The church's role in social healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe:

An analysis of reconciliation in the National Vision Discussion Document of the Churches of Zimbabwe

Gift Masengwe

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the whole thesis, except where specifically indicated
to the contrary in the text, is my original work.

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Gift Masengwe

As supervised and approved by

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Professor Steve de Gruchy

Dedications

This thesis is dedicated to Rutendo Immaculate Tariro and Munyaradzi Anesu. For your mother, Portia, I promise to be a husband, and to you my children, a father!

I am thankful of your loving patience, my children, during my absence from home (in Zimbabwe) while taking my studies in South Africa. You are lovely children! I love you. Many will remember me through you my children! May your lives be blessed through God's rich providence! I pray for God to be with Zimbabwe – Munyaradzi ave Nesu – as we put our faith in Christ – Kutenda kune Tariro. May your own lives be planted in Christ's own reconciling work on the Cross! And that reconciliation becomes a bedrock for your lives, faith and future.

Abstract

The study focuses on the National Vision Discussion Document (NVDD) from Zimbabwe, and is a reflection of the need for, and the churches' approach to, reconciliation in Zimbabwe. The analysis of the social context in which the NVDD was written sets the tone for this study, and provides the basis for discussing and constructing a deeper theology of reconciliation in Zimbabwe. Two criticisms of the NVDD are advanced, namely, the lack for a critical social analysis, and a weak theological reflection.

In responding to the first criticism, the study undertakes a detailed analysis of three key areas of enmity, namely, the ethnic conflicts between the Shona and Ndebele, the racial conflicts between white and black centered on land, and the political conflicts between ZANU-PF and civil society and the MDC. In responding to the second criticisms, the theology is deepened through an examination of Miroslav Volf's, *Exclusion and Embrace*, John de Gruchy's, *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice,* the *Kairos Document* and the *Belhar Confession.* Reconciliation was seen to lie at the edge of two parallel truths; justice and forgiveness; truth and reconciliation.

In conclusion, the study established the basis for a deeper theology of reconciliation, by focusing on three key areas: social dynamics, theological reflection, and practical and logistical steps to national reconciliation. For a deeper theology of reconciliation, seven levels for reconciliation were suggested: *individual, social, cultural, institutional, political, theological* and *religious*. From these seven levels, two strategies for the practice of reconciliation were suggested: *ecumenical* and *strategic partnerships*.

It should be noted that events in Zimbabwe continue to progress at a rapid rate and the social context changes from week to week. However, these current events suggest that the study remains relevant for national reconciliation and theological praxis because of the abiding issues of conflict that cry out for reconciliation.

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Abbreviations

AIPPA – Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act

CCJP – Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace

EFZ – Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe

ESAP – Economic Structural Adjustment Programme

FTLRP – Fast Track Land Reform Programme

HRC – Human Rights Commission

IJRC – Institute of Justice and Reconciliation Commission

MDC – Movement for Democratic Change

NCA – National Constitutional Assembly

NGO – Non Governmental Organizations

NVDD – National Vision Discussion Document

ORO – Operation Restore Order (also known as Murambatsvina)

POSA – Public Order and Security Act

SABC – South African Broadcasting Corporation

SCMZ – Student Christian Movement of Zimbabwe

TRC –Truth and Reconciliation Commission

UDI – Unilateral Declaration of Independence

WCC – World Council of Churches

ZANU PF – Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front)

ZAPU – Zimbabwe African People's Union

ZCA – Zimbabwe Christian Alliance

ZCBC – Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference

ZCC – Zimbabwe Council of Churches

ZCTU – Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions

ZHRNGOF – Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum

ZNPC – Zimbabwe National Pastors' Conference

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Chapter 1.0

Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Study

<u>1.1.1 Background to the study</u>

This thesis is a study of the theological understanding of reconciliation by churches in Zimbabwe. The study used the 2006 publication by churches called *The Zimbabwe we want: Towards a national vision for Zimbabwe*, commonly referred to as the "National Vision Discussion Document" (NVDD). The NVDD is a discussion document that was written by churches through three church bodies: the Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC), the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC). Its theme is to provide a vision for social justice, peace, and reconciliation. The document makes an attempt at rebuilding the economy, society, and the state, and to restore destabilized achievements.

<u>1.1.2 The NVDD and reconciliation in Zimbabwe</u>

Out of a vast array of subjects treated in the NVDD, national reconciliation was picked for this study. The NVDD committed a section to discuss national reconciliation, and Chapter 2 picks this up. It elaborates the achievements of the early years of independence but raises key issues in the same period that prevented people from coming together. To provide a foundation for the nation into the future, the events of the twenty-seven years before the NVDD needed to be dealt with before crafting a "shared national vision". This allows the church to argue that reconciliation is central in "nation building and development in Zimbabwe" (NVDD, 2006:43).

In the light of this, this study focuses on national reconciliation and social healing from the perspective of the church. It investigates the question, "What is the theological understanding of reconciliation that informs the National Vision Discussion Document (NVDD), and what

further theological insights could contribute towards the strengthening of this section of the document"?   In light of this question, this research investigated and identified the theology that informed the understanding of reconciliation in the NVDD. This study appreciated the NVDD initiative and also outlined its limitations. Using the NVDD, this study has identified ways of strengthening the theology of reconciliation from the works of theologians, clergy and churches in South Africa and Croatia (see de Gruchy, 2002, Volf, 1996, The Kairos Theologians, 1986, and Villa-Vicencio, 1986), and has then proposed some practical steps forward.

1.1.3 Theoretical framework and research design

The study falls in the area of social theology (De Gruchy, 2006). Social theology is born at the interface of theory and practice in the life of the church. The study is shaped by two partners; praxis (social context) and reflection (theology). From Holland and Henriot, (2000), social theology uses the best tools in social sciences. According to De Gruchy (2006), it draws from *liberation, contextual* and *public* theologies.

In social theology there are two theoretical phases: (1.) social analysis and, (2.) Christian theological reflection. Using this framework, this research investigated the topic in four logical steps. One, it reviewed the NVDD and analyzed its approach to reconciliation. It then investigated the history of conflict, and highlighted areas of tension such as land/race, ethnicity and bipolar politics. The study further engaged with theological works in South Africa and Croatia, and then it recommended a framework for strengthening the NVDD (in both process and product). This was seen as an opportunity to build a theory of reconciliation rooted in the Zimbabwean context.

1.1.4 Structure of the study

This study consists of six chapters. The first chapter introduces the thesis. It outlines the logic of the study, giving a brief overview of the history of exclusion in Zimbabwe. It raises the

questions of race and land, bipolar politics and ethnicity, and highlights the key issues in this hypothesis of study.

The second chapter focuses on the context in which the NVDD was written by the ZCBC, the EFZ and the ZCC. This chapter outlines the writing process, highlights the authorship of the document, and presents an overview and summary of the document as background information to the document.

The third chapter discusses the theology of reconciliation in the NVDD, analyzing the church's understanding of reconciliation.

The fourth chapter engages theologies of reconciliation from experiences in other parts of the world such as Croatia and South Africa. This chapter uses the perspectives of Miroslav Volf's concept of embrace and John de Gruchy's theory of restorative justice. Further, two documents that emerged in South African in the struggle against apartheid and which deal with reconciliation, the *Belhar Confession,* and the *Kairos Document*, are engaged with. These sources provide an appropriate theological rationale and praxis of reconciliation relevant to Zimbabwe's situations of tension and conflict.

The fifth chapter highlighted key social and theological issues raised in chapters 2, 3 and 4. The chapter used insights from society, theology and the church to suggest how the NVDD's approach to reconciliation can be strengthened.   It suggested how the church can build a deeper theology and practice of reconciliation.   The chapter noted that this involved three steps, namely, (1) critical social analysis, (2) a seven-fold theological strategy and (3) an interdisciplinary approach to reconciliation in the church and in the nation.

In chapter 6, the study is concluded. Taking from what was said in the NVDD, the social context of conflict, and the experiences in Croatia and South Africa, the study concluded by recommending the church to follow seven issues important for strengthening the theology of reconciliation in the NVDD.

1.2 Background to the context of the NVDD

1.2.1 Introduction to Zimbabwe

This section will discuss the geography and history of Zimbabwe. We will focus on two issues, (1) the history of Zimbabwe and the politics that has led to the problems requiring reconciliation; and (2) the history of the church's work and attempt to discuss national problems so as to bring about national reconciliation.

Figure 1: Political map of Zimbabwe

<u>1.2.2 Brief Geography and history of Zimbabwe</u>

Zimbabwe is primarily an agricultural country of 390 580 km^2 (150 804 sq mi.) with 386 669 km (149 293 sq mi.) farmland (Campbell, 2003). It is in southern Africa and is land-locked between South Africa, Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique. The tropical climate is moderated by the altitude of five thousand feet (1 200km) to provide favorable weather patterns during the summer (Mazula, 2004). Agriculture provides a source of commercial crop, animal and horticultural products for domestic and export markets. It blossomed soon after independence but later on declined (NVDD, 2006:5). The country also has natural wonders and wild animals good for tourism. Furthermore, the country has natural deposits of precious mineral and metal products (Mazula, 2004).

Zimbabwe was colonized by Britain in 1890. Its endowments were the major reasons for colonization. In 1980 it won its freedom, and President Robert Mugabe of ZANU-PF came to power. The new nation predominantly comprised Africans of both the Shona and Nguni (known as Ndebele) language groups, with Shona being 80% and Ndebele being 17%. Other smaller tribes just lived like the Shona if they were located in Mashonaland, Manicaland, Masvingo and Midlands, or Ndebele if they lived in Matabeleland or Midlands.

Since independence in 1980, the country has been ruled by Robert Mugabe who pursued the controversial land expropriation policy that negatively affected farming, job creation, the economy and health (Townsend & Copson, 2005). By 2008, inflation had skyrocketed (Moyo and Yeros, 2007:104). The state machinery of Robert Mugabe; and controversial elections since the year 2000, has led to political instability. Poverty increased in both urban and rural centres (NVDD, 2006:5). In towns, the ruling elites who took over most business enterprises lived in affluence in contrast to the urban poor majority (De Waal, 1990:v).

<u>1.2.3 The political and economic crisis leading to the NVDD</u>

Having discussed the geography and brief history of Zimbabwe, we now turn to the political and economic crisis to get a sense of the problems that led to the publication of the NVDD.

1.2.3.1 Political crisis

The end of the war in 1980 brought a turning-point from colonialism to independence in Zimbabwe, but in 28 years the nation failed to have reconciliation. For one, the state was built around the national presidency on which 'everyone' "was to be reliant on him for livelihood" (Dashwood, 2004:403). By 1996, just before the publication of *Breaking the Silence* in 1997 by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and the Legal Resources Foundation (LRF), the Zimbabwe Council of Churches initiated the formation of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA). This increase in political awakening led to the rejection of the 2000 constitutional referendum and the bitterly contested national elections between Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

The major problem of this political degeneration lies in the Westminster constitution. It allowed ZANU PF to install controversial legislative instruments that did not tolerate free political activity such as Public Order and Security Act (POSA); Access to Information Privacy Protection Act (AIPPA); and the Non-Governmental as well as the suggested Passport Bills. These bills led to a sick "nation in need of a physician" who could correctly diagnose the sickness (NVDD, 2006:9). One of the problems was in its failure to bring meaningful reform in land ownership. Less than one percent of white commercial farmers owned about 50% of fertile land situated along the national railway line where the rainfall patterns are favorable. These farms, owned by white farmers, were taken during the UDI period of Ian Douglas Smith. Indigenous Africans who lived in dry rural areas were closely interested in owning these farms "concentrated in the central watershed" (Whitlow, 1988:8). In the ideals of the war of liberation, equitable land redistribution for the poor African majority was crucial and ZANU PF was fast losing it (Banana, 1996).

In all, the new breed of opposition politicians born out of unionism, labor strikes and activism led campaigns and demonstrations that shook the ruling party. In the 2000 constitutional amendment on land reform, the compulsory acquirement of land through the Fast Track Land Reform Program (FTLRP) by the largely ZANU PF parliament attempted to claim its

commitment to service delivery. Land reform became a political survival strategy to legitimize the leadership of ZANU PF from mass mobilization and civil uprisings. Unfortunately the reform movement "was both adopted and co-opted by the ruling party" with little incorporation of "large sections of the proletariat, including farm workers and urban workers" (Moyo and Yeros, 2007:105).

1.2.3.2 Economic Crisis

The economy is central to human wellbeing and its crisis leads to human crises. The economy of Zimbabwe was affected by wrong economic decisions.

In the first place the decreasing government income led to economic reforms that negatively affected the attempt to consolidate a market-oriented economy. In 1990, Zimbabwe introduced the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) that was recommended by the Bretton Woods institutions. This boosted some parts of the economy like imports but unfortunately led to capital over-accumulation. "There is no dispute that, in Zimbabwe, over-accumulation characterised the transition to independence in 1980, that from 1990 structural adjustment induced a rapid deterioration of the economy, and that from 1997 this deterioration intensified" (Moyo and Yeros, 2007:104). The economy is a major driver of approximately 25% people fleeing the country and more than 4 million currently living in South Africa.

With a fall in profit, high government budgets resulted in the devaluation of the national currency which led to chronic shortages of foreign currency, triple digit inflation and lack of investment (UNCHS, 2006). Problems of the reforms have been cited and discussed comprehensively in different forums. Mazula, (2004:1) says ESAP facilitated economic activity, and many individuals were enriched through stock exchanges and speculative investments. Unfortunately the political climate was unhealthy for economic activity leading to liquidity problems in the private sector, so finally most businesses closed shop.

Also the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) meant to address the problem of urban and rural poverty led to political instability. Investors withdrew from the country, and many

people lost their jobs. This led to a mass exodus of Zimbabwean professionals and workers to neighboring and foreign countries in search of jobs. These losses led the country's economy to a standstill, and the government found itself making budget deficits and supplementary budgets because of inflation.

1.2.3.3 Social crisis

Social crises arose as a result of economic and political collapse, namely social violence, poverty, food insecurity and health, especially the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS. ZANU PF made bad economic decisions as efforts to stay in power at all costs; which led to humanitarian crises of hunger and disease (Taylor, 2002:404).

Zimbabwe has primarily an agrarian and mining economy. With bad climatic changes and negative land reform policies as well as poor economic and political decisions the nation lost its export earnings. Centrally, food insecurity was closely linked to changing activities on the farms, and the FTLRP became a key factor towards a complex humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe.   As a result, by 2007, the state of affairs were "evident in the statistics of high infant mortality, chronic malnutrition, vulnerability to preventable diseases, low life expectancy, and high illiteracy" (Moyo and Yeros, 2007:104). In September 2008, Morgan Tsvangirai, Prime Minister elect announced the need for tonnes of large seed cereals because of the damaged farming system by the hasty policies of the FTLRP.

Statistically, poverty in Zimbabwe has reached alarming levels. On 18 July 2007 "New Zimbabwe" Agencies wrote, "More than 65 percent of Zimbabweans are living below the poverty datum line" (http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/inflation12.11615.html). Of this 65%, 66% stayed in rural on arid lands where they depended on subsistence farming (http://www.questconnect.org/africa_zimbabwe.htm) at a density of twenty-nine people per square kilometer. The country boasted of a literacy rate of 86.2% for women and 92.7% for males by 2005 and 35.9% living in towns by 2005. At 65% under the poverty datum line, by 2005 life expectancy dropped to 40.2 yrs for women and 41.4 yrs for men (UNDP, 2007/8), due to an estimated 70% unemployment rate (Frame 2008:1305). The evaluation by the

national monitoring taskforce on HIV prevalence by 2008 recorded a drop to 15.6% HIV by 2007 where health expenditure dropped to 3.5% of national GDP by 2004 (UNDP, 2007/8) was another contributor to the drop in life expectancy.

Social insecurity had already led to a turbulent political climate due to food riots in 1997, workforce demonstrations in 1998 and a demand for a new constitution in 1999. MDC was formed in the midst of such social tensions. This led to violence during elections. ZANU PF was largely blamed for the violence during parliamentary and presidential elections of 2000, 2002, 2005 and 2008, though MDC was equally to blame. Further evidence of lack of reconciliation was also shown between 2005 and 2007, where both MDC and ZANU PF were rocked by internal tensions; with MDC sustaining a split into two parties and ZANU PF sustaining three contesting factions that became publicly known by the breakaway of Simba Makoni in the harmonized national presidential and parliamentary elections of March 2008.

HIV and AIDS is one of the major threatening factors to Zimbabwe's social welfare and health systems. The incidence of HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe reduced from "24.6% in 2004, 18.6% in 2006 (MOH&CW, ZDHS 2006) to 15.6% in 2007" (UNDP, 2007/8).   To date over 1500 deaths in the country are reported weekly. Most of the people dying are in their professional prime times and at the height of sexual fertility, leaving close to 10%, HIV-related cases of the national population as orphans. Of the one million orphans less than 15% can be accommodated in orphan homes and centres.   Most of these orphans live in rural areas with their aged grannies, and in extreme cases, under child-headed families.

In all, poor economic and political decisions have led to other humanitarian crises.

1.2.4 The church[1] and the struggle for justice in Zimbabwe

The churches in Zimbabwe have contributed immensely to the reconciliation debate in the country. Information from the internet and church bulletins, pastoral letters and church communiqués produced between 1980 and 2007 has been useful as a part of this study. It needs to be acknowledged that churches worked for the good of society during the colonial period and after independence, and churches built their work from the solid foundation of Christian responsibility (NVDD, 2006).

Since the fall of the Smith regime in 1979, the church changed the nature of its social intervention in light of the unfolding drama of postcolonial violence such as the crisis posed by the Gukurahundi from 1982 to 1987, and the unjust distribution of power and national resources (Linden, 1979; Bakare, 1996). The church issued statements and communiqués, especially at the reemergence of new forms of nationalism through student boycotts, job strikes, civil actions and food protests of the 1990s (CiM, 2006).

1.2.4.1 Churches as key part of Zimbabwean society

Churches claim 75% following from the national population as their registered members (http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/news/press/01/28pre.html, accessed August 23, 2007),[2] and they have congregations in local communities where they recruit new members. As such, churches were "not identified with any political community, nor is she bound to any political system" (Mutume, 1988:463) because its operations knows no party-political membership nor ideology. "Rather, her (church) function is to be the moral conscience of the nation, the sign and safeguard of the supreme value of a human person" (Mutume, 1988:463). At the heart of the church's business is human dignity. To achieve this, churches supported the 1960 to 1980 liberation struggle, and worked on the rehabilitation of refugees and community development

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[1] Churches here are denominations represented by Zimbabwe Council of Churches; Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe; and eight catholic dioceses under the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference.
[2] The church was actively involved in Zimbabwe; with Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) forming the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) that co-facilitated the formation of MDC with ZCTU, a move that led to intolerance between revolutionaries and the status quo.

in the 1990s (Alexander, 2000:1), taking centre-stage in public issues, and in particular, "political accountability" and the reconciliation debate (Maxwell, 1999:108).

1.2.4.2 The challenges to the church's work on reconciliation in Zimbabwe

The church in Zimbabwe however was challenged by its theological and analytical skills to deal with the problems in the country. Its theology was built to resist colonialism but failed to be relevant, like in the South African situation, in the agenda of the new regime (Villa-Vicencio, 1992:7). Rather, the church returned to "private piety and ecclesial ghettoes", while the state built monuments that celebrated violence (de Gruchy, 2004:52, 45) such as the National Heroes Acre in Zimbabwe. In some cases churches were co-opted into the state.[3] This therefore led the state to dictate ecclesial projects in infrastructural reconstruction and service provision rather than review of social ethics (Magesa and Nthamburi (eds.), 1999:9). The years between 1980 and 1997 present a pragmatic gap between the church's social teaching and its activities in Zimbabwe.

1.2.5 Conclusion

This study is aware of the developments after 2006, but is unable to deal with everything that is happening so quickly. MDC and ZANU PF have carried on a series of unsuccessful dialogues, and the crisis has been deepening every day as the dialogues failed. However, the underlying need for reconciliation is even more important every day the crisis deepens. So while events continue to change day to day, the central thrust of this thesis remains more, rather than less, significant.

We now turn to discuss the National Vision Discussion Document (NVDD) in greater depth.

Chapter 2.0

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[3] Churches shared the same contrasts of massive developments in commercial agriculture and growing modern transport and urbanization against grueling poverty. In some places, churches had impressive institutional buildings such as schools, residences and churches in remote communities of the country (De Waal, 1990:11).

The Examination of the National Vision Discussion Document (NVDD)

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter we laid out the socio-economic and political conditions which led to the NVDD. In this chapter we now examine this document, and gain a sense of the issues it raises.

2.2 Background and reception of the document.

The NVDD was published on 15 September 2006, and was launched on the national day of prayer at Harare Sports Ground. At the launch, the Zimbabwean President, Robert Mugabe was the guest speaker.[4] Before this publication came out, the original document was leaked, and was widely circulated through private emails. A comment by Bishop Ambrose Moyo at a Crisis Coalition Conference in November 2006 in Johannesburg indicated that the leaked document made it easier for the church to approach President Robert Gabriel Mugabe and convince the government with the proposal to launch the NVDD and the need to publish it (Moyo, 2006).

The publication was finally done in Harare and the document was distributed in all the ten provinces in the country through churches. The NVDD document was published on A4 size paper. It was 48 pages long, and was covered in the national colors of the Zimbabwe flag. It was published in English. Although Zimbabwe is highly literate, there is always a section of the society that cannot read and write English, which means that this initiative left a small section of Zimbabwe out of reach with the document. Despite this, the NVDD has been widely spread and read, with reprints that were made on soft recycled paper. The reprints did not have the colorful features of the national flag because it was reprinted in black and white.

The chairpersons of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe were at the centre of the writing of the

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[4] This involvement, as we will see later in this chapter, was regarded as buying time for the ZANU PF government.

NVDD. These three major church bodies in Zimbabwe represent the ecumenical section of the church in the country and have a significant following. At the time, the three church bodies were led by bishops who all happened to reside in Manicaland, namely, Bishop Trevor Manhanga for the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, Bishop Patrick Mutume for the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference and Bishop Sebastian Bakare for the Zimbabwe Council of Churches. It is quite significant that Manicaland led in this call. First, Manicaland was a major player in higher education during the colonial period, and it was from St Augustine's (Penhalonga, Mutare), Mt Selinda (Chipinge) and other schools at the border between Zimbabwe and Mozambique that the liberation struggle became successful in recruiting fighters (Mhanda, 2005). Secondly, many significant leaders, Herbert Chitepo, Ndabaningi Sithole, Bishop Abel Muzorewa, Marget Dongo and Edgar Tekere came from Manicaland; and three, it has been the home for opposition politics since 1980 (DeWolf, 1981; Mungazi, 1985; Kriger, 1988),)

According to the NVDD, the three church bodies took full and equal responsibility for the publication. The church leaders consulted a number of members to write down the concerns of the churches and to gather information. Some of these individuals were students, civic leaders, clergy, workers' representatives, politicians and lawyers (Makamure, 2006). Although full consultation needed to involve ZANU PF government, top clerics like Rev. Pius Wakatama in the Catholic Church suggests that the NVDD was spoilt by President Mugabe and ZANU PF whose rhetoric of sovereignty in the document indicate that ZANU PF's ideas took prominence in the publication (Wakatama, 2006).[5] In essence, the joint committees collected information from different voices, including labour, law, industry, church, students, civil society and parliamentarians in the process of compiling the document; hence ZANU PF and President Mugabe were consulted to the dismay of opposition and civil society.

This background explains some of the issues around the reception of the document. Between the launch of the NVDD, from September to December 2006, students, leftist church clergy,

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[5] Before the launch, the leading clergy, who had spent countless months waiting to meet with President Mugabe, met with him at his residence over a meal to discuss about the NVDD. The President was not available for the earlier date, so the church had to change its date to suit President Mugabe who was going to be the guest speaker at the launch. Many people became suspicious that the NVDD was edited by the President, taking it away from the church.

the media, parliamentarians, community and political leaders like Prof Arthur Mutambara and Mr. Morgan Tsvangirai reacted negatively to the initiative. The reasons for these suspicious reactions are rooted in history, especially when the church apologized to the nation concerning the church's failure to arrest the deteriorating political and social situation. In history, Ian Smith used Bishop Abel Muzorewa (clergy) in the 1979 Internal Settlement (New Zimbabwe Staff Reporter, 2006). In the launch of the NVDD, the Bishops confessed the sins of the church but the state kept quiet. The action of the church, especially with the inaction by the state, made one interpret the church's apology to the nation as an apology made on behalf of the state. This did not augur well with many people inside and outside the church because the failure of national reconciliation was not the sole responsibility of the church.

On the other hand, those involved with the writing and launching defended the NVDD as an authentic church document. So the ownership of the document was an issue at stake. If people were not consulted and ZANU PF controlled the process, it meant that the product could not effect national transformation and could otherwise buy time for ZANU PF's demise without bringing needed national and social transformation. In the following section, we therefore turn to the NVDD, summarizing the content in the document.

2.3 A summary of the NVDD

The NVDD was written in sections, and there are eight of them concluding with section 8 (2006:43) that draws attention to the recommendations of issues discussed in each of the preceding sections. In the conclusion, recommendations point to issues requiring urgent response. In the following paragraphs, we are going to summarize the material/content in the NVDD.

In section 1, *The Current Situation: Achievements and Challenges*, the NVDD (:7-8) presents the context in which it arises. In this section, the NVDD discusses the shortcomings of the postcolonial period that had promised blacks new opportunities that they were previously denied such as viable and competitive agriculture, education, health sciences, and the information industry. Zimbabwe's success in the early years of independence saw high records

of success in welfare and law.[6] The church views the 1980 declaration of reconciliation as a major socio-political and economic step towards bringing Zimbabwe's diverse racial, ethnic and political components together.

Still in section 1 a series of challenges are presented (:8-11). It states that Zimbabwe had no "shared national vision", which justifies the assumption that Zimbabwe has a culture of political intolerance. The section also discusses the problems of political illegitimacy in the 1990s which capitalized on the weak constitution. The largely ZANU PF parliament made laws that prevented the public from analyzing the failure of the government. In 2000 and beyond, the increasing demand for government accountability by civil society, the church and army led the significantly large ZANU PF majority in parliament to make and vote laws such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and Access to Information Privacy Protection Act (AIPPA) that did not allow ordinary people to participate in politics.

Besides its struggle for credibility in the country, the ZANU PF government's sovereignty rhetoric soured relationships with the international world. The church through the NVDD offers to help the state to reconcile with the (1) international society, and (2) the vulnerable majority who need justice. The NVDD further reveals that the church had similar problems that meant the church also needed reconciliation. The divisions in the church that were caused by history, race, ethnicity and political sympathies, prevented comprehensive and coherent unity in the church's leadership, which made bringing political components together difficult.

In section 2, *The Mandate of the church,* the NVDD (:12-14) discusses the legitimacy of the church in dealing with reconciliation and social transformation in Zimbabwe. The NVDD states that its legitimacy is rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ, which demands the church to be involved in transforming systems that affect the lives of people. With this foundation, the church possesses ideals that supersede partisan politics. Among other things, the NVDD claims that the church has a 'mandate' from the Bible (theological mandate), historical involvement, and international links to intervene in national crises and to serve the nation. The church furthermore claims to have the majority of followers from the citizens. Its mandate

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[6] In fact, South Africa is thought to have borrowed lessons from Zimbabwe in 1994 when South Africa entered a new socio-economic and political era.

from God and the national constituency is the basis upon which the church speaks for people. The historical aspect of the mandate is built in history, where the church's role after independence was in reconstruction. This involvement was important for the church, and gives the church enough expertise in building national and international relationships. The NVDD states that the church is prepared to reconcile the state with the international world as well as reconciling the state with its diverse racial, ethnic, political, economic and social population.

In Section 3, *Vision and Values of the Zimbabwe we Want,* the NVDD (:15-23) discusses "the vision and values" upon which a new Zimbabwe can be built. The lists of values that enhance the vision include national sovereignty, democracy, good governance, diversity, justice (gender, economic and ecological), prosperity, tolerance, freedom and liberty. These values provide guidelines for political leaders to fulfill their obligations to the people and to observe human rights, especially giving a "special attention to vulnerable members of society" (:22) to have equal access to the law and its protection, the right to self-determination and to own property. To achieve this, the NVDD suggests that the core values need to be mainstreamed across the spectrum of the society; from politics to the legislature, from industry to commerce, from government to the military, from family to education and from law to religion.

In section 4, *Towards a Home Grown Constitution,* the NVDD (:24-26) discusses the constitution, which specifically must show how the people give the state the mandate to govern and to advance development. The drafting of the constitution that puts people at the centre accepts inclusivity in drafting, composing the commission, and voting it into law through a referendum. The current constitution gives the president 'sweeping-powers' to make extra appointments. This undermines democracy because the appointees of the President are not mandated by people to make laws. In this, the NVDD suggests on reviewing the electoral system, which must be subjected to the national constitution. The change in the electoral system, to achieve equitability and increase representative proportions in the legislature, is also seen as a solution to increasing people's rights in a multicultural society.

The NVDD further discusses the judiciary as a public entity that should not be controlled by the executive. Therefore the appointment of commissions such as the *Human Rights*

Commission can only be transparent if power is not concentrated in the executive, but is distributed into the legislature and the judiciary, to increase consultation and accountability. In so doing, even the new constitution needs careful attention, requiring that major constitutional amendments have through a constitutional referendum.

In section 5, *National Economic and Social Transformation,* the NVDD (:27-29) discusses "National Economic and Social Transformation" (:21). The document observes that the nation was succumbing to development failure when it changed from a socialist economy by accepting the Bretton Woods economic advice of Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) of the 1990s. The deteriorating economic situation dipped into a full-fledged crisis in the early 2000's, characterized by high levels of inflation, national debt, unemployment, food and fuel shortages, poverty and the introduction of unusual strategic actions to cutback on expenses and to decrease government expenditure. The section begins the discussion from the theological perspective of human development. The NVDD discuss God's original plan for human wellbeing and human involvement in rearranging the order of creation for human wellbeing. The document traces the history of human development and human involvement with creation through history. The NVDD says God's approach to life was "holistic" and "The same holistic approach continued in the New Testament" (:28). To create a base for an economic situation that brings wellbeing to society, prudent policies are needed to protect the vulnerable and "ensure an equitable sharing of the resources available to sustain life. It demands equal opportunity and access to the means of production, to jobs, to health and education facilities, the absence of which negates the individual's participation in life and in its fullness" (:28).

Section 5 of the NVDD concludes with seven recommendations to government to provide "targeted relief assistance to distressed households" among other recommendations (:29). In order to restrain political interference in programmes, the formulation and monitoring of programmes must be broad-based and must be people owned, and must be sensitive to gender, age and ethnicity. Furthermore, the NVDD recommends economic stabilization by the adoption of fiscal and monetary policies that are appropriate. At the same time, the budget of the government must be closely monitored, to eliminate corruption, indiscipline and bad

governance. On the level of the society, the NVDD recommends economic diversification to empower vulnerable communities and to use sustainable strategies to eliminate economic depravity. The church therefore recommends that the informal sector needed to be considered as part of the national economic system. In this way, the church is ready to build international bridges through its international networks and alliances.

Section 6, *The Land Question as Part of the Economy,* is an extension of section 5, (:30-37), but it specifically discusses the land question. The NVDD observes that colonialism was unjust, but it also categorically outlines that the process of correcting colonialism that is retributive is unhelpful to bringing the nation together because of the controversy, violence, pain and polarization involved. To address the anomalies of both the colonial land imbalances and the vengeful and disorganized land processes, the NVDD makes reference to Scripture, where land is viewed as God's gift for the wellbeing of every human being. The NVDD makes a list of issues that needed urgent redress such as the process and policy of land reform. The NVDD treats the land question as a matter of urgency which has affected food production because of the uncertainty around the issue of tenancy as well as agricultural support and investment. The efforts in the sector have further been curtailed by uncertainty over profitable local and foreign markets, unavailability of water and inputs, lack of farm equipment and agric-technology, limited finance, and farming capacity.

The seventh section (which we will discuss in greater detail below), *National Reconciliation and Forgiveness,* (:38-42), claims that reconciliation is more than a spoken experience. It is a lived experience. It also observes that Zimbabwe went through a long history of racial, ethnic, political and social violence, which has left the society disunited. This section discusses items that were discussed in the previous three sections 4, 5 and 6 suggesting that their success depends on reconciliation. The emphasis in this section is to bring people together, and to chart the way forward and together, to prepare the nation to think about reconciliation and to work towards social healing. The practical example of the need for social transformation, justice and reconciliation lies in the Gukurahundi war, which I will discuss on the section on ethnicity in Chapter 3. In all, section 7 culminates in national reconciliation, which represents the vision the NVDD seem to put greater emphasis on.

2.4 The strengths of the NVD Document

The central theme in the NVDD is reconciliation, a first step towards social transformation. The NVDD clearly states, "At the moment national reconciliation is indeed the key to nation building and development in Zimbabwe" (38). The message of the NVDD is national reconciliation, which begins with the success of home crafted laws (24), whose use can transform the economy (27-29), deal with the land issue (30-37), and can lead to the transformation of the nation, economically, socially, relationally and politically. This can lead to national healing from past ethnic and racial fighting (38-42). The NVDD makes a clear analysis of Zimbabwe's lack of reconciliation, and the church willingly offers to help bring reconciliation in Zimbabwe. The NVDD articulates, maturely, its intent to see leaders who respect human dignity through the use of binding laws.[7]

A second strength is that in producing the NVDD, the church worked as a unity, although in many ways, churches could respond to the crisis as individual denominations. The NVDD expresses the visible unity of church in responding to national problems, and one of these is, lack of reconciliation. This response is positive for the nation and for churches, as their ecumenicity reduces their differences and instead enhances their unity towards common issues rather than focus on church divisions (Makamure, 2007).[8] The NVDD proposal for inter and intra church activities helps to bring Christians, on either side of the national conflict, to dialogue before the difficult issues are put on the national agenda such as reconciliation.

The dialogue among churches and Christians begun by the NVDD has led to the formation of the Ecumenical Peace Initiative of Zimbabwe (EPIZ), supported by the United Nations' division for peace in Africa. EPIZ becomes a public confession of Christ, the liberator of

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[7] In other words, the formation of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) in 1999 as a desk to oversee the writing of new national laws under the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) was a commitment to this concern.

[8] Besides the discussions about social problems, the churches have improved dialogue, forgoing ecclesial differences. The intra and inter church dialogue has earned the church respect by most dissenting voices, and has helped to reduce violence during March 29, 2008 general elections.

humanity, and a visible expression of church witness on reconciliation. In the EPIZ therefore, rulers have a great responsibility towards the citizens, from whom they are lawfully entrusted with power to rule. Furthermore, the NVDD makes a strong social analysis of the situation in Zimbabwe. This clarifies issues on the political front, and contributes significantly to the clear confession of Christ, who is the subject of reconciliation. This analysis helps this study in its discussion of ethnic, racial and political factors towards social alienation. At the centre of the analysis of the social situation in the NVDD is Christ, through whom a new approach to reconciliation is developed in constructing a theology that changes the direction of national justice and political goals.

One can also argue that comparing the 2000 and 2002 parliamentary and presidential elections respectively (Makumbe, 2002:94) with the March 29, 2008 elections, the NVDD significantly contributed to political tolerance in the first round, although ZANU PF resorted to more violence in the second round of elections in the June 27, 2008 presidential run off. The March 29, 2008 general elections were done after ZANU PF and MDC made new electoral agreements; and Dr. Simba Makoni (independent presidential candidate who broke away from ZANU PF ranks) confessed to have consulted the church on the way forward before and after elections (Interview on SABC 3 Prime Time, June 10, 0300). The involvement of politicians like President Robert Mugabe and the church, among others, during the writing and publication of the NVDD probably made it possible for presidential candidates to consult with the church. The consultation probably included President Robert Mugabe, who played a central role in the negotiations debate between ZANU PF and MDC since early 2007. We can safely argue that the compromises reached were temporary signs of the document's success, especially reports of successful negotiations in the run up to the 2008 elections.[9] We though need to treat the presidential run off differently because it defied all the previous agreements between ZANU PF and MDC in the run up to the March 29 general elections.

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[9] "The final draft constitution, a product of intense negotiations by the two parties both in Zimbabwe and South Africa, was signed by ZANU-PF negotiators Patrick Chinamasa and Nicholas Goche, and MDC delegates Welshman Ncube and Tendai Biti, as well as the South African mediator and chairman Sydney Mufamadi on September 30th. The event was described as "cheerful" (2007, "Zimbabwe: Draft constitution signed", Constitutional Changes, Internal Developments, *Africa Research Bulletin,* Blackwell Pub., Ltd.)

In conclusion, the NVDD initiative opened space for many voices. Of significance is the "Save Zimbabwe Coalition", a Christian movement composed by motivated individuals. Save Zimbabwe Coalition's initiative "Save Zimbabwe Campaign" took off alongside the NVDD. Save Zimbabwe Coalition is an association that enabled to unite MDC to NCA and church non governmental organizations (NGOs) (IWPR, Issue 1:6) in the run-up to the March 29, 2008 general elections. Save Zimbabwe Coalition has used the religious platform to pray for the nation, to keep opposition leaders on track against restrictive laws, to manage power struggles in MDC and to campaign when opposition was not allowed to take part in elections. The opening of space by the NVDD allowed various stakeholders to discuss sensitive political issues openly (Makamure, 2007).

2.5 The weaknesses of the NVDD document

The reaction by students (Katema, 2006), Jesuits (Matikinye, 2006), clergy (Wakatama, 2006), media (Mathuthu, 2006; Standard comment, 2006), residents associations (Davies, 2006) and others (Kahiya, 2006; Ruhanya, 2006); MDC presidents (Mutambara, 2006; Tsvangirai, 2006) and MPs (Stevenson, 2006), indicate that the Zimbabwean society was suspicious of the state's involvement in the NVDD initiative, given the history of the church in Zimbabwe being used to serve the interests of the state.[10] For this reason, some strongly feel that the section on the media, where the NVDD just states "Our media is polarized and is not always helping our national unity" (39) followed by a blank page failed to pass through censorship and the section was removed. From Violet Gonda's interview with Archbishop Pius Ncube on *SW Radio Africa* on Monday 14, November 2006 at 08:00, the Archbishop says,

> I think someone among the three bodies from the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference leaked it to the government and was demanding that before it's published certain pages should be removed and I see it's really toned down. It's not the original document that we agreed upon as churches.

Secondly, the assumption that the document could be discussed by members of the public in face of contestable government-drafted-laws, which most sections of the civil society viewed

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[10] The initiative seems to remind people of the 1979 Internal Settlement plan, between Bishop Abel Muzorewa and Ian Smith. In the Internal Settlement, Smith inquired of Muzorewa, "Are we dealing with a man of God, on his knees in daily supplication, or a scheming priest with political ambitions?" (De Waal, 1990: 33)

as draconian such as the AIPPA (Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act) and POSA (Public Order and Security Act) meant that the involvement of the public would be difficult. These laws did not allow people to hold public gatherings, especially those of a political nature without first seeking and receiving police clearance. In discussing such sensitive issues, after receiving police clearance, for the most part, many people felt that their contributions would be censored. Although the clerics were wise enough to begin with points of confluence, some sections of civil and religious societies wanted the church to enter the dialogue using its own essential preconditions such as the insistence on state commitment to civilize society by disengaging the uniformed forces, inclusive of the national youth service program, from being used to campaign for the ruling ZANU PF. Furthermore, the controversial pieces of legislation such as POSA and AIPPA needed to be repealed (Wakatama, 2006).

The second weakness that has been noted is that the document underplays the proportions of the national crisis, failing to name and to outline, succinctly, the nature and cause of the Zimbabwean economic and political crisis. The MDC president for the breakaway part Professor Aurthur Mutambara says, "At the root of our national problems are issues of bad governance, political legitimacy, economic mismanagement, corruption and political dictatorship, all due to the absolute failure of Robert Mugabe and ZANU (PF)" (Mutambara, 2006). The NVDD fails to name and outline the root causes of national problems, which gives the critics of the NVDD the belief that this true part of the social situation was omitted because ZANU PF censorship could not pass such a critical analysis of its failure. This therefore seems to affect how the content of the document clarifies and encapsulates a new vision and strategy for economic and social justice that takes regard of the realities of national history.

In fact, these weaknesses can be noted in the poor structuring of the document, which generalizes issues that need to be discussed in particularity. Of noteworthy is the violence against civilians in Matabeleland and Midlands between 1982 and 1987 to which Prof. A. Mutambara (MDC President for the 2005 Pro-Senate faction) states, "Gukurahundi cannot be a footnote in a National Vision of Zimbabwe" (Mutambara, 2006). The attempts to generalize in this case have affected the free flow of ideas and discussions, especially on how to restore the

affected communities and how to restore justice. In fact the section concludes the discussion with pessimism towards the idea of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) without however showing how to clearly deal with the truth if the crisis of exclusion has to be overcome.

Thirdly, the document has been criticized for lacking widespread ownership. The drafting and launching of the document failed to consult critical stakeholders of civil society, politics, industry and religion. This means that the NVDD failed to engage most of its key stakeholders in the drafting of the document. The engagement of civil society could otherwise have strengthened the conception of the NVDD as a church document. The NVDD differs significantly from church confessions in its attempt to address national issues; hence it needed to engage politicians, students, labor, unions, alliances, coalitions, and assemblies who are key players in the church and in civil society. The NVDD has a clear affinity to Christian Scriptures and theology, but as a church document to the state, it fails to be inclusive by widely consulting with other religions (Mutambara, 2006). One of the reasons why the NVDD failed to widely consult its key players is the involvement of the state in drafting a document that was critical to the government. Or possibly this put the church under political pressure to say statements that were not negative towards the ruling party. The involvement of the state, as an entity outside the church meant that other religions and the generality of the population could equally be part of the consultation process. In this case, the NVDD failed to produce timeframes for dealing with the constitution and the land reform.

It also needs to be admitted that the writers did consult experts in theology – on the social teaching of the church. Although there is nothing amiss in doing so, this document tends to reveal that it has a strong background in catholic social teaching, which represents the historical moments of catholic theological reflection. It needs to be admitted that catholic social teaching connects with marginalized communities, which provides answers to Christian engagement in social transformation. The exclusive use of catholic social teaching however, undermines the peculiarity of other traditions, especially their contributions to the lives of marginalized communities (Kaulemu, 2006).

Finally, the NVDD contradicts itself on the constitution. It states that a home grown constitution was needed, but also condemns the "Timing of the Constitution" in Section 4.4. This was further impacted negatively by President Robert Mugabe, the guest speaker of the NVDD launch who declared that the idea of constitution-making was unfit for any negotiation at the time. This supports the government idea against the rejection of the constitutional referendum of 2000. It supports Robert Mugabe's feeling that the Westminster Constitution was enough for dealing with national problems, and further supports the accusation that the NVDD was mutilated.

In all, the outgoing accusations negatively affected the credibility of the NVDD; especially its contribution towards national reconciliation and national unity.

2.6 The NVDD conception of reconciliation in the country

We have now examined the NVDD, and have noted the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the document. As noted in chapter 1, this thesis is particularly concerned about the theology of reconciliation in the NVDD. Neither those who have pointed out the strengths or the weaknesses of the document have focused on the issue of reconciliation or dealt in any depth with its theology. In this section we now examine the theme of reconciliation in the document, and its theological framework.

<u>2.5.1 The critical lack of reconciliation in the country</u>

The purpose of this section is to discuss the five key issues that are divisive, in view of the NVDD's contribution to reconciliation in the country (:38). The NVDD section 7 revisits issues discussed in sections 4, 5 and 6, and clarifies issues that are critical for immediate and long-term attention. These are (1) the land question, (2) the national constitution, (3) party-politics and the vision of the state/nation, (4) Operation Restore Order (ORO) also known as *Murambatsvina*, and (5) the media. The five dividing issues clearly indicate the need for, as well as the steps necessary towards, a national vision-centred reconciliation. In the following few pages therefore, we will discuss the impact of these dividing issues in relationship to specific experiences of postcolonial violence such as Gukurahundi, election violence, *jambanja* land reform and Operation Restore Order in Zimbabwe and the national initiatives to bring national reconciliation through the Unity Accord, Economic Structural Adjustment Programme and Operation Garikai/Hlalani kuhle to reverse the ordeals of Operation Restore Order by providing decent cheap accommodation to affected families.

2.6.1.1 The land question

The NVDD traces the history of the land question in Zimbabwe as a long term problem that began with land dispossession in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. This has been followed by uneven land distribution during colonialism. The NVDD condemns the land dispossession as well as the laws that protected the whites' tenure because: "For decades the

African people of Zimbabwe were very bitter about their land which had been violently taken by the colonial settlers" (:38). The land for which the liberation war in Zimbabwe was fought remained the centre of racial and ethnic struggles, picking up "new" versions in the process (Sachikonye, 2005). It thus was unjust not to equitably redistribute the land after independence; hence land disparity alienated whites from blacks. The delay to redistribute land has to do with government as much as it had to do with white farmers (:38). This draws important lessons for theological reflection as well as Zimbabwe's national land reform (Huyse, 2002:35).

To redress this however, the NVDD observes that the plight of black farmers does not mean that the plight of white farmers towards their land and property were less important because for those who lost farms, some "invested a great deal in those farms and for some of them it was their entire life savings" (:38). The NVDD makes reference to the Fast Track Land Reform Programme FTLRP's poor planning. It failed to contribute towards a sustainable national food security, a prerequisite for national reconciliation (Logan, 2006:207)[11]. Also white farmers did not receive compensation for their loss of property. The FTLRP therefore brought more tension between white farmers and new black farm takers. Interestingly, some blacks owned similarly large tracts of land. Farming therefore created a new class of black bourgeoisie closely linked to government. The problem was that the new class of farmers was corrupt and therefore negatively impacted the economy.

In the land tension, the NVDD attests to two paradoxes – poverty and investment. And this made it difficult for the church to articulate a theology of land that addresses African farmers on how they can deal with the national economy. The involvement of the government bureaucrats in farming made it easier for the state to blame whites for the growing national poverty which the black farmers failed to deal with. The church's take on the land as the medium of reconciliation became challenged. Actually the discussion about land, history and politics made it difficult for the church to intervene in a situation where land was as much a colonial issue as it was of the postcolonial state.

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[11] In this land reform programme, the church testifies that the government failed to bring reconciliation, and this failure may have been caused by lack of a legal framework on land ownership, lack of planning on land reform, lack of investment on capital and infrastructural development, lack of modern agricultural technology, and lack of consideration for the lives of the poor

In all the NVDD argues that the FTLRP was executed in a way that alienated whites from blacks, and in this case the land reform did not help to bring whites and blacks together but it separated them. It states thus, "The whole land issue regrettably has resulted in the emergence of a culture of racial hatred and in the alienation of the people of Zimbabwe in the first place along racial lines" (:38)

2.6.1.2 The Lancaster House Constitution

The Westminster constitution often referred to as "The Lancaster House Constitution", was an interim measure "designed to transfer power from a minority white regime to majority rule" (: 39) during a time of war. Therefore the Westminster constitution had restrictive details that protected the minority rights of white farmers as well as a general amnesty on all human rights violators (both those in the Smith regime and war liberators) in the spirit of forging a way forward for national reconciliation (Huyse, 2002:35). The Westminster constitution legislated one-fifth of the House parliament to the white minority "to enable them to block any changes in the constitution that they did not approve for the first seven years of independence" (Herbst, 1989:44).

The NVDD's focus on people- crafted laws is a significant departure from this past. With such a new constitution, politicians become obliged to serve people, respect human rights, appropriately conduct elections, improve service delivery and observe democratic principles (: 24-26; 39). In essence, the Westminster constitution lacks the credibility to protect citizens after having been amended many times in just a few years. In many ways, it served its purpose, and it no longer has answers to emerging questions of poverty, tyranny, diversity, globalization and democracy, which only a people driven constitution will forever provide for its citizens.

In this the NVDD argues that a new constitution addresses the diversity of concerns which the amended Westminster constitution fails to deal with. The NVDD shows that a broad based

constitution, written out of consultation, is of a higher priority if reconciliation can be achieved.

2.6.1.3 Party-Politics and the Vision of the State/Nation

The NVDD traces the relationship between ZANU PF and PF ZAPU since 1963 when ZANU PF broke away from ZAPU. The two parties lived in enmity and more often than not fought against each other during the liberation struggle. These rival groups became the leading parties after independence and their rivalry was later used during elections (:39). The idea behind this section is for making the state a common good for everyone (:38). This observation directly and /indirectly confronts the attempt by ZANU PF government to collapse the state into the party, making Zimbabwe a one party state. If it so happened, the ZANU PF party ideology would mean perpetual civil war in Zimbabwe because ZANU PF was not going to represent the needs and aspirations of all parties and their people. In other words the NVDD argues that this made civil engagement difficult and the observance of human rights almost impossible, requiring other players like church, civil society to intervene in bringing the needed national reconciliation. This situation has led to political and social tension.

In all, the NVDD focuses on addressing the problems that led to (1) corruption and poverty, (2) the Gukurahundi civil war, (3) elections violence, (4) the FTLRP and food insecurity, and (5) Operation Restore Order (ORO) and the unfulfilled promises of decent housing. The nation finds that ZANU PF cannot address all their aspirations, which to some extent leads to conflict, and in fact, ZANU PF could not bring national reconciliation by entrenching the state and the party as one.

2.6.1.4 Operation Restore Order (ORO) also known as Murambatsvina

ORO took place in 2005 soon after the 2005 parliamentary elections. The government reason for ORO was to stop "illegal activities in contravention of municipal by-laws, such as the erection of illegal structures, illegal vending, touting by commuter omnibus rank marshals, illegal street garaging, illegal cultivation, dealing illegally in foreign currency and prostitution"

(ZHR NGO Forum, 2006). Most people however, viewed the clean up operation as a sign of political insecurity because it depended on repressive legislation;[12] and it was highly and strongly condemned by both local and international civic organizations. The evictions took place soon after the March 2005 parliamentary elections, in May 2005, during the winter season. The UN had to send an audit team led by Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka to investigate the gravity of the evictions. The evictions were criticised as "indiscriminate" and done in an "unjustified manner, with indifference to human suffering" (UN ORO Report, 2005). It is critical to note that evicting the poor urban dwellers was a bad action as much as its timing is equally condemned.

Furthermore, the NVDD acknowledges that laws needed to be observed and that illegal activities needed to be stopped. However, the operation was done at a time when the country was facing challenges in the provision of food, essential drugs, among other basic services and necessities such as health and water (:39). The failure by government to provide economic growth and employment led to all illegal dealings in quasi-suburban areas such as informal foreign exchange deals, prostitution, unregistered transport operations and illegal shelters.

In all, the failure of the government to provide houses with habitable qualities such as water and sewerage systems by the time of the writing of this research led affected families to sneer at the government programme. The affected families hated the ZANU PF government as the major enemy of poor urban people. This has led to political drift from ZANU PF to MDC in urban centres, and commercial areas.

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[12] ORO depended on "the Public Order and Security Act" (POSA) and "the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act" (AIPPA).

2.6.1.5 The public media

The comment by the NVDD, "Our media is polarized and is not always helping our national unity" (39) seems to indicate that this section failed to pass through the censor, unlike the recommendation on the *Gukurahundi* in the same section. Stevenson suspects that the empty space after the one comment on media indicates that the government was not happy with the section on the media (Stevenson, 2006). This presents a dichotomy between the reports of violence and media blackout in the same period, such as the torture of journalists like "In 1999, two journalists, the late Mark Chavunduka and Ray Choto, were tortured by the military for a week after publishing a report about a failed plot within the Zimbabwean army" (IWPR, Issue 1:2);[13] as well as the closure of Daily News (2002) which published critical reports on the ZANU PF government.

The NVDD indicates an awareness of the problems of the media and the polarity the state had with critical media houses and journalists. The inability of the media and journalists to operate independent of state control and surveillance means that important issues that can upset political leaders are suppressed, and corrupt tendencies continue to negatively impact the nation. The state controlled media fails to bring forward the needed truth and this affects national transformation as well as the provision of justice and other liberties to ordinary citizens.

2.6.1.6 Conclusion

In short, the NVDD discusses the need for reconciliation in relationship to other variables a series of key issues facing Zimbabwe, namely, such as the economy (land), the laws (constitution), human rights (ORO), governance (vision of state/nation), and state security (the media). This leads us to further explore and deeply consider the significance of racism, ethnicity and politics in this study, and their importance for national unity and reconciliation.

2.7 The theology of reconciliation in the NVDD

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[13] The call by the international community for an inquiry into the torture of Mark Chavunduka and Ray Choto, was ignored by the government. This strategy, among others, led to media black-out in the country at a time when the media was turning professional and reliable. The government however defiantly attacked media houses and journalists who were critical of the government's policies.

This section summarizes what the NVDD (:40-42) says about reconciliation, and draws a theology of reconciliation from the document. In the NVDD, this thesis assumes, the theology of reconciliation is representative of the bodies authoring the document, namely, *the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches*. The document shows that the three church bodies built their ethical symbols upon the basis of the "preferential option of the poor".

2.7.1 Motivation for reconciliation

The NVDD recognizes that reconciliation is connected to what happened in the past. This history is in many times painful, and those who engage in reconciliation fail to reconcile the pain suffered by the wronged with the means of recourse (:40). The church's involvement in postcolonial development and emergency relief programmes (:12) has taught the church that the lack of reconciliation is a social illness that leads a society to lose its "values and integrity" and to "drift into a state of chaos" (:40). The NVDD recommends that "social wellbeing and economic prosperity" can only be attained through reconciliation, dialogue and social rehabilitation (:12. In many ways this contributes towards total liberation for the African people (:13).[14] The state therefore becomes challenged for the failure of national reconciliation (:10-11). The document makes reference to the 1980 announcement as an unfulfilled promise that remains necessary for national transformation. In a way, the NVDD proposes that the church risked its relationship by challenging the postcolonial state on reconciliation.[15]

2.7.2 Reconciliation as renewal

The view of reconciliation in the NVDD is predominantly social and economic. The NVDD says reconciliation "presupposes an equally important movement toward the creation of a just society" (:40); and the "renewal of the socio-economic and political structures" (:40). The

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[14] The NVDD (2006:13) states, "In many ways the church was also heavily involved in securing the liberation of Zimbabwe from the yoke of colonialism".
[15] The Church began the discussion on constitutional reform, and formed NCA. When too much heat came out of the debate between government and civil society, the church withdraws, leaving NCA and other stakeholders to debate on constitutional reforms.

motion for reconciliation in the NVDD therefore is firstly the addressing of economic disparities. The discussion is more of an appeal to government and beneficiaries of the colonial era to make a deliberate step to repay the society they exploited and impoverished (: 40-41). The discussion vacillates between reconciliation with God like in the story of Zacchaeus (Luke. 19$^{1-9}$) and society as in the Jewish community (Nehemiah. 5). The first example presupposes that the church is dealing with a repentant leadership while the second presupposes a homogenous Zimbabwean society. These scriptures are significant for the subject under discussion but there is need for their cautious application because many Zimbabweans are not Christian and many are not black or Shona. The NVDD however mentions important issues although it fails to develop them such as justice, dialogue, forgiveness, repentance and truth-telling. In all, the NVDD recommends the possibility of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) with well defined objectives and views to bring national reconciliation.

In concluding this section, it needs to be understood that the NVDD fails to deeply explore the theology of reconciliation in two critical areas, namely its analysis of the society in which reconciliation must take place; and the teaching of the Bible concerning reconciliation. We will be picking these two criticisms up in the rest of the thesis.

2.8 Conclusion.

This chapter examined the NVDD to understand pertinent issues for reconciliation in Zimbabwe such as (1) the constitution, (2) economic transformation, (3) land reform, (4) politics, and how these themes affect (5) national reconciliation. In the NVDD, the context is set to discuss reconciliation in view of the country's postcolonial political and social history. In the NVDD, the constitution takes a central role in the national crisis, where lack of a home grown constitution leads to a lack of national transformation and accountability. The constitution affects the economy, especially the land question as well as political transformation. The NVDD in part provides a theological framework upon which reconciliation and the church's teaching on social transformation can be realized. The NVDD though provides tools and a framework for dealing with reconciliation in the country.

However, we have noted a weakness in the theme of reconciliation in the NVDD for two reasons; (1) there is not enough social analysis; and (2) there is not a deep enough theology. In chapter 3 we are going to explore these two areas so as to find ways of strengthening the NVDD's approach to reconciliation.

Chapter 3.0

The theme of Reconciliation in the National Vision Discussion Document (NVDD)

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 outlined and examined the NVDD to understand the issues it raised. These issues are pertinent for reconciliation and social transformation in Zimbabwe. The issues raised are a new constitution (section 4), a transformed society and economy (section 5), and the land issue (section 6). Section 7 of the NVDD builds from this background to discuss reconciliation. Sections 4 to 6 set an appropriate context to discuss the misuse of power as seen in the (1) Gukurahundi civil war (1982/87), (2) Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) (1991/2),[16] (3) Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) (2000/3), and Operation Restore Order (ORO) (2005), (also known as *Murambatsvina)*.

However in chapter 2 we argued that the theme of reconciliation was not undertaken deeply enough for two reasons; it lacked (1) social analysis, and (2) critical theological reflection. Therefore this chapter proposes to engage with the first criticism and discuss the reconciliation project in light of the history of postcolonial Zimbabwe in relationship to identity and politics. It will also reflect on the church's understanding of reconciliation in the NVDD. This can hopefully lead to a creation of a new future for Zimbabwe.

3.2 Thinking deeper about reconciliation: ethnicity, racism and politics

In chapter 2, section 2.5.1. *The critical lack of reconciliation in the country,* we discussed five dividing issues. My feeling is that the NVDD does not adequately deal with factors that lead to the five dividing issues. Before dealing with the theological issue of reconciliation we need to explore three themes, ethnicity, racism and politics which give rise to the five dividing issues discussed in chapter 2. This section will do a deep social analysis of the problem of division in Zimbabwe; considering ethnicity, racism and politics, separately, to find their

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[16] ESAP was also known as economic structural adjustment programme, and others called it Extended Suffering of the African People.

interrelationships, and to find their significance for national reconciliation in Zimbabwe.   The next chapter will then focus on the second criticism to do with theological reflection.

3.3.1 Ethnicity

Before discussing about ethnicity in Zimbabwe, it needs to be acknowledged that the 5th Brigade's killing of more than 20,000 people to deal with only 400 dissidents who broke away from the army and engaged in harming government property and upsetting business (tourism) is at the centre of the Shona and Ndebele ethnic rivalry.   The publication by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), and Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) of *Breaking the Silence: Building True Peace in Zimbabwe* (1997), and which was republished by Jacana, *Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe: A report of the disturbances in Matabeleland and Midlands 1980 – 1988* (2007), shows that the most painful aspects of the massacres was the unaddressed plight of the survivors of the violence.   In this section, we are going to trace the history and relations of the Shona and the Ndebele in history and after independence.

3.3.1.1 The Colonial construction of ethnicity

The Ndebele, during colonialism, were portrayed as a brutal offshoot of the Zulu kingdom under Shaka which "survived by plunder, pillage and violent raids upon their neighbors … the Shona of the Zimbabwean plateau" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2002:17). This played a part in the history and memory of conflict between the Shona and the Ndebele (Chimhunhu, 1992:91), although some regard the assertion as mythical and others a creation of the colonial education system. Many authors agree that the differences between the Shona and the Ndebele, which had to do with ethnic differences in the late 1800s, were as real as they would be today (Chigwedere, 1982; Ranger, 1985; 1989; Mudenge, 1988; Beach, 1983; Bourdillon, 1976). The difference is that in the more recent past, they have been manipulated. New research publications affirm that colonialism participated in making ethnicity a distinct reality, and the church, unfortunately, played a part in the invention of tribalism (Lindgren, 2005:159; Chimhundu, 1992:87-109; Ranger, 1985; Ranger, 1989).

This invention has adversely affected socio-economic and political developments in Zimbabwe, especially the mythologies that were created around the national presidency, where ethnicity holds a strong trump card for winning the elections because of the 83% Shona to 16% Ndebele (AMANI, 2005). Worby, (1994) and Lindgren (2005) discuss, separately, the construction of ethnicities as a later development in the colonial project. Using this background to discuss reconciliation in relationship to the Gukurahundi, one finds that the negativity that was exercised in the war derives its energy from this history (Cousins, 2006:584-597).

The responsibility of the colonial government for ethnic divisions in the country has adequate literary coverage (Stoneman, 1988; Phimister, 1988; Ranger, 1989; Alexander, 2000; Lindgren, 2005). The Ndebele identity was firstly reinforced by dislocated evictees who lost land to Ndebele invaders (Alexander and McGregor, 1997:201). They constructed the Ndebele state "from the pain, anger and insecurity of the evictions" (Alexander and McGregor, 1997:201). The second phase of construction was done by missionaries and colonial administrators in the "colonial transformation of pre-colonial identities" which reinforced differences and distinctions made during the colonialism (Alexander, 2006). For the Ndebele, it "took the form of re-inscribing old names with new significance" (Alexander and McGregor, 1997:201).

During the liberation struggle, these differences became clear when ZANU broke away from ZAPU in 1963. ZANU was led by Shona leaders like Herbert Chitepo and Ndabaningi Sithole before Robert Mugabe took over at the eve of independence; while ZAPU was led by Joshua Nkomo associated with the Ndebele. The two movements, in many cases fought against each other. At independence in 1980, the predominantly led Shona ZANU PF took the majority of votes because of the influence of ethnic constellation to election results. In the post independence government, ethnicity was used to elevate the Shona against the Ndebele in all national sectors such as the army, intelligence, education, welfare and social development. This led to problems in the army, with formerly ZAPU freedom fighters breaking away from the army and declaring a civil war. This therefore led to the Gukurahundi war.

3.3.1.2. The Gukurahundi[17] War

The Gukurahundi war was executed by "The North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade" between 1982 and 1987 (Coltart, 2007:no page). The brigade was responsible for the death and disappearance of an estimated 20 000 people in Matabeleland and Midlands. A number of reasons have been suggested for the eruption of this war,[18] but all are rooted in the past. "This history of antagonism has had far reaching implications for postcolonial political developments, particularly in the military violence perpetrated by the largely Shona-speaking Fifth-Brigade in Matabeleland in the early 1980s" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2002:17). The war was predicated on the 19th century Shona-Ndebele antagonism, PF ZAPU and ZANU PF enmity during the struggle and also the two parties' different political ideas.[19] It cannot be denied however that the Mugabe regime was also obsessed with security issues, and hence the state failed to appreciate the difficulties the nation inherited from colonialism such as a divided national army" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2002:24).

3.3.1.3. Condemnation of the Gukurahundi War

The Gukurahundi war was criticized for its systematic targeting of "ZAPU office bearers and community leaders such as teachers, nurses and headmen" (Coltart, 2007). The attack on unarmed civilians made the violent operations "crucial in amplifying both a political and an ethnic interpretation of violence" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2002:26). In fact many people feel that the Gukurahundi war was less purposeful compared to the liberation struggle. Even Prof Canaan Banana, the first President of Zimbabwe, admits that the Gukurahundi was problematic because the "means" the government applied to fight the civil war was not appropriate. He states "The violent undercurrents in Matabeleland posed more vital problems than a first reading may convey" (Banana, 1996:225).

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[17] Gukurahundi is a Shona term for the after harvest rains that wash away the chaff. In this context, the Ndebele are regarded as an ethnic chaff that needs to be washed away. Literally it refers to ethnic cleansing.
[18] Ndlovu-Gatsheni, (2002:23) says that this war erupted because (1.) there was increasing rural and urban poverty (2.) history of antagonism between the Shona and the Ndebele (3.) lack of colonial military accountability (4.) threat of South African Apartheid extension (5.) history of antagonism between ZANU PF and PF-ZAPU, (6.) a divided national army, (7.) arms cache in ZAPU owned properties, and (6.) ZANU's intention to have a one-party state.
[19] For one, ZANU PF wanted to wash away PF ZAPU and establish a one-party state.

In the Gukurahundi war, the black government failed to create an inclusive society in which minorities were integrated. Rather, politicians abused state resources and power against the civilians. The Gukurahundi therefore negated the widely quoted and magnanimous Mugabe's 1980 independence speech[20] that "encouraged every Zimbabwean to forget the past and heralded the official policy of reconciliation of all parties involved in the conflict that gave birth to Zimbabwe and the amnesty ordinances of 1979 and 1980" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2002:23).

In the Gukurahundi war, Prof Canaan Banana questions the "excesses" in which the military and the rebels committed atrocities (Banana, 1996:227). What it suggests is that even in the government there was no agreement in terms of the excess of force applied on the civilians by the military. It is understood that there were forces against the young nation, emerging from a situation of war. Taking advantage of this, the Apartheid government sponsored destabilization in the region as a means for it to control all Southern African countries.

3.3.1.4. The Effects of the Gukurahundi war

The Gukurahundi war "hardened ethnic prejudice and created a strong link between ethnicity and political affiliation" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2002:25). For instance, the use of rape violence in the war was interpreted as an organized attempt by the Shona, "to create a generation of Shona children in Matabeleland – a 'Shona-ization' of the region" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2002:25).

Furthermore, the Gukurahundi war also aided the ZANU PF government to consolidate power. With the struggle to effect a one-party state, the merging of the state and party "would have culminated in the entrenchment of party hegemony" (Banana, 1996:226). It is from this horrid background that the troubled state of Zimbabwe continues to nurse the bleeding scars of the Gukurahundi.

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[20] Robert Mugabe's speech on 17 April 1980 marking the start of the Politics of Reconciliation states, "If yesterday I fought you as an enemy, today you have become a friend and ally with the same national interest, loyalty, rights and duties as me. If yesterday you hated me, today you cannot avoid the love that binds you to me and me to you. The wrongs of the past must now stand forgiven and forgotten".

3.3.1.5 Sentiments about the Gukurahundi

Many people have given their views concerning the Gukurahundi war, and some of the prominent characters in the history of Zimbabwe like Prof Canaan Banana regarded the experiences of the Gukurahundi as "important lessons" for Zimbabweans to pledge not to solve current and future problems through the barrel of the gun (Banana, 1996:227). The legitimacy of governance, for which the liberation struggle was fought, lies in freeing civilians to constructively criticize their leaders (Banana, 1996:226).

In the current developments, interviews and research done by civil society and members of parliament request that the "experiences of *Gukurahundi* must be recorded for posterity" (Coltart, 2007). In the same spirit, "Prof Jonathan Moyo, has drafted a *Gukurahundi* National Memorial Bill" (Coltart, 2007), whose objective is of "putting in place a mechanism to deal with the unresolved issues, healing the open wounds and invisible scars by seeking truth and justice" (Coltart, 2007). Though it is difficult to ascertain the practicality of suggested initiatives and the feelings being aroused by the *Gukurahundi* atrocities, the church's attempts to deal with it, and to possibly usher in a new era of life and reconciliation in the country, a mechanism of transformation remains fundamental to people whose lives are hurting.

One of the problems with the Gukurahundi civilian attack is the denial of children who lost parents to have a name and identity through national registration, voting rights and citizenship. The CCJP and LRF report of 1997, *Breaking the Silence*, was written with the idea of advocating for restoration, reconciliation and reconstruction of such people's lives. These people need a form of compensation to reconcile and restore their lives in society. The provision of compensation and livelihood to vulnerable persons, whose properties were destroyed during the massacres, would aim to restore the sources of incomes they were robbed of when they lost property and the parents who were killed in the war (Coltart, 2007).

3.3.1.6 The Gukurahundi war and the Unity Accord

In the Unity Accord, the clergy were also optimistic that the idea of unity represented their wishes and hopes for reconciling the Shona and the Ndebele. The Unity Accord however, failed to bring the intended ethnic reconciliation. For instance, the 2000 parliamentary elections indicate that most of the provinces in Matabeleland voted for the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). This shift indicates that ethnic discontent is still in the country, and this has been worsened by the failure of the economy and leadership problems. So, the Unity Accord did not solve ethnic tensions, but rather marked what Huyse calls "the start of a period of (uneasy) coexistence between the rival groups" (Huyse, 2002:38). The uneasy coexistence and lack of material evidence for reconciliation between the Shona and the Ndebele was marked by lack of power-sharing.

Furthermore, the Accord entrenched and imposed a form of forgetting of the past to the people of Matabeleland from the military personnel violations of human rights, a tradition they inherited from the "Indemnity and Compensation Act of 1975" (Huyse, 2002:36). Offenders were granted indemnity in advance, drawing a veil over the Fifth Brigade violations in the Gukurahundi operations. The closure of the book of violations meant that the end of the war did not bring reconciliation between civilians and the government. Unfortunately, reconciliation was negotiated by leaders, a project conceived, developed and concluded at the level of elite leadership; without grassroots consultation or survivor involvement. This Accord therefore did not resolve past grudges nor allow the public to internalize the agreement. In essence, the imposed Accord fed the unresolved grudges rather than resolve them because even government policy in Matabeleland replaced aggression "with neglect and victimization" because the ZAPU leaders "yielded to military pressure and agreed to 'unite' and become part of ZANU-PF" (Huyse, 2002:38). In the NVDD, the Unity Accord, which supported the culture of political impunity, became challenged.

3.3.1.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, ethnicity challenges national reconciliation and the Gukurahundi experience testifies to the failure of the nation to assimilate the Shona and the Ndebele (Nyangoni,

1978:125; Banana, 1996). The church also failed to intervene during the Gukurahundi to help PF ZAPU and ZANU PF bury ethnic differences to attain national unity and reconciliation.

3.3.2 Racism

The question of race in Zimbabwe cannot be discussed without the question of land. In the Zimbabwean experience, it is the disparity in white-black land ownership, before and after independence that led to "new forms of alienation". The Westminster constitution unhelpfully supported land ownership disparities, while the dominant ZANU PF party's parliament secured land for government cronies. This led to national insecurity in terms of food production and economic growth. The resistance to national problems led to the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) which further led to greater insecurity.

3.2.2.1 Racial disparity in land ownership

The NVDD traces the history of land ownership and uneven distribution in Zimbabwe as a major driving force for racial tension during and after colonialism. Thus the first *Chimurenga* war (1890s) and the second *Chimurenga* war (1970s), used land as the locus of racial tension (Cousins, 2006). The persistence of this disparity in the independent Zimbabwe further alienated blacks from whites, and whites from blacks. Thus the NVDD views land as a central factor towards racial identity. Unequal land distribution therefore, caused racial tension and the NVDD states, "sooner or later there was going to be some unrest resulting from the glaring inequitable distribution of land. This situation was morally indefensible and certainly needed to be corrected" (NVDD, 2006:30). In this, the NVDD clearly shows that land is significant factor towards racial identity, hence an important factor towards national development and reconciliation. This can be corrected by equitable distribution, which in this case requires an appropriate reform process and policy (NVDD, 2006:30).

This disparity increasingly frustrated the nation. The nation interpreted the continued land inequalities in independent Zimbabwe as a betrayal of the ideals of liberation. The first President of independent Zimbabwe, Professor Canaan Banana, a clergyman, suggested,

> If the mode and tempo of implementation is not radically reviewed, there is a very grave danger of the landless catching the virus of discontent which may lead to social upheaval (Banana, 1996:241).

At the same time, there is a strong recognition that land disparity in Zimbabwe, by 1996, was no longer a race issue although most whites owned large tracts of land. Among blacks, elites also owned large tracts of land. In Bakare's book[21], *My Right to Land,* Banana raised pertinent issues about land disparity. He states

> For as long as one privileged section of the Zimbabwean community exploits any other less privileged group of people, then to talk about freedom in the Zimbabwean context becomes a surreal dream (Banana, 1996:245).

Besides blacks also owning large tracts of land, white farmers were also uncooperative on land reform policy and this negated the government efforts on food production and black empowerment. This happened in the face of diminishing government income, lack of jobs for the increasing numbers of graduates and spiraling government budget deficits.

3.2.2.2 The Lancaster Agreement perpetuated land disparity

The Westminster constitution, commonly referred to as the Lancaster House Agreement, legislated that one-fifth parliamentary seats (20 of the 100 seats) be reserved for the white minority from 1980 to 1987. This would enable white farmers to stop the parliament from making unapproved changes in the constitution. These restrictive details protected the minority white farmers from losing land until the third elections in 1990. Besides this law, the ZANU PF government had to give guarantees to whites for their land, and if it was acquired for resettlement of people, it had to be paid for in foreign currency. With agriculture as the mainstay of the national economy, the government followed "the letter and spirit of the Lancaster House constitution" (Hebrst, 1989:45), to protect the agrarian industry and national reconciliation. This commitment did not obligate white landowners to change their luxurious lifestyles during colonialism "while the vast majority of the population continued to eke out an

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[21] The quest for freedom in the developing world in general and in Zimbabwe in particular will remain a hollow dream unless it is accompanied by a shift in the balance of material forces that are essential for sustainable living. The material deprivation of the majority of the underprivileged regrettably, is not only a colonial legacy but continues to be a perennial problem many years after political independence. Central to this problem is the issue of land redistribution.

existence from inadequate landholdings" (Herbst, 1989:45). For this reason, Zimbabwe had the best black government economic policy for whites (Herbst, 1989:46).

Unfortunately, the policy had a narrow focus because whites were treated kindly because of their economic output, which in some way meant that the economy was going to be run by whites without considering the contribution of blacks. In the first place, the ZANU PF government's response was wise for national reconciliation and continued agricultural production, but it however failed to do justice to growing poverty and hunger among black peasant farmers.

3.2.2.3 ZANU PF Parliamentary dominance

From 1980 to 1999, ZANU PF controlled the parliament and government. During the same period, the ZANU PF government protected the interests of black entrepreneurs in agriculture, transport, construction, banking, stock market, tourism, retailing and education. The government secured the emergence of a new proletariat black class (Cousins, 2006:592). The parliament focused on competitiveness, and hence competitive blacks, especially government cronies, helped each other to have access to land even when the majority of the masses were clamoring for a land revolution. This means that the genuine demand for land by the masses was turned into political rhetoric by politicians who canvassed for votes and lacked political action. Government officials were harshly criticized by the clergy and civil society for corrupt and unjust land distribution (Bakare, 1996). In fact the idea of resuscitating the 'sacred ideals for which the war of freedom and independence was fought (Banana, 1996:240-241) is an acknowledgement that politicians were not fulfilling their promises. Land was not available for agriculture, housing and economic development and this led to further impoverishment of the urban and rural poor.

In one of the responses to increasing urban and rural poverty, the dominant ZANU PF government introduced the Enhanced (Economic) Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in 1991/2. ESAP was an attempt to address increasing poverty among taxpayers and income earners. The government was undergoing reduced revenue from workers, its own investments

and industry. The government had to reduce its expenditure to suit the income. This had a direct effect on food production because ESAP forced government to reduce its support on agriculture, education and social services along its cut on spending by retrenching workers. The philosophy of ESAP was on economic efficiency rather than food security, and this impacted negatively on urban poverty. The introduction of ESAP, to address issues of poverty, was an ideological strategy to prolong the demand for genuine land reform (Moore, 1985, 1991; Elbadawi, 1996).

The effect of political dominance on the electorate was resentment. The electorate was not happy with the economy, the leadership and the unfulfilled promises. Voters were unhappy with the policies of ZANU PF which led to lack of basic food stuffs and other commodities. In the February 2000 voters casted a protest vote against the constitutional referendum and voted for MDC in the 2000 May parliamentary polls. The kind of difficulties people endure as seen in Zimbabwe, forced people to attempt to change the ZANU PF government for MDC in the hope that MDC could reduce their suffering. The government interpreted this as sabotage from whites who influenced people to rebel against the ZANU PF government.

3.2.2.4 Land Reform Programme that focuses on Race and increases Insecurity

The events preceding the year 2000 led to the decreasing popularity of ZANU PF due to economic difficulties in Zimbabwe. Workers, students and civil society[22] became involved in work boycotts, food riots and strikes for affordable prices of consumer goods. Also, the government social service provision was depreciating. This scenario led to the rise of civil society as a strong opposition force, and this led to the rise of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). ZANU PF responded to some demands by civil society such as the drafting of a new constitution. Due to the anomalies the constitutional process went through, civil society campaigned against the constitution, which failed to pass the February 2000 constitutional referendum. The failure of the 2000 constitutional referendum led the dominant ZANU PF parliament to amend the Westminster constitution to compulsorily acquire white owned farms. This was called the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP), which unfortunately

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[22] The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) organized students, lawyers and ordinary people in demanding for economic transformation.

focused on whites as the locus of the national economic crisis. This programme, the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) focused against whites, and it increased food insecurity because the white farmers, the people who had produced food for the nation, became afraid of working on farms.

There is a close link between land and race (Logan, 2006:203) and a hasty redress of land disparity through the FTLRP failed to address national security and reconciliation (Logan, 2006:207). Above this, government officials made racial attacks on white farmers, verbally and sometimes physically. This scenario increased national insecurity, impacting further the decreasing services in education and health, and the ability of the national industry to produce food and clothing.[23] Though the land reform was a noble aspect of economic redress, the FTLRP failed to plan and consider the effect of external factors such as bad weather conditions and the international market system. The state also failed to consider the national limitations in farming technology, challenges of weather patterns, HIV and AIDS among farm workers and lack of farming finance. The FTLRP was widely condemned by both the local and the international society for it took land from the rich white farmers to government cronies without empowering poor people.

In all, the FTLRP brought more racial insecurity as ZANU PF used racial polarity on land redistribution. Many people viewed this as ZANU PF's political struggle to survive, as well as the struggle for the legitimacy of its leadership in the face of growing poverty due to a deteriorating economic base in agriculture and manufacturing (NVDD, 2006:31).

3.2.2.5 Conclusion

The land question in Zimbabwe is at the centre of racial identity. Even in politics, land has been the driving force for ZANU PF's political survival, making the land issue a locus of reconciliation for white and black people. This means that resolving the land issue once and for all is a positive step towards national reconciliation, where racial relations between whites

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[23] Herbst, (1989:46) argues that Zimbabwe had the best black government economic policy for whites.

and blacks can be restored. This could assist small scale black farmers to produce more food (Cousins, 2006:594) as well as reconcile whites and blacks in the country.

3.3.3 Politics

3.3.3.1 Political setting: ZANU PF and opposition in Zimbabwe

From 1980 to 1987, ZANU PF enjoyed 88% majority in parliament, and after 1987, it increased to 98% parliamentary dominance. Similarly, "From 1980 to 1990 Mugabe was the beacon of Zimbabwean and even African politics" (Togarasei, 2004:75). After the signing of the Unity Accord to end the civil war in Matabeleland and Midlands in 1987 between ZANU PF and PF ZAPU, Zimbabwe went through a quasi one party state. The attempt to move towards a full-fledged one party state met resistance in 1990 with Edgar Tekere, a liberation companion of Robert Mugabe, who formed the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) party to contest the 1990 general elections. This posed a big challenge to ZANU PF but still ZANU PF managed to win all the constituencies except for the two ZANU Ndonga seats in Chipinge. For two decades, ZANU PF had ZANU Ndonga to worry about until "Mugabe's grip to power was strongly tested with the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 2002" (Togarasei, 2004:75). MDC challenged the political dominance of ZANU PF, using the decreasing economic, social and moral economy of ZANU PF to woo voters. Many people abandoned ZANU PF party for the new MDC party which addressed their immediate needs. "The MDC drew a lot of supporters mainly from the working class particularly the urbanites in the elections where the party managed to snatch 57 seats from the ruling party" (Togarasei, 2004:75).

The reason for ZANU PF's dominance in politics since the liberation struggle was its adoption of the fascist political styles, where violence was employed to force allegiance. Even Prof Canaan Banana, the first President of independent Zimbabwe, noted that ZANU PF was abusing political and civil rights of the people during elections. General elections were accused of violence during the general polls. In the 1980 general elections, the ZANLA forces were strategically deployed to carry out campaigns in rural areas in contravention of the

electoral bill. The 1985 elections were also marked by violence because of the civil war in Matabeleland and Midlands. In 1990, Edgar Tekere's Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) tested ZANU PF's hold on power. This increased ZANU PF's use of violence against opposition members and any persons who contested in elections against Robert Mugabe or his close lieutenants.[24] At the end of each polling result, those who engaged in political violence were pardoned by the President for their abuse of others' human rights.   This increased political impunity where in every election, political violence received immediate pardon because of the qualification that the violence was motivated by politics.

3.3.3.2 ZANU PF and MDC

ZANU PF has been challenged by deteriorating conditions of service in education and health, and escalating food prices. The rural and urban poor became frustrated by ZANU PF and many chose to support MDC, especially workers. The increase in hardships also led to the popularity of MDC. In 2000, during the constitutional referendum, opposition scored 56% to 44%. The urban poor, farm labourers and white farmers opposed the Constitutional Commission (CC) that was formed by ZANU PF government in counter to the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) proposal. Bruised from the constitutional rejection, ZANU PF changed "the Lancaster House constitution to enable it to compulsorily acquire land for the resettlement of indigenous Zimbabweans" (Togarasei, 2004:75). This campaign was meant to reduce the base of MDC's financial backing as well as justify to the electorate of ZANU PF's commitment to service delivery. This campaign resulted in violent clashes with a lot of murderous activities on farms and in towns. In the 2002 elections, MDC filed court cases for election rigging which were never attended to until the end of the President's term of office. This caused mistrust and tension between ZANU PF and MDC during the talks of 2003 to 2007.

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[24] The 1990 case of Patrick Kombayi's challenge to Simon Vengayi Muzenda, the deputy of the President is a classic example. Prompt pardon was given to Elias Kanengoni, (the Central Intelligence Organization, CIO, head for Midlands region), and Kizito Chivamba, (senior ZANU-PF Youth League official), in the run-up to 1990 general elections, for attempting to kill Patrick Kombayi who mistakenly stood as an opposition candidate under Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM), against Simon Muzenda, Mugabe's deputy. Even though a Zimbabwean court found the two men guilty of attempted murder and the Supreme Court upheld the conviction, Mugabe promptly pardoned them.

3.3.3.3 Population dislocation in towns, farms and rural areas

In 2005, the government approved a crack down on illegal business and housing structures, known as Operation Restore Order (*Murambatsvina*). It displaced urbanites, whose support for the opposition in the 2005 parliamentary elections revealed that ZANU PF was losing its grip on power. Although the results were interpreted as a sign of anger by the electorate, the blame was on poor urbanites, seen as saboteurs of the national economy through the parallel market system. Augustine Chihuri, a war veteran, and a service chief, negatively commented on poor urbanites that they were "crawling masses of maggots bent on destroying the economy" (CCJP, 2007: xvii). This made many to think that ORO was not intended (by government) to correct housing and business structures but to punish and errant urban electorate for voting the opposition during the parliamentary polls.

These operations also relied on war veterans. Some people feel that war veterans have close affinity to ZANU PF because of (1) experiences of the struggle and (2) indemnity payouts for their contribution to the struggle. The use of military equipment owned by government forces, acquired through the army service chiefs (who are war veterans) has discredited the professionalism and integrity of the army because of the regrettable unaccountability of the war veterans to the society. People also suspect that the army could be used in the guise of war veterans. This has reduced people's respect for the army (http://allafrica.com/stories / 200806140092.html). This increased people's fear of the army with obvious implications on the polls.

There are striking similarities in the ORO's (2005) images and Gukurahundi. ORO's imagery of removing filthy in poverty stricken centres closely links with the 1982 to 1987 Gukurahundi removing of ethnic chaff in Matabeleland and Midlands. In the urban centres, the poor formed the base for MDC membership. Similarly, Matabeleland and Midlands served as the strongest centres for PF ZAPU support. Hence in both operations, ZANU PF aimed at suppressing the base for the opposition, as well as influencing the outcomes of the general elections.

3.3.3.4 ZANU PF and House of Assembly

Soon after MDC's formation in September 1999, nine months later, in May 2000, MDC polled almost half of the legislature (57 to 120 seats). This led to violence, and the significance of violence on MDC after the parliamentary events of 2000 has led to the installation of new legislative instruments through ZANU PF's majority ticket in the parliament. ZANU PF widened its scope of dealing with the opposition. Firstly, ZANU PF became critical of the media and closed newspapers that are sympathetic to MDC such as The Daily Newspaper. Secondly, it introduced oppressive legislative instruments such as the dreaded Public Order and Security Act (POSA), Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), and other bills on Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as the Media Commission. ZANU PF used a number game in the house to change policies, and used a chief whip to make sure their party members voted according to party policies to effect repressive laws MDC.

The Public Order and Security Act (POSA) restricted any meetings of a political nature for the opposition if done without police clearance. In an attempt to maneuver restrictive laws, the "Save Zimbabwe Campaign", [25] an alliance by individual Christian members, organized an "anti-Mugabe political rally disguised as a prayer meeting so as to circumvent a ban on such events under the draconian Public Order and Security Act" (IWPR, Issue 1:6) at Zimbabwe Grounds (working class suburb of Highfields, Harare). The 11 March 2007 prayer meeting ended in disaster with the Highfields police shooting and killing Gift Tandare, the youth chairperson of NCA; which "is a lawfully registered group that advocates for Zimbabwe to adopt a homegrown, people driven constitution" (FAHAMU, 2007). As the following picture shows, most of the detainees endured serious injuries, with Morgan Tsvangirai sustaining serious head injuries and being hospitalized in intensive care (IWPR, Issue 2).

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[25] "Save Zimbabwe Coalition, an emerging alliance which brings together all the opposition parties, civic groups and church organizations", such as National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), MDC, and ZNPC. (IWPR, Issue 1:6).

MDC faction leaders, Arthur Mutambara (left) & Morgan Tsvangirai (centre), NCA Chairman, Lovemore Madhuku (right) leave a Harare magistrate's court, 13 March 2007 (IWPR, Issue 3:6)

During detention, the detainees were ill treated. They could also not see their lawyers, who were also harassed for attempting to protect their clients. The detainees were denied medical treatment (FAHAMU, 2007).[26] The consortium of detainees and people who sustained injuries from this rally ranged from MDC party heads, Morgan Tsvangirai and Aurthur Mutambara to NCA President Lovemore Madhuku (IWPR, Issue 3: 6), along with party members, such as Nelson Chamisa, MDC spokesperson (IWPR, Issue 2:4),[27] and Grace Kwinjeh, MDC deputy secretary for International Affairs (IWPR, Issue 1:1). Others, like Ian Makone, MDC's national executive member, went to Harare magistrates' court, on life support and in police custody on 31 March 2007 (IWPR, Issue 3:4).

3.3.3.5 Talks

The use of intimidation to cripple the opposition has yielded fruits for ZANU PF. In a response to the Gukurahundi atrocities, Ndlovu-Gatsheni clearly states that ZANU PF used

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[26] Commending on untried detention and assault on opposition leaders, Innocent Gonese, legal affairs secretary for the opposition MDC said, "These actions are symptomatic of a rogue regime that has lost all semblances of sanity and decency".

[27] Nelson Chamisa was attacked by unknown assailants at Harare International Airport on 18 March 20074 and was detained for medical attention at Avenues Clinic after attack.

violence to influence its political continuity. In the current situation, the provocative speeches by army chiefs intimidate members of the opposition, and alienate society. In fact, the use of violence during elections creates a subculture that harbours acrimony, suspicion and exclusion among civilians, and this has benefited ZANU PF during general elections in rural areas throughout the country (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2002:31). The 2007 shooting event was thus interpreted as an intimidation campaign against opposition leaders "in a bid to cripple the Save Zimbabwe Coalition" (IWPR, Issue 1:7).

The use of violence on civilians has seemed to receive no action from the international society, whose outcry and criticism has failed to sway Robert Mugabe in 27 years rule of tyranny (IWPR, Issue 2). ZANU PF benefitted in the talks with MDC where violence was Robert Mugabe's strategy to pressure on Morgan Tsvangirai. Many people took exile in neighboring countries, mainly South Africa. The majority of people in exile have been cut off from meaningful participation in the country through voting and political participation. There are strong opinions about the unpreparedness of ZANU PF on brokering peace with MDC without swallowing MDC into ZANU PF. The analysts showed that attacks on the opposition, and in particular its leadership, were meant to break their spirits before the negotiations, or force MDC to submit to the will of ZANU PF (IWPR, Issue 3:4).

3.3.3.6 Meaningful engagement

Positively, the inclusion of ZANU PF and MDC parliamentarians in the house of assembly impacted on policy making and analysis. ZANU PF and MDC parliamentary portfolios cooperated and produced credible laws that could be used when the situation in Zimbabwe normalizes. These laws are needed to safeguard the nation from entering into another unnecessary crisis. On preparing for the 2008 general elections, the talks between MDC and ZANU PF resulted in the signing of a constitutional agreement which repealed some electoral laws and brought in new laws that forced ZANU PF to agree to some transparent measures during elections. Many analysts commended the amendments to the constitution as a *roadmap* to parties agreeing on something acceptable. Many people think that the national conflict in

Zimbabwe can be solved by a new, well-drafted constitution (IWPR, Issue 6:1). The optimism in having a constitution was in establishing a fair field for electioneering as well as giving the judiciary enough arbitrative space on issues of solving election conflicts.

The government of Robert Mugabe was forced to negotiate with Morgan Tsvangirai's MDC party because of the ailing economy (IWPR, Issue 5:1). The national President's attempt to make an alliance with business and industry had failed because these they did not trust the sincerity of President Mugabe. In the negotiations, the two parties used the services of the South African President, Thabo Mbeki. During the same period and process, ZANU PF did not stop to condemn MDC as a western puppet, which was also met with a failure by MDC's leadership to clearly dispute ZANU PF's accusations, and to show that MDC was not a sub-contract of foreign governments (IWPR, Issue 6:6) but rather a product of labour unrest through Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and National Constitutional Assembly (NCA). Technically, MDC, as a new party, was weakened further by internal squabbles, especially its failure to maintain party unity over the decision and dispute to go for senatorial elections in 2004 (Options, 2004). This has been worsened by MDC's primarily negative political campaigns, especially its lament on the failure of democracy and human rights observation without offering alternatives to the hopeless electorate as well as a way forward during these trying times for both MDC and the national population.

3.4. Conclusion

The broken relationship between the Shona and the Ndebele, white farmers and the black government and between MDC and ZANU PF has affected people's economic, social and political wellbeing. For racial tension, there has been difficulty in meaningfully engaging the society in effective economic development in farming – crop and animal farming, commercial agriculture, horticulture, tourism, mining, industry, and others. On ethnic tension, the society has failed to meaningfully engage because of corruption, nepotism, patronage and pillage. On the political front, those in power have not given any players the chance to engage through elections, parliamentary debates, media, and law-making. Undeniably, what the NVDD

observes, "At the moment national reconciliation is indeed the key to nation building and development in Zimbabwe" (:38) is a challenge the church faces with the current situation.

Thus the country has major challenges from its past that pose a problem for future national development. Among these issues are racial identity and access to national resources such as land in terms of mining rights, farming, industrialization, construction and tourism. There are many ways in which limitation of access to land impede with the future of the country. This closely connects with how minority races and ethnic groups are treated in terms of receiving justice and access to national resources is another major challenge that poses a problem for the future of the country. The effect of differences on political legitimacy is negative for minorities, and it affects national reconciliation. The focus has been changed from human need to political legitimacy, making political responsibility impossible. Any decent theology of reconciliation has to take this social situation extremely seriously.

Chapter 4.0

Theological engagements of reconciliation in Croatia and South Africa

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 discussed the major issues in Zimbabwe's past that pose a challenge for the future, mainly what "left the nation torn apart and must be attended to in order to reconcile the nation and to achieve consensus on the fundamental developmental issues that concern our nation" (NVDD, 2006:38). For the NVDD these issues include the Gukurahundi war, Operation Restore Order (Murambatsvina), Fast Track Land reform and economic mismanagement through ESAP that politicians consistently use to divide people, by race and by ethnicity. These issues are seen as a hindrance to social transformation and development. In chapter 2 I have argued that the NVDD is correct about the need for reconciliation, but it does not deal with social reality deeply enough, nor does it develop a deeper and robust theology of reconciliation. In chapter 3 I argued that there are three areas of deep division in Zimbabwe that are in need of healing, namely, ethnic tensions between Ndebele and Shona, racial divisions between white and black over land ownership, and political divisions between ZANU PF and the MDC. The NVDD did not deal with these issues in depth, and so fails to provide a strong social context for a theology of reconciliation.

In this chapter we pick up the second criticism, namely the need for a deeper theology of reconciliation. To do this, we will turn to theologians who have worked in other situations of conflict, namely Croatia and South Africa to see what we can learn from them. The way theologians have engaged with Croatian and South African experiences are a challenge to the Zimbabwean church, to reexamine its role in the face of power and the plight of the poor. In this chapter therefore, we will discuss how the Croatian and South Africa experiences can provide resources for a theology of reconciliation in Zimbabwe.

4.1.1 Background to this chapter - theology of reconciliation

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The major proponents for a theology of reconciliation that this study has consulted are the Croatian theologian Miroslav Volf and the South Africa theologian John W. de Gruchy in their books *Exclusion and Embrace*, and *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice,* respectively. Volf's book was published in 1996 following the events in Eastern Europe, and de Gruchy's comes later in 2002 following the changes taking place in South Africa. Along with Volf and de Gruchy's texts, the South African church initiatives of the *Kairos Document* (1985) and *Belhar Confession* (1982/6) are examined as examples of two attempts to speak about reconciliation in the context of apartheid in South Africa.

4.2 Miroslav Volf: The Croatian Experience

4.2.1 Introduction

In this section we are going to deal with Volf's theology by looking at three central ideas in his book. For our purposes, the key themes around reconciliation are closely related to three biblical figures: Cain, Abraham and Christ. First we will deal with the background of the book and its central idea, and then discuss its key contents.

4.2.2 Background: context, history and central idea of the book

Miroslav Volf is a multinational character[28]. His book was written at the peak of neocolonialism, six years after the end of the thirty-year Cold war between Union Soviet of Socialist Republic (USSR) and the United States of America (USA) in 1990. He wrote *Exclusion and Embrace* after attending a 1992 conference in Potsdam in Germany entitled "God's Spirit and God's People in the Social and Cultural Upheavals in Europe". In 1993 the

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[28] Volf, a Croat by birth, resides in the United States of America. He studied in Germany under Jürgen Moltmann. He is a professor of systematic theology, a religious writer and a Christian. He participated in the *Vatican Council* on "Promotion of Christian Unity" and the Christian-Muslim inter-faith dialogue. He is a regular visiting professor in Central and Eastern Europe. He is a professional member of two religious societies.

German theologian Jürgen Moltmann, and his mentor, asked Volf whether he as a Coat could embrace a Serbian soldier, known as a Chetnik.[29] Volf admitted that the Croatian experience affected his humanity. However as "a citizen of a world at war and a follower of Jesus Christ" (:10), Volf's many identities gave him an obligation to embrace a Chetnik. *Embrace*, the central theme of his book, is a personal journey, and he terms it "spiritual", undertaken in face of a social reality of violence and the demands for reconciliation through Christ.

Volf has written more than 10 books and over 150 editorials and articles. He received three awards in four years of the publication of *Exclusion and Embrace*.   Along with this significant text of the late 20th century, Volf also got an award for *After Our Likeness* (1998).[30] His text has been chosen for this study as these awards suggests that peer reviewers recognise that it transcends time, experience and history. Baum calls this transcendence *good practical theology* (Baum, 1998), applicable in any situation of social exclusion, and hence can be used to reflect on culture, race, gender, age, class, religion and ethnicity in a world divided by conflict, disease, terrorism, poverty and identity. This makes Volf a pacesetter of the theology of reconciliation at the start of the 21st century.

Volf undertakes a creative theological dialogue with themes in classical thought, philosophy and gender in our world today. The dialogue between the Bible and these diverse topics is innovative, and it contributes to a creative renewal of biblical thinking. He makes a persuasive reflection on Christian doctrines of the Trinity, Christ's incarnation and the Cross to clarify debates on exclusion and oppression in the struggle for embrace, justice, liberation and peace. He employs an incisive style in his study that reveals his attachment to the actual cases of conflict and violence. As a Reformed theologian, Volf departs from postmodern liberal thinking by advocating for transformation of the self to become more responsible. His belief in the God who sides with survivors and is empowering them to deal with violence suggests that even survivors can contribute in perpetuating cycles of violence.

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[29] Chetnik refers to a radical Serbian nationalist/royalist paramilitary movement that operated in the Balkans and was responsible for atrocities against the Croats before and during the first and second world war.
[30] Exclusion and Embrace received the Christianity Today book award for "50 leaders 40 and under" and the 100 most influential religious books of the 20th century. He was also a winner of the 2002 Grawemeyer Award. His other book *After Our Likeness* was also a winner of the Christianity Today book award.

Volf refrains from making explicit examples of violence in Croatia although his remarks seem to say that Croats were survivors and Serbians offenders. When we closely examine the history of Croatia, the Croats were not innocent either because Franjo Tudjman, Croatia's first elected president "restored the flag and the coat of arms of the notorious Ustashi state, which was responsible for the mass murder of Serbs" (Baum, 1998). Volf mentions the difficulty of using historical truth to bring about reconciliation especially if the history of conflict is long. In other places like the Germany-Polish conflict (Furet, 1999), tracing the history of conflict and violence is counterproductive because truths are counter-created by historians. In the Germany-Polish conflict, the churches came up with a solution. They worked a common story out of the conflict for the warring parties and managed to suggest solutions for the common good of the German and Polish people (Baum, 1998).

4.2.3 Critical issues in *Exclusion and Embrace* on Reconciliation

A number of problems have been noted in *Exclusion and Embrace*. Baum (1998) advances four significant criticisms. First there is an uneasy alliance between physical conflict and gender identity. Also, the concrete analysis of women within a context of conflict and war can barely be done ably by male theologians (Baum, 1998). Then the Trinitarian doctrine is dealt with in absolute disregard of the foundations of theology and cultural conditions in which the Pauline doctrines arose, especially their hermeneutics and history. Third, the theme of reconciliation sometimes fails to be coherent with the biblical texts, especially the historicity of the Parable of the Prodigal son. There is no proper contextual-hermeneutical credibility to use this Scripture in conflict. Finally this all surmises that the book was written on the Balkans in light of Volf's experiences in America, applying theology without roots in third world countries.

Notwithstanding these concerns, however, my reflections on Zimbabwe suggest that this book has a rich theological approach and methodological praxis that can contribute in constructing new theological ideas that can deal with conflict in our society today. To understand this more fully we can turn to his discussion of three biblical figures, around which he weaves his theology of reconciliation.

4.2.4 Cutting the strings of exclusion and cycles of violence: Cain and Abel

4.2.4.1 Naming evildoing and the evildoer

In the story of Cain and Abel, the evildoer and his strategy are clearly named. Cain failed to pull together with Abel and this resulted in belonging apart from each other, thus creating a cycle of mutual exclusion. "The first link in a chain of exclusions" (:95) came from Cain who viewed and treated Abel as insignificant. The cycle of exclusion led Cain to attempt to undermine Abel's story, and failed to create new relationships, and for Cain to acquire a new humanity, hence the "fraternal blood" (:78), and the land became "inhospitable and no longer yields fruit" (:98, 97). It (i) separated Cain from creation, (ii) robbed him of a brother, and this meant that (iii) he lost belongingness in his society.

4.2.4.2 Evildoing is owed a particular treatment

Volf states that sin is "generated by a perverted self in order to maintain its own false identity" (:96). Both survivors and perpetrators are guilty, but their guilt cannot be equated. Cain's repentance and confession of sin seem to acknowledge Volf (1996:82) quoting Reinhold Niebuhr that theological reflection needs "to balance the equality of sins with the inequality of guilt". Cain is thus treated with integrity for the gravity of his sin. However Cain's moral performance could not undo the relationship between Cain and Abel (:85), hence "God both relentlessly questions and condemns Cain and graciously places a protective mark upon him" (:93) to "protect him as a potential victim" (:98) from Abel, whose blood called for vengeance from the ground. In all God restores Cain and Abel's relationship.

In conclusion, for Volf this story provides a language of dignity for perpetrators. They are regarded as evildoers, notwithstanding the circumstances that led them into those actions. Yet finally, Cain is treated with integrity, without shortchanging Abel.

4.2.5 Taking the dangerous step of opening up for the other: Abraham

4.2.5.1 Abraham and cultural transformation

In the "towering figure of Abraham" (:38) a new hope for a new culture "radically bound to God" (:42) made Abraham a stranger among his own people but a voyager in a new place. In this voyage, he however discovered in a new place a new culture (:40). So his response to God by moving away enriched his thinking and acting. Abraham created a new human heritage. He became a new locus of human genealogy. In a "new universality" (:39), Abraham created new networks of relations different from his history and religion and focused on a new history and religion created by his departure. Abraham's closeness to other cultures due to his departure from his own culture, Volf argues, brought Abraham closer to his own culture. Departure is a metaphor Volf uses for the church; and he says it no longer involves physical distance because "it can take place *within the cultural space one inhabits*" (:49).

4.2.4.2 Paul and the transformation from Judaism to Christianity

In Paul's letters, the Gentiles were "'wild olive shoots' engrafted to 'share the rich root of the [Jewish] olive tree'" (:48). God acted through the specific culture, the Jews. The argument is that intimacy is in God. For this, "ultimate allegiance is given to God and God's Messiah who transcends every culture" (:49). "The oneness of God implies God's universality, and universality entails transcendence with respect to any given culture" (:39). Paul appropriated the story of Abraham in a shift to Christianity because "The belief in one God entails a belief in the unity of the human race as recipient of the blessings of this God, yet in order to enjoy the full blessings of this God a person had to be a member of a particular 'tribe'", 'the Jews' (:44). Paul's theology attempts to make a movement from particularities to universalities such as the movement "from the locality of a land to the globality of the world" (:43).

Paul explains how Christians live within their own culture, opening "up a particular people to become the one universal multicultural family of peoples" (:50). Paul departs from discussing salvation in relationship to the Jewish people. He reinterpreted salvation as a reality now "lived out in the many bodies of different people situated in the one body of Christ" (:50). The

fulfillment of Abraham's departure, whose goal was in all cultures, was so to authenticate all cultures in Christ. This departure gave Abraham the opportunity to see himself in the eyes of other tribes and to see other people in their own eyes.

In conclusion therefore the significance of reconciliation found in Abraham, particularly in Paul's interpretation of Abraham, is that "Christians take distance from their own culture because they give the ultimate allegiance to God and God's promised future" (:51).

4.2.5 Healing comes when the wounded embrace the perpetrator: Jesus Christ

4.2.5.1 Healing as the justice of God

Volf moves on to discuss the significance of Christ in the social reality in Croatia. Christ is the seed of Abraham, who fulfils both "the genealogical promise of Abraham and the end of genealogy as a privileged locus of access to God" (:45). Birth in Abraham is replaced by faith in Christ. In pursuance of ultimate justice and a common humanity, Christ takes the centre place of all tribal allegiances, deities and heroes which fan cycles of conflict in the world (: 158). In the face of social reality, the place of Christ, especially the command for love is critically analyzed. Kim further argues that in Volf, justice is necessary as a vehicle of forgiveness and a new identity for the perpetrator (Kim, 2002).[31] Thus, "only those who are forgiven and who are willing to forgive will be capable of relentlessly pursuing justice without falling into the temptation to pervert it into injustice" (:123). It is only with Christ that the justice of God, the forgiveness of sin and the hope for a new humanity is made possible.

4.2.5.2 Healing as the willingness of the sinner to be embraced

Although the hope of renewal for culture and humanity is in the resurrection of Christ (:27), the individual is equally important for realizing the justice of God, forgiveness and a new beginning. Rather, "the will to embrace ultimately rests on a willingness to take up the

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[31] "Volf addresses the most difficult question of just how a believing Croatian father of a raped and murdered daughter can obey Christ's command to love the Serbian soldier who committed the crimes when every ounce of his being cries out for blood? ... "Indeed Volf argues for the necessity of remembering justice in order to help bring a perpetrator to a state of being able to receive forgiveness and consequently a new identity from God".

Cross" (Brown, 2000:921). In the Cross, Volf contends, "the voices and perspectives of others, especially those with whom we may be in conflict, resonate within ourselves, by allowing them to help us see them, as well as ourselves, from their perspective, and if needed, readjust our perspectives as we take into account their perspectives" (:213). Volf makes a special discussion on justice, forgiveness and new hope. He states (:302),

> Without entrusting oneself to the God who judges justly, it will hardly be possible to follow the crucified Messiah and refuse to retaliate when abused. The certainty of God's just judgment at the end of history is the presupposition for the renunciation of violence in the middle of it. The divine system of judgment is not the flip side of the human reign of terror, but a necessary correlate of human nonviolence".

In Christ the justice of God and forgiveness of sin lead to new hope for humanity.

We have come to the end of our discussion on the theology of reconciliation by Miroslav Volf in which we have identified three key elements, namely: From the example of Cain and Abel we learn about cutting the strings of exclusion and cycles of violence; from the example of Abraham, we note the importance of taking the dangerous step of opening up for the other; and we learn from the story of Jesus Christ that healing comes when the wounded embrace the perpetrator.

4.3. John de Gruchy: The South African experience

4.3.1 Introduction

In this section we are going to deal with De Gruchy's theology by looking at four central ideas in his book. Unlike Volf, De Gruchy uses an interdisciplinary motif that involves four disciplines: theology, politics, law and anthropology, and these give us the four themes for our discussion. First we will deal with the background of the book and its central idea, and then go on to discuss its key contents.

4.3.2 Background: context, history and central idea of the book

In his book, *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice*, De Gruchy, a white South African theologian, explores "the relationship between the politics of reconciliation and the Christian doctrine of reconciliation" (:13) in relationship to the end of the 300-year period of colonization and apartheid in South Africa. In this exploration, he uses the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)[32] as a reference point to explain "the story of struggle, suffering and the 'miracle story' of transition to democracy" (:23). He writes with conviction, as an insider of the TRC, with a privileged perspective, hoping to renew and transform relations and ethos of the new South African society. The TRC in South Africa was the most notable reconciliation process in history because of its attempt to restore the human identity of both survivors and perpetrators by recommending reparations for the loss suffered by survivors and rehabilitation for perpetrators. The TRC highlights strongly the centrality of story-telling. Story telling was used to give amnesty to those who told the truth. Survivors managed to 'remember' stories and to deal with their memories of pain while perpetrators 'remembered' and came "face to face with their guilt" (:23), offering a new beginning for South Africa.

De Gruchy is a notable scholar who in 200 pages comprehensively recounts the unnerving fresh memories of apartheid and skillfully joins them with the ideals and teachings of the church through history as well as the ideals of the South African society such as *Ubuntu* philosophy.   For this reason, De Gruchy's work stretches across many fields and is designed for use by anthropologists, social scientists, politicians and theologians. For our purposes, De Gruchy proposes a fourfold strategy that puts Christ at the centre of the dialogue between former enemies (:16, 17). We now turn to examine this in more detail.

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[32] The 1998 Truth and reconciliation Commission (TRC) used by De Gruchy is an initiative that attempted to bring the divided South African society together from the legacies of apartheid. De Gruchy uses it to reflect on how a new culture can be built through restorative justice.

4.3.3 Critical issues in *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice* on Reconciliation

There are concerns about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), although this study will not discuss these in detail. In sum, the TRC has been questioned concerning its methodology, the dominance of Christianity (:18, 76), the particularity of a brand of Christianity among many (:15), the politics and ideals of reconciliation (:42) and the paradox of seeking both reconciliation and justice.   The TRC failed to connect the evils of the past to a free South Africa. The TRC left the assumption that only blacks suffered under the apartheid era and the new nation had a special obligation to blacks. This has never been balanced with the realities of poverty and pain in South Africa.

Also, the Muslim and Jewish premises of reconciliation differ significantly from the Christian premises. De Gruchy also admits that the TRC did not address the "multicultural character" and "dynamics of multi-faith relationships" (:2), where "mob violence", "urban terrorism" and "religious bombings" bore testimony to religious fundamentalism after apartheid (:113).[33]

Despite these shortcomings, the TRC in South Africa was supported by Muslims, Jews and Christians in South Africa in reaching for justice and reconciliation (:3). This led to the strengthening of the process of reconciliation as the TRC embraced the theological and political dialectics of the three prominent world religions (See: 123).

4.3.4 Taking social reality very seriously: social perspective of reconciliation

De Gruchy understands the seriousness of the place of society for the success of reconciliation. For him, reconciliation can only take place "within a particular context and with regard to a particular set of interpersonal or social relations" (:153). For instance in exploring the notion of restorative justice from the Christian perspective, he was aware of the plurality of strands in Christianity. He also acknowledges that societies are multicultural, multi-religious, and he was overly aware of the diversity in contexts and histories. Though his study uses images from the

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[33] "The rise of religiously inspired vigilantism following the collapse of Apartheid deserves careful review in any study of South African history. To gloss over such events promotes a suspect revisionist history that does little to advance reconciliation" (http://episcopal.wordpress.com/2008/01/16/reconciliation-restoring-justice/).

Christian religion, De Gruchy also examines a humanist philosophy, *Ubuntu*. This philosophy comes from traditional society, and was taken aboard to define how human beings were expected to live (:91).

Ubuntu, originating from the concern of "Bantu" (people) among the Zulu, was a founding principle of the struggle for liberation, probably alongside James Cone's "Black Theology" which influenced the rise of black consciousness (Kalu, 2006:576-595). This philosophy became instrumental in charting a way forward in the TRC, defining and describing the process of reconciliation. *Ubuntu* was also used in drafting the South African constitution; as the foundation of the South African nation. This makes *Ubuntu* a "sacral principle" in the living memory of the history of apartheid in South Africa (: 96). So *Ubuntu* made South Africa a new nation. It brought a new liturgy and spirit to people, who for 300 years were deprived of true religious formation and practice (:107).

De Gruchy explores lines of relationships such as God and creation, gender, and of course, former enemies locked up in a given geographical space. The TRC, using *Ubuntu* philosophy, helped to find ways to pay back the losses suffered by both survivors and perpetrators (:31). The *Ubuntu* philosophy helped to bring liberation as well as justice in South Africa (:37), to answer the question "Who is an African' within the South African context?" (:31). Though no substantive resolve about reconciliation has been reached in South Africa yet, the TRC set a trend for engagement through practices that enhance reconciliation such as nation building. The use of truth to 'remember' the past as well as plan and prepare for the future is a method that has been in use in many contexts in the world (:23).

4.3.5 Reconciliation is not cheap grace: interpersonal perspective of reconciliation

De Gruchy firstly shows that there are significant connections between the historical realities of politics in South Africa and the teachings and theology of the church over the years. Some personalities fought bravely for the liberation and end of apartheid in South Africa (:71). Many people died; and some people are heroes, playing a role as political saints. For this

reason, reconciliation is a costly exercise which begins with seeing examples of those who paid heavily both emotionally and in personal losses, who yet chose to forgive their enemies.

De Gruchy defines reconciliation as a metaphor with overarching relevance for the TRC process and its goal of liberation, freedom and justice. Of all the possible metaphors, reconciliation clearly defines and articulates history and theology without losing meaning. It goes beyond religion, and it covers fields of human experience and theological introspection. The TRC is such a model that contributed significantly to South Africa's transition from apartheid to peaceful democracy. For blacks, the TRC promised a new future, but for previously privileged whites, it challenged their comforts. The TRC provided South Africa with an opportunity for transformation. Whites were made conscious of the atrocities of apartheid through the media and the blacks remembered the past and it helped in dealing with current and future anger between whites and blacks.

By the end of the process, healed memories began to show the world that new narratives had become part of the new South African society. An example is Ginn Fourie whose daughter died during the Heidelberg Massacre, where black freedom fighters killed some white students in reaction to apartheid. Ginn's story is passionate and amazing; it undergirds the building of new narratives. It clearly shows the shift of power and relations between whites and blacks, and is a testimony for the restoration of human dignity for both whites and blacks in the democratic South Africa (:25).

4.3.6 The divine initiative with the offender: theological perspective of reconciliation

There are a number of similarities between de Gruchy's and Volf's books, although de Gruchy writes with a different perspective to Volf. De Gruchy explores the life of Abraham for its significance to three major world religions: Islam, Christianity and Judaism (:131). The story of Abraham is a living testimony of God's involvement in human history. De Gruchy, like Volf turns to Paul, and asserts that God took the initiative to deal with hostility even though humanity had offended God (:52), which closely connects with de Gruchy's discussion on restorative justice, where the offender is justified by accepting the offer of forgiveness.

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The theology of De Gruchy denies the limitation of the gospel to personal piety, and argues that it contributes to the wider restoration and renewal of relations and society. This transformation is built into a continuum of relations in restoring society and creation to God and each other. This work is done after the fall of apartheid in South Africa and supports the quest for democracy. His hope is to see the support of other religions, notably Judaism and Islam, embraced in bringing world peace.

4.3.7 Restoration, creativeness and renewal: institutional perspective of reconciliation

De Gruchy suggests interesting and salient features of restorative justice where law and gospel are two complementary opposites. He works with the ideas of Karl Barth who considers the importance of law and gospel for the realization of full justification as he discusses restorative justice. The central element for the mediation of justification according to Karl Barth is the church through its rituals and sacraments.[34] The sacraments preserve the promises of Jesus Christ, unleashing the incomparable power of love.

De Gruchy states, "reconciliation is about the restoration of justice, whether that has to do with our justification by God, the renewal of interpersonal relations, or the transformation of society" (:2). For the South African society, positive responses from government and civil society have helped to renew society and transformed South Africa. Some of the examples of this transformation are seen in the rehabilitation of perpetrators, educational programs and victims' compensation payouts. The legislation of compensation gives survivors hope when their immediate needs are met. In fact this process contributed immensely to the provision of education, health, other services and access to land. So what began as confession, story telling, truth telling and forgiveness bore practical fruit.

De Gruchy makes a departure from modernity in his discussion to create new ideas born by bringing in new people. From this insight, De Gruchy discusses 'natality', the idea that a new

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[34] It is therefore imperative that if sacraments use natural elements from creation, their mediation of justification can only be possible and complete when creation is regarded and restored in all its relations hence restore its sanctity.

child in life brings new beginnings. The inclusion of the blacks and whites in the nation was going to bring surprises unknown before. The creativity brought by new people would advance new beginnings for South Africa. This closely agrees with the understanding that reconciliation must begin at a personal level because of the creativeness of individuals in accepting and being willing to risk their lives for the better of all. For this, taking from Moltmann's seeing and doing things creatively and even disturbing the established order, De Gruchy proposes a radical theology.

We have come to the end of our discussion on the theology of reconciliation by John W. de Gruchy in which we have identified four key elements, namely: From a social perspective we need to take the social reality very seriously; From an interpersonal perspective we need to know that reconciliation is not cheap grace; From a theological perspective we need to know that the divine initiates reconciliation with the offender and From the institutional perspective there is need for restoration, creativeness and renewal._

4.4. Church documents from South Africa

Thus far we have looked at the theological resources from two key theologians who have dealt with the theme of reconciliation in contemporary societies. To complete our survey of theological resources for the church in Zimbabwe, we turn to two Christian documents that were produced during the struggle against apartheid, both of which deal with reconciliation in South Africa. These two documents are (1) the *Kairos document* and (2) the *Belhar Confession*. We gain an insight of how the church in South Africa dealt with reconciliation to inform how the church can also deal with reconciliation in Zimbabwe.

<u>4.4.1. The *Kairos Document*</u>

4.4.1.1 Background to the document

The *Kairos Document* was written by theologians and lay Christians in 1985 in response "to the deepening political crisis in South Africa" (Goba, 1987:313), especially army repression in the South African 'black townships'. Quoting from the preface,

> The *Kairos Document* is a Christian, biblical and theological comment on the political crisis in South Africa today. It is an attempt by concerned Christians in South Africa to reflect on the situation of death in our country. It is a critique of the current theological models that determine the type of activities the church engages in to try to resolve the problems of the country. It is an attempt to develop, out of this perplexing situation, an alternative biblical and theological model that will in turn lead to forms of activities that will make a real difference to the future of our country.

The church in many ways needed to respond to the deepening crisis, responsible for creating and supporting the theology of apartheid.

4.4.1.2 An overview of the Kairos Document

The *Kairos Document* was written in six chapters, the preface and the explanatory notes. The Chapters are, (1) The Moment of Truth, (2) Critique of 'State Theology', (3) Critique of Church Theology', (4) "Towards a Prophetic Theology", (5) Challenges to Action and (6) Conclusion. Chapter One explores the social situation with apartheid. Chapter Two explores the lack of reconciliation in a racialized state and the use of religion to support racism. Chapter three explores the church's insistence on old ideas that are not useful to the church in South Africa under the apartheid rule. Chapter four explores the characteristics of a theology of change (called Prophetic Theology) that is grounded in Scripture and social reality. Chapter five explores the practicality of ideas developed in Chapter four and how the church can participate, in a real life situation of conflict and violence. Chapter six revisits the work in the document and calls Christians within and without the country to take necessary action and to provide support to the struggle.

In this document, reconciliation appears in every corner of the discussion. However, chapter three has a section on reconciliation when it is critiquing "church theology". The type of reconciliation this study has been discussing is the one found in "prophetic theology" in chapter four because "prophetic theology concentrates on those aspects of the Word of God that have an immediate bearing upon the critical situation in which we find ourselves" (The *Kairos* Theologians, 1986:17).

4.4.1.3 Reconciliation in the Kairos Document

The *Kairos Document* identified four issues supporting the Apartheid regime the church had to deal with, namely (1) the misuse of Scripture (2) 'the preferential option of the poor' (3) prophetic theology and (4) political revolution. Firstly, the *Kairos Document* sought to liberate Scripture from misuse and to justify God towards the marginalized and against the doctrine of "pigmentocracy" (Kalu, 2006: 589) as a means for privilege.[35] In a way, the document attacked the conservatives who "applied middle axioms to preach reconciliation" (Kalu, 2006: 593); and attempted to protect the poor, oppressed and marginalized, who are embraced in Jesus' ministry.

The point the *Kairos Document* makes about reconciliation is that the plight of the poor is central. This helps to shock those in power and to extend the gospel to the majority who are in the class of the poor. The proposal is critical of "cheap grace", "which designates the readiness to receive love from God with no sense of obligation toward one's neighbors" (Volf, 2002:35). It is a readiness to pursue justice and the struggle for freedom to the oppressed. For the sake of reconciliation, Maluleke asserts that regard for the poor is important because "only equal human beings can ultimately be reconciled" (Maluleke, 102).

Secondly, the *Kairos Document* says reconciliation is impossible without radical transformation. It argues for reconciliation that is balanced by justice. Graybill commenting on the *Kairos Document* states, "For the *Kairos Document* theologians, reconciliation can only follow white repentance as a clear commitment to fundamental change" (Graybill, 2002:43). It

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[35] Kalu, (2006: 583) states, "Blackness was the context, the reason for the oppression by whites, and the question is whether theology could serve as a tool of liberation of the black person from white oppression".

also asserts that reconciliation rejects middle path theology. The response of those in power with third way theology is an attestation that "Reconciliation is an obvious aim of any Christian. But at the same time it is clear that the means to reconciliation will encounter hostility from those who do not wish to give up privilege" (Rowland and Corner, 1990:184).

The *Kairos Document* finally calls for practical steps to action to support a revolution. Rowland and Corner (1990:175), analyzing the *Kairos Document*, state, "The *Kairos Document* feels that it can no more condemn the armed struggle against apartheid and call for peace at any price, than it can call for reconciliation at any price". For this reason de Gruchy (1997:169) notes that the document "heightened" tension within the English-speaking churches. In sum then, the *Kairos Document* highlights three issues, namely: (a.) The gospel's clients are the poor, marginalized and oppressed; (b.) True reconciliation requires justice; and (c.) The gospel allows for violent revolution to bring justice and reconciliation

4.4.2 The *Belhar Confession*[36]

4.4.2.1 Background to the Belhar Confession

The *Belhar confession* was a theological engagement with issues of racism in South Africa by the Dutch Reformed family of churches. It was done by the synod of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk (also known as the NG mission church) at Belhar in Cape Town on September 22 to October 6, 1982. The Belhar confession recognizes that some political leaders closely lived their faith for its moral legitimacy like Hendrik Verwoerd (1961), and so this was a warning to the rulers that their legitimacy was at stake (Naude, 2003:6). So, in Cape Town, the DRC church met to register disappointment with the political schism in South Africa caused by divisions in the church.

The confession borrows from the Nicea creed. It condemns apartheid as heretical (Botman, 2007). It also condemned the divisions in the church for fueling political divisions. The political crisis was blamed on theological indecisiveness caused by divisions in the church.

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[36] Belhar is formerly a suburb for people of mixed parentage in Cape Town. The confession by the Dutch Reformed Church in Cape Town is significant because this is the seat of the legislature.

This landmark gathering at Belhar fostered a way forward in church unity; and in so doing, the churches encouraged their members to live in harmony with each other, and to live in a way that witnessed "reconciliation in Jesus Christ and the unity of the church of Jesus Christ in its very essence" (Villa-Vicencio, 1986:241).

4.4.2.2 An overview of the Belhar Confession

The Belhar Confession is a four page statement written in two major sections, "A Status *Confessionis*" and "The Confession of Faith". A Status *Confessionis* gives the background to the statement, outlining the subjects of the statement as well as the object of the writing. It establishes the social context in which the confession is arising. It categorically condemns apartheid as a heretical and idolatrous, hence an impediment to national reconciliation. In the second section, the 1982 *Belhar Confession* makes affirmations of belief on God's work of reconciliation and the centrality of the church in bringing about this national unity. In the second section, the confession covers the themes of justice, unity, reconciliation, freedom, and the work of Christ to remove "ir-reconciliation and hatred, bitterness and enmity" (Villa-Vicencio, 1986:243). The use of justice rings what is needed by the oppressed, poor, strangers, prisoners, orphans, widows, differentially-able and wronged.

4.4.2.3 The significance of unity in the church to national reconciliation

About divisions in the church, the conservatives took advantage of their privileges to directly and indirectly influence the state, to embrace "Afrikaner nationalism"[37]. The ideas of race nationalism from experiences in other fields of life and from neo-Calvinist thinking and the idea of Africa as a mission field were used (Naude, 2003:5). This unfortunately antagonized races and divided the church, placing Christians, effectively, on either side of the conflict. The conviction by both sides of the conflict was the centrality of the church, struggling with either, liberation or oppression. For many, the church manifested its adherents' social ethics, identity and morality, and the notion of belonging to a church distinguished one "from any self-selected structure and from the natural forms of race, class, gender, nationality, and ideology" (Botman,

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[37] Some direct laws enacted at the request of the Dutch Reformed Church are the prohibition of cross-cultural marriages.

2007). In that vein, the church from the *left* interpreted the apartheid system differently, hence the *Belhar confession* pointed against the political significance of the system.

In this confession, the church is the subject and the Trinity is the object of the confession (Naude, 2003:11). The confession does not emphasize the Trinity because the problem is the lack of unity in the church because of the heretical teachings of apartheid that privileged one section of the church and society against the other. To get to unity, the church needed to reexamine its established status of unity in the Trinity, which God established and protected in history (Naude, 2003:12). So in all the work of God is focused at history and not divinity. This asserts that the God of history was relevant for the unity of the church in South Africa. Therefore the gospel that divided the South African society was not from God and was not relevant for building a new South African society.

4.4.2.4 The focus on reconciliation in the Belhar Confession

The Belhar Confession makes three affirmations of reconciliation. The first is the affirmation of unity in the Christian churches (Elphick & Davenport, 2008:153). It became the basis for dialogue about structural unity in the confession of the DRC church family and a recommitment to the ongoing conversation in the church concerning unity and reconciliation (Alston, et al, 2007).

The second is the interpretation of reconciliation in the Christian message (Elphick & Davenport, 2008:153). The document establishes a particular connection with God's act of unity, liberation and reconciliation (Oduyoye & Vroom, 2003:162). Forgiveness that came through the Cross forces individuals to enter into new patterns of life and practices that help to sustain new social allegiances. Helmick & Petersen (2002:20) say "It is a spirituality of costly grace that enables new forms of reconciliation to grow out of authentic forgiveness".

Thirdly, reconciliation comes in the principles of justice and peace rooted in God (Elphick & Davenport, 2008:153).   The emphasis on this is more towards the centrality of ethics in the community. The God of justice stands with the poor, oppressed, sick and marginalized. In a

way, the confession makes a strong link between social reconciliation and the notions of fairness in the Bible. Oduyoye and Vroom (2003:162) say "The God of justice, who stands with the oppressed against their oppression, is the God of reconciliation. God's preference for justice is indeed God's reconciling work on earth".   Villa-Vicencio (1986:242) also says this stand supports the integrity and mission of the church.

4.5 Conclusion

In chapter 2 we made two important criticisms of the NVDD, and in chapter 3 we discussed the first criticism, namely the need for social analysis of the context of conflict.   This chapter has picked up on the second criticism, namely the need for a deeper theology of reconciliation. It has turned to theologians who worked in situations of conflict in Croatia and South Africa, and also the works of churches through the *Kairos Document* and the *Belhar Confession*.   In all, this chapter has established some helpful ideas to support a contemporary theology of reconciliation in Zimbabwe.

Chapter 5 will pick up with the issues raised here.

Chapter 5.0

Towards a theology of reconciliation for Zimbabwe

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has picked up the second criticism to the NVDD that there is need for a deeper theology. This chapter picks up on everything raised in chapter 2, 3 and 4. Issues raised in chapter 2 are (1) the lack of critical analysis in the NVDD, and (2) a need for a deeper theology of reconciliation. In chapter 3, three critical issues were raised, namely ethnicity, racism and politics. And in chapter 4, key theological insights were raised from experiences of reconciliation in Croatia and South Africa. In this chapter, the key issues and insights we raised in chapter 3 and 4 will be used to suggest how the NVDD approach to reconciliation can be strengthened. In a way, this chapter combines what was raised in chapter 3 and 4 to help strengthen the quest for reconciliation in the NVDD (as were raised in chapter 2).

In building a theology of reconciliation for Zimbabwe, this chapter will critique the theology of reconciliation in the NVDD using the ideas raised by Volf, De Gruchy and the churches in South Africa. De Gruchy's work has four important elements that are central to the discussion on reconciliation in light of his principle of restorative justice. De Gruchy merges four human science disciplines: theology, politics, law and anthropology, and summarizes major issues discussed by Volf and the South African churches.

In the following few pages therefore, taking from chapters 2, 3 and 4, we will lay out an agenda for the church and reconciliation in Zimbabwe, thus deepening the understanding of reconciliation in the NVDD. This follows the 'hermeneutical circle' of theological reflection, sometimes popularized as See-Judge-Act. The first element, concerns social analysis, and calls for a deeper and more critical analysis of the social reality in Zimbabwe (See). The second concerns theological reflection, and involves a strong understanding of the depth and breadth of reconciliation from a theological perspective (Judge). The third concerns practical engagement and this involves recognizing that the church cannot drive the reconciliation

agenda by itself, but needs to partner a range of other stakeholders in an interdisciplinary manner (Act).

5.2 Towards a critical analysis of the social situation in Zimbabwe

5.2.1 The centrality of social justice

Based on the NVDD context and the experiences in Croatia and South Africa, the church in Zimbabwe faces a theological challenge in regard to social reconciliation.[38] According to de Gruchy and the *Belhar Confession*, reconciliation plays a central role in the mission and ministry of the church. From the Jewish perspective, social conflict was believed to bring misfortunes initiated by the disgruntled spirit-world while justice opened the heart of God's blessings (Micah. 6^{8-10}). Volf (1996) and de Gruchy (2002) argue that the theological anchors of reconciliation are in social justice. The dilemma with social justice is that social justice is seen as a derivative to the agenda of the church's activities because the church lack powers to enforce it. In essence, the church carries several pieces of the puzzle on justice: to be compliant to church theology as well as to social needs.

In this argument, social justice is central to social renewal. It however needs to be admitted that there is a drastic divide on the understanding of justice in the Bible and the understanding of justice in the 21st century Zimbabwe that has been influenced by history, politics, law and economics. To be able to deal with this, the ideals of the church must embrace and be conversant with the language of the world in terms of human rights, health, social services, governance, and media freedom which are pertinent for democracy, reconstruction and economic growth in the country. This questions how the church can provide wholeness, healing and "comprehensive wellbeing" for individuals and communities in the midst of its limitations.[39]

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[38] The reconciliation debacle in Zimbabwe took two twists; one done by President Mugabe through his infamous and magnanimous 1980 speech; and two, between ZANU PF and PF ZAPU in 1987.

[39] This is healing, healthy living, or salvation, which is Latin *Salus*, Greek *Soteria*, and Hebrew *Yesa*, which refers to life-lived without necessity deprivation and deliverance from factors that hamper freedom.

Politics is central in social justice because of its close relationship to economic justice and identity. How can the church seek for political rights and economic justice where the gaps widen everyday between the haves and the have-nots? How can the church challenge Zimbabwe's divisive economics inherited from the colonial regime?[40] Also, how can the church contribute in reversing political and military expansion in favour of the elites? Of course the NVDD mentions land reform as one form of economic justice. The poor were promised resettlement on white owned farms. The problem has been the hasty policies of the Fast Track Land Resettlement Programme that had a lot of flaws. ZANU PF's loss of popularity and support led to the hasty policy to appease its voters. Unfortunately the poor, who lack skills, resources and legal protection, failed to access the land, robbing them further in terms of their access to health, food, education, decent living, information, electricity, clean water, peace and happiness.

Volf points out that reconciliation entails freedom from threats to life by hunger, disease, war, and the restoration of wholeness of body, soul, spirit and society. This means that at the centre of the church's business is the dignity and agency of human beings. Human beings lose these tenets under oppression and material deprivation. With damage to the national economy and politics in the country, human dignity is difficult to guarantee, and this calls for total renewal. In the context of this discussion, the church understands succinctly its commitment to human dignity (De Gruchy, 1995b:22, 44), and the fulfillment of God's design for true humanity. True dignity encompasses social fulfillment as well as spiritual purposes in human usefulness in society and for the purposes of God. Among other things, social justice concerns how resources like land are distributed; how laws are applied and how people find recourse through the courts.

For achieving this, De Gruchy places the South African TRC at the centre in transforming South Africa from an apartheid state to a democratic state. The TRC helped to spell out the subjects and regulate both the process and exercise of reconciliation. To meet the highest standards of social integrity, the TRC allowed members of society to participate in the process, and when necessary, to critique its weaknesses. The process was accountable, though too

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[40] In other words, the capitalist and economic system advanced by the West has benefited the patrons of independence who wield monopoly to economic, political and legal control over the country.

professional and corporate in style and governance. The bureaucratic standards helped the TRC to reduce manipulation and to bring justice. The people were brought on board and their "agency" was increased (De Gruchy, 2002:147) because the bills and laws were used to manage the TRC, and this increased the agency of affected persons, their creativity, their freedom and their rights, and for many, they participated in bringing about a better future for their communities.

5.2.2 The question of identity

For reconciliation to be successful and sustainable, it needs to take seriously the racial, ethic and political diversity in the country. The church understands that diversity in God's creation 'is a good that has to be pursued as a witness of God's creative nature'. Diversity witnesses to the richness in creation. Zimbabwe's 12 million people have a challenging social multiplicity "comprised of two main ethnic groups, the Shona (83%) and the Ndebele (16%). There is a small white population of less than ½ %" (AMANI, 2005:1).   In this we cannot underplay racial and ethnic tension towards vulnerable people, and the drive towards social homogeneity. Of significance to this in Zimbabwe is the abuse of the liberation struggle to divide whites from the Shona and from the Ndebele. Accusations are given without qualification.

Identity is an important factor in society, and an important variable in national elections, and continues to influence national unity and reconciliation. It is a social reality requiring serious consideration if society is to be renewed and transformed.   Identity closely connects with the livelihood, history, religion, language and economy of the people. For a new Zimbabwe, identity needs to consider the historicity of minority groups by nationalizing their languages, culture and history. To fail to do this, the church faces an unconscious risk of competing with traditional religion, especially when it comes to ethnicity (Uzodike, 2004:308).

The challenge towards a multicultural society has to do with attitudes of dominance among majority groups. The work of the church towards social diversification can be taken beyond the local level. In South Africa, identities are enshrined in the national constitution, which recognizes 11 official languages in both the educational and public arena. Most South African

children however, have been moving away from traditional languages and culture in exchange with English, French and Portuguese because they offer more exposure to jobs and international careers. Using local languages and culture in Zimbabwe therefore would help to build a sense of honour among local communities while young people get the liberty to take languages and cultures the offer them more opportunities.

Secondly, the church's involvement with vulnerable members of society embodies an inescapable theme of God's message of salvation and deliverance from deprivation, poverty and death into God's glory, service, abundance and happiness. For this I propose that a third factor, economics, can be used to unite people against divisive identity politics. The economy and economic activities need to be fairly run, distributed and owned. Also, the promotion of ethnic, racial and ideological diversity in economics can help create a third force in society where the major threat for reconciliation, poverty, is dealt with decisively as an acknowledgement of God's ownership of "earth and the riches thereof" (Psalms. 24:1)

We also need to attend to the regional realities in southern Africa, where people move from place to place but remain members of their family groups in a particular place. This can also be seen in the church. There are bigger pictures in ethnic demographics that need redress (Ranchod, 2003), such as regional migration and citizenship. This creates new dynamics of identity and history. For Zimbabwe, the Ndebele, have ethnography of such nature. Both the Ndebele and Shona claim common features of national history rooted in the struggle against colonialism, but there is a significant dimension for the Ndebele who ran away from king Shaka of the Zulu. For Volf, the Ndebele and Shona as is the black and white, have 'a long history of conflict in which none is innocent'. Maybe that is why Volf talks about departure and belonging in the life of Abraham because of human nature and sin. In regional migration, we cannot avoid conflict. We however, like Volf, cannot have pride in loss. But we however have a greater benefit by rewriting our history, which is founded in histories of other peoples. Kornegay (2005:3) says that this initiative creates new geographical and political borders.

We have analysed the society in which reconciliation should take place, and we now turn to a deeper theology of reconciliation.

5.3 Towards a deeper theology of reconciliation in Zimbabwe

5.3.1 The theory of reconciliation

De Gruchy addresses the ingrained decrees of apartheid which did not provide space for the other in the new political order in South Africa. To create a new inclusive society, new values in fitting with the needs of the majority required an interface between justice and reconciliation. Reconciliation to De Gruchy is not simply a different name for the same activity pursued by religious notions of salvation and freedom. It covers a tangible field of human experience and theological introspection. It encompasses perpetrators and survivors, with the latter defining and articulating history.

5.3.2 The strategy of reconciliation

On this account, De Gruchy's theory of reconciliation proposes a fourfold strategy. Volf and the churches in South Africa do not specifically outline their strategies. In de Gruchy (2002:17), at the centre is Christ through whom a new movement and society is built; and it uses truth-telling as a method (:23). In the context of Zimbabwe, I would argue that reconciliation requires a seven fold strategy.

The first is reconciliation at an *individual* level. De Gruchy says that new individuals born bring new beginnings. Quoting from Hannah Arendt, De Gruchy discusses "natality" as the surprises and creativity individuals bring to society. This is arguably the first step towards reconciliation. When individuals are transformed, have accepted and are willing to risk their individual comforts for a greater good, it brings in a new humanity that embraces, relates and belongs in a new family and society. The TRC successfully handled painful stories and changed individuals: survivors remembered and dealt with their 'memories' of pain, while perpetrators remembered and came "face to face with their guilt" (De Gruchy, 2002:23). This produced new individuals who were willing to risk their lives for the greater good, especially

the example of Ginn Fourie who lost her daughter in the Heidelberg Massacre where her daughter died when the resistance movement fired back on the apartheid regime. Her choice to forgive the perpetrator even when he refused to apologize is a passionate and amazing risk that undergirded in building new narratives for South Africa. This inspiration has led to many projects on reconciliation in South Africa such as the Vuleka Trust in Durban, Institute of Justice and Reconciliation Commission in Cape Town and other church programmes.[41]

Even Jesus requested his hearers to individually respond to his message by softening their hearts, change their minds and open up to new possibilities presented by the gospel (Matthew. 23[1-13]). The individual is changed from within, what Volf calls the de-centering of the self in mind, heart, motives and intentions. Like in Cain's story, Jesus shows persistence towards the sinner's repentance, who must receive the Cross of Jesus as the protective mark from damnation (Volf, 1996:93). This is because sin is "generated by a perverted self in order to maintain its own false identity" (Volf, 1996:96). This however limits freedom for the individual. Freedom is a basic tenet of personal transformation and leads to sustainable reconciliation (Gadacz, 1987).

The second is reconciliation at the *social* level. Both Volf and De Gruchy discuss about social transformation. About social transformation, the focus is on relations, and De Gruchy states that reconciliation takes place "within a particular context and with regard to a particular set of interpersonal or social relations" (:153). De Gruchy's focus in his writing is social justice, economic equitability, peace and human welfare, which takes place within the renewal of relationships of the South African society, and build new relations based on a new ethos. For De Gruchy, "reconciliation is about the restoration of justice, whether that has to do with our justification by God, the renewal of interpersonal relations, or the transformation of society" (: 2). This led to "a fundamental shift in personal and power relations between former enemies" (:25)

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[41] The dioceses of the Catholic, Anglican and Methodist Churches in Durban run a programme called Managing Diversity at the Koinonia Centre at Thousand Hills under Vuleka Trust. The Institute of Justice and Reconciliation Commission in Cape Town has written modules that are used for training as well as books such as: *Learning to live together: practices of social reconciliation.*

These relations, Volf expands, are not dependent on personal or social behavior only. We are related by geography, blood and history. For Volf, relations give meaning to life and it is by upsetting these relations that we exclude ourselves from the same relationships. He (:97) uses the story of Cain, who "By his own act of exclusion he excluded himself from all relationships – from the land below, from God above, from the people around". For he states, "The land soaked with fraternal blood is inhospitable and no longer yields fruit". In all, the practice of solving conflicts through violence further alienates without bringing acceptance. The society therefore needs to be transformed so that relations are renewed and a new ethos is built.

The third is *cultural* reconciliation. De Gruchy discusses about identity as a national issue that led to the questions of "'Who is an African' within the South African context?" (De Gruchy, 2002:31) but he does not spend much time on cultural transformation. Volf instead, spends more time discussing cultural transformation, and this has relevance in Zimbabwe's struggle with identity in a globalizing world full of controversies of neocolonialism, political autarky, economic corruption and social polarization. This culture has partly been borrowed from colonialism, the West and other African autocracies; hence Volf (1996:59) asks the question, "How would the face look in a mirror that was not made by us in order to court our vanity?" The tribal culture full of corruption, idolatry and exclusion needs to be deprived of its definitive place in order to give it and other cultures "legitimacy in the wider family of cultures" where "ultimate allegiance is given to God and God's Messiah who transcends every culture" (Volf, 1996:49). Thus, Christ erases all particularities and breaks all tribal allegiances because as "the seed of Abraham" he fulfills both the promise from Abraham's dynasty and replaces birth with a new people. To this effect, the culture that used genealogy as a locus of privilege to access God (Volf, 1996:45) was changed to Christ.

The Zimbabwean culture that is leaning towards westernization finds relevance in the "stepping out of enmeshment in the network of inherited cultural relations" (Volf, 1996:39) in Volf's departure and belonging text. Using the Croatian experiences, he discusses about cultural renewal as a useful option for readjusting relations. Also Christianity focuses on cultural transformation, and as "many bodies of different people [become] situated in the one body of Christ" (Volf, 1996:50), the Cross and resurrection of Christ (Volf, 1996:27) unifies

the human race and not membership in the Jewish tribe (Volf, 1996:44). Paul's theology moves from use of genealogy as a means of salvation to spirituality; tribal loyalty to multicultural realities and moves "from the locality of a land to the globality of the world" (Volf, 1996:43). For the same reason, Volf uses contemporary examples of exclusion to show that to demonize others as "filth that must be washed away from the ethnic body, pollution that threatens the ecology of the ethnic space" (Volf, 1996:57) is an ugly face of exclusion driven by difference, race, ethnicity, language, religion or ideology (Volf, 1996:18) and negates the geographical space shared by same people.

To transform culture, the culture and history of people need to be revisited, especially their strategies to change culture. In addressing the relations between whites and blacks in South Africa, black perspectives to oppression and initiative to reconciliation became important (Roberts, 2005). The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) revisited the history of apartheid and reenacted examples of resistance important for South Africa's new democracy. The SABC launched a comedy that used local drama for building South African culture of reconciliation "Suburban Bliss" with the intention to address sensitive civil and cultural issues through use of humor (Roome, 1999).

The fourth level of reconciliation is *institutional*. In De Gruchy's book, one sees a trend in the culture of human rights, a new culture that fostered a smooth transition from repression to liberal democracy in South Africa (Wilson, 2000:76). This means the TRC did not belong to the church; and the TRC leaders understood this because they employed a civil and social language to the cases they heard and examined (Wilson, 2000:76). So what began as confession, story telling, truth telling and forgiveness ended in courts and compensation – bearing fruit of justice and mercy.[42] The church became an example although it continued to have its own crises.[43] Despite this, most survivors became hopeful because the government provided some of their immediate needs. The TRC also contributed immensely to service

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[42] The government pledged to pay reparations to the survivors of violence (Victims Compensation).
[43] Though the church remained a place of much hope, some of its membership remained divided. De Gruchy states, "Victims, benefactors and perpetrators were members together in the Churches, an indication of both the failure of the Church to be a community of reconciliation, but also of its potential to help bring about national reconciliation in this post-apartheid period" (de Gruchy, 2002: 112). Many institutions struggle to cope with change. Political parties are at the centre of this crisis. This change needs to be embraced by civil society, churches, academic institutions, the army, police, and the national security.

provision in the education, health and economic sector by giving more opportunities, resources and services to those who were previously disadvantaged.

The fifth is *political* reconciliation.   Volf gets it right when he makes a major classic departure from modernity. Modern nations radically turn from spirituality to dirty political scheming, "manufacturing hatreds, fabricating injuries and rewriting histories of brutality" (Volf, 1996:77). The spread of Christianity shares in this brutality, and the language used emphasizes radical purity and exclusion. There are some circumstances when brutality becomes "madness," when destruction of enemies extends to their achievements, sacred places, culture and children so that no accusing finger can be raised against their brutality (Volf, 1996:74). Most perpetrators keep hold on power, postponing indefinitely the safety valve and hope for transition for fear of losing all what motivated them in the first place.[44]

The surprise of smooth change in South Africa from apartheid to liberal democracy is found in what Schaap (2004) calls "logic of recognition". As long as there is no recognition, the question of identity (de Gruchy, 2002:31) fails to receive a new logic in the possibility of reconciliation by countering past violence with genuine civility.   The realization by Nelson Mandela to exercise moral integrity helped him to achieve justice (de Gruchy, 2002:37). Others accuse him of acting out of political expediency by providing political legality, reciprocity and civil friendship to his former enemies. Though, the inclusion of the statement in the interim constitution, "there is a need for understanding, but not for revenge, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for *ubuntu* but not for victimization" (de Gruchy, 2002:40) shows the premises of genuine expediency and sound and moral teaching.

In the *Kairos Document*, the determination to reenact a new, just and democratic order brought a new political socialization that proved that the theology of apartheid was faulty, limited and inadequate (The Kairos Theologians, 1990: ibid). The document empowered the churches' struggle for justice, identifying apartheid as a "heresy" and an idolatrous ideology that disfigured humanity, politically and morally.   This mobilized local English-speaking churches, civil society, religious groups and the international community to support the struggle against

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[44] See Volf, (1996:78), which says such brutality is motivated, "in a world of scarce resources and contested power" by the desire "to secure possessions and wrest the power from others".

apartheid (Goba, 1987: 317). The nobility of the struggle drew collaboration from a variety of progressive movements that were prepared to reexamine their allegiances to political injustice and the radical demand for political transformation (Kalu, 2006:593).

The sixth level of reconciliation is *theological*. The transformation of theology pushes out the boundaries of church confessions; convicts the church against its own teaching and challenges the church to make fervent confessions.[45] In South Africa, during the struggle to end apartheid, the Dutch Reformed Church "viciously attacked" initiatives that were bringing confessions relevant for the needs of the moment. Other churches like Anglicans, Catholics and Lutherans were not "in the forefront of the struggle against racism in South Africa" until the late seventies (De Gruchy, 1979:97). The conservatives, even after the "Sharpeville uprisings in 1960 and the Soweto riots in 1986", "the Dutch Reformed Churches (NGK, NHK, GK)" "deployed covenant theology, natural theology, race, blood, soil and the history of the Boers in South Africa" as a divine arsenal for separate development (Kalu, 2006:590). The *Kairos Document* put "theology at the center of political ethics and pursued an ecumenical response or common confession amidst corrosive circumstances" (Kalu, 2006:5821).

The effort of the church in writing the *Kairos Document* and the *Belhar Confession* was to place Christ at the centre of social transformation. In the confession however, Christ's Lordship demonstrates a "bifocal vision of antecedent church witnesses. Christ is firstly Lord of the church, but also Lord of history and society" (Naude, 2003:14). With contemporary theological reflection, the works of the church such as the confession of Belhar "closes a loop in Reformed confessions by coming to terms with the revelation of God in relation to the realities of social justice" (Botman, 2007). The struggle for justice as De Gruchy rightly puts it puts the church in a drama, and it is by using art that we can transform wrongly designed confessions of the church of yesteryear (De Gruchy, 2001).

The seventh is reconciliation at the *religious* level. The three major religions de Gruchy talks about have commonalities in that they claim origin in Abraham. The Christ debate of the

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[45] Barth quoted in Botman says, "There are good and perhaps strong Christian words which are not confessions because they are merely spoken among the like-minded where they cost nothing and do not help to make visible the contours of the Christian community" (Botman, 2007).

seventies also played an important role in bringing tolerance between Jews, Christians and Moslems. It is from this background that finding commonalities reduces religious conflict, which can push us into the future where the Christian religion takes no more space than other religions are willing to give. In South Africa, the TRC borrowed story-telling and other significantly teachings and practices of Islam and Judaism (de Gruchy, 2002: 18, 76). This recognition led the two religions to cooperate with Christianity in shaping the process so it could be relevant to theology and politics. This method helped to reopen new debates and research in the fields of theology, ethics, philosophy, classics, arts and sciences (de Gruchy, 2002:13). Centrally, truth-telling has been the principle method of narrating, proclaiming and celebrating the story of human salvation (de Gruchy, 2002:12). Even those who supported the ideals of apartheid were disempowered because two conflicting religions agreed in a just process for building a new South Africa. In so doing, South Africa did not need a revisionist history and theology over the testimony of "mob violence", "urban terrorism", and "religious bombings" (De Gruchy, 2002:113). De Gruchy carefully refers to religious fundamentalism as activism, especially its rise after apartheid. Though this seems to be a far-fetched idea, this is an important strategy for dealing with identity because of the centrality of religion among Africans, and especially Zimbabweans.

Having provided a theological framework for reconciliation, it is important for the churches of Zimbabwe to recognize that the task of reconciliation must involve other stakeholders and role players in an interdisciplinary manner. To this we now turn.

5.4 Towards an interdisciplinary praxis for reconciliation in Zimbabwe

5.4.1 Reconciliation in the church

We have noted the contours of a theology of reconciliation for Zimbabwe, and now we need to move to strategies for engagement. Clearly the first task the church can engage in is to live out its theology in its sermons, bible studies, prayer meetings, consultations and other visual and

public events such as services of reconciliation, rituals of reconciliation and showing that Christians across the divide can learn to live and work together.

5.4.1.1 Ecumenical strategies for reconciliation

For healing broken relationships and wounds that give us a way forward in national reconciliation and forgiveness, churches need to deal with their own divisions and prejudices first. Firstly, churches need to work on their confessions of faith so that they become inclusive rather than dividing before they think about making joint programs. Confessions contain the ideas crucial for theological and social action. For church unity, confessions are the basis for joint declarations and the basis of a peace-building initiative. In other words, the confessions stand as the mission statements of individual religious groupings, and if they are divisive it's difficult to engage and the nation cannot trust peace-builders who are not at peace themselves. Also crucial is the strategic formulation of restorative themes such the 1992 World Council of Churches initiative *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. Such work goes beyond fellowship and activities with implications on faith and ministry. This could also help the joint ecumenical initiatives of ecumenical organizations such as Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) and Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) to be effective in the churches represented.

Secondly, every city in Zimbabwe has a local monthly or weekly fraternal meeting that discusses social issues. "The objective of these activities is to bring visibility to the national reconciliation process and to invite support from the public who may not be aware of the initiative" (NVVD, 2006:52). As a way of "opening up arms to each other", local fraternity programs for ministers, women and men can develop programs critical for uniting church members despite ethnicity, race or ideology. In a way ministers' and women's fraternal meetings can be used for joint peace-building ecumenical programs that involve youths and men in the church. In Mutare, churches run church choir competitions and youth soccer tournaments across denominations. If taken intentionally, these initiatives can be used in the

NVDD church to church activities. In such activities rituals such as a joint ecumenical communion or ministry projects can publicly take place.[46]

However, in the wider political and social realm, the churches also need to be a catalyst for national reconciliation that goes beyond just the churches or Christians. This involves a deliberate engagement with other role-players and stakeholders, and calls for interdisciplinary strategies. We now turn to engagement with other stakeholders.

5.4.1.2 Critical approach to strengthen the NVDD theology

To make the proposed activities successful, the NVDD initiative has a few issues to consider as preparatory work for its theological reflection and praxis. In a few paragraphs we will propose as well as critique a few issues.

De Gruchy proposed "to explore the relationship between the politics of reconciliation and the Christian doctrine of reconciliation" (:13) using the TRC to usher South Africa from apartheid to democracy (:10). In using De Gruchy's proposal, many fields of human sciences were involved, specially theology, law, politics and anthropology. The NVDD can borrow de Gruchy's proposal that aims to pull together issues of justice and forgiveness to issues of social transformation and reconciliation (Ross, 2003).[47] Reviews to *Exclusion and Embrace* indicates that engagement with non-theological works in the book makes the ideas of "distance and belonging, exclusion and inclusion, gender identity, oppression, violence, truth and justice" (Brown, 2000:920) useful in a variety of ways. By widening the scope upon which reconciliation takes place, even formerly war parties like ZANU PF can be engaged in their struggle for self-definition and survival.   This helps the church to effectively communicate its gospel message to politics, its followers and its competitors.

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[46] The NVDD suggestions for public gatherings in "prayer breakfast gatherings" may prove expensive and elitist, and "national days of prayer" may be manipulated by politicians while "street marches and other open meetings" can have problems with the national laws. Thus I suggest publicly accessible programs which can easily reach church members at lesser costs and without requiring legal and political constraints.

[47] De Gruchy's approach to other fields of study sees its relevance to gender, rape and HIV and AIDS issues in Africa and South Africa (De Gruchy, 2002:157), where his work is being used by anthropologists, politicians, theologians and social scientists. See also Fiona Roos, (2003), *Bearing Witness: Women and the TRC in South Africa*, London: Pluto Press.

The church in Zimbabwe is further challenged to promulgate an inclusive approach to social reconciliation. With the example of the TRC, De Gruchy suggests that South Africa used the inclusive approach in the TRC as an instrument to promote "national unity and reconciliation". Even its chairperson, Archbishop Desmond Tutu spoke at the end of the exercise stating "it is ultimately in our best interest that we become forgiving, repentant, reconciling and reconciled people, because without forgiveness, without reconciliation we have no future" (Tutu, 1999:127). The limited actions and recommendations the TRC made were purposed at bringing "measures necessary to prevent future gross human rights violations" (Farisani, 2002:265-266) thereby averting an opportunity politicians always seek to take advantage of social differences and to manipulate the populace. The process was successful because the state was involved in sponsoring it.

The NVDD mentions borrowing from the *Kairos Document* as well as the need for a TRC. Despite critics of the TRC, "no one can deny the important role played by the TRC in beginning a process of fostering reconciliation in South Africa. With some improvements, the South African experience can be used elsewhere in Africa" (Farisani, 2002:268). Using de Gruchy's concept of restorative justice found in the TRC praxis, the NVDD was found wanting on a number of angles, which shows that there was narrowness of vision and scope. However with the South African models, the NVDD can borrow an inclusive approach to deal with exclusion in the country.[48]

The NVDD can borrow from De Gruchy's approach that condemns elitism in Christianity. In one way Christianity constructed inequalities where pain and suffering were promoted as virtues for eternity.   Rather de Gruchy suggests practices for social renewal such as "Art" as a way of involving the margins. Instead speaking for the marginalized, the church initiative needed to speak after making adequate analysis of the political situation by involving people. This initiative thence merges politics and theology in dealing with disease, violence during

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[48] The NVDD was written at the time when two voices in the Anglican Church were divided between Bishop Nolbert Kunonga and Bishop Sebastian Bakare, and a crisis in the central Harare Diocese was threatening to divide the church into two. Polarity in the church was also applied in the society.

elections, poverty and deteriorating life expectancy, 'autarky' and lack of democracy. This, it is hoped can strengthen the NVDD towards reconciliation for the marginalized.

<u>5.4.2 Reconciliation and other institutions</u>

5.4.2.1 NVDD and centrality of other institutions

Although the church is the centre of this discourse, it has no sole onus of the project. The church needs to consider other role players in civil society with a range of expertise in law, anthropology, research, politics and agriculture. The church cannot deal with legislation and national laws and constitutions in a secular way.[49] The church has expertise in these fields, but the church needs to create space within itself and its members, to engage experts in the fields of law and constitutions. This may mean engaging lawyers, as a separate entity, under the banner of the church. This ultimately helps to provide, even though the church already has expertise, the legal and conceptual framework within which "the debate on human rights, economics and culture building" takes place (Villa-Vicencio, 1992:277). One example of this was the formation of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), as a desk under Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC). This relieves the church from attending to routine duties to focus on emerging social and policy issues.

For Zimbabwe, the church needs to continue supporting institutions such as the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) to provide guidance and inspiration upon which the national constitution can be built. It also needs to support the workers' unions and students - the base for social activism and transformation. The church further needs to support new ecumenical, social and religious movements such as Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (ZHRNGOF), Student Christian Movement of Zimbabwe (SCMZ) and the Zimbabwe Christian Alliance (ZCA), among others. The South African TRC and other related organizations helped to bring a new culture of human rights to foster a smooth transition from apartheid to liberal democracy

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[49] In Christian Care, where I was Mutare's regional chairperson, the World Food Programme (WFP) funded agricultural projects that needed farming experts to advise poor farmers on new methods of farming, use of modern machinery, new implements, seeds and fertilizers. So in dealing with poverty and hunger we also need to engage other partners. Though it may not sound necessary, interfaith dialogue is necessary, but currently insignificant because of the type of impasse in the nation.

(Wilson, 2000:76). Truth commissions and such organizations are not religious projects but social projects; hence the TRC used human rights language in South Africa, including the religious leaders like Archbishop Desmond Tutu (Wilson, 2000:76). In a way, these institutions are building blocks for a democracy.

5.4.2.2 NVDD and program funding

The church needs to understand the cost involved in the TRC. It is in the church's interest to partner with government and other stakeholders for the TRC. The South Africa TRC was funded by government.[50] Taking from the experiences of South Africa, the act gave the commission enough money to hire personnel and offices in two and half years, and staggered a reduced budget beyond an extra three years before concluding the process. Freeman and Hayner (140) states,

> The act provided the most complex and sophisticated mandate for any truth commission to date. It gave the TRC the power to grant individualized amnesty, search premises and seize evidence, subpoena witnesses and run a sophisticated witness protection programme. With a staff of up to 350, a budget of some USD 18 million each year for two-and-a-half years (plus an additional, smaller budget for another three years) and four large offices around the country, the TRC dwarfed previous truth commissions in its size and reach.

It is by strategic partnership that the church can be able to run a national TRC funded by tax-payers' money, supported by government and other stakeholders. Zimbabwe has 67.5% of the population as Christians from African Initiated Churches, Catholics, Protestants and contending 30.1% followers of African Traditional Religions, and an insignificant 1.3% of other faiths (Religious Freedom, 2001). Though this figure indicates that there is no threat for religious conflict, it is prudent for national reconciliation to forge ahead while engaging in interfaith dialogue.

5.5 Conclusion

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[50] The Zimbabwe church is still unable to raise funds for its projects and still is unwilling to cut economic ties with the West. The church needs to address its funding options to increase its effectiveness in national programs. Dependence on donors where politicians are under *smart sanctions* is incapacitating especially when funds only come with a tag.

This chapter discussed key theological and social issues raised in the previous chapters and provided a deeper insight into how the NVDD could be strengthened in its approach to reconciliation. The chapter critically explored the social dynamics of reconciliation before looking at ways in which the theology of reconciliation can deeply be approached. It ended with practical insights and logistical strategies for a national reconciliation. For this reason, the chapter ended discussing an interdisciplinary approach to theological and social problems.

Chapter 6.0

Summary, recommendations and conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study. We set out to study the NVDD. We noted that it has weaknesses in social analysis and theological reflection. We set out to find how to strengthen its theology of reconciliation as well as suggest how the church can practically engage in national reconciliation. Since 1980, the NVDD is the first publication by ecumenical organizations to express their views about events in the country.[51] It fills the gap in literary publications on the work of churches and reconciliation.

This study has benefitted from the NVDD publication as well as the works of de Gruchy, Volf, and the South African churches. Among others, this study builds up the volume of literature on reconciliation, and provides a reference for future theological work from a Zimbabwean perspective. To this note, this study has adequately argued for the church's capacity for national reconciliation and peace-building.

6.2 Summary

In chapter 2, I analyzed the context in which the NVDD was written by interpreting issues that precipitated the writing of the NVDD. Chapter 2 outlines the background for the research study; the caliber and composition of the NVDD authors, and the problems the document addresses. In the NVDD, the history of division is explored and suggestions to sever the ordeals of the past from the prospects of the future are noted using the church as the centre of the reconciliation process.

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[51] We do not consider the "(1997), *Breaking Silence* by Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and Legal Resources Foundation" and the "(2006), "The truth will make you free: a compendium of Christian social teaching, Churches in Manicaland", because they don't represent the church, nationally.

In chapter 3, we expanded the NVDD understanding of reconciliation. The church has been involved in the liberation struggle because without justice the past challenges the future. Three key issues were raised; ethnicity, racism and politics. For a new future, a new schema for dealing with identity and politics was suggested in the hope to create a new future for Zimbabwe.

Chapter 4 set to discuss theories of reconciliation from South Africa and Croatia. I have used de Gruchy, Volf, the *Kairos Document* and the *Belhar Confession*. Chapter 4 raised questions about justice and reconciliation, restitution and forgiveness, among others. In a way, this chapter posited for a theology of reconciliation in Zimbabwe.

In Chapter 5 we have highlighted key social and theological issues raised in chapters 2, 3 and 4. The chapter has used these insights to suggest how the NVDD's approach to reconciliation can be strengthened. Chapter 5 combined issues that were raised in the previous three chapters to suggest how the church, through the NVVD can build a deeper theology and practice of reconciliation. We noted that this would involve three clear steps, namely, more critical social analysis, a seven-fold theology of reconciliation, and strategies to push for reconciliation in the church, but also in the nation.

In light of this background, this chapter concludes the study. Taking from what was said in the NVDD, the social context of conflict, and the experiences in Croatia and South Africa, this study concludes recommending the following for strengthening the NVDD theology of reconciliation.

6.3 Recommendations

For strengthening the NVDD, the church needs to consider the following:
1.) The paradigm of reconciliation from a theological perspective needs to emerge from the Zimbabwean context of racial, ethnic and political problems. In this theology, the causes of suffering help to suggest and uncover options for social renewal. This clarifies the history of

conflict as well the prospects of reconciliation. This informs the church on how to deal with identity and political power as a resource for national reconciliation.

2.) Also, the paradigm needs to have a theoretical and ethical basis upon on which action is promoted, justified and authenticated in the struggle for social transformation.

3.) Furthermore, the theology of reconciliation takes place at the interface of theory and reality. For the sake of methodological clarity on theological action, the debate needs to seriously consider insights from other social science disciplines, especially what the law and economics say about human rights and dignity.

4.) More efficaciously, a national programme on reconciliation in a multicultural society requires interfaith dialogue and engagement of civil society and government. Other faiths contribute needed moral and social values, and for say, Islam, has a strong social theology that can contribute to empirical approaches to reconciliation.

5.) The NVDD also reveals that reconciliation can best be approached momentarily by stating that it was merely suggesting what the nation needed to discuss. It has become a norm in our society that new generations bring new things. It is therefore in our best interest to provide tentative suggestions for theological reflection and action through open axioms of reconciliation relevant for current generations and leaving room for progressive action and reflection in future challenges.

6.) It has also been discovered that power is authenticated and consolidated by theology. A transforming approach to reconciliation needs to critique current ecclesial, political and social structures that are oppressive and self-perpetuating. Theology has a special obligation to those who were previously disadvantaged and to serve all.

7.) To serve all, theology needs to be communal, and incorporate grassroots perceptions. In essence, theology needs to be intentional about the currently disempowered, and to prepare them for radical engagement and participation; without creating new social inequalities. For

this, a new society is built by a corporate, democratic and participatory approach that displaces hypocrisy with truth.

6.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has set to provide a theoretical basis for a theology of reconciliation from the perspective of Zimbabwe. This theory is hoped to be a resource for strengthening the theology of reconciliation in the NVDD.

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