached an accord in 1987, the damage had been done (*Breaking The Silence* 1997: 33-61).

After 1987, the CCJP and the ZCBC were viewed by the state as reactionary bodies. The Church continued to pursue its watchdog path criticising Government's adoption of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) The Jesuits condemned the whole exercise and in particular Father Peter Balleis wrote as follows:

We feel very concerned about the fact that the basic human conditions for the life of the people-income, nutrition, health, education, freedom – are going to be sacrificed for the sake of ESAP. The most glaring case of human sacrifice for the capitalist economies is the repayment of foreign debt. Debt repayment demands often results in cuts in social expenditure and that means that the health and growth, the education and the life of millions of children will be again sacrificed on the altar of payment of debt and of its economic adjustment programmes. The Bible rejects any form of human sacrifices for the idols and even God himself... (Balleis 1992:1-11)

The government ignored the criticism and went ahead with the implementation of ESAP as dictated by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. The result was massive layoffs of workers. The unemployment rate soared to 31 percent and many people found themselves on the streets. The gap between the rich and the poor widened living many families desperate for food. The rich got richer and the poor got poorer. Health care declined. Many industries closed down. In education school fees were doubled and many parents could not afford to send their kids to school. Many mines closed down and a number of government companies such as Cotton Marketing Board were privatised (Ruzivo 2000: 56-57).

Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe

The Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) is a fellowship of churches, church related organisations, and individuals who share a desire to express unity, fellowship and combined action among churches and organisations of evangelical persuasion. The idea of forming the EFZ was mooted in 1962, at a meeting in Harare by Clyde W Taylor, the executive secretary of the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association (Verstraelen 1995:192). His message was that in the face of the rising tide of liberalism and ecumenicity, Evangelicals must join hands and hearts in a practical outworking of that spiritual unity that is already there in Christ (Bhebhe 1988: 314). The second meeting in Harare, October 1962, intended to explore the possibility of establishing the Evangelical Fellowship of Central Africa. To pursue the idea, two other meetings took place in 1963 in Lusaka and Choma (Verstraelen 1995). The meeting in Choma resolved that the uncertainties of the federation militated against the idea of an Evangelical Fellowship of Central Africa. Members at the meeting agreed that territorial fellowships be established. After its foundation EFZ embodied the following objectives:

- a) *To provide a spiritual fellowship among evangelical Christians as a means of united action in promoting Bible teaching, prayer and Evangelical ministries in accordance with Evangelical faith outlined in the fellowship's statement of faith, directed towards the perfecting of the individual believers, and the salvation of lost souls.*
- b) *To cooperate with other similar Evangelical bodies throughout Africa and other countries.*
- c) *To take common action with a view to awakening Christian people to the danger of modernism, false cults, and from ecumenicity that is achieved at the expense of vital Christian faith (Bhebhe 1988:321).*

In its objectives, the EFZ took a spiritual and an anti-ecumenical tone. The EFZ was silent on political issues. It did not speak out against the oppressive Government of the Rhodesian Front Party. During the liberation struggle it interpreted the armed struggle in terms of the advance of communism and Russian influence. Many evangelicals felt that it was their duty to speak out against communism and the liberation movement. The Rhodesian government was presented as a Christian government that merited the support of all Christians. Prayers were made for the destruction of the 'terrorists' and safety of the security forces (Bhebhe 1988:325). This attitude of the EFZ greatly undermined its

credibility in the eyes of the nationalists and other Christian bodies that engaged the state on political issues.

After independence the EFZ found itself in a state of confusion as it found itself still haunted by its past. In post independent Zimbabwe the Evangelicals limited their engagement with the state on general issues of ethics, society and development.

Fambidzano Yamakereke Avatema

There is also a unique organisation called *Fambidzano Yamakereke Avatema* (henceforth Fambidzano) which has about 99 members on its list. This movement engages itself in theological training, and rural development, and promotion of cooperation among members. *Fambidzano* does not have a clearly spelt out programme on how it relates with the state and mainline churches. Most African Initiated churches are conservative in nature and enjoy a pan-Africanist agenda. They tend to support the status quo. In terms of Church-State relationships, there is not much that can be said since the Fambidzano movement is solely with spiritual matters such as prophecy and healing

Christian Alliance

Other organizations such as the Christian Alliance CA, which came into being in 2006, have been more vocal and effective in condemning what they saw as undemocratic procedures by government. CA lack effective structures they can use to engage Government. In 2006, however, CA condemned government operation 'Drive Out Trash - Murambatsvina' that saw the destruction of thousands of homes by government. In the recent polls CA issued a statement 'Give Peace a Chance' in which it said:

We wish to remind those in authority that the reason Zimbabweans resorted to violence against the settler regime was because those in authority at that time lacked the requisite qualities for the acceptance of a peaceful transition. These are the same sentiments now being expressed by President Robert Mugabe, service chiefs and some who occupy key positions in government (www.kubatanaarchive.org)

CA urged Zimbabwean politicians to respect the rights of citizens to exercise their vote. It implored observers from the region and beyond to help in defending the rights of the Zimbabwean people to a free vote.

Other Church related Developments

From the year 2000, the EFZ, ZCBC, and ZCC collaborated more closely in the democratisation process, with the launch of their national vision document, *The Zimbabwe We Want* in which the churches critiqued the state over its failure to initiate a national dialogue about the land, micro-economic policies, the constitutional debate, electoral process, human rights, governance and national reconciliation. The churches also critiqued the state over its failure to establish an independent land commission that

would ensure transparent, equitable, and fair land distribution. It further rejected the Access to Information and Privacy and Protection Act (AIPPA) and Public Order and Security Act (POSA) amendments. The churches encouraged government to open up and interact with international partners. It urged government to address the issue of the ailing economy and poverty reduction, to support the informal sector and create genuine wealth. The churches pledged to use their global and international connections to help government build bridges among Zimbabweans and between Zimbabweans and the international community (*The Zimbabwe We Want* 2006: 43). Government poured scorn on the efforts of the church leaders in promoting dialogue about national issues. On the launch of the document in September 2006 President Mugabe instead praised the Lancaster House constitution as the best constitution that the country had ever had. Church leaders had looked forward to engaging the president in the process of nation-building and social transformation but the head of state was not prepared to engage church leadership in an honest manner (www.kubatana-archives.org).

In state functions mainline church leaders who were perceived to be reactionary were sidelined. President Mugabe had found comfort in Bishop Norbert Kunonga's Anglican Church. Bishop Kunonga (a beneficiary of the land reform process) had become an ardent supporter of President Mugabe. Kunonga had described Mugabe as God's messenger sent to redeem the people of Africa. He defended Mugabe's policies in every forum where he was given the chance to speak. President Mugabe had demonstrated that if mainline Christianity became critical of his regime then he had the ability to do without them and to relate to those that are less critical of his rule. President Mugabe also found support in Destiny for Africa Network President Rev Obadiah Msindo. In 2002 a previously unknown Destiny for Africa Christian Broadcasting Network was aired on national television. The founder condemned white farmers. Other pastors have described Rev Msindo who is linked to this broadcasting network as a briefcase pastor who does not represent any church (Chipere 2006). But it is Msindo who normally appears on state television purporting to speak on behalf of the churches in Zimbabwe.

In spite of the states' infiltration of churches and using divide and rule tactics among church organisations, the churches seem to have weathered the storm. In the events leading to the harmonised elections, most church organisations (EFZ, ZCBC and ZCC) continued to speak against violence. The ZCC thus issued the following statement:

Government should provide a level playing field for all those seeking political office. Let justice flow like a stream and righteousness like a river that never goes dry (Amos 5:24) All political parties, candidates and their supporters to exercise maturity, tolerance and to seek power only through the ballot. To campaign in a peaceful and honourable way, shun all forms of violence, to observe and encourage peace at all times. The law enforcement agents should execute their duties in an efficient, effective and non partisan way to protect life and property. To apply the law without discrimination or favour, for God hates all forms of injustice. The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission to adhere to the SADC norms and principles and other international best practices in the conduct of our elections. The media as a major stake holder in the election process, to give objective and balanced reports and fair coverage to all political players and strive to influence and promote peace. All eligible voters should exercise their democratic right to vote. The nation to seek peace and pursue it and invite all people to come and reason together as we undertake this process of electing our representatives at different levels. Blessed are the

peacemakers for they shall be called children of God. (Matthew 5:9) All people of faith to prayerfully promote peace, love, justice and respect for diversity (kubatanaarchive.org)

The Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference followed suit and issued their own statement in December 2007, in which they encouraged the government to create a more conducive atmosphere for the holding of the harmonised elections:

Past elections have been marred by controversy and violence. This time, we urge Government, and all the contesting parties, to create a social, political and economic climate that enhances moral integrity. We urge those responsible for organizing the elections to establish a credible electoral process, whose outcome will be free and fair and with local and international recognition. The Church looks beyond political parties and derives its ethos from the eternal Kingdom of God, a kingdom of love, truth, justice, freedom and peace. The Church therefore aims to build the foundations here on earth of that Eternal Kingdom (www.kubatanaarchive.org)

The CCJP issued two pre election statements that urged people to out and vote for a Government of their choice. After the elections it issued it issued a statement in which it categorically told government that it was concerned with the fast deteriorating situation in the country:

The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJPZ) would like to emphatically register its profound concern over the fast deteriorating political and security situation in Zimbabwe since the watershed 29 March 2008 elections. Elections should be an occasion for the governed to choose, as freely and fairly as possible, who will govern them. After all, that is what the liberation struggle was all about i.e. to have and enjoy the freedom to choose their rulers (CCJP 30/04/08).

Conclusion

The Christian churches in their public role in the democratisation process in Zimbabwe continue to exercise their moral influence. The Catholic Church, Evangelical and Pentecostal churches, and Protestant churches participated in the democratisation of the country through their para-church agencies such as the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches. Lately the Christian Alliance has come on board and they have been persecuted by the state for their involvement in speaking on behalf of the suffering people. These continue to engage the state on the political processes of the country.

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Interview

- Rev Chipere Waterfalls 10 April 2006
- Tendai Chikuku Hatfield 20 May 2008

Chapter 2

CHURCH ACTIVISM: A MISSION AND A CALLING TO BE ATTAINED.

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Introduction

This chapter interrogates the Church's social gospel movement and understanding in the struggle for democratic change in Zimbabwe. The basis of this interrogation is the theological understanding of the Church – her calling and her mission. Theologians are generally agreed that the Church is 'a living and loving community,' it is a community of those called by God; it is a manifestation of the kingdom of God on earth. From this understanding of the Church, one can conclude that the Church is a transforming and empowering community; it is the continued presence of Jesus the Christ on earth. What this definition implies is that the Church cannot afford to be indifferent and isolated in the face of our present socio-political and economic decay that has become both a disgrace and a scandal to the goodness of God's beautiful creation.

The critical questions are:

- What is the meaning and role of Christianity in the light of our human experiences of pain, hurt and suffering?
- Has the Church been a means of grace as the continued presence of Jesus the Christ on earth?
- Can the Church find space in the midst of political confrontation, not as partisan player but rather as a peacemaker?

Church activism in the context of social disintegration and national polarisation demands a practical socio-political and economic engagement with the relevant arms of governance and the relevant political players/ parties toward a socio-political contract which will give birth to peace and democratic space for all. The basis for the Church's activism is motivated by divine justice and compassion for the marginalised children of God: "I have heard the cry and seen the suffering of my people." (Exodus 3: 7).

God who is not involved in the lives of the people that He proclaims to love is no god at all. In the same vein, a Church that is not involved in the lives of the people that she seeks to serve is no church at all. In a nutshell, Church activism is about reconstruction and transformational theology. Such a Church and or theology is interested in the promotion of social justice and human development. But has the Church in Zimbabwe played her central role in the promotion of democratic change and human creativity and development? Such Church activism is and has to be informed by the Holy Scripture's declaration: "--- shall reign as King and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land."(Jeremiah 23:5) "I came that all may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10: 10). "My peace I leave with you." (John 14: 28).

Sociological Understanding of the Church

Theologically, the Church is a community of believers, a fellowship of those called to be disciples of Jesus in a hurting world. Interestingly, the ministry of Jesus Christ defined the Church from a sociological perspective. Jesus was human centred; his interest was in the welfare of the society of his day. His message was interested in the people's everyday experiences; he was interested in the immediate welfare of the people, hence his declaration: "Repent for the kingdom of God has come." (Mark 1:15). From the perspective of Jesus' words and work, the Church can be and should be understood as a living and a loving community. It is a transforming and empowering community; it is the continued presence of Christ on earth. In short the Church is the manifestation of the kingdom of God on earth. What this basic appreciation of the Church means is that the Christian Church cannot afford to be indifferent and self-preserving when the same people that she seeks to serve are in pain, under siege and perpetual suffering.

In a nation that is politically unstable, the institution of the Church becomes the one of the few places of hope toward social dialogue and social healing. What is disturbing, however, is that many a time Church leaders have been more interested in self-preservation, structural maintenance and self-glorification. Such a tendency is very common to such an extent that the pain and suffering of God's creation, the people created in God's image has been over-looked. One observes that in a situation where the Church's programmes are built on petty issues of staff welfare, structural and policy preservation, membership boosting and such other internal issues, then the likelihood of the Church being alienated from her social responsibility is very high. If the Church's programmes are far removed from issues of social justice, good governance, the democratic rights of the citizens and a concern for a quality life for all, then such a Church cannot truly claim to be a manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth.

It is noted that religious freedom, respect of people's rights, and the promotion of good governance are the essential elements of the biblical message. The Bible views human beings as being granted free will, which is the human freedom of choice to belong and the choice to express oneself without restraint by those who sit on the political pedestals. For Augustine of Hippo, free will is a mark of our humanity which cannot be subdued by another human being (Augustine, St. Civitas Dei). The element of human freedom is beyond the state's jurisdiction, but is rather a divine mandate.

The Biblical and Moral Challenges to the Church

In the history of human development, there have been calls to overthrow the Church when the Church lagged behind in the midst of human development and challenges. To illustrate this, such thinking, Voltaire (1694-1778) attacked the Catholic Church in particular and Christianity in general by saying "Let us obliterate the infancy" (Comby J. 1986: 105). He regarded Christianity as being too superstitious when people needed enlightened guidance. One may ask; is the Church not being superstitious by her continued threats of "There is hell and heaven, Repent!" when people are being butchered for exercising their God-given free-will; the freedom to belong and to vote according to their will(s)?

Bosch (1979:20) argues that the Church can either support the status quo or call for its overhaul. The first option tends to be a narrow and naïve perception that the Church cannot engage in political matters because it is not a political entity. The second notion employs the Jesus methodology of reaching out to the broken hearted, bruised and scandalised persons. It places the Church at the centre of human creativity and healing. This second option reminds us that the Church is a living and loving community; it is in the world to serve human beings as an attempt to make this world a better place.

For Bonhoeffer (1974: 127) the Church exists for others just as Christ exists for the Church. The essence of being an authentic Church means that its ministry must be defined by the life and work of Jesus Christ.

The challenge that the Church is facing is that of relevancy. Because the Church is a key element of the civil society, she cannot afford to be an observer in the democratic dispensation. The Church lives and works in the society in which she encounters the tragedy of human selfishness, pain and suffering in the midst of a politically tense environment. At the same time the Church is called to solidarity with the bruised and maimed of God's children. Elements of activism are already observed in the Church's call for righteousness and justice in the land; "But let justice roll down like a river, righteousness like an ever-flowing stream!" (Amos 5: 24).

The ministry of activism is not an appendix to the mission of the Church; rather it is the core, the heartbeat of the message of Jesus the Christ. Jesus of the gospels was a social activist! It is true that he fought against many social ills and evils of his day. The Holy Scripture proclaims Jesus as the Saviour or Victor because of his victory over the many social challenges of his day. One observes in Jesus' declaration a zeal for a better society, love for justice, passion for peace: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me...He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners...to release the oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord's favour." (Luke 4: 18-19). In the book *The Politics of Jesus* it is clear that Jesus was not only concerned about the future events /issues but his major concern was the people's welfare as he met with them and encountered the social and political hurdles that they faced (Howard Y.O. 1972: 45).

It is therefore clear from the Bible and the lessons from Christ's ministry show that the Church is and should be a social activist as she is the continuation of Christ's ministry on earth. She is not an end in herself but points to Christ for whom she exists. The Church is a servant that should give service to the world. Following the example of Jesus the Christ, the Church exists "for others" and speaks on behalf of the marginalized. This ministry of the Church is implied through a variety of structures and offices of the Church. These offices relate to Church in Society Committees, Social Justice Committees, Peace and Reconciliation, and Justice Desks.

Church Activism as a Ministry

It is common for senior government officials to give public lectures on what the Church must do, warning the Church not to depart from its pulpit and never to engage in politics.

Church activism in Zimbabwe reflects a church that understands her social context and discerns her historical and theological role. Church activism is a culmination of the vision for a just and peaceful society. It learns from the fact that a Church, which proclaims justice, peace and righteousness, should be able to promote social humility. David Kaulem, in his paper *The Role of the Church in Society*, argues that in her activism, the Church acts as a witness to Christian teachings that should affect policy making and styles of governance.

The Catholic Church's Activism in the Promotion of Justice and Democracy in Zimbabwe

In its pastoral publications, the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe has been consistent in demanding from the political leadership, selflessness over self-interests with a view toward the creation of a just and democratic society.

In May, 1998, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop's Conference issued a pastoral letter "Working For The Common Good". The pastoral letter noted that the social disintegration that we witness today has its roots in the year 1998 when labour movements became critical over the sharing of the country's wealth between the employer and the employees and the structures of governance. In particular, in its pastoral letter, the ZCBC declared "Our Conviction is that if we are able to dialogue constructively, openly and widely, with a special concern for the vulnerable, we will unite together----- for the common good of Zimbabwe...." (Page2). In the same letter, the Z.C.B.C. also notes: "an Economic System that brings so few people into the world is seriously flamed". (Page 2) The letter also states that a government that closes space for the ordinary citizens deserves no respect. Through this pastoral letter, the Catholic Church refused to be blind to the economic injustice and inequality. It warned against the weird economic policies that the government was employing and the closure of democratic space saying: "Genuine dialogues between state and all sections of civil society is required" (Page 3).

On 17th April 2000, the ZCBC issued a strong statement condemning all forms of violence that characterised the election period vis-à-vis the claim of the right to "our land" slogan. The pastoral letter entitled 'Easter Message' reads in part: "The real problems of this country ...cannot be solved by violence... Even verbal violence must be avoided. Threatening, insulting and racist language cannot be tolerated. The laws of the country that protect people from abuse and physical assault must be enforced. The courts must be respected." This statement rightfully positioned the Church as the voice of God and the voice of the suffering masses. Sadly, the sentiments expressed in the Easter message were quickly forgotten or ignored even by some of the bishops save for the few who continued to be advocates of social change and justice amidst the continued violence by those who had the political sword/ weapon in their favour.

On the 7th of June 2002, the ZCBC noted that “violence has already claimed more than 26 lives and injured more. Property worth billions of dollars has been destroyed. Some people fled their homes and are now living as refugees in their own country...we therefore issue a pastoral plea to all political parties and their supporters to desist from any form of violence...election terror and intimidation must stop.” This pastoral letter clearly indicates a Church with a ‘human face,’ a Church that sees and understands its mission from a praxis perspective. Such a Church becomes the heart, hands and feet of Jesus the Christ.

The Catholic Church’s activism toward creating a democratic society was clearly spelt out again in the bishops’ May 2001 Pastoral letter entitled *Tolerance and Hope*. In the letter ZCBC argues: “Violence intimidation and threats are the tools of failed politicians... they are engaging in unjust activity.” The beauty of this letter is in the forthright message it puts across. Such a letter learns from the honesty of Jesus who, when he saw the fallacy of the Pharisees declared: “Woe unto you hypocrites...” (Matt 23: 13-27). On the 30th November 2003, the Z.C.B.C wrote, “We cannot have lasting peace without truth and justice, love and freedom... The government has a responsibility to create an environment where individuals... learn, appreciates and develop in themselves a culture of truth, justice, love and freedom (Pastoral Statement 2003:4).

In August 2004, the ZCBC issued a pastoral statement that called for credible elections for responsible and accountable leadership. In the pastoral letter the Catholic Bishops declared: “An election is not an event confined to a window period of registration of candidates, days of balloting and counting the votes. An election is rather a process that takes place over a considerable period of time. An electoral process must be based on a moral integrity that makes freedom and fairness a reality. Hence our present effort ...to urge you to establish a credible electoral process whose outcome will be a people’s choice...” In this particular letter the Catholic Church stood as a watchman ready to protect the people’s vote. But the results of that particular election (2005 Parliamentary election) were disputed because the government did not provide space for a free and fair election period and or process.

The clumsy road toward the 2008 March 29 harmonised election was discerned by the ZCBC’s pastoral letter: ‘God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed.’ In this pastoral letter, the ZCBC declared that Zimbabwe was in a crisis, both politically and economically. The ZCBC noted the nature of the crisis as being characterised by:

- a. A crisis of governance
- b. A crisis of moral leadership
- c. A spiritual and moral crisis

In their summation of the crisis, the ZCBC concluded: “No to power through violence, oppression and intimidation! We call upon those who are responsible for the current crisis in our country to repent and listen to the cry of their citizens.” (2007:10). Three

months before the 29th of March 2008 landmark elections, the ZCBC declared in the pastoral letter: “Press freedom is to be safeguarded in the interest of promoting human rights enshrined in the constitution” (2007:5). The state media has not stopped attacking the opposition party; the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) is described as a western puppet, and of late, The Church has also been accused by ZANU PF and the state media, as working towards regime change under the sponsorship of the former colonial power (Britain). On the other hand, certain individual clergymen have referred to President Mugabe as a liberator to be equated with Jesus Christ (Excommunicated Anglican bishop of Harare, Rev Nolbert Kunonga – quoted on ZBC News on Monday 13 May 2008).

The Churches’ Role Toward Building a Democratic Society

During the liberation struggle, prior to 1980 Independence, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) played a pivotal role in the struggle for majority rule. However, since 2000, the ZCC has tended to be too much protective of the so-called hard won independence without critically and objectively condemning the evils of those who rule with an iron fist over God’s ‘frozen people’ (muzzled citizens). The height of the ZCC’s policy of appeasement is clearly reflected by its General Secretary’s declaration: “We are not anti-Government, we will not condemn our leaders just because the imperialist west wants us to do so---. We are a Church body and we need to support our leaders and pray for them and not insult them” (Interview 2008: 02).

However, from 1980 to 2000 the ZCC was heavily involved in the economic programmes that aimed at empowering people. Such programmes came in the form of manpower training courses, youth empowerment programmes, women empowerment programmes, and such other programmes. This thrust clearly made the council of Churches a partner in societal development. Also of great significance were the council’s democratic programmes that were run by Church in Society department. These programmes included, but were not limited to, voter education workshops, legal aid projects, human rights awareness workshops. Interestingly, such programmes on the promotion of good governance gave birth to the call demand of a new and democratic constitution. The project of a new constitution later found itself in the hands of the civic society group when the council of churches chickened out when the ZANU PF government declared that such a process was only possible through its structures. From this observation one starts to observe that the council of churches was slowly but clearly losing its moral responsibility toward creating a just and democratic society.

Interestingly, the 2003 report of Church in Society Department of the ZCC, states that their major constraints toward exercising their democratic mandate was the lack of cash, lack of sufficient organisational capacity, inadequate staff in economic justice and legal aid clinic (Oct.2003: 1). There has been poor advocacy work by the ZCC. Despite its failure to be clearly prophetic in a polarised political landscape the council of churches issued cautious press statements on the prevailing political and economic problems. Soon after the disputed 2002 presidential elections the council of churches issued a press statement calling for restraint on the part of both the winner and the loser: “we note that the level of tension is not healthy for the good of the

country hence the need or all the concerned parties to exercise restraint and accept the people's verdict" (The Daily News, 23 July 2003). In 2005, just before the General Election, the ZCC declared that "all citizens were encouraged to exercise their right to vote without fear" but strangely enough, ZCC did not condemn those who made others afraid to exercise their democratic right to vote. It is true that the ZCC was to a certain extent vocal up to the late 1990's hence through this active role the ZCC gave birth to the formation of the National Constitutional Assembly. Unfortunately, when the NCA became extremely vocal in its demand for a people driven constitution, the council of churches chickened out of the whole process. Such naïve and non-committal attitude toward fighting for the people's democratic rights does not present a faithful and honest picture of the Council of Churches. During the World Council of Churches Assembly hosted by the ZCC in Harare, 1998, the ZCC was very protective about the political and economic situation, which was slowly showing signs of a crisis in the making. Sadly, there are no clear ZCC prophetic pastoral letters except for the joint statements with other ecumenical organisations

In April 2005 the ZCBC, ZCC, EFZ and the Heads of Christian Denominations (HOCD) issued a Pastoral Letter dubbed: A Call to Conscience. This pastoral letter reflected on the silver jubilee of the nation (1980 – 2005). The key issues that these Christian bodies raised relate to:

- a. 1980-2004 achievements by the ZANU PF Government
- b. Manifestation of Economic and Political crises
- c. The death of Conscience in the Political Leadership
- d. Need for Reconciliation and Hope

The pastoral letter reminded the nation to be oriented toward peace through word and action by "listening to our conscience" (2005:2).

In September 2006 the ZCBC, ZCC, and EFZ produced a document dubbed "The Zimbabwe We Want." This document expresses the Church's perceived National Vision. The document however, does not bind anyone to action since it is called a discussion document. When this national vision was launched there was little action by the Churches. Rather the government apparatus were the main players. In launching the document, the State president who also happens to be the ZANU PF leader, Robert Mugabe, was negative to the whole process. What an anti-thesis.

However, The Zimbabwe We Want raises interesting issues for discussion and key to these are:

- a. Issues of home grown Constitution
- b. The Land Question and Economy
- c. National Reconciliation and Forgiveness in reference to the Gukurahundi era
- d. The Media Laws
- e. Issues of Operation Murambatsvina

The Zimbabwe We Want observes "Unpleasant instances of political intolerance, violence, impunity and lack of transparency and accountability continue to rear their ugly head within our evolving National Democratic Culture" (2006: 5). Sadly, the document was generally ignored even by its sponsors hence in 2007 a new attempt

called Ecumenical Peace Initiative (EPIZ) was launched with the basic aim of reviving the Vision of the Zimbabwe We Want.

One is left to conclude that the Churches' dialogue with the political environment which breeds intolerance has been less prophetic and effective to a larger extent. But occasionally, independent actors have attempted to engage in serious dialogue with those who matter. Key players in this attempt include the three bishops from Manicaland, Fr. Fidelis Mukonori and such other diplomatic clergy. This conclusion does not ignore the Churches' noble initiatives toward solving the political log-jam. The ZCBC, ZCC and EFZ have been involved in sponsoring talks between the ZANU PF party and the MDC party for several years. However, these talks collapsed in 2006 when the Heads of Christian Churches were accused by the independent media of dancing in ZANU PF's favour. Commenting on the initiative, the Zimbabwean Newspaper declared, "Church Leaders Disappoint Nation" (15-21 June 2006: 22). In the same article, Bishop Peter Nemapare, the head of the team, is quoted as saying "We know we have a government that we must support, interact with and draw attention to concerns. Those of us who have different ideas about this country must know we have a government which listens" (Page 22). Mr Denson Mafinyane of the ZCC also declared "the Church fully supports Government and its members were also in need of land...the two must consult and maintain their partnership" (Page 22). This meeting, which took place at State House, marked the end of the dialogue as sponsored by the Churches. One may conclude that the Church failed to rise above political patronage.

Despite of the Churches' weaknesses, individual Christians have continued to rise above the challenge. The most renowned of such Church leaders is the former Catholic Arch-Bishop of Bulawayo, Bishop Pius Ncube. He was a voice of reason until about two years ago when he was accused of immorality in terms of his individual private life-style. After his departure from the ZCBC and the leadership structures in general, there has been observed 'diplomatic silence' except for some junior clergy through the less organised and respected structures.

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Chapter 4

THE CHURCH AND THE STRUGGLE FOR MULTI-PARTY DEMOCRACY IN ZIMBABWE

Robert Matikiti

Introduction

This chapter discusses the church's activism in the struggle for multi-party democracy in Zimbabwe. It explores the church's role in promoting multi-party democracy during the colonial era, with particular emphasis on the post-independence era, characterized by the dominance of one political party. As Frans J. Verstraelen has illustrated in his very illuminating *Zimbabwean Realities and Christian Responses*, the church can exercise its ethical task or prophetic mission vis-à-vis politics on different levels by condemning the tyranny of unjust rulers and demanding democratic political space for all citizens. This chapter traces the history of Zimbabwe's struggle for freedom and nationhood, spanning the interactive dynamics between religious and political forces during colonialism, to the birth of a new nation, searching for multi-party democracy. It argues that the church in Zimbabwe exists in a socio-political economic context of struggle and change and must, as a matter of urgency, define its role in the quest for the promotion of democratic values in the country. This work is an interpretive history of the development of Christianity in relation to the political development of modern Zimbabwe.

This chapter examines the political interface between the church and state in the evolution of multi-party democracy in Zimbabwe. According to Chiluba (1995:12), there are "several fundamental characteristics that can be assigned to democracy, even though there is no one universally agreed definition of the term." In this chapter, democracy refers to political systems that are characterized not by majority or by minority rule but rather by the competition for influence among many competing groups that seek to enlarge their influence relative to one another in order to secure a larger share of benefits dispensed through public policy (Nhema, 2002:15). Thus, for this study, the democratic system refers to multi-party democracy.

One of the major universal principles of democratic governance is the principle that rulers are chosen by and are accountable to the people. Put differently, people must have the opportunity to elect a government of their choice. Democracy is therefore government by the consent of the governed.

The second major principle of democratic government is the right of citizens to change a government that no longer serves their interests. The 19th century US President Abraham Lincoln avowed the following:

Any people anywhere, being inclined and having the power, have the right to ... shake off the existing government and form a new one that suits them better. This is a most valuable; a most sacred right a right which we hope and believe is to liberate the world [*The New York Times*, October 31 1990].

People must be accorded an opportunity for alternative rulers. The electoral process in multi-party democracy provides the means to manage government change thereby preempting a possible prospect of violent change through revolution or the coup d'état.

People have the right to increase their influence by joining or supporting civic organizations, interest groups, and political parties. According to Diamond (1994), civil society is defined as the way society is organized outside of the state. Civic groups point to individuals constituting themselves into groups and associations. In a society where multiparty systems exist, opposition political parties are intervening organizations which lie between the state and the conventional civil society. In modern times, the claim to authority lies in the nature of ongoing relations between the state power and civil society. In multiparty democracy, freedom and equality among individuals and groups depends upon preserving types of organizations which nurture local freedoms and provide for the active expression of particular interests (Nhema 2002:18). Religious organizations are part of civil society. It is vital to counterbalance state power with the demands for autonomy that arise from civil society. State and society exist in a complementary relationship. The push and pull relationship is important for a healthy democratic nation.

One- Party System in Southern Rhodesia

While a complete electoral process cannot in itself be equated with democracy, it is a cardinal precept of liberal democratic theory and practice. Democracy refers to a specific manner of organizing and exercising power in accordance with certain universal norms and principles (Nzongolola-Ntalaja and Lee 1997:13). The electoral process is significant in any democracy.

Legislative Elections

The first legislative elections in Southern Rhodesia (1899) and the first referendum (1922) made the territory the fiefdom of the British South Africa Company (BSAC). Through a Royal Charter, the territory, subsequently become a British colony. According to Cowen and Laakso (2002:1), these elections to the colonial legislature served to endorse the political presence of colonialists.

The first legislative election in Southern Rhodesia (1899), with a Resident Commissioner appointed by the British government, marked a first step towards the establishment of responsible self-government for white settlers. It must be stated from the onset that the London Missionary Society (LMS) and the Jesuits (SJ), who had accepted large portions of land from Cecil John Rhodes, were tied to the scheme of the white settlers' political agenda to dominate politics in Southern Rhodesia. Formed in 1903, the Southern Rhodesia Missionary Conference was the first interdenominational body in the country with its main concern for church-state relations affecting African education, health and social welfare.

The missionaries' stance during the initial stage of colonialism was one of complicity; their mission was linked to politics. In an interview with Mr D. Mafinyani, the General Secretary of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches stated the following:

The missionaries connived with exploiters-the colonisers-in the marginalisation of the indigenous people. There are two sides to the church. This was the bad side. Remember Lobengula did not want to sign 'the X of approval' for Rhodes to rule Matabeleland. He was forced by a missionary Robert Moffat to do so. In good faith he signed, only to realize that he had lost control of his territory. This Moffat approach is still in existence today. The missionaries were part and parcel of the colonisation process. The other side is that of a few missionaries like Skeleton who worked for democracy and majority rule. (Interview with Mafinyani at the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, 2 May 2008)

Indeed, during the 90 years of colonial occupation, in which a small minority ruled the country to the total exclusion of over 95% of the population, only a few missionaries were on the side of good governance and multi-party democracy.

The Unilateral Declaration of Independence

Laakso (2002:327) points out that the Rhodesian Front (RF) “created the strongest party machinery ever known in the country.” The major aim of the RF was to promote European interests and to defy domestic and international pressures for change in the minority governance of Southern Rhodesia. In 1965, the Smith government declared a state of emergency in order to allow the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) to take place. Other laws were enacted, such as the Emergency Powers (Maintenance Law and Order) Regulations, which allowed for detention without trial, banning of public meetings and curtailment of political activity. After the declaration of UDI on 11 November 1965, the Christian Council of Southern Rhodesia issued a statement that condemned UDI.

The Council and Government were antagonistic over the issue of multiparty democracy. Meredith (1979) argues that the struggle in Southern Rhodesia was no longer confined to a matter of individual rights but involved the wider issue of political power. After the introduction of UDI, the church and government increasingly found themselves on a collision course. The church was now caught between UDI regime and a nationalist movement that increasingly intensified guerrilla warfare. The church in Southern Rhodesia became one of the strongest bastions of resistance to the government; with church mission schools across the country providing the only education for Africans, therefore offering opportunity for generations of African nationalists.

Until 1963 there was one main political movement known as Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union (ZAPU). The party split for many reasons. A new party was called Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) was formed. The major leaders of the nationalist movement, whatever their ethnic and political differences, had a church background. Ndabaningi Sithole was a minister in the American Board Mission Congregational Church while Abel Muzorewa was a bishop of the United Methodist Church. Joshua Nkomo was a lay preacher in the British-based branch of the Methodist Church while Robert Mugabe was a member of the Roman Catholic Church. As conflict between white and black communities deepened, the nationalists looked to the church as a welcome ally. Church sympathy for the nationalist cause aroused strong resentment among white

congregations as well as the government. Priests were frequently told that their duty was to preach the gospel and not meddle in politics. The churches steadily raised the volume of their criticism of the government's racial policies the only effect was to increase the gap between the church hierarchy and their white members.

Banana (1996a) argues that colonial rule was a dominant force that decreased the churches' response; the typhoon of colonial rule overwhelmed churches. The undisguised behavior of the dominant class led by Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front government was to perpetuate a policy of overt racial division. Banana further argued that through all the subjugation and poverty, the church and its servants never ceased to tirelessly work towards the attainment of a truly democratic society.

Several nationalist leaders and politically conscious ministers of the Methodist Church spoke against the unilateral act of defiance by the Smith regime. Banana (1996a:86) postulates that "the UDI represented a travesty of justice, bastardization of civilization and an irreclaimable erosion of Christian values and traditions and its only claim to fame was that it opened the way for purportedly legitimate exploitation of the already oppressed African."

A Catholic priest, Bishop Donald Lamont, an extremely conservative and outspoken critic of the Southern Rhodesian government, worked continuously to promote majority rule and multi-party democracy. He produced joint pastoral letters, with his fellow churchmen, denouncing racial injustice. In his view, the church had to move into politics only when the government passed laws that infringed upon the rights of man as handed down through the gospel.

The 1969 Constitution

The churches' entry into politics came largely with their opposition to the 1969 Constitution that entrenched white rule and further strengthened segregation. Bishop Lamont saw it as a move by the state into the Church's sphere of influence, for the new laws prevented the churches from carrying out their duty. The Land Tenure Act, introduced at the same time as the new constitution, made it illegal for either race to enter another's area without applying for permission from the government. The churches refused to register under the new act or apply for permits to hold land and threatened to close down their schools and hospitals. After months of argument, they forced a concession from the government; an amendment was issued without the churches needing to apply.

Meredith (1979: 232) states, "Bishop Lamont was the most vociferous critic of the 1969 Constitution". In Lamont's view, the constitution amounted to moral violence and terrorism. The Southern Rhodesian government would prepare the way for communism by creating conditions which made communist ideology attractive. Supporting African aspirations through missionary work, the Catholics were the dominant church in the fight against the constitution.

Even the Anglicans and Methodists, with larger white congregations and fewer ties in the vast rural areas, were prepared to join in condemning government policies. Methodist leader Muzorewa urged Africans to set their sights high, warning against apathy and despair, advising them to fight for their political rights. He devoted most of his time working for African advancement. Some government officials considered the churches to be more a political force than religious organizations. However, their criticism against the Anglicans and Methodists was conducted in a less aggressive manner than against the Catholic hierarchy.

Bishop Lamont lambasted the Southern Rhodesian racial ideology as being in essence the same as that of Nazi Germany, differing from it only in degree of application (Meredith 1979:234). He condemned the government for summary arrest and restriction of political opponents. Ministers in the Rhodesia Front retaliated by accusing some priests as being partisan and being agents of nationalist movements. As the conflict spread, the guerrillas turned to remote mission stations for food and medical supplies.

The Church and Multi-Party Politics from 1980 To 1990

The first elections, which ushered independence in Zimbabwe, were held in March 1980 and the Zimbabwe African Nationalist Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) won 57 seats out of 100 and Robert Mugabe assumed leadership of the nation. The victorious party called for a government of national unity. PF ZAPU held four ministerial posts as well as two for deputy ministers. The defeated Rhodesian Front leader, Ian Smith, remained in parliament as the leader of the opposition. Two members of the Rhodesian Front were given cabinet posts.

Zimbabwe adopted a liberal democracy entrenched in the 1979 Lancaster House constitution. However, the ruling party was desirous of absorbing and eliminating the opposition. Opposition parties such as Zanu (Ndonga), with one seat, were not given space in the new dispensation. The new Zimbabwean government inherited repressive laws enacted by the settler regime, which it retained and enforced. For example, the State of Emergency Act of the in 1960s empowered the state to detain persons without trial. Until it was abolished in 1990, opposition party members critical of government suffered repeated harassment and detention under it.

The government of national unity did not allow democratic space for opposition politics. In fact, ZANU PF became the domineering and only viable party in independent Zimbabwe. In 1982, Prime Minister Mugabe was quoted as saying “when all people carried party cards, the present national registration cards would be abolished, because they would serve no purpose. It would also be easier to identify the enemy”, (The Herald, 25 January 1982). With this kind of statement, the ingredients of one-party state in independent Zimbabwe were in place.

Maxwell (1995:109) argues that in 1980, “established churches faced widespread suspicion due to their association with the former colonial regime.” For this reason churches generally sought legitimacy through endorsing state-directed development at the expense of promoting multiparty democracy. The established churches embarked on a

policy of appeasement due to the fear that their compromised relationship with colonial powers would cause the new state to prefer independent churches at their expense. When Zimbabwe became an independent nation, the protection of an individual against the excesses of the state received inadequate attention; the democratic role of civic organizations was ignored.

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches, a collection of established churches and more recently independent and Pentecostal movements and the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC) have, in different ways played a significant role in the democratization of Zimbabwe. Civil society movements took different forms of adapting themselves to the post-colonial period.

Armed Conflict

As mentioned in first chapter, in 1982 there was armed conflict in the South and West of the country between the two main political parties, ZANU PF and PF ZAPU, in the government of National Unity. There was suspicion on the part of the government that ZAPU had planned a coup d'état. The ex ZIPRA and the ex ZANLA forces found themselves turning guns against each other. For ZANU PF, the armed conflict provided an opportunity to wipe out PF ZAPU and establish a one-party state. The role of the church as an ally in national development was diminished from the breakdown of the government of national unity.

The church took issue with the government over the unparalleled brutality of the Fifth Brigade against innocent civilians. In March 1983, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace spoke personally to Prime Minister Mugabe and presented their paper entitled, "Reconciliation is Still Possible." In presenting the Prime Minister with this paper the Catholic Church spoke the courage of its convictions. The encounter of the prime minister with the heads of denominations on 18 April 1984 resulted in prime minister challenging the churches to play a creative role together with other non-state institutions. Despite the "dissident" problem in Matabeleland Mugabe impressed upon the delegation the need for continued cooperation between church and state in development. On the other hand, the heads of denominations urged the need to respect multi-party politics in the country.

After the 1985 elections, Mugabe did not appoint members of PF ZAPU to the cabinet despite the fact that ZAPU had won 15 seats in Matabeleland. Meanwhile, the "dissident" problem was causing havoc in Matabeleland. The church was confronted with the dilemma of the Fifth Brigade which was accused of gross violations of the civil and political rights of the people in Matabeleland. It took the church a long time to play its prophetic role of championing democratic issues of good governance:

The church entered the new dispensation of the new Zimbabwe with largely otherworldly detachment from things social and political except for the Roman Catholic CCJP and the ZCC, who even amid objections from some of its members, thought through the relevance of the Gospel values to the political and economic realities of the nation. Issues of democracy, human rights and development were, by and large, viewed as out of the jurisdiction of church

activity. Some churches fell into the pit of political appeasement at the expense of maintaining the integrity of the church. (The Zimbabwe We Want, 2006:10)

This aloofness and failure to engage government in the midst of harassment, intimidation, brutality, war and death made the church lose its relevance in the country. The Pentecostal churches were also largely absent in the political ministry of the church.

In mid 1987, the government banned ZAPU meetings and raided its offices in Bulawayo. In September 1987, ZAPU was banned. To achieve one-party state in the country, 20 white seats were abolished and filled by ZANU PF members. ZANU PF attained majority in parliament of 85 seats out of 100.

In February 1997, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) published a report entitled, *Breaking the Silence: Building True Peace*, giving a full account of what transpired in the period 1982-1987. It also focuses on building the broken walls of Jerusalem. The report provides possible therapy for the living victims of the Fifth Brigade in Matabeleland and gives primacy to healing, reconciliation, rehabilitation, and reconstruction over silence and pretension. It emphasizes humanity, justice and truth as the foundational cornerstones of a healthy nation.

The Unity Accord and Multi-Partyism

The major aim of the Unity Accord of 1987 was to eliminate violence in Matabeleland. ZANU PF and PF ZAPU committed themselves to unite under one political party by signing the Unity Accord. The Unity Accord destroyed the philosophy of multiparty democracy that the leader of ZAPU, Joshua Nkomo, had for Zimbabwe.¹ With the accord in place the seeds of one-partyism were sown. The accord did not improve democracy. It witnessed the disappearance of effective opposition. Mafinyani thinks this line of reasoning is faulty and not sustainable:

PF Zapu was not a small party. It had a sound think-tank. The party was not swallowed Nkomo had to put national interests at heart. There is Government of National Unity in Germany as we speak, but no one speaks of a party being swallowed in Germany. There was joy and ululation among the Shona and Ndebele when Zapu and Zanu joined forces on 22nd December 1987. The presence of many political parties does not mean there is democracy. Democracy is how people feel (Interview with Mafinyani Mbuya Nehanda, Harare 21 May 2008.)

Mafinyani is of the view that the presence of many political parties was detrimental to democracy in Zimbabwe. Real development advanced after the Unity Accord.

¹ According to Rukuni Charles (The Inside June 2004) "the old guard in ZAPU believed that the Unity Accord, signed on 22nd December 1987, was responsible for the present crisis in the country, especially ZANU PF's intolerance of any opposition".

Verstraelen (1998:75) postulates that in situations such as those in most developing countries such as Zimbabwe “where democracy is limited and civil society is underdeveloped, the churches are sometimes the only civil organizations that can inspire and support a movement towards true democracy and the development of a civil society which can counteract and change a monopolizing one-party political system which usually abuses its power.” While this might be right, it is clear that the Unity Accord opened up space for civil society to criticize government against the desire to introduce a one-party state. In the 1980s, the church was opposed to one party dictatorship. The Unity Accord could have given the government the impetus to legislate for one party dictatorship. The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace was at the forefront of protest movements campaigning against one party dictatorship and thus promoting fundamental rights and freedoms and party competition. According to Nhema (2002:139), the Church in “one of its advertisements placed in a major daily in 1990 urged the ruling party to abandon its plans to establish a legislated one-party state and to seek a mandate to govern from the people based on real freedom of participation.” By admonishing the ruling party from establishing one-party rule, the church fulfilled her prophetic mission/function of being “the salt of the earth and light the world” (Matt 5:13-16). The church plays a pivotal watchdog role in the process of democratization.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, multi-partyism became the catchword of social movements opposed to Mugabe’s one-party dictatorship tendencies. These movements represented a violation of interests in civic society. Civic society accused the government of being corrupt and insensitive to economic hardships affecting the common people. Of significance is the Forum for Democratic Reform which later became an opposition political party in its push for the democratization of the country. Student demonstrations became rampant.

Among the civic organizations which took centre stage against one-partyism were the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, (ZCTU) Zimbabwe Human Rights Organization (ZIMRIGHTS) and University of Zimbabwe Students Representative Council (SRC). They avowed that multiparty democracy facilitates the competition of ideas for public policy and about how society will achieve its vision and goals.

The role of civil society was prominent in the defence and support of multiparty democracy. Maxwell (1995:118-119) states that in July 1990 the ZCC endorsed Anglican and Roman Catholic churches’ opposition of the government’s intent to a one-party state. The ZCC together with the CCJP also organized a seminar on human rights. The Pentecostal church also petitioned against one-party state.

Multi-partyism in the 1990s

In 1989 Edgar Tekere, a former key cadre in ZANU PF, formed a new political party called the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM). The party was opposed to ZANU PF’s campaign to impose a one-party state. The March 1990 parliamentary elections demonstrated that ZUM enjoyed a lot of support among students and civic organizations

opposed to the introduction of a one-party state. ZUM gained its strength from the revelation of widespread corruption scandals, downturn of the economy, high unemployment and rising inflation. ZUM provided an alternative to ZANU PF's plans to introduce a one-party state.

ZUM won 2 of the 106 contested seats in parliament. The state reaction to ZUM mobilization and campaigns was extremely repressive. Reports of police brutality, partiality, discriminatory procedures, harassment, censorship, monopoly of power, etc were rampant. ZANU PF refused to open up its political system to democratic winds of change.

According to Laakso (2002:337), the 1990 ZANU PF electoral victory did not convince everybody of its legitimacy to be the only political organization that could rule the country in the future and the party soon abandoned the idea of a one-party state.

In the 1995 general elections, ZANU PF won more than 82 percent of votes and ZANU (Ndonga) won 2 seats in its traditional base of Chipinge with about 7 percent of the national vote. The Forum for Democratic Reform won 6 percent of the national votes. Independent candidates won about 5 percent of the votes. The philosophy of "one partyism" was evident in the rural areas while urbanites showed interest in opposition political parties. The election was characterized by voter apathy in the urban centres. Voter apathy reflected fatigue and frustration due to the continuous and systematic repression of any political dissent in the country. For many people, the general election was a non-event.

The launch of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) in June 1997 marked a new beginning in the campaign against repressive laws and for democracy. The NCA was made up of an array of civil society groups such as churches, trade unions, women's organizations, political parties, human rights groups, students, and other interested groups. It was an amalgamation against the repressive and undemocratic Zimbabwean constitution. Through workshops, seminars, media campaigns, public lectures, rallies, stay-always, posters, demonstrations, the NCA conscientized the nation about the need for democracy and constitutional reform.

The NCA successfully urged the people to reject the Constitutional Commission proposed draft constitution in February 2000. Elements of the mainline churches were in the forefront of demands for electoral reform and democratic political space. The Zimbabwe Council of Churches provided secretarial assistance to the NCA. The NCA encouraged a culture of popular participation in decision-making. A few years later ZCC, Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), and ZCBC concurred with the NCA's call for a homegrown constitution:

We have already stated that the current Lancaster House constitution was not inspired by the collective consent and consensus of the people of Zimbabwe. ...The overriding interests in any constitutional reform process should be to create an enabling and conducive framework for good, peaceful and stable governance. (The Zimbabwe We Want, 2006:24)

The churches implored the Government and NCA to dialogue and find a common position for the betterment of Zimbabwe.

The Two Political Parties and the Church in Zimbabwe

In September 1999, a new opposition party, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was formed under the leadership of Morgan Tsvangirai. It represented a new political order in the country. Although nine political parties were registered for the 2000 elections, ZANU PF and MDC became the dominant parties with broad national support. A two-party system took root from 2000 onwards. There was now strong opposition in the country.

Vibrant Opposition and Democracy

Notwithstanding the emergence of a strong opposition party to challenge the ruling party for alternative government, Chikuku, the Director of Ecumenical Documentation and information Centre in Southern Africa (EDICISA), urges for strong civic organizations:

The role of civic organizations is increasingly needed even if there is change of government. The civil society should be strengthened to avoid the Zambian syndrome. The coming to power of Frederick Chiluba saw the demise of civic organizations. This explains why Chiluba was at liberty to abuse national resources in Zambia. Civic organizations should be strengthened to play their prophetic watchdog role. (Interview with Tendai Chikuku, EDICISA, Harare, 21 May 2008.)

While Chikuku's argument is sound and valid civic organizations have failed to exonerate themselves from the damaging accusations of being agents of opposition political parties in the country. The ruling party accuses civic organizations of championing regime change in Zimbabwe. Civic organizations should be by definition non-partisan and stand for justice.

Banana (1996b:78) argues that the church must continue to be the watchdog of democracy and ensure that no impediments are placed on the path of those wishing to exercise their constitutional right to vote. The commitment to the promotion of justice and peace is a constitutive element of evangelisation. In the general elections of June 2000, the second substantive opposition party in Zimbabwe after ZAPU, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), captured 57 parliamentary seats against 62 seats won by the ruling party (Raftopoulos 2001:1). The opposition claimed to have achieved this feat within the context of state-sponsored political violence (Raftopoulos 2001:1). The MDC also claimed the elections were rigged, including ballot stuffing, in favour of the ruling party (Raftopoulos 2001:2). The MDC manifesto included political issues such as the return to democratisation, the rule of law, constitutional reform and transparent land reform (Kambudzi 2000: 37). Both the 2000 parliamentary elections and the 2002 Presidential elections were not deemed to be either free or fair by the World Council of Churches and other religious bodies.

In 2003 the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), a network of civil society organisations, launched an electoral reform programme. It was able to build on from where the NCA had left off. ZESN benefited from the inter-party mediation efforts of three bishops: one from the Catholic Church; a second from the Zimbabwe Council of Churches representing the Protestant churches, and a third from the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) representing the Pentecostal churches (Matchaba-Hove R and Moyses A., 2005:17)

In the March 2005 general elections, the MDC garnered 41 seats but claimed violence unleashed by the ruling party and the government's refusal to promote civil society compromised the government's legitimacy (Kambudzi 2000: 37.). According to the Zimbabwe Council of Churches 2005 Parliamentary Elections Report (2005:1) a climate of tolerance and respect among citizens and political parties could have strengthened democracy and facilitated for peaceful political competition.

As if disappointed by the March elections in May 2005, the government launched Operation Restore Order, a countrywide police blitz on shanties, stalls and cottages deemed to have been built illegally (*Daily Mirror*, 19 May 2005). The government said the operation was meant to stamp out the black market and reduce pressure on overcrowded urban areas (*Daily Mirror*, 19 May 2005.). Civic and human rights groups such as the National Constitutional Assembly condemned the operation as a violation of human rights and urged the government to restore the rule of law (Harold-Barry, 2005:14). In addition, the Catholic Bishops indicted the government for "a grave crime committed against the poor and the helpless... for which they will be held individually accountable." (Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference, 2 June 2005). The UN estimated that the campaign left at least 700 000 of the poorest people homeless.

In October 2005 Christian Alliance (CA) was formed in Matopos in Matabeleland. It was formed by like-minded church leaders who felt called to help solve the crisis in Zimbabwe through prophetic actions. The group was comprised of church leaders from across the Catholic, Evangelical and Protestant divide. Bishop Levee Kadenge of the Methodist Church was chosen to be the convener of the Alliance. He was later to leave fulltime work in the Church because of his role in CA. The Church felt it would be comfortable without him because government agents were constantly harassing the Church leadership because of Kadenge's involvement in CA's activities.

In September 2006, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches prepared a discussion document entitled, "The Zimbabwe We Want: Towards a National Vision for Zimbabwe". In this document the churches implored, the nation to shun political intolerance:

Political intolerance has unfortunately become a culture in Zimbabwe. The trading of insults, violence with impunity, lawlessness and hate speech has unfortunately been characteristic of inter-party and intra-political parties. The Zimbabwe We Want must cherish, embrace and celebrate a culture of tolerance of dissent, political plurality and

a willingness to accommodate political differences. Intolerance breeds hatred and hatred breeds violence. Violence, in turn, leads to destruction and social rupture. These vices cannot build the Zimbabwe We Want. (The Zimbabwe We Want, 2006:8)

Political tolerance is an important ingredient in the efforts towards democratic consolidation in Zimbabwe.

The 29 March 2008 Elections

The electoral process was significantly overhauled in the 2008 parliamentary and presidential elections. There is an increasing prophetic role of the church in 21st century. The church realized that democracy would not be handed down to Zimbabweans on a silver platter. Multiparty democracy could be realized only through sustained political pressure and struggle.

A harmonized presidential, parliamentary and local government election was held on March 29, 2008 in Zimbabwe. The three major candidates were incumbent President Mugabe of the ZANU-PF, Morgan Tsvangirai of the MDC, and Simba Makoni, an independent candidate. The election was expected, because of Zimbabwe's dire economic situation, to provide President Mugabe with his toughest electoral challenge to date. Mugabe's opponents have been critical of the handling of the electoral process, and the government was accused of planning to rig the election.

No official results were announced for more than a month after the election. The failure to release results was strongly criticized by the MDC, which sought an order from the High Court that would force their release. An independent projection placed Tsvangirai in the lead, but without the majority needed to avoid a second round. The MDC has, however, declared that Tsvangirai won a narrow majority in the first round. After the recount and the verification of the results, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) announced on May 2 that Tsvangirai won 47.9% and Mugabe won 43.2%, thereby necessitating a run-off, which was to be held on 27 June 2008.

The Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC), The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) and The Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), expressing deep concern over the deteriorating political, security, economic and human rights situation in Zimbabwe following the March 29, 2008 national elections released the following text:

Before the elections, we issued statements urging Zimbabweans to conduct themselves peacefully and with tolerance towards those who held different views and political affiliation from one's own. After the elections, we issued statements commending Zimbabweans for the generally peaceful and politically mature manner in which they conducted themselves before, during and soon after the

elections. Reports that are coming through to us from our Churches and members throughout the country indicate that the peaceful environment has, regrettably, changed:

... Organized violence perpetrated against individuals, families and communities who are accused of campaigning or voting for the 'wrong' political party in the March 29, 2008 elections has been unleashed throughout the country, particularly in the countryside and in some high density urban areas.

People are being abducted, tortured, humiliated by being asked to repeat slogans of the political party they are alleged not to support, ordered to attend mass meetings where they are told they voted for the 'wrong' candidate and should never repeat it in the run-off election for President, and, in some cases, people are murdered. (Catholic Communications Network: Press Release, 25/04/2008).

The churches stood as a voice of morality by condemning political violence and lack of political tolerance after the 29 March elections in Zimbabwe.

The government of President Robert Mugabe made every effort to ensure the process leading up to the March 29 elections disadvantaged the opposition. As a result, the elections were far from free and fair, observers from the World Council of Churches (WCC) and All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) said in their final report:

The process of voter registration, access to the media and freedom to campaign by the opposition were somehow encumbered, to some extent, by the incumbent and agents of the ruling party, ZANU PF. Uniformed forces openly intimidated the voter population in the days preceding the poll," according to the WCC/AACC report released in Nairobi. 6 May 2008.

All these events are indicators that the electoral process was skewed in favour of the incumbent who openly utilized state resources to his advantage. Thus the 2008 elections were far from being free and fair.

Conclusion

The relationship between the organized church and government of Zimbabwe, especially with regard to democratic space for association, has been at the centre of conflict between Christians and the government. From the point of view of the political common good, the activities of the citizens as members of the church have an impact on that common good. Christians are part of the political society and the national community. The church is in the body politic HENCE Church-State relationships are critical. The church and the body politic cannot live and develop in sheer isolation from, and ignorance of, one another. Multi-Party democracy encompasses ordinary citizens making ongoing input into a government's decision-making and policy processes, along with freedom to form or join a political party of their choice.

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Chapter 5

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRATIC RULE

Francisca Chimhanda

Introduction

Democracy, the “government by the people, for the people” in Zimbabwe, as in most post-colonial African countries, is an ideal and the attainment of it is difficult as characterized by the absence of and pretensions to it. In Zimbabwe itself, the road to democracy since independence from colonial oppression is fraught with blind alleys and impasses. The church here takes note of the ecumenical church of Christ that is in dialogue with other faiths. Throughout history, the church is a recognized key partner to the state, in particular, and society in general, in the discourse facilitating the democratization process. In this context, the church shares in the mission of Christ in the triple role of being the conscience of the nation, prophetic advocacy and pacesetter in upholding the moral fabric, providing voice to the voiceless and in education for social transformation, respectively. The church’s role is explored using access points that include liberation, reconciliation and reconstruction, vis-à-vis democratic values of the quest for human dignity and participation of all people in decisions that affect the quality and direction of their lives. The question of how the church has exercised its role in the transition from colonial rule to democracy in Zimbabwe, calls for other related questions that are: What has been done? What is being done? Do the interventions go deep enough? What needs to be done?

The Transition to Democracy

A time for transition from colonial rule to democracy in Zimbabwe is symbolic, an opportune time.² A transition creates new opportunities to heal wounds and build bridges. The challenge is to seize the opportunity and its burden of responsibility to redefine the task of the church in working towards nation building. The challenges include the abolition of injustices and the formation of a liberating social order as the church engages the future (Russel Botman 2000:98-99). Where opportunities are missed, we simply have one repressive government replacing another. For example, underlying the church’s role in facilitating liberation, reconciliation (forgiveness), reconstruction (renewal), we have the dichotomies of the wounded who are seeking healing, the dispossessed majority that need to be repatriated, the decay of the country’s moral fibre and the need to restore and affirm our essential cultural values. Here the church plays a prominent role as custodian of ethical values, pacesetter in the process of democracy and as one of the main stakeholders in education.

The Church and Participation in the Zimbabwean Dream and Vision for Democracy

² Kairos Document of the churches of South Africa.

In the struggle for independence and particularly at independence, Zimbabweans had a dream. The church has attempted to initiate a nation-wide debate in articulating the dream and vision for a new democratic Zimbabwe. The original unprinted Working Document, “The Zimbabwe We Want”, produced by the ecumenical church of Zimbabwe³ somewhat captures the vision for democracy for most Zimbabweans. It is in unison with the Zimbabwe Charter⁴ in urging for a nationwide free debate on the Zimbabwean Constitution in working toward a people initiated constitution, and in pressing for freedom of expression, association and assembly.

Zimbabwe’s Transition to Democracy and the Situation of the Ground

The post-independence period from colonial rule saw Zimbabweans emerging from protracted guerrilla warfare. This was liberation from racism, elitism and imperialism and the urge was for democracy, expressed as the rule by the black majority. Indigenous people, then, either automatically became cheap labour or they were evacuated into Reserves or Tribal Trust lands (TTLs). In the TTLs there was systematic impoverishment of black people through overcrowding, overstocking, deforestation and poor farming methods

Liberation, Reconciliation and Reconstruction

The democratization process must call for a creative dialectic of liberation, reconciliation, reconstruction (renewal) and democracy. Liberation and reconciliation and reconstruction are values that are mutually inclusive in the agenda for the attainment of democracy, particularly in the renaissance from colonial oppression. In this context, the church is challenged to share in Christ’s redemptive healing ministry. Authentic liberation and reconciliation has biblical roots.

In God’s creation and salvific plan, reconciliation is at the heart of the Good News. In love and graciousness God initiates reconciliation in the Christ-event of the Incarnation, passion, death and resurrection, of Jesus. In this divine activity of reconciliation, God in Christ enters into the depth of human experience of suffering, conflict and violence. The Christ-event gives us the story of deliverance and attainment of quality life. Resurrection heralds the new place – the new heavens and new earth in which the reconciled are gathered. As such reconciliation embraces all dimensions of human life. It breaks down human enmity, and embraces all the entire cosmos. It points to the alienation to be overcome, created by the violent situation. It involves lament for what has been lost and calls for healing of memory. In the God-human-cosmos interrelationship, reconciliation has also a cosmic dimension (Schreier 1992:8) underlying the biblical concept of good stewardship of creation.

The post-war situation needed to deal with inner healing – the healing of wounds. An inclusive approach to reconciliation takes note that God has a salvific will for both the

³ Produced by the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop’s Conference (ZCBC), the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC).

⁴ Adopted by the People’s Convention, Harare, on 9 February 2008

oppressed and the oppressor and that sometimes the oppressed are sometimes themselves oppressors. There is need for both internal and external critique (Deortis Roberts 1987:15-19). Failure to take note of this aspect can result in (substitutionist approaches to democracy) reversed racism, classicism, sexism, ethnocentrism, etc. In this case, there is cognitive dissonance in that the oppressed of yester while are found to be the oppressors of today.

Although the processes of liberation and reconciliation are mutually inclusive, however, liberation has been associated with the delivery from oppression through armed struggle. Consequently, the process of liberation has been negated as condoning violence. There have been attempts to separate liberation from reconciliation and reconstruction. According to Robert Schreier (1992:6), a case in point is that of Latin American Bishops⁵ who advocated reconciliation as an alternative to liberation. They argued that reconciliation captured more fully the Christian message and was not as conflictual as liberation. It offered peace to all sides. In the context of African theology, J.N.K. Mugambi⁶ postulated a paradigm shift from liberation to reconstruction (renewal). In this he advocated a shift from the Moses type of leadership of the Exodus deliverance from Egypt to the Nehemiah type of leadership of reconstruction in the aftermath of the Babylonian exile. However, Mugambi was quick to see that liberation is a complex process mutually inclusive of reconciliation and reconstruction. According to Mugambi, in the aftermath of the liberation struggle, the Church has to take the lead in nation building starting from ruins (2003.61ff.).

The concept of building from ruins is proper to our understanding of the church's role in capturing the kairos, and bearing the responsibility that goes with it.⁷ In the liberation struggle, civilians suffered atrocities from both warring sides. Racism as practiced by whites undermined the dignity of black people. As described above, liberation from colonial oppression left people physically and psychologically wounded and broken. The cry of the people in authentic liberation was the unraveling of the truth of war crimes and holding the perpetrators to account. The search for truth is a prelude to reconciliation. Concerning the mutual influencing of truth and reconciliation, there is need for incisive honest conversation.

The pertinent issue is what to do with those who have committed war crimes. It is a question of holding the oppressors to account for the atrocities of war - justice being another essential prerequisite to forgiveness. Various avenues are open here:

- i. Offering blanket **amnesia**, forgetting and forgiving.
- ii. Related to the above is offering general amnesty – this is really the same as amnesia (forced forgetfulness).
- iii. The granting of amnesty to individuals in return for a full disclosure relating to the crime is what undergirds the post-apartheid South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

⁵ Latin American bishops in a Conference held in Chile in 1985, and in the Los Andes Statement

⁶ JNK Mugambi in his book, *From Liberation to Reconstruction*, 1995.

⁷ Cf. the *Kairos Document* of the Church in South Africa, 1985.

- iv. Harsh punitive measures are incurred on perpetrators of war crimes. These include prospects of long prison sentences to those imprisoned, or, arrest, prosecution and imprisonment for those who still going free.⁸

Post-apartheid South Africa opted for the third way. The Nobel Peace laureate (1984), Archbishop Desmond Tutu, headed the multi-ethnic 17-member Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Today we hear of a similar structure and process that is taking place in post-war Liberia. The main thrust was anamnesis, remembering of the painful memories of war atrocities in order to bring about authentic healing.

According to Archbishop Desmond Tutu, an important learning from the Our Father is that we are not asked to forget. Remembering is necessary for authentic reconciliation so that we will not let such atrocities happen again. George Santayana brings this concept to sharp relief by asserting, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it” (Crossroads 2001:25). David Harold Berry et al, in *The Past is the Future* (2004) accentuates this point of anamnesis concerning the transition to democracy in Zimbabwe. True reconciliation, then, as the healing of such memories exposes the abuse, the pain, the degradation, and truth. Not forgetting the past means re-examining them with a new attitude and learning precisely from the experience of suffering that only love can build up, whereas hatred produces devastation and ruin. In the process of reconciliation, the deadly cycle of revenge should be replaced with the new-found liberty of forgiveness.

It is common observation that in situations of war, people have an awful capacity for evil, whereas, in the process of reconciliation, they have an amazing capacity for forgiveness. The South African TRC with its strengths and weakness proved to be an authentic forum for easing the emotional burden. Tutu testifies that in giving their testimonies, many people weep, express anger or voice confusion. In this context, it has been shown that story telling has therapeutic value. Part of the process of psychological healing for any victim is being given the opportunity to retell the harrowing stories of suffering to a supportive and non-judgmental audience. It is observed that people have an extraordinary capacity to forgive once the truth is established. Tutu is emphatic that this is not cheap forgiveness because in this process the culprits are given opportunity to acknowledge the wrongs and if possible, ask for pardon. It is real healing resulting from having dealt with the real situation (Tutu, in *Facing up to Horrors of the Past*, 1999, cf. Crossroads 2001:24-25).

It appears that the post-apartheid South Africa’s TRC paradigm of dealing with situations where violence, turmoil and sectional strife are rife and often in conflicts that take place not between warring nations, but within the same nation is appropriate for Zimbabwe. Here we can pose to ask what actually happened in the aftermath of liberation from colonial rule. At independence from colonial rule, the new Zimbabwe government was commended for taking up a policy of reconciliation. But was this like the shaking of hands in a soccer match after it is inevitable that there is a winner and a loser? The retrogression that took place in a couple of decades after independence points to the superficiality of this act. There needed to be in-depth follow up to the process of

⁸ Tutu, in *Facing up to the Horrors of the Past*, 1999, (cf. *Crossroad No.175*, 2001:24-25 book review).

liberation and reconciliation. Churches needed to offer theological and pastoral interventions to this effect.

According to Robert Schreiter (1992:6), the understanding of reconciliation as hasty peace tries to deal with the history of violence by suppressing its memory and ignoring its effects. The approach urges for a fresh beginning on all sides. Consequently, there is false reconciliation in that the approach continues to oppress the victims by trivializing their suffering. It is common human experience that the past far from being forgotten persistently haunts us unless it has been dealt with adequately. It is an indirect way of saying that the experiences of those who suffer are not important and that the oppressed are unimportant in the process of reconciliation. Unfortunately, the church is implicated in this superficial and easy option to reconciliation.

In exploring the spirituality of reconciliation or therapeutic discourse, Schreiter (1992 :) rightly notes that the reconciliation process begins with the shattered victim as he/she discovers God's gratuitousness of restoration of the abused and shattered humanity. Two biblical motifs are important here that is, the appropriation of creation and baptismal dignity of humankind of the imago Dei/Christ and orientation on God's memory or posture for the **anawim**, the poor of Yahweh. This is what underlies the Church's role of prophetic witness as shall be discussed below.

Dialogue of Education

The church as pacesetter can initiate a dialogue of study. The church in her teaching office is together with the state a major stakeholder in education. Many political leaders pride themselves of having gone through Church schools. In participatory democracy, the church should facilitate access to and dissemination of information. But education has both short-term and long-term outcomes. Concerning the latter, education in human and democratic values should receive pride of place in church schools. In vocational training, places like Silveira House have included leadership training.⁹

Concerning focus on both long-term and short-term outcomes, Jonah Gokova (in interview) points out that the church as stakeholder in education should aim at education for living. Such an education should prepare people to deal with day-to-day life situation. Of utmost importance, education for living should equip believers to engage in prophetic ministry. For example, in a situation where the government has grabbed land and consequently failed in production, education should equip people to understand the dynamics of a political economy.

Another practical example exists in that in preparation for the 29 March harmonized elections, the church engaged in a thorough voter education programme. Amid negative propaganda messages from the state, the church felt the common people needed to be informed in making a responsible choice for a leader that would stand for their needs. In this context, the bishops issued a pastoral letter on Zimbabwe Elections 2008: Only when Power Stands under God's Blessing can it be Trusted (16 December 2007). The church

⁹ I attended three modules of leadership training for Religious leaders (2004-2006)

urged for Christian and cultural values of love, truth, justice freedom and peace to act as a filter for extracting the truth as people pass through thick layers of ideological and political propaganda for. The Church urged government and all contesting parties to create a social, political and economic climate that enhances moral integrity, the establishment of a credible electoral process whose outcome would be free and fair. Likewise, Christians were urged to make their decisions and choices guided by the Christian ethos. Voters were to use Christian Social Teaching to examine the views of the election candidates on pertinent issues and rate the candidates' integrity and their past or potential performance.

With the understanding that where Christian and cultural values are the guiding principle, it does not matter that people, in general, and believers, in particular, belong to different political affiliations – the desired outcomes of tolerance and peaceful co-existence are the same. Thus voters were encouraged to show tolerance to the individual's choice of a political party while showing a commitment to justice and solidarity with each member of the people of God.

The church under the SADC Regional Faith Based Initiatives (RJFBI) included Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa (FOCCISA), Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA) and Interregional Meeting of Bishops of Southern Africa (IMBISA). In preparation for the 29 March 2008 harmonized elections and recognizing its challenge as partner and stakeholder in achieving good governance, accountability, transparency, human rights and respect of the rule of law was proactive in training election-monitoring officers. While all local officers were accredited, there was disappointment that the 110 church leaders from the Churches of SADC who arrived in the country 10 days before the polling day were not accredited to observe the elections.¹⁰ Sr Veronica claims that the latter applied for accreditation too late. She witnessed the recount for Parliamentary seats and concluded that the disparities were minor and this made the process unnecessary. She was shocked at the harassment of presiding officers as part of state organized violence. In Masvingo some presiding officers (including a religious Sister) were arrested.

Conclusion

In this chapter, it was shown that the church shares in the mission of Christ to establish the kingdom or reign of God on earth. This is a Kingdom in which love, peace and justice reign supreme. In the Great commandment of love the church as the people of God is mandated to inculcate these kingdom values. This is what underlies participatory democracy in the God-humanity-cosmos mutual connectedness. A transition to democracy in post-colonial Zimbabwe was put to sharp relief as a kairos moment – an opportune time in which the challenge for the church is to seize the opportunity with its burden of responsibility. Zimbabwe is a fragmented society having emerged from colonial oppression in addition to its history of repeated civil strife emanating from bad governance and corruption. The need for truth and reconciliation could not be over-

¹⁰ Interview with Sr Veronica of IMBISA Social Communication Department held on 7 May 2008. The RJFBI issued Press Statement urging for the immediate release of election results.

emphasized concerning the healing of wounds and as a means of ensuring that past mistakes are not repeated.

As a partner with the state, in achieving good governance, accountability, transparency, upholding of human dignity and respect for the rule of law, it is plausible that the church by nature has a capacity to promote a culture of tolerance, inclusion and dissipate conflict. It has a capacity to work with all people and to engage all political parties in working for unity based on love, tolerance and justice. In this context, it is true to say that the church is the ideal place for putting in place structures for justice and reconciliation.

Three important roles of the church in the transition to democracy in Zimbabwe were highlighted. These are the church as guardian of moral values, prophetic mission and the church as pacesetter. Democratic values punctuated in the WCC Unilateral Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) are seen as the flipside of divine love and justice. Here it was seen that the church itself experiences a moral dilemma in that it is supposed to take the lead in championing for democracy when it is in actual fact not democratic. In situations of conflict and, as highlighted by the biblical motif of the anawim and also the Old Testament prophetic tradition, the church is supposed to provide voice for the voiceless. The church as pacemaker must take a conjectural approach and this in turn entails a multi-sectorial dialogical approach (church-state dialogue, dialogue of culture and the gospel and a dialogue of education for democracy). But in this dialogue, the church must guard against compromising its prophetic role.

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Chapter 5

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND ITS FUNDING PARTNERS IN ZIMBABWE

Levee Kadenge

Introduction

This chapter looks at the role of the donors and the Church in Zimbabwe and critically examines how their mutual relationship has influenced the struggle for democratic change. In this regard, this chapter has two major objectives, namely, to discuss the role of funding partners and the Church in the current Zimbabwean struggle for democratic change and to explore how their relationship has influenced this struggle. Furthermore, this study is mainly justified by the fact that there is a recent realization among the generality of Zimbabweans and funding partners that the Church is an important player as far as general national development is concerned. In this context, all Zimbabwean political parties and progressive civic organizations are now stampeding for recognition by the Church constituency in order for them to successfully pursue their objectives. Therefore, it is imperative for the donor community to recognize the centrality of the Church in determining political stability.

It is also noteworthy that in order for the Church in Zimbabwe to effectively and efficiently participate in the fight for democratic change it needs to acquire and deploy adequate human and financial resources. Muchena D(2002:17) states that it is not a secret to point out that the Zimbabwean Church has in this regard received enormous funding from individual well-wishers, local, regional and international organizations. This demonstrates why Zimbabwe is one of the countries that urgently need humanitarian and political intervention from well-wishers.

In this context, this chapter seeks to explore how the Church's funding partners have influenced or shaped the nature of the strategies that the Church is deploying in order to effectively and efficiently fight for democracy in Zimbabwe. This exploration is important since it clearly demonstrates the effects of receiving funds that have stringent conditions. One of the major effects of this kind of arrangement is that the funded organizations end up pursuing other people or organizations' hidden agendas and not what they set out to do.

Funding Partner

These are the institutions or organizations that fund the activities of faith-based organizations. They are also known as donors or sponsors. These are in the main Overseas Church institutions and para-church organizations mainly based in Europe and the United States of America. These institutions have funded, in varying degrees, the activities of a number of faith-based organizations in order to influence the struggle for

democratic change in Zimbabwe (Chakaodza 2005:3). Therefore, this study is going to use the terms ‘funding partner’, ‘sponsor’ and ‘donor’ synonymously. As mentioned earlier, this study qualitatively analyzes, for the first time ever, how these funding partners have shaped the struggle for democratic change in Zimbabwe.

The Relationship between the Activities of Funding Partners and the Church in Zimbabwe

All funding partners have one major role in the struggle for democratic change in Zimbabwe and perhaps Southern Africa as a whole, which is basically to bank-roll the pro-democracy activities that the Church is involved in. Our investigations have also shown that they support a number of equally important programmes that are related to humanitarian assistance. Countries such as Zimbabwe that are not peaceful, in the sense that its population does not feel safe, need quite a lot of humanitarian assistance. The assistance involves food, condoms to prevent the spread of HIV-AIDS and clothing distribution. They also assist Zimbabwe with medicines and other medical instruments.

It is very unfortunate that the Mugabe regime has over the years abused the Christian Care, World Vision and many other organizations’ programmes by politicizing them (Kadenge 2005:5). There are documented cases where the food has been given to ZANU PF supporters only. In such cases, the regime would want to campaign using the food that is meant to benefit all deserving Zimbabweans. The Church has become the moral avenue for administering donor funds because of its apolitical role. In this perspective, the donors have tended to channel their humanitarian assistance through the Church and para-church organization.

Trocaire, a faith-based organization, which comes from Ireland and was created by the Irish Bishops Conference, is involved in many development related programmes in the Southern African region (Wallis 2004:62). Their major concern is to promote peace and justice in the region. Trocaire also works in collaboration with serious friends that work for peace and justice in their respective countries. This shows us that this funding partner has global concerns. In this regard, they are not just concerned about peace and justice in their own home country but peace and justice the world over. They are very much concerned about global peace and justice. It is also noteworthy that their funding does not come from the Irish government lest other people may want to think that the Irish government has a hidden agenda as far as the Zimbabwean story is concerned. It is also noteworthy that they also work with civic organizations that promote peace and justice in Zimbabwe.

Our interview with Bishop Magaya, the convener of the Zimbabwe National Pastors Conference, who has been very vocal and in the forefront fighting for democracy in Zimbabwe was very revealing. The interview was very important as it enlightened us on how Church related organizations view the activities of their funding partners. He said that they get their funding from organizations that emphasize peace, justice and advocacy (Magaya, interview, 20 May 2008). One interesting observation is that there is congruence as far as the objectives of funding partners and those of Church related

organizations are concerned. This observation is based on the fact that they are both concerned about peace, justice and equity. He also revealed to us that all the organizations that fund them have a Church background. Some of them are the Germany Church Aid, Norwegian Church Aid, Christian Aid and Tear Fund.

All the funding partners have a universal thrust, that is, to fight for peace and justice the world over. This shows us that they have a core and universal vision. For example, MISEREOR, “places justice, peace and integrity of creation at the heart of its work” (MISEREOR Newsletter, March 1983). This organization is a development from the German Catholic Bishops’ Organization for Development Cooperation and they offer cooperation for development processes to all people of good will, in a spirit of partnership and they are also strongly committed to implementing the Biblical preferential option for the poor.

In their detailed guidelines for planning a project and submitting a request for support to MISEREOR they clearly indicate that they “strengthen civil society, and see the poor themselves with their rich potentials as the key protagonists of development processes for a world in which lives can be led in dignity” (MISEREOR Newsletter, March 1983) In addition, they foster dialogue, mutual learning, and North – South as well as South – South networking for development. This thrust strengthens lobbying and advocacy as well as the promotion of good governance and the observance of human rights, aspects which are central to the mission of the Church.

It is also noteworthy that some of the funding partners are international, while others are regional and local. As result of their diversity, they also have different interests as far as the Zimbabwean story is concerned. Most of those that are local also have international partners. So, most of the funding that we find in the Church is foreign. However, the questions that we grapple with in this investigation relate to the level and scope of influence that the funding partners have on faith based organizations.

Our main observation is that most funding partners have diverse roles in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. The analysis has shown that some funding partners support the struggle for democratic change while on the other hand ZANU PF has tended to fund certain Church individuals and institutions to advance its political ideology. For example, it has funded the Destiny of Africa Network in order to maintain its hegemony. This study has found out that most international donors and embassies support those activities by Church-related organizations that have something to do with the ushering in of democratic change in Zimbabwe.

From the interviews that we carried out with leaders of selected Church related organizations and funding partners we established that they enjoy a harmonious relationship. Most church leaders contented that the global aid has enabled them to pursue their objectives as much as possible. What is particularly interesting is the observation by some church leaders that their funding partners do not negatively affect their objectives (Rev Mhlanga, Interview, 23 April 2008). Most of those interviewed

concur that the objectives of the funding partners and theirs tally very much. They agree that "...aid to Africa (must bring) positive impact and sustainable human development." (Reality of Aid: 2004, 4) They do not normally disagree. Bishop Magaya actually said that "we do not approach those organizations that pursue objectives and visions that are different from ours. We actually approach those organizations that we know, that is, those that pursue peace and justice issues" (Interview). For example, organizations like Christian Alliance easily get financial support from donors that empower those that stand for peace and justice. This can be accounted for by the fact that Christian Alliance advocates peace and justice.

All the Church organizations that we approached also informed us that they do not get funding from embassies. They get all their funding from the church related funders. This is so primarily because they are not involved in unorthodox protests. They do not fire guns. However, ZANU PF thinks that there is a problem with progressive organizations and political parties that get funding from the international world. This contradicts their much publicized relations with the Chinese and the North Korean governments where they got their funding during the liberation war, when they were fighting Smith.

The results of our analysis demonstrated that the objectives of progressive Church organizations are not in any way influenced by their donors. They actually acknowledge that their funding partners have played a fundamental role in sponsoring their activities. This has actually positively shaped their struggle for democratic change in Zimbabwe.

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