CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN ZIMBABWE: THE CASE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN ZIMBABWE

BY

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SUPERVISOR: PROF. E. CHITANDO
DECLARATION

I declare that the entirety of the work contained in this thesis is my own, original work, and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for publication or for obtaining any qualification.
DEDICATION

To my wonderful wife, Elizabeth, and dear children for their love, patience and encouragement.
ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

AACC…………… All Africa Conference of Churches
ABCFM………… American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
AIPPA……………… Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
ANC………………… African National Congress
CCJP……………… Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
CCZ………………… Church of Christ Zimbabwe
EDICESA………… Ecumenical Documentation and Information Centre for Central and Southern Africa
EFZ………………….. Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe
ESAP………………. Economic Structural Adjustment Plan
GNU………………… Government of National Unity
GPA………………… Global Political Agreement
LMS………………… London Missionary Society
MDC………………… Movement for Democratic Change
NCA………………… National Constitutional Assembly
NDP………………… National Democratic Party
PF………………….. Patriotic Front
POSA……………… Public Order and Security Act
RENAMO/MNR… Mozambique National Resistance
SADC………………. Southern African Development Community
UANC……………… United African National Council
UDI…………………. Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UDACIZA …………. Union for the Development of Apostolic Churches in Zimbabwe Africa
UCCZ……………… United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe
UN…………………. United Nations
WCC………………. World Council of Churches
WHO……………… World Council of Churches
ZANLA……………. Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU..................Zimbabwe African National Union
ZANU-PF.............Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZAPU..................Zimbabwe African People’s Union
ZCWC..................Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Conference
ZCC.....................Zimbabwe Council of Churches
ZIPRA..................Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army
ZUM.....................Zimbabwe Unity Movement
Abstract

This study seeks to establish the perspectives of the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe (UCCZ) on political violence in order to understand its theological position on politically motivated violence in Zimbabwe. The UCCZ has a long history of concern for social justice. Its members have often taken forthright positions on controversial issues involving Christian principles. Since the time of its establishment in Zimbabwe in the late 19th century, the UCCZ has been speaking to the human issues in the contemporary world from a sound biblical and theological foundation as historically demonstrated in the UCCZ traditions. This study on Christian perspectives on political violence traces the roots of Zimbabwe’s contemporary political violence to the actions of the Rhodesian state and armed forces, to inter-party rivalry between the major nationalist political parties in the 1960s, and to violence that took place during the liberation war in the 1970s. The focus, however, is the UCCZ viewpoint on political violence of post-colonial Zimbabwe. In this regard, the consequences of Renamo banditry activities, Gukurahundi violence, harassment of national political leaders, violent elections, totalitarian tendencies, and inter-party and intra-party violence are assessed in order to obtain the UCCZ’s perspectives on political violence. The thesis interrogates the UCCZ’s viewpoint on state-sponsored violence during the fast-track land reform and elections. The UCCZ standpoint, expressed during the post-2000s polarized society in Zimbabwe, is instructive on the church’s stance on political violence. The consistent theme in the thesis is the church’s response to the trauma and fear of the survivors of political violence and the impunity of the perpetrators in the search for the church’s outlook on political violence. This study seeks to find out how the causes, patterns, dynamics, and consequences of political violence have affected the UCCZ’s theology. The key finding of this thesis is that for the UCCZ political violence is primarily a moral problem, and every moral problem is ultimately theological. The complexity of the Zimbabwean situation defies the neatly worked out moral principles of classical Christian tradition. The findings in this research refute the reviewed literature which is largely centred on Augustine’s Just War Theory. Many UCCZ members have been misled into believing that political parties’ worldviews are stronger than their own Christian worldviews. In fact, there is no longer a strong Christian mind in areas wrecked by political violence. This thesis has demonstrated that the church’s singular failure has been the failure to see Christianity as a life system, or worldview that governs every area of existence. This Church should understand that God transcends every culture, every power, every social group and every ideal. The thesis identifies a gap in theology and proposes an anti-violence theology emerging from the UCCZ viewpoint on political violence in Zimbabwe. The argument pursued is that it is possible to craft an anti-violence theology in Zimbabwe. The Christian’s duty is not only to build up the Church but also to build a society for the glory of God. There is no doubt that developing a Christian mind is a rewarding and enriching act of discipleship - it brings Christian principles into the area of life and creates a new culture.
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Many people have contributed in different ways to the production of this thesis. I am profoundly grateful for the valuable assistance that I received from my supervisor, Prof. E. Chitando. He deserves special thanks for his penetrating criticisms and for supporting this line of research that has so greatly interested me, and opening up his library to me. Without this, the thesis would have been more difficult to complete.

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I am sincerely thankful to UCCZ community members who spoke to me about their recollections or experiences of political violence in Mount Selinda, Chikore Mission, Chipinge and Harare.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abbreviations and Acronyms........................................................................................................i
Abstract.....................................................................................................................................iii
Acknowledgements....................................................................................................................iv

1.0 Chapter One: Introduction ......................................................................................................1
  1.1 Area of Investigation ...........................................................................................................1
  1.2 Statement of the Problem ...................................................................................................2
  1.3 Stimuli ...............................................................................................................................2
  1.4 Aim and Objectives ..........................................................................................................9
  1.5 Methodology .....................................................................................................................10
    1.5.1 The Phenomenological Approach .............................................................................11
    1.5.2 The Historical-Narrative Method ............................................................................16
    1.5.3 The Theological Method ..........................................................................................18
    1.5.4 Complementary Nature of Methods .........................................................................21
  1.6 Scope and Limitations .......................................................................................................21
  1.7 Terminology and Conventions ..........................................................................................23

2.0 Chapter Two: Literature Review ..........................................................................................27
  2.1 Introduction ......................................................................................................................27
  2.2 The Bible and Violence .....................................................................................................27
    2.2.1 The Old Testament and Violence .............................................................................28
    2.2.2 The New Testament and Violence ...........................................................................32
  2.3 Violence in Early Christian Writings ..................................................................................39
    2.3.1 Justin Martyr of Caesarea .........................................................................................40
    2.3.2 Tertullian ..................................................................................................................41
    2.3.3 Origen ......................................................................................................................43
    2.3.4 St Ambrose of Milan .................................................................................................44
    2.3.5 St Augustine’s Classical Just War Theory .................................................................45
2.4 The Middle Ages, Reformation Period and Violence ........................................49
2.5 Religion, Violence and Major Western Theologians ....................................52
2.6 United Nations, Violence and Law of Love ..................................................63
2.7 Political Theology and Violence ...................................................................65
2.8 Liberation Theology and Violence ................................................................66
  2.8.1 Latin American Liberation Theology ......................................................67
  2.8.2 African Theology and Violence ..............................................................70
2.9 Feminist Theology and Violence ..................................................................75
2.10 Theological Works on Violence in Zimbabwe .............................................77
2.11 Conclusion ..................................................................................................95

3.0 Chapter Three: The History and Structure of the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe .................................................................96
3.1 Introduction ..................................................................................................96
3.2 Colonialism: The Roots of Violence for Independent Zimbabwe ..................97
  3.2.1 Attempts to Establish Missions in Zimbabwe ..........................................99
  3.2.2 Christian Missions Stalled .....................................................................102
  3.2.3 The Establishment of Mission Stations in Zimbabwe ............................103
3.3 The Coming of American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) ..........................................................106
3.4 The Wars of Resistance 1893, 1896-7 ..........................................................110
3.5 Evangelism ..................................................................................................115
  3.5.1 A New Faith is Planted ........................................................................116
  3.5.2 Leadership Development .....................................................................119
3.6 Education ....................................................................................................121
3.7 Theological Education ................................................................................124
3.8 The Church and Political Awareness ..........................................................125
3.9 Political Parties and Political Violence .......................................................130
5.2 Questionnaires

5.2.1 Questionnaire Participants

5.2.2 Participants Who Witnessed Political Violence

5.2.3 Political Violence Witnessed by the Respondents

5.2.4 Forms of Political Violence Witnessed

5.2.5 Rating the relationship between the UCCZ and Government

5.2.6 Why Relationship was as Rated in Question 4 Above

5.2.7 Church Stance in Dealing with Political Violence

5.2.8 Effectiveness of UCCZ in Dealing with Political Violence on a Scale of 1-10

5.2.9 Causes of Violence in Areas of Operation

5.2.10 The Church and the Violent Land Occupation

5.2.11 The Way Forward to Create Harmony in the Community

5.2.12 Survivors of Political Violence

5.2.13 Perpetrators of Political Violence

5.2.14 The General Populace

5.3 Interviews

5.3.1 The Clergy Should not be Involved in Politics

5.3.2 Political Parties Apportion Blame

5.3.3 Interviews on RENAMO Political Violence

5.3.4 Interviews on Gukurahundi Political Violence

5.3.5 Prominent Members of the Church Experienced Political Violence

5.3.6 Newspapers Report Violence at UCCZ Mission Stations

5.3.7 Eye Witness Account of Violence

5.4 Conclusion

6.0 Chapter Six: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

6.2 The UCCZ’s Normative and Pragmatic Position on Political Violence
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>The Christian Perspective on a Good Society</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Failure to See Christianity as a Worldview</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>The UCCZ's Guiding Theological Foundations</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>Divisions and Ambivalent Positions</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>The Church of Political Victims</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>The Culture of Impunity</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>Past Approaches to Political Violence</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>The Way Forward: A New Theology to Deal with Political Violence</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.10.1</td>
<td>Mapping Out the Contours of Anti-Violence Theology</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.10.2</td>
<td>Anti-Violence Theology Draws on the Reconstructive Motif</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.10.3</td>
<td>Ubuntu/Hunhuism is a Remedy for Political Violence</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.10.4</td>
<td>Anti-Violence Theology is Biblical</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.10.5</td>
<td>Anti-Violence Theology Draws on the Praxis Model</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.10.6</td>
<td>The Church’s Role as Teacher and Moral Guide</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.10.7</td>
<td>Global Church and Political Violence</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>What Then Shall We Do?</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.11.1</td>
<td>Need for Education for Life</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.12</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>References</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 1: Questionnaire on UCCZ and Political Violence .................................................. 344
Appendix 2: Churches in Manicaland Forced to Close for Zanu-PF Rally ................................. 347
1.0 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Area of Investigation

This is a study of the problem of the ambivalence that characterizes Christian theology on political violence. This work seeks to explore some of the conflicting perspectives on the link between religion and political violence among the followers of Christ, in general, and the UCCZ’s attitude to political violence, in particular. The ambiguity of violence is clearly articulated by Paul Tournier thus:

Thus violence is ambiguous, sometimes condemned, sometimes praised, depending on the camp to which the critics or admirers belong. It raises therefore for our consideration difficult problems which cannot be settled by superficial pronouncements about justifiable or unjustifiable, malignant or benign violence.¹

The subject under consideration in this study, theology and violence, brings together two important theological debates: that of violence and non-violence. The violence that has been interwoven with religion throughout history has rarely been taken into account by theologians. Those who have faith in God experience difficulties when they attempt to understand violence in a world created by a God who is Almighty, a God who is good, peaceful, merciful and loving.

Christian perspectives on violence lie at the intersection between one’s understanding of the faith and one’s practical experience in the civil society. The essential test is whether the Church could be characterized as pro-active or not. Put differently, this research argues that theology has the potential to contribute to peaceful co-existence in the society.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The statement of the problem is two-fold. Firstly, the subject of this study is one of the most pertinent problems in the area of religion and society in contemporary Zimbabwe. Secondly, this work examines the problem of basic human dynamics that produce violence in order to find out whether this church has a clear theological viewpoint regarding political violence.

1.3 Stimuli

The rationale for pursuing this study revolves around a number of factors. In fact, seven challenges stimulated the development of this thesis on the UCCZ’s attitudes to political violence in Zimbabwe. Firstly, an observation of historical trends within Zimbabwean contextual theology stimulated further investigation. Since the colonial period, many theological works have been produced in Zimbabwe. Judging from the available literature on churches, in general, and the UCCZ, in particular, one can conclude that little has been done in the area of Christian perspectives on political violence. When one studies these theological works that touch on political violence, one recognizes their opposition to oppressive measures. The basic themes in these theological materials are the defence of human rights, respect for humanity, and the need for conversion of heart and rejection of violence both as a means of preserving the status quo and as a means of bringing about change in society. In addition, no extensive academic work has been devoted to political violence in relation to the UCCZ. This denomination is under-studied
in Zimbabwean church-state relations, with “bigger” denominations such as the Roman Catholic Church, the Methodist Church, the Anglican Church and the Lutheran Church receiving prominence. To the best of the writer’s knowledge, no theological work has been wholly devoted to the study of intertwining of religion and political violence in Zimbabwe. There is little scholarly historiography about Christian theological perspectives on political violence among Zimbabwean theologians.

Secondly, there is need to formulate a new theology that articulates Christian perspectives on political violence. A major assumption of this thesis is that the experience of politically-motivated violence among the UCCZ members generated a new attitude / theology to violence. The researcher’s experience in teaching Political Theology has enlightened him on the churches’ involvement in conflict resolution and peace-building in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African continent. In many countries, theologians have played a critical role in resolving conflicts. The researcher concluded that theologians in Zimbabwe must constitute the active life of the country and try to enlighten the nation about the problem of political violence that has torn communities apart. Dube, an emerging Zimbabwean theologian, bemoaned the lack of theology grappling with political violence when he wrote:

In Zimbabwe and in Africa in general the church is yet to formulate a theology that deals specifically with issues of political violence. Such a theology is long overdue considering that half or even more of the African population (Christians included) has at a certain point in time been brutalized or humiliated either through colonial oppression, ethnic conflicts, or apartheid in the case of South Africa. The fact that a large segment of the population is involved either as victims, perpetrators, or as survivors and bystanders
makes it imperative for the church to deal with political violence as a theological issue.²

Dube’s assertion is correct. Christian views on political violence have been treated as an appendage in many theological works in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, very little research has been done by Zimbabweans themselves on the theological implications of political violence in socio-political contexts where Christians live and perish.

Thirdly, the justification of this study hinges mainly on its intended potential to situate the question of Christian viewpoints on political violence at the centre of theological debate and scholarship. Sources available such as When a State Turns on its Citizens by Lloyd Sachikonye (2011), The One Party State and Democracy in Zimbabwe by Ibbo Mandaza (1991), Democracy and Development in Zimbabwe: Constraints of Democratization by John Makumbe (1998), Travails of Opposition Politics in Zimbabwe by Eldred Masunungure (2004), Contextualising the Military in Zimbabwe by Martin R. Rupiya (2004), The Constitution and the Independence of the Judiciary by Lovemore Madhuku (2001), and Constitutionalism, Democracy and Political Practice in Zimbabwe by Welshman Ncube (1997) deal with violence from the perspective of political science, law and social studies. This shows that for too long the discourse on political violence has been championed by political and social scientists and legal experts to the detriment of theological and religious values; hence the need to situate the thesis in the wider theoretical framework of religion and violence.

This study, therefore, aims to provide “the missing link” by interrogating the phenomenon of violence from a theological point of reference. There is need to explore the reasons why some Christians oppose violence, and the issues they are trying to safeguard. The feeling that bloodshed is largely opposed to love runs deep in Christian conscience; any claim that is made for the legitimacy of violence has to be reconciled with this conviction. New information concerning Christian theological attitudes to political violence in Zimbabwe will be unveiled.

Fourthly, Christian theologians have debated the problem of violence for centuries but they have not presented the average believer with a satisfactory explanation of the presence of violence in God’s creation. This study focused on finding out new orientations that emerged from the UCCZ in terms of religion and violence. In this regard, the study intended to know what questions, issues and arguments members of the UCCZ raised in the midst of violence. Christians cannot afford to exclude political violence from their theologizing, otherwise they caricature their theology.

Fifthly, the subject of this study is one of the most pertinent problems in the area of religion and society in contemporary Zimbabwe. This study will situate the issue of violence in the context of religion and violence. It is a truism that political violence belongs to all generations; but currently in Zimbabwe it is more topical than ever. Instances of political violence are rampant in Zimbabwe. The torture and killings of opposition party and ruling party activists, and civil rights activists, and political beatings have become common events in independent Zimbabwe. The torture and
killings are presented to by the Amnesty International Report on the Zimbabwe Elections, published in October 2008:

Many people in Zimbabwe were ‘beaten, arrested, unlawfully detained, tortured and killed,’ between the March 29th harmonised elections (presidential, house of assembly, senate and local government) and the 27th June presidential run–off in 2008. ‘Sources in Zimbabwe documented over 180 violence related deaths and more than 9 000 people tortured and beaten’.3

This has brought about a sense of insecurity and uncertainty. This research, therefore, is being undertaken within the framework of the reality of political violence in the country. D.M. Ackerman postulated that theology rooted in people’s experiences has the “potential to change people, to deepen faith and understanding, and to heal our wounds.”4

Sixthly, this study will specifically investigate the position of the UCCZ on political violence in order to find out the church’s role in politically-motivated violence. It seeks to interrogate, theologically, what it means to be a prophetic witness in a time of political violence. It argues that in the current crisis Christians need to adopt a theological position on political violence that is both prophetic and contextual. There is need for prophetic theology in Zimbabwe that will liberate people from the shackles of political violence. Such a thrust will set up a genuine theology designed to make a paradigm shift in Zimbabwe. The view that this author will advance is that theology has a major contribution to make towards a society of mutual political recognition. Insights from this research will help the Church to better deal with this aspect of human experience.


Seventhly, as one who lives and is a member of the community under research, the researcher felt compelled to contribute to this vital area of theology. The nation has to be rebuilt and this has to be the result of discussion by citizens of this country. This requires a change of heart, a change in our attitudes, a true conversion, and the transformation of the Zimbabwean as a person. I consider this primary in an effort to end violence in Zimbabwe. Zimbabweans must discern the Word of God spoken through the Zimbabwean situation, speaking the Gospel to people in their situations of political violence.

The insider/outsider problem is one of the most perennial problems in the academic study of religion. The terms “insider” and “outsider” which relate to basic methodological applications to the study of African Traditional Religion, refer to African or Euro-American scholars respectively. In a broader sense an “insider” is a scholar of religion while an “outsider” is a researcher who has not studied religion. T. Hinga observes that: "More narrowly, the term "insider" in the context of religion, refers to the participant in a given religious tradition."⁵ According to E. Chitando, the question has always been, “Who is best qualified to research on and teach ATR?”⁶ Insiders claim that only a person who was or is involved in a religion or who has practiced some form of that religion is qualified to say anything meaningful about it.

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Does an academic training permanently exclude one from insider status regardless of one’s personal beliefs or sense of belonging? There is always a danger when scholars attempt to impute or discern meaning that perhaps it is they, and not the informant who is seeking it. As a lifelong member of the UCCZ, the researcher was well versed in the operations of this church. This familiarity “shortened the normal process of gaining entry to the field and establishing a rapport with the subjects.” Even though some members of the church had reservations about this sensitivity of the topic on political violence and goals of the research, no one regarded the researcher’s arrival as unusual. As a member of the church, the researcher’s ethnography was informed as much by his biography as by his training. The insider’s understanding of the faith enabled him to get more data on the emotive issue of political violence than an outsider would have been able to do. Thus, in defence of the “insider” concept, scholars point out that insiders have first-hand experience of what it means to be a practitioner of the faith. On the other hand, outsiders are incapacitated by cultural and linguistic barriers. Therefore, they cannot interpret internal thought forms and symbols.

However, the committed “insider” is usually accused of subjectivity. At times “insiders” may be biased towards giving a nationalistic view of a particular national ideology. As a result, such scholars may be seen as suppressing vital evidence to a particular character of a religion or denomination.

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The researcher’s position helped avoid some of the pitfalls that limit the “immersed” ethnographer, while preserving the ability to empathize with the informants. The phenomenological method of research has been able to open immense possibilities for many researchers, as will be demonstrated in section 1.6 below. Chitando pointed out that the phenomenological system endeavours to bracket out all biases, pre-conceived beliefs and prejudices, and refrains from evaluating truth-claims by religions, while attending to the adherents’ point of view. By performing the phenomenological bracketing to eliminate every type of prejudice, the scholar of religion paradoxically remains in control of knowledge and thereby dictates the rules for interpreting religious phenomena.

This study is informed by Rene Girard’s mimetic theory. Girard, a French anthropologist, historian and literary critic, explained the interpenetration of religion and violence of all religions except Judaism and Christianity to the directing of violence onto surrogate victims or scapegoats, and they justify and sacralize violence in the name of God or the gods. In contrast, biblical revelation takes the side of the victim and exposes the mechanisms of violence so that they may be overcome. Girard has developed a three-point mimetic theory that claims to explain the central dynamics of human desire, behaviour, patterns of violence, and the meaning of biblical revelation. Christ broke into the vicious circle of violence by taking upon himself the violence of humanity to pay

back violence. Christ is a sacred saviour from human violence, breaking its fatal
determinism. This theory is described in detail in Chapter Two.

1.4 Aim and Objectives
The study aims at investigating Christian attitudes to political violence with reference to
the UCCZ in order to find out whether this church has a clear theological viewpoint
regarding political violence. In pursuit of the above aim, the study will be guided by the
following objectives:

- To identify and examine scholarly theological positions regarding violence with
  reference to key theological works in order to find out what scholars of religion
  have said about violence and religion.
- To trace and delineate the history of the UCCZ in the context of violence in order
  to check if there is any evidence in history of Christian attitudes to political
  violence.
- To examine church-state relations in independent Zimbabwe and show how the
  UCCZ responded to political violence in the country.
- To examine and interpret Christian perspectives on political violence from church
  leaders and other stakeholders in the UCCZ.
- To find out the UCCZ’s theological models to counter political violence and to
  cultivate a culture of peace in Zimbabwe.

1.5 Methodology
The phenomenon of the link between religion and political violence is so complex that it cannot be adequately addressed using one method or a single approach. This study incorporated some quantitative aspects into the qualitative research because the questionnaire, which is a traditional research instrument of the quantitative paradigm, was made use of. In this research a combination of two paradigms was made for mutual confirmation. As A. Okuni and J.H. Tembe pointed out: “qualitative and quantitative research paradigms are complementary and may be used in the same study.”\footnote{A. Okuni and J.H. Tembe, \textit{Capacity Building in Educational Research in East Africa}, Bonn, Educational Science and Documentation Centre, 1997, p.23.} The aim of a qualitative analysis is a complete detailed description. In quantitative research we classify features, count them, and construct statistical models in an effort to explain what is observed. The results of qualitative research are normally presented in words while results of quantitative research are usually shown in numbers. It is mainly for this reason that the researcher adopted an interpretive theological method of analysis that employed an interdisciplinary approach drawing upon phenomenological, historical and theological methods. This research was based on three distinct, though inter-related, fields of enquiry. This multi-disciplinary approach did more justice to the complexities of the subject than was otherwise possible. It sought to interpret the meaning of political violence from a phenomenological, historical and theological frame of reference. The first two approaches were designed to open the way towards theological analysis and investigation on the basis of affirmations and propositions which emerged from the social and critical analysis of society. The main instruments of data collection were the questionnaire and the interview. ‘Research instruments’ are tools of data collection and management used in the acquisition of data with which to test the research aim. In order
to complement the interview method the researcher used the quantitative mechanism of questionnaires.

1.5.1 The Phenomenological Approach

In order to solicit Christian beliefs on political violence, the study assumed a phenomenological approach and its implied descriptive and historical frame of reference. The phenomenological method is largely built on a qualitative approach that assumes that reality is socially constructed through individual or collective definitions of the situation. C. Grbich defined the phenomenology of religion as an approach that attempts to:

Understand the hidden meanings and the essence of an experience together with how participants make sense of these. Essences are objects that do not necessarily exist in time and space like facts do, but can be known through essential or imaginative intuition involving interaction between researcher and respondents or between researcher and texts.¹²

Thus, the phenomenological approach is centred on the qualitative assumption that human beings are complicated and can only be studied through observation and asking questions. However, there is no universally agreed definition of the term “phenomenology of religion.” According to N.T. Taringa, the term phenomenology may refer to:

An attitude toward or the study of religious phenomena in a broad sense, or to a cross-cultural comparative study and classification of religious manifestation or a commitment to a specialized method of inquiry of religious expressions.¹³

This study will utilize the common characteristic features agreed upon by many phenomenologists.

The research employed the phenomenological *epoche* (suspension of judgment) so as to eliminate value-judgements, and bias and allow Christians and those involved in violence to speak for themselves.\(^{14}\) *Epoche* is a approach whereby the observer may avoid value judgements:

> It is not primarily concerned with explaining the causes of things but tries, instead, to provide a description of how things are experienced firsthand by those involved. The phenomenological investigations of something like ‘homelessness’, for instance, would focus on the experience of being homeless. It tries to understand homelessness from the point of view of those who are themselves homeless and tries to describe how they see things, how they understand the situation, how they interpret events.\(^{15}\)

This study will focus on the UCCZ’s perspectives on the experience of political violence in Zimbabwe. In any description of religious activity, the observer must select which aspects are important and which are not. In utilizing the phenomenological approach, the researcher was ultimately connected with the phenomena being studied. In this regard, the phenomenological method is experiential and qualitative.

Through the phenomenological process of empathy, the researcher came to know other persons and checked whether his/her experience of violence corresponded with others’ experiences. S. B. Twiss and W. H. Conser state that empathy involves both “imaginative re-experiencing and systematic introspection of the contents that are


imaginatively experienced." Thus, the points of departure in this research were the church people and those people involved in violence. An advantage accrued from this. Since the research began with the phenomena themselves, the study seemed to begin at the right place. The testimonies of members of the UCCZ formed the centre of the thesis, in contrast to what happened with some early researchers. Some western theologians produced “library theses” based on their intellectual capabilities, without carrying out fieldwork. The fieldwork consisted of questionnaires, observations and interviews. This research, therefore, proceeded by description rather than deduction.

The researcher conducted interviews, as a method of data collection, with church leaders, reverends, ordinary members of the UCCZ, survivors of political violence and politicians, in order to obtain a comprehensive description of their experience of political violence. Interviews facilitated methodological triangulation of data by checking whether what was written on questionnaires is supported or refuted. In order to achieve methodological triangulation, the researcher interviewed 25 five informants who comprised politicians, church leaders, church members, and political violence victims, to establish their views on political violence in independent Zimbabwe. In an effort to maximize neutrality and consistency of findings, an interview schedule was used. The researcher also used semi-structured and unstructured interviews. This was very important and useful because different types of interviews were employed at different stages of the same study. In the semi-structured interviews, the researcher introduced the topic, and thereafter an interview guide was used. This type of interview offered the

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interviewer (researcher) considerable latitude to pursue a range of topics and to offer
the subject the opportunity to shape the content of the interview. The unstructured
interview used open-ended questions. These interviews gave the researcher the
opportunity to get first-hand information about political violence in Zimbabwe. The
researcher avoided asking leading questions, and utilized penetrating questions
designed to help in producing a genuine understanding of the interactions. The
interview data on Christian perspectives on violence from each participant was broken
into segments and the researcher looked for meaning in these segments. The study
compared views of all the participants and the findings were synthesized. This is clearly
demonstrated in Chapter Five.

Having sought to transcend the limitations of bias and subjectivity through
phenomenological *epoche*, the researcher gave an objective assessment of the data.
The researcher reflected on the subjectivity and hidden agenda of all interviewed
persons. Thus, the descriptive phenomenological method was designed to open the
way towards objective analysis.

J.L. Cox asserts that the researcher should be aware from the outset that *epoche* can
occur only within limits because the observer by definition plays an active role in
phenomenological descriptions.17 One of the problems which was encountered during
the research was that even though the observer endeavoured to suspend all previous
judgements, this seemed likely to be impossible since each person brought with his /

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her cultural, and psychological understandings which were in part hidden to his / her consciousness. The second step after performing *epoche* which the researcher had to undertake when using the phenomenological approach was performing empathetic interpolation. After the observer had suspended his own judgements, the researcher would enter into the experience of the believing community being studied, in this case the UCCZ.

Sampling is the fundamental technique of inferring information about an entire population without going to the expense of measuring every members of the population. Fifty questionnaires were distributed during the UCCZ Annual General Meeting in November 2011 to a sampled population of fifty people, randomly sampled from the targeted population of two hundred and sixty people at Mount Selinda Mission. Random sampling involves the random selection of a sample using tables. This allowed sampling without bias and was easy to generalize findings to the population under study. In addition, stratified random sampling was adopted because of the need to collect the views of smaller sub-groups of the UCCZ. In pursuit of the above, the researcher distributed fifty questionnaires to fifty respondents, who included the UCCZ reverends, ordinary members, employees and victims of political violence. J. Bell indicates that there is no ideal choice for a data gathering technique, by stating that each technique has strengths and weaknesses and that each is appropriate for practical situations.\(^{18}\) This suggests that it is circumstance that plays a key role in choosing the technique that the researcher is going to use. Thus, aspects of qualitative and quantitative techniques

can be used in the same research. Through the use of a questionnaire the researcher was able to classify features, count them, and construct statistical models in an attempt to find out how the UCCZ theologically interpreted political violence in Zimbabwe. In the sensitive area of political violence, the questionnaire’s anonymity solicited honest responses.

1.5.2 The Historical-Narrative Method

The second method utilized by the researcher was the historical-narrative method. It was possible, through careful analysis of multiple sources of evidence concerning Christian attitudes to political violence in Zimbabwe, to discover what ‘really’ happened during post-colonial Zimbabwe. The historical-narrative method entails the discovery and formulation of truth out of a given historical situation and this is in tandem with Third World theologies. The method was used initially to study the encounter between Africans and Western missionaries and the subsequent Christianization process. The study needed to be grounded historically in order to find out whether the UCCZ has any trajectories in attitudes to violence coming from the biblical, Christian tradition and Christian theologies. The historical method oriented the study towards critically investigating Christian perspectives by assuming that the perspectives could not be understood outside their history. Historical research deals with events that took place prior the researcher’s decision to study them.\(^{19}\)

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Historical investigation enabled the researcher to put the whole research in context and placed the study in its natural setting. The author was able to explain how perspectives were influenced by the specific historical, cultural and socio-economic context, within which violence occurred. According to J. Habermas, “social action exists only with reference to the system of traditional cultural patterns in which the self-understanding of social groups is articulated.”\textsuperscript{20} For Habermas, understanding comes through a process of meaningful communication. Therefore, patterns of communication were investigated with the aim of discovering how the society was shaping and reshaping itself and what the cultural patterns were and what action was necessary for the society to realize its vision. The method helped the researcher to assume that the UCCZ perspectives on political violence could best be understood, not in isolated snapshots, but as belonging to a complex system of experiences, all of which were related.

This method also enabled readers to appreciate the wholeness of experience. It was therefore incumbent upon the researcher to find data through secondary sources such as official documents. In pursuit of this goal, the research employed critical theory; an analysis and interpretation of secondary materials to compare and evaluate findings. Therefore, a reading of contemporary literature on Christian perspectives on political violence in Zimbabwe was essential.

This study is contextual. That is to say it is rooted in Christians’ lived experiences. The researcher benefited from the contextual methodology gleaned from Robert Schreiter. Schreiter’s theoretical framework states that:

Social change is often the reason why local theologies need developing in the first place. Received notions of what it means to be Christian, accepted modes of Christian behaviour, formulations about the relation of the Christian to God may all be called into question by the emergence of new circumstances or by awareness of social relationships not previously understood…. Certain questions took on new urgency, such as those about relations of Christians to political activity, to violence, to being poor.21

This work sought to explore the relations of the members of the UCCZ to political activity and political violence in Zimbabwe. Ecclesiastical leaders and ordinary members of the church formed a critical part of this research. The contextualization process evaluated the church from the bottom up using the theoretical framework provided by Schreiter. We cannot understand a political problem without grasping its social implications.

The problem with history is that not all history is recorded, and the researcher relied on oral history. P. Thatcher warned that the researcher "must handle oral history very carefully since it depends on human memory which is sometimes unreliable."22 Moreover, there is very scant information in some cases of history to an extent that one may be faced with unrecorded events. This creates gaps in the chronology of events so that one will pursue an approach more subjective than critical. The other problem is that history is not 100% perfect because it is shrouded in cultural, personal, religious and

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intellectual biases which serve a certain purpose. There are a number of historical events recorded in this study that are not recorded elsewhere.

1.5.3 The Theological Method

The primary methodological approach was the theological method. The study interpreted the meaning of political violence from a theological frame of reference, focusing on how the UCCZ’s beliefs in God influenced their attitudes to political violence. The Christian faith arose at a certain point in the history of Israel in response to certain events. The first ‘believers’ interpreted what they experienced on the basis of their own particular presuppositions, predispositions, etc. This theological method is biblical; it is a response to what God has done. It is Christ that Christians carry in their hearts. Theology is a dynamic discipline, an ongoing exercise involving contemporary insights into knowledge (epistemology), human beings (anthropology), and history (social analysis). The theological method entails the discovery and the formation of theological truth out of a given historical situation.

Since the Christian spiritual life belongs to the supernatural order as a life of grace and the virtues, the most suitable method of investigation and study was the theological method. The science of theology seeks knowledge through causes and deduces conclusions from principles. According to D. Crystal, “theological method is a systematic critical clarification of the historical beliefs of the Church.” Historical beliefs are traditional beliefs passed from generation to generation. Unlike the science of religion, theology has the purpose of investigating contents of belief by means of reason.

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enlightened by faith. The study delineated God-talk among victims / survivors (members of the UCCZ) of politically-motivated violence in Zimbabwe. The theological method was useful in the research concerning religion and political violence in order to assess how political violence affected the UCCZ’s anthropology, theology, Christology and soteriology. K. Rahner asserts that reception of the continuing tradition of theology is a matter of faith.²⁴ The theological method helped in the interpretation of the events surrounding political violence as they were understood by the UCCZ. It offered a comprehensive way measuring the research since it had to be understood theologically that political violence was an existential reality. The method helped the researcher to unravel how Christians understood violence with regards to humans and the divine. Christians must attempt to view the politically violent events through the lens of Christian believers. The Gospels provide a clear picture of the essentials of Christian faith.

The theological method enabled the researcher to proceed by way of analysis and interpretation of secondary materials. This involved reading relevant literature. In this regard, debates and writings concerning contemporary ideas on religion and political violence in Zimbabwe were examined. Post-independence political discourse formed the basis of this research.

However, the theological method has some shortfalls. It does not address nor can it address people who are not religious. The method also remains foreign and unintelligible to people with a secular perspective. Christians and non-Christians were

affected by political violence; both the sacred and secular world experienced political violence in Zimbabwe. This study focused on people of faith, in this case, members of the UCCZ. The researcher was mindful of the fact that Christians can be apologetically minded - defending the value of their faith for the purpose of convincing the researcher. This is one of the weaknesses of the theological method. The three methods utilized by the researcher complemented each other as shown below.

1.5.4 Complementary Nature of Methods
A multi-pronged approach was utilized in this study. This consisted of a combination of descriptive, comparative and evaluative methods. Qualitative research methodologies such as the phenomenological method were primarily used because they were better when it came to producing descriptive data about Christian perspectives on violence in Zimbabwe. Employing qualitative methodologies allowed the researcher to look at both historical and present political violence, and the whole process of how Christians were influenced by these developments. The researcher was able to extrapolate the meaning and common understanding of political violence among Christians. The theological method focused on how Christian beliefs in God influence the interviewees’ attitudes to violence. The people who were interviewed using the phenomenological method live in a historical context. Thus, the researcher employed the historical method. The historical method was particularly used in Chapter Three where the researcher traced the history of the UCCZ. Generally, the study assumes a historical chronology of events. The researcher also made use of the quantitative research paradigm through the use of
questionnaires. A combination of two paradigms (qualitative and quantitative) was made for mutual confirmation. The exclusive use of a single paradigm could not achieve the potential illumination that resulted from a combination of two paradigms. Thus, the researcher thought that using two paradigms was better.

1.6 Scope and Limitations

This research is being carried out in Zimbabwe; its main focus is on UCCZ perspectives on political violence. The findings of this research may not apply to other churches such as the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and the United Family International Church.

Limitations of the study are problems encountered during the process of research. Despite the preparedness of the researcher to carry out a study of this nature, there was non-co-operation on the part of some informants. Their non-co-operation was necessitated by the nature of the study which to a great extent is sensitive in the context of Zimbabwe. In addition, polarization also affected the objectivity of the interviewee. The two main political parties (Zanu-PF and MDC) have opposed views and this has resulted in a polarized society. Zanu-PF views MDC as a surrogate party of neo-colonial forces. To ensure co-operation, the researcher exercised caution by not identifying with any of the two main political parties and by persuading informants to be co-operative.

Locating some of the twenty five interviewees randomly selected was quite problematic because the nature of the research was generally viewed as more highly political than academic. Many informants suspected the researcher of being a state security
operative masquerading as a researcher. Because of this suspicion, some informants withdrew. However, the researcher was able to get data from key informants and this made this research to be a success.

The researcher intended to carry out interviews in all three geographical Conferences of the UCCZ, namely the Eastern, Northern and Western Conferences. Financial constraints limited the interviews to two Conferences: the Eastern and the Northern conferences. The study focused mainly on the UCCZ’s perspectives on political violence in the Eastern Conference where the majority of the UCCZ churches are located. However, the researcher was able to distribute questionnaires to key members of all the three Conferences of the church.

1.7 Terminology and Conventions

In order to avoid gaps in understanding as much as possible, some points of definition of the terminology and conventions used in this work must be given. Thus, for a clearer understanding of the area being investigated, there is need to first of all define the term “violence”. The definition of this term is elusive. In Zimbabwe there is a tendency to emphasize what it is not, and as a result it remains vague and sometimes even contradictory. For example, the ruling party regards the formation of opposition political parties and affiliation to any such parties is not violence, it is one’s democratic right to do so. The immediate response to the word “violence” is to think of it as describing an overt physical act of destruction. When such violence occurs one can see it, it is tangible. But there can also be violence which is covert and thus cannot be seen. The word violence is related to the Latin word “violare” which means to violate.\(^\text{25}\) Violence is

the violation of God’s will. It is the unlawful exercise of physical force even in circumstances of self-defence. J. Kurebwa defined political violence as any form of violence that seeks to achieve certain desired political objectives by enhancing the political fortunes of the perpetrator or negating those of the opponent. In addition, violence can be defined as the “exertion of physical or mental force so as to injure or abuse.” Violence constitutes the improper use of force while force is violence sanctioned by law. J.M. Waliggo characterized political violence as a “common means used by people and governments around the world to achieve political ends and goals.” Thus, political violence is influenced and instigated by those in leadership, contrary to the law, against the citizens of a nation to achieve certain political goals. The working definition for this study, as provided by A. Kee, defines it as any physical force resulting in injury or destruction of property or persons in violation of general moral belief or civil law. In the context of this study political violence is usually instigated by political parties or party members who want to take control of a situation that has gone out of hand.

This study explored political violence; “political violence” conjures up images of power and force. In this case there can be no violence without power and force. Therefore, violence should be understood in relation to politics, the science and method of government. According to C. Heywood, politics is the “activity through which people

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27 Webster’s Dictionary Encyclopedia Britannica Reference Unit.
make, preserve and amend the general rules under which they live.”30 The basic
definition of political violence is that it is any activity of government or powerful groups
resulting in injury or destruction of property or persons in violation of general moral
belief or civil law.

The other word that merits definition in this study is perspective or attitude. According to
H. Hemingway, the concept of attitude arises from attempts to account for observed
regularities in the behaviour of individual persons.31 Attitudes are predispositions to
classify sets of objects. The researcher will heavily depend on behavioural indices of
attitude, for example on what people say, on how they respond to questionnaires or
interviews. The quality of one’s behaviour is judged from the observable, evaluative
responses one tends to make.

In Zimbabwe the word “reconciliation” generally refers to frosty race relations between
blacks and whites. However, in this study it is taken to mean political dialogue, the
promotion of tolerance among and within communities, and the peaceful coexistence of
people and communities with varied political affiliations.

The term “church” can have several meanings. According to C.S. Banana, the word
church comes from the Greek word “ekklesia” which means the “called out ones” or

In this study the word Church refers to either a denomination such as UCCZ or to the whole category of churches in Zimbabwe.

The world of some theologians used in this study was androcentric; it was man-centred or patriarchal. Male images for God were sometimes used. For example, there are references to God as “He” that were retained in this study. But otherwise gender inclusiveness was employed in this study.

1.8 Conclusion

In this section we have looked at the area of investigation, statement of the problem, stimuli for the research, methodology, complementary nature of methods, scope and limitations terminology and conventions. This thesis interrogates the ambivalence that characterizes the link between religion and political violence among the followers of Christ. This section has highlighted several factors which stimulated the researcher to explore the UCCZ’s attitude to political violence. The study situates the question of Christian viewpoints on political violence at the centre of theological debate. To achieve this, the research benefitted from the phenomenological approach, the historical and the theological methods. These methods complemented each other. The chapter has also identified the limitations of the study. The key terms used in this study were defined. This enabled the researcher to move to provide an outline of the thesis before the next chapter. In the next chapter we review selected major works which have been consulted.

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1.9 Outline of Thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is an introduction to the whole thesis. In this chapter the problem under study is presented and justified, objectives are stated and the methods are explored. Chapter Two critically elaborates on literature relevant to this study. Chapter Three traces and delineates the structure and history of the UCCZ. This church experienced the reality of political violence in some periods of its existence. Thus, the historical method will be employed. Chapter Four interrogates the phenomenon of religion and political violence in Zimbabwe. The context of political violence will be provided. In this regard, the study will assume a phenomenological approach and its implied descriptive and historical frame of reference. Chapter Five discusses and interprets Christian convictions on political violence from church leaders and other stakeholders. Thus, the theological and phenomenological methods will be utilized. Chapter Six concludes the study by suggesting the anti-violence theology to deal with the problem of religion and political violence for the contemporary Christian community in Zimbabwe.

2.0 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has drawn attention to the area of investigation of the study, and its stimuli, and methodology, and to the scope and limitation of study, and the definition
of terms. This chapter reviews the literature that has been produced in the area probed by this thesis. The purpose of literature review is to set out the framework in which we can situate and judge the consistency or inconsistency of the UCCZ’s attitude to violence with these longstanding Christian views on violence. We cannot discuss all individual scholars in detail here, except where individual scholars have a great bearing on this thesis. References to other works used will be made in the thesis itself. This researcher is not a pioneer in this field. The research will benefit from insights from earlier works. The literature review has been divided into various sections: the Bible and violence, Early Christian Writings on Political Violence, St Augustine’s Classical Just War Theory, The Reformation and Violence, Western Theologians and Violence, The United Nations and Violence, Political Theology and Violence, Liberation Theologies and Violence, African Theologians and Violence, Feminist Theologians and Violence, and Theological Works on Violence in Zimbabwe.

2.2 The Bible and Violence

The problem of the interpretation of the Bible is hardly a modern phenomenon. In the history of interpretation the rise of historical-critical methods opened a new era of interpretation. The interpretation of biblical texts continues in our own day to be a matter of lively interest and significant debate. In this section the researcher will not delve into the controversy caused by literary criticism, but will survey the standing positions as given by scholars and ask whether their views could be the views dominant in the UCCZ in the context of political violence.
In an effort to find out the UCCZ’s position on political violence, the researcher reviewed literature on the biblical position on violence. It is a truism that Christians do not agree and probably have never agreed about the biblical position on violence. In all matters of controversy among Christians the Scriptures have been accepted as the highest court of appeal. It is clear that there are two sides to this issue of violence in the Bible. Some Christians are pacifists in outlook, while others emphasize the legitimacy of violence. Thus the two dominant positions on violence that conscientious Christians have embraced throughout Christian history are pacifism and Just War Theory. Some passages of the Bible express pacifist views while others emphasize the legitimacy of violence. A pacifist is someone who believes that under no circumstances is war justified. Therefore, in this thesis the researcher intends to find out the position of the UCCZ on political violence.

### 2.2.1 The Old Testament and Violence

There is nothing in the Old Testament that suggests that there is anything inconsistent in being at one and the same time a soldier and a follower of the Lord God of hosts. L. Boettner pointed out that there are thirty-five or more references throughout the Old Testament where God commanded the use of armed force in carrying out His divine purposes. The Old Testament has ample evidence of violence in the religious text. God did utilize the nation of Israel to impose a penalty on local nations whenever their individual and national crimes increased to some intolerable extent. God pronounced

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His judgement and sentenced religious deviants, some to slavery, some to death, whatever the proper penalty they deserved, and sent His army of Israel to fulfil his command (1 Sam 15:1-3). Punishment was also meted out to the Israelites whenever they sinned against God.

The sixth commandment is often quoted by pacifists to prove that all war is wrong. It should be noted that the same God who said “Thou shall not kill” (Ex 20:13), said in Exodus 21:12, “He that smiteth a man so that he dieth, shall surely be put to death.” Both verses summarize the Old Testament understanding of violence; there is the justification and rejection of violence.

The researcher is of the viewpoint that a bible passage accepting peace as an ideal is not necessarily ‘pacifist’. For the pacifist peace is not just an ideal but a duty. A non-pacifist can accept peace as an ideal while admitting the permission of just war in some instances: he or she does not rule out war.

### 2.2.1.1 Violent God of the Old Testament

The wars of the Old Testament were certainly not figurative. The Old Testament endorsed acts of violence. Yahweh is presented as the warrior whose right hand “shatters the enemy” (Ex 15: 1-18.). Old Testament figures like Gideon, Samson, David and Samuel were men who, through faith, conquered kingdoms. In fact, Israel’s wars were clear evidence that at least some forms of violence were legitimate.

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34 The Old Testament community was patriarchal and therefore used male terminology for God.
The first war in the Old Testament is recorded in Genesis 14, when the patriarch Abraham armed his servant warriors to defeat four alien kings and their armies. Abraham’s primary objective was to rescue his nephew Lot from these invaders. This violence was the method whereby God accomplished His vengeance on these four alien kings for their invasion and pillage of five communities of southern Canaan.

The use of the descendants of Abraham for the execution of God’s wrath on the sinful and wicked nations of Canaan is mentioned in a statement of God to Abraham: “For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” (Gen 15:16). God utilized the arrival of the new nation of Israel in the Promised Land to execute His judgement and penalty upon the indigenous nations of Canaan for their crimes. This was ostensibly capital punishment on a large scale. The crimes of the residents of Jericho and other areas on both sides of the Jordan River, documented in the book of Joshua, were so serious that God from heaven pronounced them guilty and sentenced them to death. They were all executed after their defeat by the Israelite armies (Deut 7:1-2).

The destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel and its deportation to Assyria in 721 BCE by the army of Assyria was the judgement of God upon them for their crimes against Him (2 Kings 17). In a similar manner, God used the Babylonian army on the southern kingdom of Judah as His method of executing His penalty on them for their crimes (2 Kings 24-25). The devastation of both Israel and Judah through violence is viewed as a penalty on a massive scale for their crimes against one another and against God; they rightfully deserved such retribution from the judge. War as God’s
method of retribution continued until the war of independence under the forces of the Maccabees.

However, that violence was not the perfect will of God but only a temporary accommodation is evident in the reprimand of Samuel when the people of Israel requested a king (I Sam 8). The people wanted a centralized monarchy and a militarized state like other nations. God accommodated them and granted their request. Another example of God’s rejection of violence is recorded in 1 Chron 28: 3. God forbade King David the privilege to construct the temple, giving preference to Solomon who was not contaminated by bloodshed. King David was a soldier during his career; soldiers cause and witness much bloodshed.

In Old Testament times capital punishment for a capital crime was legislated by God. It should be noted that the objective of capital punishment is to provide justice to the offended party and those affected by the seriousness of the crime, and also to deter people from future criminal infraction (Deut 13:5, 10-11). In addition, it was aimed at decreasing crime and helping people to live in greater security. To deprive a person of their life was a serious matter and was regulated by the law of God (Ex 21:12).

2.2.1.2 Pacifism in the Old Testament

There are also pacifist views in the Old Testament. According to L. Boettner, pacifists are people who have committed themselves completely to the task of making peace.35 There are pacifist views in the Old Testament. Isaiah prophesied during the era of the invasion of the northern kingdom of Israel by Assyria in about 720-680 BCE. He

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prophesied that the Redeemer of Israel, the Messiah, would deal with the termination of the military of Israel and the transition to a pacifist society:

For every boot of the trampling warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called “Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Is 9:5-6).

And the effect of righteousness will be peace and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places (Is 32:17-18).

The above prophecies foretold a new type of kingdom that would not utilize or have need of the military and of violence as a method of settling differences. Isaiah 2:4 refers to the conversion of the production of weapons and artillery to that of agricultural implements. Military preparation, training and enlistment will terminate in the new kingdom. In effect, the new kingdom would be a pacifist society.

In a nutshell, Old Testament wars were sanctioned as a means of gaining righteous ends. At other times wars were used as severe disciplinary measures against the Israelites when they went into apostasy. On the other hand, there are some notable pacifist views in the Old Testament.

2.2.2 The New Testament and Violence

It is clear that the New Testament gives no direct teaching on the subject of violence. The Old Testament was written to and about a nation while the New Testament was written to individuals and to a non-political body known as the Church.\textsuperscript{36} There was a

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p.17.
difference of emphasis for the two dispensations. However, there are snippets of teachings on violence in the New Testament.

2.2.2.1 The Non-Violent Messiah in the New Testament

The historical reading of the New Testament stresses the sayings of Jesus about making peace and finding means of reconciliation and non-violence. The New Testament is essentially about the spiritual kingdom - the rule of God over life. The subjects of the spiritual kingdom are those who allow the law of God to rule over them. The ancient kingdom of Israel was patterned after the spiritual kingdom. The New Testament emerged from the law oriented Old Testament. According to D.H. Shubin, God instituted:

    a religious system consisting of priests, sacrifices, holidays, temple and tabernacle furnishing, and forms of worship which was to impress upon every member of Israel the need for Him to rule over them with their voluntary subjection to the Ten Commandments and related laws dealing with morality.37

God instituted judges and kings to represent His rule on earth.

However, the fact that the Church should fight with spiritual weapons does not mean the state must be pacifist.

John the Baptist admonished the people to accept the gospel as proclaimed, to repent - turn their life around - and allow God to rule over their lives (Matt 3:1). The New Testament emphasizes the virtues of love, patience, forbearance, and forgiveness.

Violence is at odds with the spirit of the gospels. Jesus was consistently non-violent throughout his ministry. He advised his followers to learn to love their enemies (Matt 5:43-45). They were to suffer evil rather than retaliate: Christians were not to resist an evil person, Jesus said, rather if he is struck on the right cheek, Christians were to turn to the striker the other (Matthew 5:38-42). Thus, violence had no place in the Christian's life. Jesus seems to accept violence which is endured rather than inflicted, the violence which is suffered in imitation of the Founder as a way of controlling human passions. Jesus rejected the Zealot strategy of direct confrontation with Rome in favour of the kingdom of God. Jesus distinguished his tactics from those of the Zealots. The Zealots saw the Roman presence as the principal cause of the oppression of the Palestinian population. The only way to rid the country of military domination was by violent means. Jesus and his followers, however, did not see Rome as the principal enemy. The principal enemy was spiritual decay in the country. More often Jesus avoided provoking military conflicts. He practiced what he preached. His own life and death underscored the pacifist character of the Christian faith. Jesus exemplified his call to non-violence for he resisted neither betrayal nor arrest, neither trial nor sentence, neither torture nor crucifixion. When he was insulted he did not retaliate. He was the innocent suffering servant of the Lord (Isaiah 53:7). Jesus loved those who despised and rejected him. He even prayed for the forgiveness of those who nailed him to the cross.

Those who are committed to non-violence begin with the Sermon on the Mount in the gospel of Matthew (Matt 5:9). It is from this part of the teaching of Jesus that many have developed their commitment to non-violence. Thus, pacifists conclude that the teaching
and example of Jesus together commit them to the way of non-resistance and non-violence. From the very beginning, however, two distinct strands developed within the pacifist movement: Principled Pacifists and Responsible Pacifists.\textsuperscript{38} At the core of principled pacifism is the conviction that violence is taboo. Principled pacifists feel duty-bound by their conscience to renounce every kind of violence. At the core of responsible pacifism is taking up the task of preventing the outbreak of violence and ending the use of violence. For this reason, responsible pacifists start with solidarity with survivors of violence. Responsible pacifists insist on subduing violence through the law. Unlike just war theorists, they do not find justification for war.

Pacifists believe that war is inconsistent with the law of non-resistance preached and modelled by Jesus Christ. Their tradition is based on their interpretation of part of the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus taught:

\begin{quote}
You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, 'Do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also' (Matthew 5:38-39).
\end{quote}

This is the “law of non-resistance.”\textsuperscript{39} Following Christ’s command to turn the other cheek, many pacifists believe that it is better to suffer violence than to commit violence. They believe this was taught by Jesus, and was modelled by him in the words of Peter: “For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps.” (1 Peter 2:21).

Pacifists believe that their obligation as believers is to follow the example of Jesus who turned the other cheek and did not return evil for evil. They also say we are to “resist not

\textsuperscript{38} W. Huber, Violence: The Unrelenting Assault on Human Dignity, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996, p.93.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., p.94.
evil” (Matthew 5:39). They interpret this to mean that we are never to resist evil under any circumstances or under any conditions. Christ did not retaliate against violence, but rather he suffered on the cross taking suffering to himself and extinguishing it. The pacifists see the death of Christ (an innocent victim in the face of injustice) as a pattern for all Christians to follow.

Pacifists believe that war is inconsistent with the ethic of love. Again, they quote from Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount:

> You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you (Matthew 5:43-44).

Pacifists argue that Jesus called Christians to love their enemies and not to take up arms against them. Christians are to pray for those who persecute them. They are to turn the other cheek. They are not to resist evil, but to allow love to overcome evil.

The view that violence was not a solution to the conflict was exemplified by Jesus Christ when he was arrested by the Roman soldiers:

> And behold one of those (Peter) who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.”(Matt 26:51-52).

Pacifists are on the side of non-violence which is by no means a choice of weakness or passivity; rather, pacifists believe more passionately in the force of truth, justice and love than in the force of wars, violence and murder.

The non-resistance of evil in the Sermon on the Mount is an ideal. In real life situations violence is inevitable. Jesus did not present this ideal as a duty for his followers. This
study explores whether the UCCZ perspectives reflects pacifist or non-pacifist tendencies.

2.2.2.2 The Violent Messiah in the New Testament

However, the New Testament presents another side of Jesus’ teaching. There is danger in reducing Jesus' teaching on violence to a single point of view. The evidence of Jesus’ attitude to pacifism is “cumulative” rather than specific. It does not depend upon any one text; it emerges from a consideration of his total outlook on God and humanity. The New Testament also contains some texts that are ambiguous or unfavourable to a pacifist outlook.

A comprehensive study suggests that Jesus was not a pacifist. In John 2: 14, Jesus came to the Temple and found people selling “oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables.” He saw that the religious leaders had turned the temple, His Father’s “house of prayer”, into a marketplace. Instead of prayers and supplications, there was the noise of commerce. Jesus burned with anger and indignation. The zeal for His Father’s house consumed Him to the extent that:

... making a whip of cords, He drove them all, with the sheep and the oxen, out of the temple; and He poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables (John 2:15).

One can conclude that this was a physically violent response on the part of Jesus. This makes it abundantly clear that Jesus was not a pacifist. However, Jesus did not physically harm any human being or animal. He just freed the animals, drove them away by fright, and turned over the tables and money. It is certainly clear in the Bible that Jesus was sinless although this text seems to show that Jesus was violent.
In Luke 22: 36-38, Jesus was preparing His disciples for His departure. He knew that the Jewish leaders were decidedly against Him. In the past, when He sent His disciples out, He took care of all their needs. But now things were going to change for the worse.

Jesus advised his disciples that:

But now, whoever has a money belt is to take it along, likewise also a bag, and whoever has no sword is to sell his coat and buy one. For I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, ‘And he was numbered with transgressors;’ for that which refers to Me has its fulfilment.’ They said, ‘Lord, look, here are two swords.’ And He said to them, ‘It is enough.’ (Luke 22:36-38).

This text shows that even the disciples had a militant attitude.

Jesus talked about rendering to Caesar what was Caesar's (Matt 22: 21) and he did not turn the other cheek when the servant of the High Priest struck him (John 18: 23). Jesus had high praise for the centurion at Capernaum (Mark 8: 5-13), yet the military profession was intrinsically associated with violence. John the Baptist said nothing about abandoning the military service to the soldiers who came to him for advice (Luke 3: 14). Peter had no qualms about baptizing the centurion Cornelius (Acts 10). The book of Revelation is full of images of wars and violence: Jesus is portrayed as a victorious general (Rev 3: 21 and 5: 5) and as a warrior of justice who leads the armies of heaven and will conquer the beast and the kings of the earth (Rev 19: 11-21). However, these references in the book of Revelation are figurative.

When travelling from city to city, people of those days often had to carry a sword in order to fend off robbers. Jesus told his followers that he was going to send them out
there, and warned them to be prepared to defend themselves when the situation demanded. Clearly, Jesus was not a pacifist. Having examined attitudes toward violence in the Old and New Testaments, in the following section I focus on early Christian writings and violence.

The Bible itself presents a variety of conflicting perspectives on violence. We have noted that both the Old Testament and New Testament are characterized by ambivalent perspectives towards violence. This study intends to find out whether the UCCZ is characterized by ambivalence as well in its perspectives on political violence.

2.3 Violence in Early Christian Writings

This section seeks to uncover the way in which the Church Fathers have wrestled theologically with the ambivalent perspectives on violence. In essence, it is historical enquiry as a basis for analysing the contemporary UCCZ’s attitude to political violence in Zimbabwe. The problem of violence for Christians in the first two centuries was treated as an appendage in the writings of the Church Fathers. Consequently, information about what Christians actually thought about the matter is derived from general comments on war and indirect references. They tell us little about the precise way in which the use of force can be reconciled in an individual’s conscience with the Gospel. The study seeks to trace early Church perspectives on violence in order find out whether the UCCZ’s attitude to politically-motivated violence in Zimbabwe has roots in church history.
The early Christians, who took very seriously the injunction that they were not to take up the sword, refused to serve in the Roman armies for centuries. In order to become a soldier in the Roman army, one had to offer a sacrifice, swearing an allegiance to Caesar - swearing ultimate allegiance to him as a god. J. L. Allen, in his book *War: A Primer for Christians*, observed that there was “danger that in the Roman army, Christians might be asked to commit idolatry - to sacrifice to the emperor or at least to approve of doing so.”\(^{40}\) Of course, many Christians agreed that this was not possible for a devout believer. For this reason, believers were prohibited from joining the military. Early literature gives ample evidence of the position of the pacifists of the Christian Church. However, to say all Christians in the early centuries were pacifists is not correct. This is one of those polemical generalizations that will not hold up under even the most superficial scrutiny.

During the initial 300 years after the ministry of Jesus Christ, the members of the Christian churches or Messianic communities abstained from war and military service. The earliest of these were the Messianic Jews of the apostolic era.\(^{41}\) They fled Judea to the east of the Jordan River to escape the invasion of the Roman army, the Jewish War and the devastation of the country, which occurred in the years 66-70 AD. During this period none of the Jewish revolutionaries took up arms to defend their country from invasion by the Roman army or in the defence of Jerusalem during the siege.

### 2.3.0 Church Fathers

The section below discusses the position of some Church Fathers on violence. The Church Fathers or Apostolic Fathers is a reference to Christian authors whose writings have come down to us from the end of the first century and the beginning of the second. However, it should be noted that a pacifist or non-pacifist position of certain Christians does not mean that the Church was officially pacifist or non-pacifist.

2.3.1 Justin Martyr of Caesarea

Writing about 150AD, Justin Martyr of Caesarea, one of the earliest apologists, was anti-violence. Justin, who was martyred for his faith, wrote: “We refrain from making war on our enemies, and (we) cannot bear to see a man killed, even if killed justly.” He challenged Christians to pray for their enemies and to follow the injunction of Christ about turning the other cheek. He argued that Christians were living in the time which was prophesied by Isaiah, and this demanded a new ethic. Isaiah prophesied that in the consummated kingdom:

... they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more (Isaiah 2: 4).

Justin insisted that Christians should abstain from bloodshed. Justin's time was largely associated with gladiatorial combats, cases of murder and judicial processes. Justin was of the view that the Christians of his time felt the era of military service to have concluded and the new era of anti-violence to have been inaugurated with Jesus. Justin did not have a liking for violence. Does violence contradict the spirit of the UCCZ? This study investigates whether the UCCZ’s perspectives show any spirit of anti-violence.

2.3.2 Tertullian

Tertullian (c160–c220 AD) was the first articulate spokesman for pacifism in the Christian church. He inclined toward pacifism as a character trait of the Christian especially during his Montanist period.

Tertullian took a strong stand against violence and military service because he thought it was irreconcilable with the scriptures:

> There is no agreement between the divine and the human sacrament, the standard of Christ and the standard of the devil, the camp of light and the camp of darkness. One soul cannot be due to two masters - God and Caesar. Shall it be held lawful to make an occupation of the sword, when the Lord proclaims that he who uses the sword shall perish by the sword? And shall the son of peace take part in the battle when it does not become him to sue at law? And shall he apply the chain, and prison, and the torture, and the punishment, who is not the avenger even of his own wrongs?... Touching this primary aspect of the question, as to the lawfulness even of a military life itself, I shall not add more.

Tertullian regarded military service and violence as immoral. For him, it was sinful for a soldier to hold the sword, a symbol of blood-letting, even in time of peace. Tertullian made the following statement in the early third century:

> For even if soldiers came to John and received advice on how to act, and even if a centurion became a believer, the Lord, in subsequently disarming Peter, disarmed every soldier.

Tertullian was referring to the incident where Peter attempted to defend Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus halted him, forbidding him to take up the sword against those attackers. He told Peter that he who lived by the sword would die by the sword.

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(Matt 26:53). Tertullian and many Church Fathers saw this as a model for all Christians - so that none were given the right to pick up the sword. Tertullian considered Jesus' actions in the Garden of Gethsemane as a denial of violence. In admonishing Peter about putting away the sword, he disarmed all soldiers and, thus, cursed the wounds of the sword.

Peter was the first Pope so, even if just war is legitimate; there is something out of place about a Pope cutting off people's ears. Jesus' rebuke to Peter may be linked to the unsuitability of violence to clerical occupations. Even though Tertullian later changed some of his early writings, he remained pacifist in outlook during his Catholic period. The thesis of this study is that the UCCZ's perspectives on violence may help provide a clear vision consistent with the Bible.

2.3.3 Origen

Origen (185-254 AD), a biblical scholar, took strong exception to Christian involvement in war, and agreed that violence was not wholly consistent with Christian ideals.46 He recognized the need for temporal power in the created world. Christians also had responsibilities for the safety and well being of the Roman Empire. There is no doubt where he stood on the issue of Christians and violence. He was one of the most prominent non-pacifists in the early Christian Church and he was the first Christian theologian to treat in some detail the problems created by pacifism. Origen acknowledged the possibility of just wars and the role they played in protecting the empire from external threats. The Christians' battle is against the powers of evil both

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within and outside humans that stir up conflicts and prevent a lasting peace. Origen submitted that whatever coercive methods were needed to keep the barbarians at bay could be entrusted to the armies of Rome, but for Christians the new dispensation largely forbade violence.

It should be noted that in the first three centuries, both pacifist and non-pacifist positions existed side by side and neither was able to supplant the other. The reign of the Christian Roman emperor Constantine (306-337 AD) represents a watershed in the development of Christian attitudes towards violence. It was a turning point in Christian thinking about the legitimacy of violence under certain conditions. Christians were now wrestling with the principles of violence in a new context and coming up with new answers. Does the UCCZ take exception to political violence? Origen’s contribution generates insights that may be significant for this research.

### 2.3.4 St Ambrose of Milan

St Ambrose of Milan (339-397AD) insisted on the need to distinguish between just and unjust wars. He believed that in some circumstances war might be defended as the lesser of two evils. Ambrose justified war that was designed to punish wrongdoing or was defensive in nature. Therefore, for Ambrose not all wars were immoral. He denied taking unfair advantage of the enemy as ideal for Christians. Mercy had to be accorded an enemy in defeat. Violent self-defence was unacceptable in Ambrose’s view because it inevitably destroyed the virtue of love or piety, which united man to God. Accordingly, hurting an assailant in order to protect one’s own life or property was tantamount to

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preferring a human good to a divine one and such a reversal of the proper hierarchy of values undercut any benefit that might accrue from preserving one’s life.

Ambrose proposed that the same principles did not apply whenever a third party is involved. The responsibility for looking out for one’s neighbour could require a person to use force on another’s behalf even to the point of taking an aggressor’s life. According to H. Lietzmann, in his book *The Era of the Church Fathers*, Ambrose wrote that the emperor was a soldier of God on duty, bound to serve the faith.\(^\text{48}\) In such circumstances, love and extreme violence were not mutually exclusive. This implied that love demanded the use of violence. This was the thrust of Ambrose’s philosophy and it also played a crucial role in Augustine’s thinking about the legitimacy of using violence.

Ambrose treated other aspects of the problem of violence in a cursory way. The fundamental problem Ambrose faced was how an individual could maintain within himself a spirit of love while in the very act of using force. Ambrose told us little about the precise way in which the use of force could be reconciled in an individual’s conscience with the Gospel. This study will take up Ambrose’s issue of violence as the lesser of two evils and check whether the UCCZ’s perspectives reflect this.

Ambrose categorically rejected the death penalty as a means of effecting religious conformity. What is more, he regarded violence against non-believers as a matter of no consequence. He conceded that it was legitimate for public authorities to have recourse to the use of force, but he insisted that there were definite limits to the right. Mercy was

\(^{48}\) Ibid., p.77.
for Ambrose the better course because there was always hope for the wrongdoer’s conversion.

2.3.5 St Augustine’s Classical Just War Theory

Augustine of Hippo (354-430AD) is regarded as the author of the “theory of the just war”. Augustine’s attitude toward war was moulded by the defeat and sack of Rome by the Goths in 409-410 AD. He endorsed the use of coercion to suppress religious dissent. For Augustine, military service was compatible with the Christian faith. Augustine’s ideas on violence were largely based on humanity’s present condition in the created world. As a result, this wretched state of man led inevitably to bloodshed. Human beings’ tendency to follow their own self-interests and lower appetites threatened the very structure of human society. Consequently, God willed the civil order as means of punishing wrongdoers and restraining evil. Augustine believed that obedience to a properly constituted authority was a general stipulation of human society. He further suggested that all men might be classified either as citizens of the city of God (i.e. Christians) or as citizens of the earthly city (lovers of self). Christians and lovers of self differed in the objects of their love, their goals and their ultimate destiny. The welfare of God’s city was inextricably bound up with that of the earthly city. Augustine thought that Christians should be grateful for the limited peace that was attainable in a sinful world.

Augustine’s fundamental belief was that the peacemaker who wielded the Word instead of the sword was following a higher call. The same theologian’s own experience with

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the horrors of armed conflict convinced him that preventing war through persuasion and seeking peace through peaceful means rather than through war was more glorious than slaying men with the sword.\textsuperscript{50} This statement is fundamental to an understanding of Augustine’s approach to the whole problem of violence. Violence and an internal spirit of love were not mutually exclusive. Among the principles governing justifiable violence was authority - killing was justified only when sanctioned by legitimate authority. Leaders had the right to take human life. But this was not all. Equally important were the motivations which generated armed conflicts. Wars initiated to punish wrongdoing by another nation were justified. Augustine formulated seven points that had to be adhered to in order to wage a justifiable war. Within the Just War Theory there is a seven-fold criterion:\textsuperscript{51}

1. **There must be a just cause.** All aggression is condemned in Just War Theory. Participation in war must be prompted by a just cause or a defensive cause. No war of unprovoked aggression can ever be justified. Pre-emptive war can be legitimate in some circumstances, according to Just War Theory, if it is known that a grave act of aggression is imminent. If a government knows that their nation or another is about to become a victim, it can act to prevent the injustice before it takes place.

2. **Just intention.** The war must have a right intention to secure a fair peace for all parties involved. One must have just motives for going into war. The goal of the

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., pp.33-37.
war must have as its object the punishment of injustice. In other words, the intention must be good. The result must be a more just order than existed before. The motives for such a war must be noble.

3. **It is a last resort.** Other means of resolution such as diplomacy and economic pressure must have been reasonably exhausted before war is resorted to. War is to be declared only after all peaceful means of accomplishing a resolution have been exhausted. War must be the last resort when the belligerent refuses to settle differences by peaceful negotiations.

4. **Formal declaration.** The war must be initiated with formal declaration by a properly constituted authority. Only governments can declare war, not individuals or militias or terrorist organizations. War is to be declared by the head of state and fought by legitimate authority.

5. **Limited objectives.** Securing peace is the purpose and objective in going to war. War must be engaged in such a way that when peace is attained, hostilities cease.

6. **Proportionate means.** Combatant forces of the opposition may not be subjected to greater harm than is necessary to secure victory and peace. One must apply the law of proportion, balancing the devastation and loss of life caused by the war and intended goals of the war.
7. **Non-combatant immunity.** Military forces must respect individuals and groups not participating in the conflict and must abstain from attacking them. Justifiable wars are always directed at enemy forces. Therefore, no innocent civilians must be injured or killed and no civil property should be destroyed.

The main weakness in the criteria of Augustine and his just war theory is that both sides can claim the same justification. For example, both warring sovereigns of state can declare war and claim to be on the side any three of the seven criteria above. However, this does not make the just war theory invalid; the obscurity of the claims must be cleared to identify the guilty sovereign. Perhaps the other major flaw of Augustine’s criteria is that he gave Christians justification for waging war using the above criteria, rather than ceasing from war. However, it should be observed that it is very difficult to satisfy the requirements of the just war theory. Scriptures are characterized by the voice of correction and the voice of mercy. Thus, violence is a result of sin and the remedy for it is peace.

What is of value in the above analysis is that Augustine’s pessimism about human beings’ fallen state and the violence which inevitably follows from it is matched by an overriding conviction about two things; that ultimately in God’s providence everything works to the good, and that God uses war both to punish the wicked and to test the faithful. God works His will in this area in ways hidden to human beings. Does the UCCZ’s attitude to political violence subscribe to Augustine’s pessimism? The study will explore whether sin is given as one of the reasons why violence is rampant in
Zimbabwe. This study will take up the difficulty of reconciling bloodshed and Christian love.

2. 4 The Middle Ages, Reformation Period and Violence

The Christian Church’s active support of war in certain circumstances was theologically defended in its most systematic form by Thomas Aquinas three centuries before the Reformation era. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) was the greatest of the Christian theologians of the Middle Ages. He lived and theologized against the background of the 6th, 7th and 8th Crusades, in 1228-1229, 1248-1254, and 1270, respectively. The Crusades were Christian wars against Islam. Popes wanted to recover territories lost to the Muslims during the Dark Ages. Holy violence overwhelmed the early Christian protest against violence. The Militia Christi, the “soldiers of Christ,” referred to Christian soldiers who specialized in fighting Muslims.

Aquinas subscribed to Augustine’s just war theory as a Catholic doctrine. Aquinas taught the legality of slavery and of the burning of heretics by the state. He regarded violence as an instrument of justice in international life and, therefore, an important tool for the benefit of humanity, if used in the right way.

The great reformer Martin Luther viewed the state as the civil arm of God. In his thinking the state governed by divine providence, and so the citizens had the obligation of

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obedience to the state in the manner in which the state understood the will of God. Luther is one of the greatest Protestant reformers, who dealt with the questions of war and the obedience of subjects to their prince (ruler). On the question of war, Luther was very clear. A prince should not go to war against his overlord, but should submit to injustice. He thought that the governing authority must not be resisted by force, but only by the confession of the truth.

His later response to the Peasants’ Revolt of 1524-1526 seemed to indicate that violence was sometimes unavoidable. A prince might wage war against an equal or an inferior, but only after offering justice and peace; he must not consider personal interests and how one might remain lord, but the interest of his subjects to whom he owed help and protection. Luther avowed that it was both Christian and an act of love to kill, plunder, burn, and injure the enemy until the foe was defeated. Then mercy and peace should be offered to all those who would submit.

On the question of the obedience of subjects to their prince, Luther was slightly less clear. In view of this, he attested that if a prince was definitely in the wrong, subjects were excused from obedience. Luther further argued that if the subjects did not know whether or not the prince was in the wrong, they should obey. These two cases, when combined with earlier injunctions to resist evil only through the auspices of temporal authority left Christians entirely vulnerable to any secular tyranny, just so long as it stopped short of demanding that Christians give up their beliefs.

\[54\text{Ibid.}\]
In Luther’s political theology the soldier was the servant of the state. G.H. Heering states that in Lutheran theology the soldier was allegorically given the sword by God to fulfil His will as the state saw fit:

The hand which bears such a sword is as such no longer man’s hand, but God’s, and not man it is, but God who hangs, breaks on the wheel, beheads, strangles, and wages war.  

Luther’s idea that service in the military was service to God emboldened Christians. This study will investigate if Luther’s theology had a bearing on the UCCZ’s perspectives on political violence.

The other great reformer of the 16th century, John Calvin, was far more militant than Luther. We will not review Calvin’s attitude to violence in detail in this section because it forms the basis of Chapter Three. John Calvin emphasized that a Christian soldier should never use force to gain personal advantage, but “use force out of love for thy neighbour.” Standing by and refusing to act while harm befell a neighbour was not a virtue; it was a vice. He taught that the state was subject to the Church. Calvin created a “Christian state” by establishing the Geneva Experiment in Switzerland. The state was theocratic; like the concept of Israel in the Old Testament. There was room for military conscription in his state. Calvin also believed in the execution of heretics. The UCCZ largely follows Calvinist traditions.

2.5 Religion, Violence and Major Western Theologians

Theologians are a product of their own milieu. A great deal of theological reflection on religion and violence must be done in Zimbabwe. The view which this researcher will

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advance is that Christian theology in Zimbabwe must make a contribution on violence and guide the theological advance in the times ahead. As a theology of its time, it needs to react against what is prevailing in society regardless of the risk involved. Christians should shape national consciousness if their religion is not to be regarded as a “dead faith”. Theology should be relevant to the situation. Silence cannot be the last word in a country ripped apart by violence. The issue is why churches react the way they do. Insights from major Western theologians can benefit Christians in Zimbabwe dealing with violence in their midst.

2.5.1 Roland Bainton

Roland Bainton has conducted an insightful study in the area of religion and violence. He regarded pacifism as one of the most persisting views among Christians. The same scholar submitted that it was difficult to see how a state could exist without violating, in some way, the soul and the body of people. He argued that should the state act contrary to the fundamental principles of Christian ethics, there was no way Christians could provide it with legitimation.

However, Bainton failed to recognize that sometimes submission to a tyrant can be justified on the grounds that resistance would cause worse violence. This is not legitimating unjust rule but just refusing to make things worse. Violent revolt against a tyrant has conditions, like just war, and it is possible that the conditions for legitimate

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violence against a tyrant are not fulfilled even if the tyrant is in power.\textsuperscript{58} This study will analyse whether the UCCZ’s viewpoint agrees with Bainton’s observations.

\section*{2.5.2 Leo Tolstoy}
Leo Tolstoy, who served in the Russian army in the 1855-1856 Crimean war against Turkey, made the concept of Christ’s teaching on non-violence and non-resistance to aggression the theme of his book, \textit{The Kingdom of God is Within You}. The horror of organized warfare and the bloodshed of the battlefield impressed upon him the futility of the objectives of armed struggle and the senselessness of deaths in battle. Leo Tolstoy understood the principle of non-resistance to evildoers (Matt 5:39) to be the heart of the gospel of Jesus.\textsuperscript{59} He wished to make the claim that utter renunciation of violence was what Christian faith and Christian love finally meant. He taught that Christians should not succumb to the politics of national struggle and the ideology of military service. Instead, peaceful coexistence with all individuals, societies and nationalities was mandatory for the followers of Christ. In his later years, Tolstoy was a conscientious objector and his attitude of non-violence and pacifism had an influence on many religious and political leaders of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. For him, the existing state structures are the root cause of violence. This research will find out whether Tolstoy’s principles tally with the UCCZ’s perspectives with regard to the violent situation in Zimbabwe.

\textsuperscript{58} Ideas provided by J.D. McClymont, Department of Religious Studies, Classics and Philosophy, University of Zimbabwe.
\textsuperscript{59} L. Tolstoy, \textit{Op Cit.}, p.83.
2.5.3 Jacques Ellul

Jacques Ellul, the French lay theologian and sociologist, espoused a strong theological rejection of violence.\(^6^0\) He believed that this utter renunciation of violence was what Christian faith and Christian love finally meant. He observed that innumerable Old Testament passages witnessed how God opposed people’s use of violence as a means of settling conflicts. Ellul regarded violence as a lack of love. Violence demolished the spiritual power of prayer and barred the intervention of the Holy Spirit. He stripped violence of every possible justification. To him violence is evil. When we use it we invite our adversaries to use it too. Every action had a reaction. Ellul did not tell us how Christians should to act if they lived in a state of violence received from members of the civil society. There is need for critical theology on religion and violence in Zimbabwe, which will liberate people from the shackles of violence. What the UCCZ thinks about God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church and the Second Coming of Christ will shape a genuine theology designed to produce a paradigm shift in Zimbabwe.

2.5.4 John Howard Yoder

John Howard Yoder in his Politics of Jesus accepted the importance of being relevant to the political process.\(^6^1\) He excluded the Christians’ involvement in coercion and violence. He argued that violence has been shown, in the life of Jesus, to be contrary to the kingdom. For him, a Christian cannot normally be called to the work of police protection. The study on Christian theological perspectives on political violence implies that the UCCZ must be relevant to the political process.

\(^6^1\) J. H. Yoder, Politics of Jesus, Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1972, p.236.
2.5.5 James McClendon

James McClendon considered the use of violence to be inconsistent with Christian faith. He rejected the use of violence as against Christian principles. Like Yoder, he insisted that non-violent commitment was not a strategy of withdrawal from society and from relevance. Christians had to be involved in social justice, but they did not use the methods of violence in struggle:

Military service may be no longer open to the followers of He who was crucified by soldiers but peace-making service is.62

In a society where politics and violence have become the dominant orientation, in the same way that diet, kinship relation, religious ritual, or exploitative economics may emerge as areas of greater concern in other cultures. McClendon’s oversimplification of the complex problem of violence would lead to a superficial theology. Most mainstream liberals are not pacifists. They are deeply critical of unrestrained violence and social coercion. They argue that even when violence must be used against a clear wrongdoer, the Christian must act with restraint and avoid self-righteousness. Most mainstream liberals perceive more ambiguities in the use of violence in revolutionary struggles than do many of the liberation theologians. Violence is sometimes necessary but always a tragic recourse in civil society.

2.5.6 Joseph Allen

Joseph Allen, like of many mainstream liberals, subscribed to the classical just-war criteria to determine when violence is morally to be preferred as a lesser evil. He wrote:

62 Ibid.
…once we view the conflict of wrongdoers and wronged from the perspective of God’s inclusive covenant, we do not have the option of rejecting the wrongdoer. Both victim and wrongdoer are children of God and thereby have equal human worth. It is not as though once one person has seriously, even grievously, wronged another, we are then free to wash our hands of further respect for the wrongdoer’s worth.\(^{63}\)

He subscribed to certain criteria by which the legitimacy, or otherwise, of a particular act of war could be measured.

### 2.5.7 Martin Luther King, Jr.

Martin Luther King, Jr. (January 15, 1929 – April 4, 1968), the American pastor, activist and prominent leader in American civil rights, was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi’s success with non-violent activism.\(^{64}\) King deepened his understanding of non-violent resistance and his commitment to America’s struggle for civil rights. He was convinced that the method of nonviolent resistance was the most potent weapon available to oppressed people in their struggle for justice and human dignity. In a real sense, Gandhi embodied in his life certain universal principles that were inherent in the moral structure of the universe. Starting in 1965, King began to express doubts about the United States of America’s role in the Vietnam War, insisting that the U.S. was in Vietnam to occupy it as an American colony. He also argued that the country needed larger and broader moral changes.

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\(^{64}\) J. Lersch, *Dreaming God’s Dream: Celebrating the Life and Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther Jr.*, Memphis: Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, 1989, p.89.
Martin Luther King rejected violence as a method of reforming American society. He pointed out that violence had a logic; once it started it was difficult to stop.\textsuperscript{65} Violence bred violence and victims of violence became violent themselves. In other words, violence created a vicious cycle of violence. This study will assess the UCCZ’s attitude to political violence and ascertain whether insights from Martin Luther King can benefit the church.

\textbf{2.5.8 Philip Wogaman}

Philip Wogaman pointed out that there was no ethical justification for violence. The stronger governed because they have the power and consequently they ruled in their own interests.\textsuperscript{66} The weaker obeyed because they could not help it; they were the tools of the rulers. He wrote:

\begin{quote}
Social conflicts resolved by the ultima ratio of war can claim no rational or moral basis for the solution achieved - only the stronger prevailed. …The main witness of Christian tradition has been deeply suspicious of war in the face of its obvious evil.\textsuperscript{67}
\end{quote}

In this regard, war is seen as irrational and immoral. This study will find out whether members of the UCCZ stressed the irrationality and immorality of violence.

\textbf{2.5.9 John C. Bennett}

John C. Bennett noted that the ultimate use of force had historically been a very important aspect, if not the definitive characteristic, of the state:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{65} J. Lersch, \textit{Dreaming God’s Dream: Celebrating the Life and Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther Jr.}, Memphis: Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, 1989, p.89.
\item \textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
...The state is the institution in which the ultimate social authority and power are located, authority and power that are to maintain order and to give conscious direction to the life of a society.\textsuperscript{68}

Thus, Bennett sees the ability to enforce authority through violence as necessary to maintain order in society. It is questionable that the UCCZ regard violence in Zimbabwe as necessary to maintain order.

2.5.10 Paul Ramsey

Paul Ramsey, whose writings have helped to understand the problem of violence, pointed out that Christians had to listen once again to the counsel of reason and to the voice of conscience.\textsuperscript{69} Christians had an obligation to seek the best possible answer, which reason and faith could help us find. In his book \textit{War And The Christian Conscience}, Ramsey argued that to depart from the doctrine of the just war was to surrender to irrationality and gross immorality. He discussed the nature and meaning of rational armament from the perspective of a Christian humanist. He believed that unjust, immoral institutions made it difficult for people to relate to one another in just and loving ways. On the other hand, institutions could embody justice and love. Love (\textit{Agape}) was not simply present in a loving act. Christians had to do everything in love for their neighbour. It is the writer’s fundamental belief that Christians in Zimbabwe have something to learn from the theology of Ramsey. While the perpetrators of violence must be restrained, there is need for the UCCZ to show \textit{agape} to the wrongdoers and the wronged.

\textsuperscript{68} J. C. Bennett, \textit{Christians and the State}, New York: Charles Scribers Sons, 1975, p.73.
2.5.11 Harry Blamires

Harry Blamires made the claim that there was no longer a Christian mind for a society permeated by secular thinking. For Blamires, the Christian had surrendered to secularization. What remained is the Christian ethic and a Christian spirituality. He rejected the religious view of life, which set all earthly issues within the context of the eternal. Does secular thinking permeate the Christian mind in Zimbabwe? Are there still people who seek to bear a Christian witness in Zimbabwean society? The issue Blamires raises is a crucial one; Christians are not agreed on the question of violence. This study deals with the ethics of the problem and this touches on the role of the UCCZ as a moral guide for the nation.

2.5.12 Charles Reed

Charles Reed, in his book Just War?, explored the Church and the use of the “just war” tradition in the two Iraq wars in 1990-91 and 2001-03. He concluded that by altering the theory to fit their own perspectives, Church leaders consistently missed the opportunity to engage in useful public debate. In his view both wars were just. The presuppositions that undergird his effort hold that Christians not only need to recover their own past and reinterpret its rich tradition of thinking about the use of force, they have the further responsibility to engage the dramatically altered circumstances in which they find themselves in post-1989 and post-9/11.

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Reed is of the view that theologians are blinded by literal interpretations of the Bible. Theologians back up politicians using superficial analysis of scripture. Consequently, they justify war on flimsy grounds. He pointed out:

Literal interpretations of the Bible that give rise to either a dogmatic militarism or pacifism tend to falsify Scripture by seeing it as amounting to a set of timeless instructions rather than as a set of historical documents reflecting the age in which it was written.\(^7^1\)

In his view, just war thinking sustains deep moral argument and reflection on occasions for the use of force. The moral argument must be at the centre of the UCCZ’s theology in Zimbabwe.

### 2.5.13 Keith Ward

In his book *Is Religion Dangerous?*, Keith Ward examined the key area of religion and violence and went on to assess the allegations of irrationality and immorality, before exploring the good religion has done over the centuries. Ward responded to critics who argued that religion was something to fear and something people were to oppose because it corrupted minds and promoted terrorism and violence:

> Belief in God, like belief in ultimate moral values, in the uniformity of nature, or in the dignity of human nature, is a foundational belief, a rational postulate that is validated by its ability to provide a workable, fruitful, coherent and comprehensive intellectual account of all the varied experiences and occurrences of human life.\(^7^2\)

He pointed out that without religion the human race would be considerably worse off and there would be little hope for the future. This study will assess whether the UCCZ’s attitude to political violence is helpful in Zimbabwe.

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2.5.14 Leo Lefebure

Leo Lefebure, in his book *Revelation, the Religions, and Violence*, examined the basic human dynamics that produce violence, and showed how the diverse experiences of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, as well as Chinese and Indian religions, address this universal problem. In this regard, Lefebure analysed violence in a multi-religious context. He has led the way to a comprehensive treatment of violence in the world’s religions from a theological and spiritual standpoint. He analysed violence through the scientific paradigm of chaos theory. This theory argues that the religions of the world have a dark side. For this reason, religions have fostered, incited, condoned, and initiated violence. To demonstrate the dark side of Christianity he cited Pope John Paul II who said:

> We can ask forgiveness for the divisions of Christians, for the use of violence that some Christians have committed in the service of the truth, and for the attitudes of mistrust and hostility sometimes assumed toward followers of other religions.73

The violence that has been interwoven with religion throughout history owed to the scientific chaos theory. In scientific sense, a system is in chaos if scientists cannot predict the future states of the system. Violence could be explicable through the complex, unpredictable interactions among the world’s religions and even the course of any single religious tradition that include chaotic elements that cannot be neatly fit into a coherent system.

Lefebure argued:

> Chaos theory resonates deeply with the ancient wisdom traditions of China, India, and Israel; it also takes up in new context themes that were important

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to Nicholas of Cusa, such as the coincidence of opposites, the paradoxical knowing of what is unknowable, and the intimate relation between each being and the entire universe.\textsuperscript{74}

This study will critically analyse the UCCZ’s views on political violence and check whether they are informed by Lefebure’s Chaos theory.

It has, therefore, been demonstrated that writings about Christian faith and violence are many and varied; attitudes of Christians towards violence are very diverse. In the eyes of many Christians, violence is regarded as anti-evangelical. These Christians try to present a nonviolent Jesus who is the direct opposite of the Zealot Jesus presented by other exegetes. Some Christian spokesmen for non-violence such as Wogaman and Martin Luther King Junior, have chosen a personal option for non-violence but have not gone on to say that violence itself is against the gospel message. Christians should not use the methods of violence as shortcuts to guarantee the triumph of righteousness in human affairs. Even when violence must be used against perpetration of violence, Christians must act with restraint and avoid self-righteousness. Theology in Zimbabwe must constantly face up to the question of violence and other challenges of society.

2.5.15 Rene Girard

In his book \textit{Violence and the Sacred}, Rene Girard explored violence as it was represented and occurred throughout history, literature and myth. He analysed biblical narrative, Greek tragedy and the lynchings and pogroms propagated by contemporary states to illustrate his central argument that violence belongs to everyone and was at

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., p. 175.
The heart of the sacred. Girard has developed a three-point mimetic theory on violence. The first principle of Girard’s theory involves the construction of desire. He pointed out:

> From the time we are very young we learn what is desirable from other persons whom we take as models: we imitate the desire of our model. Our most basic needs are shaped by biology, but the way we fulfil these needs depends on models. \(^{75}\)

Girard called this process “mimesis.” In essence, the peoples’ desires are not spontaneous but they are learned from others. People desire to be by imitating someone else. Put differently, desire is mimetic.

The second principle of Girard’s mimetic theory is that mimesis leads to rivalry, and rivalry leads to violence. When a person imitates a model, s/he threatens the model's position. As such the model becomes an obstacle and rival. Thus the theory focuses on patterns of violence and scapegoating. For this reason, violence repeatedly threatens to escalate out of control. Girard argued that since the dawn of human history, the dynamic of mimetic rivalry has led to conflicts that end in violence. Groups discovered that violence could threaten to overwhelm a group, making common life impossible. The death or expulsion of a particular individual or group of individuals had a calming effect. Early humans realized that to prevent uncontrolled violence was to discharge the tensions of the group onto particular individuals. In time, these spontaneous primal murders were ritualized and sacralized: the primal experience of the sacred is violence directed at a surrogate victim or scapegoat. Girard argued that every culture without exception arises from the repeated patterns of mimetic rivalry and scapegoating.

The third principle in Girard’s theory focused on divine revelation in the biblical tradition as God’s non-violent response to mimetic rivalry and the surrogate victim mechanism. Girard argued that the God of Israel and of Jesus was not a mimetic rival of humans and did not require sacrificial victims. This God expresses solidarity with victims even at the point of dying on the cross. The Gospels have largely destroyed the power of the surrogate victim mechanism, and conventional culture was now in a painful process of disintegration. Girard credited revelation in Christianity for the widespread concern for the oppressed and the victims of history.

This study seeks to find out whether scapegoating is as universal and all-encompassing a phenomenon as Girard made it out to be. Does the UCCZ subscribe to this mimetic theory?

2.6 United Nations, Violence and Christian Law of Love

On December 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Following this historic act the Assembly called upon all member countries to publicize the text of the Declaration and to recognize the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. Some of the key articles relevant to this work are:

**Article 3.** Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person;

**Article 5.** No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; and
Article 9. No one should be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Political violence is a negation of the above articles of the UN. Zimbabwe became a member of the UN soon after independence in 1980.

The Christian religion respects and values the law of love (Mark 12: 28-34). Love is the greatest commandment. It is the supreme test of the Christian spirit. Christians must extend this love to all humans. One should expect, therefore, to find the Christian spirit powerfully reflected in Zimbabwean society.

Having provided a historical overview of Christian attitudes towards violence, in the following sections I examine how specific theological traditions have handled the theme. Even though there are many important traditions that have dealt with the theme of religion and violence, the sections below will examine this theme in Political Theology, Liberation Theology, African Theology, Feminist Theology and theological works on Zimbabwe.

2.7 Political Theology and Violence

Political theology is a way of viewing reality which emerged in the 1960s in Germany. It is sensitive to the suffering and evil that operate within the world, society and human lives. Political theology understands its role in terms of challenging distorted social systems and dehumanising attitudes in the name of the liberating Christ. It insists that the Christ mystery is always understood according to the ‘context’ of enquiry. When
Jesus is interpreted from the vantage point of the poor and oppressed, we see a more radical and subversive Jesus who is caught up in the politics of his time. This section will review the work of Johann Baptist Metz to illustrate the key features of Political theology in relation to violence.

Political theology perceives that the real world in which humans live is a world marked by torture and death-camps, ecological crises and starving peoples, the experience of the Jewish holocaust in Germany in the 1930s and the threat of nuclear war, the exploitation of women and the near-extermination of entire cultures, gross misuse of political power and sheer capitalistic greed. These forces of negativity and corruption--the forces of evil--impoverish whole societies of human beings and threaten our planet with extinction. Consequently, political theology has no difficulty in admitting that the world stands in need of 'salvation'. Its question is not whether human beings are in search of a Saviour-figure but, given our evident need to be saved and liberated, how does Jesus Christ fulfill this role? How does the life and ministry, death and resurrection, of Jesus of Nazareth enable us to transform this situation of 'death' into a situation of 'life'?

One of the exponents of Political theology, Johann Baptist Metz, a Catholic diocesan priest from Bavaria, pointed out:

We must resist the current of domination that washes over us and resist its siren call to dominate others. We recall and connect to suffering and we remember God’s demand that we exercise and empower praxis. But such a
memory can disrupt the status quo, cast a shadow on business as usual, and arm the victims.\textsuperscript{76}

For Metz, bourgeois culture is a culture of apathy and lost memory: people have lost the ability to feel sorrow and guilt; and they no longer have the capacity to grieve suffering and death. In the absence of these human and humane qualities, bourgeois culture is unable to express pathos, love and compassion. Metz seeks to confront bourgeois society with the radical stories of Jesus who challenged the society of his time with words and actions of crisis. Political theology is primarily a Christology of discipleship. It calls for a deep, personal conversion to the kingdom values in a world where justice, love and peace are suffocated by the dominant forces of industrial capitalism.

This study investigates whether the UCCZ was interested in the what and how of Jesus’ life in the midst of political life. Adherence to the language of Jesus would enjoin the UCCZ to rediscover the political relevance of the gospel in the hope of transforming society.

\textbf{2.8 Liberation Theology and Violence}

Liberation Theology has been one of the most significant theological phenomena since the 1960s. With the emergence of liberation theologies, an alternative theological tradition which questioned the institutional Church’s condemnation of all violence was developed. Oppressive state violence was eventually challenged by violence in self-defence against aggressors and tyrants. Liberation theologies appear in a variety of forms such as Latin American Liberation Theology, Black Theology, Feminism, African

Theology and Minjung Theology. Their leading exponents include Gustavo Gutierrez of Peru, Leonardo Boff of Brazil, Juan Segundo of Uruguay, Jose Miguez Bonino of Argentina, James Cone and Rosemary Reuther of the United States, Manas Buthelezi and Desmond Tutu of South Africa, John Mbiti of Kenya, Kwesi Dickson of Ghana, Kosuke Koyama of Japan and Canaan Banana of Zimbabwe. Liberation theologies aimed at the transformation of society and the humanization of people suffering injustice and social, political and economic exploitation. In other words, liberation theologies stress freedom from all forms of human oppression. Liberation implies setting people free from whatever it is that enslaves them. These forms of theology are revolutionary in their perspectives.

The theology of liberation is a complex phenomenon, which ought not to be oversimplified. It began to establish itself as a theological movement in the early 1960s. The area of liberation theology is one of contestation. This researcher reviewed the works of three Latin American liberation theologians and three African theologians as presented below.

2.8.1 Latin American Liberation Theology

Serious theological reflection on issues of violence in the “the global South” (the Third World) began in the mid 1960s. Influenced by the Second Vatican Council’s attention to the social teaching of the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches’ attention to racism, theologians paid greater attention to the call by Jesus to act in life-giving ways against all forms of oppression, including violence.
Liberationists call for the overthrow of the existing order by a seizure of power. This call for revolution by most of the Third World theologians addressed the need for total and systematic change. They argued that an unjust order is itself inherently violent (institutionalized violence). Hence violence was inevitable in the struggle against oppressive powers. They denounced non-violence as totally unworkable in depressing situations. However, Jesus succeeded in handling such situations in his life time. In tandem with liberation theologians James Cone, an exponent of Black Theology, wrote: “No one can be non-violent in an unjust society.”\(^7\) For many liberation theologians, violence is not a weapon of choice; it is forced on them by the oppressive system.

Third World theologians advocated for the use of violence by the oppressed people against the oppressor. In actual fact, they do not call it violence at all but the demonstration of one’s discomfort at inhuman treatment. However, Malcolm X, a radical American civil rights activist, concurred with liberationists that the use of any form of violence to assert one’s opinion against oppression, subjugation and subhuman treatment was not negotiable. He said that “if violence is the only option to gain liberation, then it is the most sensible thing to use it.”\(^8\)

In the Third World liberation theologies the structure postulated by Helder Camara on the theology of revolution and a theology of violence is apt. He postulated a three-tiered

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\(^8\) Ibid.
way of violence;\textsuperscript{79} (1) “Violence number one” is the institutionalized violence embedded in and underlying the oppressive power structure. (2) This original violence provokes and unleashes “violence number two”, which is the violence of the oppressed; and (3) the authorities try to restore order by resorting to repressive measures; that is “violence number three.” Camara, therefore, argues that “violence breeds violence, provokes violence in return.”\textsuperscript{80} Camara's insights will be helpful in this study.

Gustavo Gutierrez cited with approval the work by 900 Latin American priests who argued that “by all means avoid equating the unjust violence of the oppressors with the just violence of the oppressed.”\textsuperscript{81} He argued that the only real issue is between justified violence and unjustified violence: humanity is groping for ways to replace violent means by non-violent ones, so Christians must try to abide by the principle of less and less violence. For Gutierrez, the Gandhian philosophy of non-violence in an oppressive milieu is ineffective for it strengthens the hand of the oppressor. Insights from Gutierrez will be helpful in this study on the UCCZ’s attitude to political violence in Zimbabwe.

All along, the writer has been looking at the view of liberation theologians that have advocated the use of violence to counteract violence from whatever sector of the society. It is necessary to highlight another side on the stance towards violence. The principle of non-violence is defended by many liberation theologians. Thomas Merton goes so far as to present the principle of non-violence as the underlying “theory for

\textsuperscript{80} \textit{Ibid.}
Christian effectiveness” in any political order.\textsuperscript{82} However, the principle of non-violence has been criticized from many standpoints. An objection raised constantly is that violence is everywhere and that non-violence is an unrealistic and fictitious alternative. Some point out that no real option for non-violence exists; one can only opt for different kinds of violence.

Some liberation theologians have dangerously put too much weight on one theological point. For example, in their justification of violence, most of the liberation theologians stress the Exodus metaphor. They emphasize freedom in Christ at the expense of other important issues.

2.8.2 African Theologians and Violence
Many African theologians have written on violence in Africa. There is little scholarly work on the relationship between the Christian religion and violence among African theologians. Most of the African theologians have written about religion and politics and treat violence as an appendage, which makes it especially important to explore the relationship in a thorough and deeper manner. If anything, too few books have attempted this thorough analysis. This section will review the works of four theologians in Africa.

2.8.2.1 Desmond Tutu
Desmond Tutu, an anti-apartheid icon in South Africa, espoused the Gandhian philosophy of non-violence. It is clear that Gandhi’s principle of satyagraha (non-
violence) is different from simply doing nothing. There is an assertive element in the non-violence. Tutu subscribed to Christian witness in the nonviolent struggle for liberation from the evils of society. Tutu condemned both the violence of racist institutional structures and that of freedom fighters, and at the same time asked Christians not to abandon those who were fighting for human rights even if the struggle became violent. While violence was contradictory to the demands of the Christian Gospel, there were some forms of violence that were justifiable. Thus, there is ambivalence in Christian understanding of violence. There is need to find out whether the Gandhian philosophy of non-violence informed the UCCZ’s theological attitude to political violence.

Tutu, answering the question on violence and non-violence from the perspective of Black Theology, said black people in South Africa were victims of “structural violence” - victims of police brutality. This was the kind of violence that was perpetrated by the organs or institutions of the state, like the police force and soldiers. He also condemned violence masterminded by mercenaries as unacceptable: “But I also condemn the violence of South African troops when they shoot down innocent women and children, refugees in Angola and Namibia. Let us condemn all violence.” Did the UCCZ condemn violence in its theologizing? This will be answered in this study.

2.8.2.2 Engelbert Mveng

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The theological reflection of Engelbert Mveng, a Jesuit priest from Cameroon, took a different path. Mveng focused on the violence of “anthropological annihilation, the systematic elimination of the humanity of a people as occurred in Africa as a result of the slave trade and colonization.” Of further interest to sociologists, anthropologists and theologians is the fact that although Africa is now recognised to be the poorest continent economically, theologians in sub-Saharan Africa (excluding South Africa) have not generally embraced "Liberation Theology". Rather, most have chosen to go their own route, for the form of oppression which they feel most keenly is not economic oppression, but rather a cultural oppression, the derogation of African people and things African. This is what E. Mveng and other African theologians have referred to as anthropological oppression. Mveng’s view of anthropological annihilation has also been seen by Emmanuel Martey who states that “theology in Africa has always been a struggle, a struggle against all enslaving and dehumanizing forces” This study investigates whether the UCCZ’s theological perspectives on political violence show a struggle against oppression.

2.8.2.3 Charles Villa-Vicencio

C. Villa-Vicencio pointed out that churches and theologians have never agreed completely on the use of violence in political struggle. The dominant tradition of the Church has, however, tended to bless the state’s use of violence while condemning violent revolution against the ruling authorities. This was clearly illustrated by the edict

of Milan in 313 AD. Constantine, the emperor, had a right to violence against sporadic persecution of Christians. Revolutionary violence was prohibited. When a state fails to secure the consent and respect of the governed and loses its moral legitimacy, having to rely solely on military force to maintain power, its legislation of violence degenerates into a licence to enforce tyranny. This study analyses the UCCZ’s theology and check whether the interaction showed that the state was illegitimate.

2.8.2.4 Eunice Karanja Kamaara

Eunice Karanja Kamaara has written extensively on political violence on the African continent and on gender-based violence. Drawing illustrations from the Kenyan case where various religions engaged in civic education against violence for peaceful political transition in 2002 with tremendous success, she proposed the role of religion in the development of anti-violence ethos all over the world. Her naming of civic education as remedy for the dynamics of violence is an insightful contribution.

Eunice Kamaara, in a paper entitled “Christian Ethnic Nationalism and Globalization: The Role of the Church in Kenya”, pointed out that religious leaders have taken sides; they are even more tribal than politicians. She contends that for a long time the religious leadership in Kenya has displayed some partisan tendencies and has not exercised a prophetic role of being a voice of the voiceless. While describing the 1992 land clash violence, Kamaara says: “Among the Kikuyu, their religious leaders interpreted their plight as ‘persecuting of God’s chosen people’ while the Kalenjin interpreted it as ‘holy war for what God has rightly given us’…She observes that the Presbyterian Church in Kenya was generally dominated by Kikuyu and ordinarily supported Kikuyu candidates
while the African inland Church was dominated by the minority ethnic groups (Kamatusa) and these generally supported non-Kikuyu presidential candidates…"\textsuperscript{88} Kamaara also predicted that marginalization of Muslims would lead to violence. Is the UCCZ partisan, like some Kenyan churches? This study investigates whether some members of the UCCZ were partisan in their interpretation of political violence in Zimbabwe.

Kamaara, in her article “Developing Anti-violence Ethos in Africa: the Role of Christianity”, argued that Africa is in crisis.\textsuperscript{89} Violence resulting from socio-political, economic, and religious issues characterizes the continent: domestic violence, civil wars, ethnic conflicts, religious wars, among others, threatening human life. Most of the countries of the continent like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Liberia, Sudan, Somalia, and Rwanda have active conflicts while other countries have latent conflicts that threaten to turn active any time. Efforts by governmental and non-governmental agents like United Nations agencies have applied various strategies to control the violence without much success. Scores of Africans continue to lose their lives and hundreds rendered homeless every day. The chaotic scenario in countries identified above is replicated in Zimbabwe. The UCCZ is operating in the midst of violence.

Kamaara proposed the development of anti-violence ethos. The basic assumption held is that if the fundamental values of African peoples change, an effective and sustainable

\textsuperscript{88} E. K. Kamaara, in a paper entitled “Christian Ethnic Nationalism and Globalization: The Role of the Church in Kenya, Nairobi, 27 April 2008.\textsuperscript{89} Ibid.
strategy against violence may be adopted. For theological, moral, and utilitarian reasons, it is possible to convince people that violence is against their self-interests as individuals and as groups. This study will find out whether the UCCZ has creative and sustainable strategies to end violence in Zimbabwe.

There is need to diversify the fieldwork in search of new insights about the interface and dichotomy between religion and violence. The researcher, therefore, pursued this interesting and specific issue vigorously. The interviews the researcher carried out with Christians encouraged the researcher to conduct more research in the field. The researcher wants to set forth conceptions on the relationship between religion and violence.

### 2.9 Feminist Theology and Violence

This section will identify the contribution of feminist theologians towards resolving violence in Africa. African women theologians have tried a great deal to attend to the problem of violence. This is evidenced by women forming pressure groups to deal with violence. Conferences have been held to try and solve the problem. The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (popularly called the Circle) tackled decisive issues such as violence against women. The Circle is the space for women from Africa to do communal theology. The Circle’s members are women who are rooted in Islam, Christianity, Judaism and African Indigenous Religions. The Circle is being challenged not only to respond to the dearth of theological literature from African women, but also
to play a significant role in helping to create and sustain viable communities of women and men in the church and in society in Africa.

According to M. Getui ethnic antagonism and tribalism are evils that have proved to be both disastrous and endemic in many nations of the world, especially in Africa.\textsuperscript{90} Lives have been lost, properties destroyed and many people displaced and disabled, all in the name of ethnic chauvinism. Ethnicity is contentious in social, political, religious and even economic discourses. One of the co-founders of the Circle, Teresa Okure, commented on the recognizing of gender in theology. According to N.R.G. Edet, gender refers to the power relation between the masculine and the feminine and it presupposes that the masculine encompasses the female.\textsuperscript{91} Feminist theology starts with the naming of women’s experience.

In 1980 African women theologians organized a conference in Accra. This conference was chaired by Daisy Obi, the then director of the Institute of Church and Society of the Christian Council of Nigeria.\textsuperscript{92} Addressing delegates at the conference, E. Mashinini stressed that “violence and wars are very important issues in theology today” and that authorities “should immediately look at the issues of violence and stop it with immediate effect.”\textsuperscript{93}

\textsuperscript{93} \textit{Ibid.}, p.38.
A 1994 Conference brought together woman theologians from North and South to seek to transform the contexts that generate violence, to assert authority over their own bodies and to develop a cultural hermeneutic to guide them. They agreed to work together to promote human worth and dignity for all people. The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians led by Mercy Amba Oduyoye, in their conference held in Kenya in 2001, expressed their concern over the plight of women and children due to wars in Africa. They urged African leaders to respect the will of the people and find lasting solutions to the wars taking place in their countries. They expressed concern about the number of women who were contracting the deadly HIV owing to wars in Africa. They also called for the Circle to engage some African leaders so as to find lasting solutions to problems in Africa.94

Third World women theologians reflected on violence against women, noting that wherever there was generalized violence, as in times of war, natural disasters, social upheavals and ecological violence, women and children bore the brunt of the hardships. They also concluded that most violence against women was rooted in the mutually reinforcing hierarchies of patriarchy and androcentricism in cultures, religions and economic systems.95 Insights from various Third World women theologians will be utilized in this study.

Since Feminist theologians contend that religion is part of the problem in relation to violence against women, it is pertinent to find out whether the UCCZ is part of the problem or not of politically-motivated violence in Zimbabwe.

2.10 Theological Works on Violence in Zimbabwe

Theological works on religion and violence provide a general framework for this specific study on the UCCZ’s perspectives on political violence in Zimbabwe. In recent years theological works have emerged on the topic of religion and political violence in Zimbabwe. We select a few examples to illustrate our point. This section will review works by C.S. Banana, P. Gifford, D. Auret, C. Hallencreutz and A. Moyo, S. Bakare, B. Raftopoulos and T. Savage, J. Dube, E. Chitando, L. Togarasei, M. Manyonganise, P. Gundani, O. Wermter, S. R. Dorman, M.R. Gunda, O. Vengeyi, D. Kaulemu, L. Sachikonye and P. Moorcraft. The contribution of critical political activists such as Archbishop Pius Ncube and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace is the subject matter of the above writers.

2.10.1 C.S. Banana

Canaan S. Banana has written extensively about church-state relations in Zimbabwe. The issue of violence is one aspect of the problem of the relationship between Church and the state. Banana argued that in the struggles for liberation in the Third World violence was the moral norm:

…in the developing countries of the Third World today the historical context is different and the choice of armed revolution has been made possible. ⁹⁶

Banana believed that the best method of dealing with violence was use of some form of violence. This was epitomized by his ‘Combat Theology’ that advocated a fight for one to get what was rightly his/hers. By its very nature, the state involved the use of coercion but Banana treated the issue of violence as an appendage in his various writings. Banana’s position as State President compromised his stance in terms of condemning violence in the country. He tended to generalize on religion and political violence.

Banana, an ordained Minister of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, covered mainly his church in his theme of Church and state. There is need for theological analysis of the problem of religion and political violence on the UCCZ’s views, which this work will provide.

2.10.2 P. Gifford

Paul Gifford pointed out that in many other countries the Church’s role is significant, though it took different forms. In Zambia the churches were among the most prominent local bodies involved in the transition to democracy at particular times of crisis, playing a decisive role in preventing deadlock. During the 1980s the churches have increasingly played a major role in wider society – not only in the national areas of education and health, and, more lately of development generally, but on a higher plane altogether, that of direct political involvement.\textsuperscript{97} Christian churches, somewhat paradoxically, have also played an important role in opposing reform by supporting oppressive regimes. Social, economical and political trends are changing in all African countries including

Zimbabwe, and the Church is also involved in the change and in many instances is advocating the change. It is interesting to find out whether the UCCZ play a significant role in “solving” the problem of religion and violence in Zimbabwe.

2.10.3 D. Auret

Diana Auret postulated that to refuse social justice was to refuse to accept the wholeness of the nature of the human being. The Commission performed many functions in order to ease the burden brought upon ordinary people. They shared anxious and fearsome moments with those who were involved in the struggle. They were concerned about the plight of ordinary people.98 Auret observed that denying social justice was tantamount to refusing the wholeness of the human being. The book grappled with the violence that characterized the early period after independence in Zimbabwe. The researcher wants to fill the scholarly gap – violence did not end with the coming of independence in 1980 but was to be pursued right into the post-independence years, resulting in many events that were not included in Auret’s book.

2.10.4 C. Hallencreutz and A. Moyo

C. Hallencreutz and A. Moyo edited the book Church and State in Zimbabwe in 1988. This book gave a framework of the government’s national development plan and indicated how new relationships emerged between Church and state after independence. Studies on Church and state relations in independent Zimbabwe touch

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upon the dynamics of the wider question of religion and socialism. The relations between Church and state varied from being cordial and friendly to being frosty and sometimes hostile. The book touched on violence, especially after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence by Ian Smith in 1965 and the era soon after independence. Insights from this book are matched with the findings of this research on the UCCZ’s attitude to violence in Zimbabwe.

2.10.5 S. Bakare

Sebastian Bakare avowed that the land is God’s gift to every one of us, therefore to sell land meant to devalue it making it cheap and removing its spiritual significance. Land should not be a preserve of the elite. Eighth century BC prophets such as Amos, Hosea and Isaiah condemned the ruling class for the exploitation and oppression of the powerless and the poor. Unless and until we come up with a land policy that met the needs and aspirations of all Zimbabweans, we would be held accountable for our actions. Land remains a burning issue throughout generations as long as the powerful continue grouping into an oppressive elite against the poor. Sebastian Bakare made an important point that land was our birth right. He showed how land had been distributed unequally to the landless majority in Zimbabwe. However, there was not much on the violence that accompanied the land distribution. This book is important for our study in that it provides the background to the violent land occupations which took place later in the year 2000.

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101 Ibid.
2.10.6 B. Raftopoulos and T. Savage

Brian Raftopoulos and Tyrone Savage noted reconciliation is a beginning, involving a decision to take the first steps towards the higher goal of sustainable peace. It is a process that is rarely linear. It is invariably uneven, requiring restraint, generosity of spirit, empathy and perseverance. It needs necessarily to be sustained and energized by concrete goals and a shared vision of what can and might yet be accomplished." It is true that reconciliation is not easy, as it demands total commitment by the parties/people involved. The researcher will use this book to bring to light how reconciliation has been conducted in Zimbabwe. The success and the failure of the process of reconciliation and how the UCCZ has applied itself in this regard will be analysed.

2.10.7 J. Dube

Jimmy Dube acknowledged the vast global forces at work in the suffering of so many local communities in Zimbabwe. He addressed the need for pro-active resistance and problem-solving that did not reinforce the destructive patterns of globalization. He argued that the churches had not engaged in an active and systematic way to address the injustices plaguing their nation.

Commenting on the Methodist church’s response to political violence in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces, Dube wrote:

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The Methodist response would be best explained as ambivalent. There was no theological statement issued by the Methodist church in Zimbabwe categorically condemning government actions nor was there any pastoral letter sent to the ordinary Christians who were suffering, while others were either killed or maimed for life.\footnote{J. Dube, \textit{Op. cit.} p.107.}

Dube’s book addressed the problem of religion and violence in Zimbabwe using the Methodist Church as a case study. There is need to tackle the problem of religion and violence from the theological standpoint of the UCCZ.

\section*{2.10.8 E. Chitando and L. Togarasei}

Ezra Chitando and Lovemore Togarasei, in their article “\textit{June 2008, Verse 27: The Church and the 2008 Zimbabwean Political Crisis}”, maintained that the liberation war in Zimbabwe in the 1960s and 1970s divided the Church:

\begin{quote}
For some, institutional racism justified the taking up of arms. This was a just war to undo an iniquitous and obscene system. Others felt that Christians were permanently called to lead lives of peace and non-violence and so condemned church participation in the liberation struggle.\footnote{E. Chitando and L. Togarasei, “\textit{June 2008, Verse 27: The Church and the 2008 Zimbabwean Political Crisis},” \textit{African Identities}, Vol. 8, No. 2, May 2010, pp.152-153.}
\end{quote}

The article examined the response of the Church in Zimbabwe to the 2008 political crisis that was precipitated by violence, economic decay and social strife. The article explored church-state relations in the country highlighting “waves of violence followed Mugabe’s (President of Zimbabwe) defeat at the polls….Mugabe and his henchman resorted to naked violence.”\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p.151.}

On the challenges accompanying the Church’s engagement with the political crisis, the article argued that Zimbabweans:
…could literally not sing the Lord's song in their own land, as state agents and the police brought political divisions right into the sacred precincts of the church. The crisis in Zimbabwe has had far-reaching effects, including within the religious sphere.\textsuperscript{106}

The two scholars argued that sermons in some Zimbabwean churches continued to focus mainly on how people can go to heaven at the expense of addressing political violence as an integral part of the mission of the Church. Theological rigidity forced the Church to abdicate its social responsibility by focusing on the next world. The church became other-worldly. The Church was not visible as an institution in challenging the state during the political crisis. However, the article did not focus on any particular denomination. It tended to generalize about churches and political violence. This study is focused on one denomination, the UCCZ and its perspectives on political violence rather than its mere response.

2.10.9 E. Chitando and M. Manyonganise

E. Chitando and M. Manyonganise in their chapter “Voices from Faith–Based Communities,” pointed out that within the faith-based communities in Zimbabwe there had been a general acceptance that a crisis of unparallel proportions had descended upon the country and that there was need to work towards finding a lasting solution to the crisis. The article focused on the responses of the faith-based community in Zimbabwe “to the socio-economic and political crisis that has engulfed the country from the late 1990’s to the contemporary period.”\textsuperscript{107} They argued that faith-based communities “are crucial actors as in many cases they have been the only one to pick

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{107} E. Chitando and M. Manyonganise. “Voices from Faith –Based Communities,” in Tim Murithi and Aquilina Mawadza (eds), Zimbabwean in Transition: A View from Within, Sunnydale: Fanele, 2011,pp.77-78.
up the pieces following incidents of the violence and humanitarian crises.” 108 This research will go beyond the Church’s mere response; it will articulate the theological attitude of the UCCZ to political violence.

They argued that even though the spiritual market in the country was dense, Christianity had taken by far the largest share of the market. Even though Buddhism, the Baha’i faith and Hinduism were significant players, they tended to concentrate on meeting the spiritual needs of their adherents and had not been actively involved in the processes of political engagement.

The two scholars pointed out that the churches contributed to the resilience and tenacity that the Zimbabwean populace had demonstrated in enduring the crisis. The stress on non-violence helped to avert more violence; the state had demonstrated that it would not hesitate to use violence to suppress dissent. Muslim leaders had been involved in preparing their followers to be relevant to the Zimbabwean crisis through peaceful messages from the Quran.

2.10.10 L. Togarasei

L. Togarasei, in his article “The Bible in Context,” argues that:

108 Ibid., p.78.
Throughout the history of the Church, the Bible has been read and interpreted to address the existential needs of the Christian community. It has been used to justify slavery, to stop slavery, to justify colonialism, to fight for liberation and even to justify apartheid, as memories of apartheid South Africa tell. The Bible can therefore be described as an ‘all-weather book’.\(^{109}\)

Consequently, during the Zimbabwe 2000 fast-track land reform programme, a programme that attracted international attention, the Bible was once again visited by Christians who wanted to seek its guidance on the matter. For Togarasei, the Church of Christ Zimbabwe (CCZ)\(^{110}\), is one such Christian community where the Bible was re-read. This church places the Bible at the centre of its teaching and practice, disregarding issues like Church tradition. The article discusses briefly the background to the land reform programme, the manner of the reform and the manner of Biblical interpretation in the Church of Christ. It then analyses how the same Bible was read and interpreted by this Church during the land reform programme. He argues that “although the CCZ did not make any public statements about the land reform programme, debates were taking place among members of the church as they met at different fora.” The fast-track land reform programme started with violent farm invasions which were led by the war veterans of the 1970s liberation war. These were joined by land-hungry Zimbabweans mostly from communities around the white commercial farms. The following story depicts the manner of such invasions.

Togarasei’s interpretation of the Bible will be used in our analysis of the UCCZ. This study will check whether it is feasible to read the Bible without a tradition of some kind.


\(^{110}\) This Church is different from UCCZ.
Even if Protestants reject Roman Catholic tradition, Protestant Churches have some history or tradition of their own that gives them “spectacles” through which they view the Bible. This study will find out how the UCCZ read the Bible in the wake of politically-motivated violence.

2.10.11 P. Gundani

Paul Gundani, in his article “Prophecy, Politics and Power: Changing Relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the Zimbabwean State,” investigated the role played by the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe since independence in 1980, on the basis of bishops’ pastoral letters. He argued that the prophetic voice of the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe was compromised by its proximity to state power in the first years of independence. However, as the state became more and more distanced from the people and brutal, the bishops finally managed to recover their prophetic voice. He pointed out that in May 2001 the bishops issued an indictment against the tendency by politicians to misuse unemployed youths in order to perpetrate violence against opponents during periods of election campaigns.¹¹¹

Gundani specifically researched on the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe. This study will sample from the church leadership, clergy and ordinary members of the UCCZ, thereby isolating key informants for this research.

2.10.12 Fr. O. Wermter

Fr. Oskar Wermter has written extensively on church-state relations. Religion and political violence is one area of interest in his researches. He worked with the Catholic Commission for Justice Peace (CCJP) for a long time. Among its many functions, the CCJP aims to achieve true social justice and peace for all people as part of its contribution to human salvation. Fr. Wermter points out that citizens in general and Christians in particular are called to be creative protagonists in society.\textsuperscript{112} He wrote that the Rhodesian leaders and their supporters were responsible for much of the blood that was shed because of their incredible intransigence and arrogance in refusing any meaningful political settlement. Commenting on post-colonial political violence he wrote:

> The heart of democracy is that I respect even my political opponent as a person; I defend his personal integrity and the rights he has as a citizen. I definitely do not declare him an "enemy of the state" and an outlaw (anyone can kill just because I do not agree with his political ambitions or interests). A democratic election campaign must never degenerate into a hate campaign leading to the physical destruction of the "enemy".\textsuperscript{113}

The methods of violence developed during the war of liberation have spread through society. They have become part of Zimbabwean social and political language.

Fr. Wermter’s writings are very critical for this research. Even though he is writing specifically from a Catholic perspective, he addresses the central issue for this study: the interface of religion and political violence. The study will explore whether the UCCZ was pro-active or not in terms of reflecting about God, Christ and the Holy Spirit in the midst of violence.

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., p.44.
Sara Rich Dorman, in her thesis *Inclusion and Exclusion: NGOs and Politics in Zimbabwe*, explores the changing relations between the Zimbabwean state and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) after independence.

She argues:

> The Zimbabwean ruling party used the mechanisms of the state to set up a pattern of authoritarian rule in which societal groups sought to be included in the hegemonic framework of the ruling élites. While they may not always have accepted the government’s entire agenda, few wanted to be excluded from access to spoils, which were social and cultural, as well as material. A combination of selective coercion and inclusion created a resilient authoritarian regime which endured with little challenge from 1980 to 1997. NGOs, by virtue of their historical origins and commitment to the government’s ‘progressive’ developmental agenda, became deeply bound up in this hegemonic process.\(^{114}\)

The thesis focused on debates over the role of NGOs in democratization in developing countries, using Zimbabwe as an example. The thesis argued that the study of democratization is best accomplished through detailed empirical case studies, relying on historical narratives and participant-observation research. Such research reinforces our understanding of democratization as a complex and dynamic process.

Dorman’s thesis proposed a framework for understanding state and society relations in Zimbabwe, emphasizing the ruling party’s use of coercive and consent-generating mechanisms to establish hegemony over the new nation. It examined the changing relationship between NGOs and the state after independence, when the ruling party’s

efforts to include most groups within its nationalist coalition extended to NGOs. Case studies of NGO coalitions show how activist NGOs fail to mobilize others owing to the unwillingness of many NGOs to challenge the ruling party’s control over policy-making.

The establishment of the National Constitutional Assembly by some NGOs, churches and trade unionists set the stage for an increasingly tense engagement between NGOs and the state after 1997. The constitutional debate opened up the public sphere in new ways. As the ruling party attempted to retain control over the political sphere and the constitutional debate, NGO politics became increasingly polarized. The emergence of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change, and the prominence of NGO activists within its leadership led to further conflict. After losing the February 2000 constitutional referendum, the Mugabe-government sanctioned violent attacks on white farmers, businesspeople, and NGOs. While the ruling party attempted to shore up its support through nationalist rhetoric and financial incentives, groups perceived to oppose the state were excluded and vilified.

Dorman’s thesis provides the backdrop of this study. Political violence is a reality in Zimbabwe and it has created a polarized society.

2.10.14 M. R. Gunda

M. R. Gunda, in his article “The Reign of Bishop Nolbert Kunonga: Nationalist Spirit or Empire Builder?”, argued that in the light of Mugabe’s campaign of violence, the Anglican Bishop of the Harare Diocese:
jumped into the breach and became one of the few leaders to unequivocally support Mugabe and his government. Soon he would become a “spokesman” for the government, defending the policies of the Government without evaluating the impact of those policies on the people that looked up to him for guidance.\textsuperscript{115}

Gunda analysed how Nolbert Kunonga endeared himself to the political establishment in Zimbabwe. The article shows how Kunonga supported Zanu-PF’s land theology and “continued to be one of the few religious leaders giving Mugabe some moral legitimacy.”\textsuperscript{116} Kunonga has identified himself as a nationalist Bishop fighting for the cause of common Africans, and has centered his theme on “Land Theology” in direct agreement with the state and its haphazard land reform programme. This thesis investigates whether there were any priests in the UCCZ who acted like Kunonga during the period of political violence in the country.

\textbf{2.10.15 O. Vengeyi}

O. Vengeyi, in his article “Israelite Prophetic Marks among Zimbabwean Men of God: An Evaluation of the Conduct of Selected Zimbabwean Church Leaders in Zimbabwe,” explored whether the Church was pro-active or passive in the context of the violence that engulfed the nation soon after the 29 March 2008 election.

He advanced the view that the Church has spoken with contradictory voices:

\begin{quote}
There are churches and individual Church leaders who openly displayed their allegiance to the government irrespective of all glaring misgivings; on the other hand, there existed some Christian leaders who opposed whatever the government did, and hence they openly clamored for regime change.\textsuperscript{117}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{116} \textit{Ibid}, p.299.

The article identified Old Testament prophets who proffered the prophetic ministry such as Amos and Isaiah. It also identified prophets who were responsible for propagating the Davidic royal ideology. Vengeyi noted that some Zimbabwean men of God supported Mugabe while the orgy of violence engulfed the nation from the year 2000 until February 2009. Church leaders such as Nolbert Kunonga of the Harare Diocese of the Anglican Church, O. Musindo of New Generation Church, and Elizabeth Chinouriri of the Family of God, among others, have never criticized the perpetrators of violence. Like the government, they condemned the victims as they celebrated and prophesied blessings on the perpetrators. The camp even compared Mugabe to Moses, Jesus and other biblical figures.

Other men of God supported the opposition political parties. Vengeyi cited Alex Perry who singled out Pius Ncube, the former Catholic Archbishop of Bulawayo, as one independent prophet: “He not only criticized the ruling party but also the opposition leaders as directionless. He proved to be a true conscience of the nation.”

He also argued that in the traditional Shona setting the governing system was based on a high level of consultation, as opposed to Mugabe’s rule. Shona chiefs could only act in accordance with the wishes of their followers who had the right to remove them should their rule conflict with the expected established norms and practices.

\footnote{Ibid., p.173.}
Vengeyi concluded his article by arguing that the Church in Zimbabwe had both the blessings of the Old Testament and Shona tradition for resisting authoritarian governments. Likewise, the UCCZ has the Old Testament and Shona tradition in its interaction with the state in the violent situation in the country. This study enquires whether the UCCZ used the Old Testament and Shona tradition in its theologizing on political theology.

2.10.16 D. Kaulemu

David Kaulemu edited the book Political Participation in Zimbabwe which provided space for practitioners to reflect and write about their respective experiences rather than providing comprehensive theories about political participation:

Many articles in this book tackle these issues from the point of view of law, justice, democracy, human rights, environmental governance, and Catholic social teaching.119

The book provided a sample of the forms and levels of the struggle for political participation in Zimbabwe as it was understood by those engaged in it. It showed the strength and weaknesses of Zimbabwean political imagination.

However, a few faith-based organizations and sectors were invited for this project to write a book and to provide theological reflection. Theological reflection on religion and violence is the critical component of this research. The participation that the book

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promotes is important for this study; the UCCZ should participate in the political affairs of this country.

2.10.17 L. Sachikonye

Lloyd Sachikonye’s book *When a State Turns on its Citizens: Institutionalized Violence and Political Culture* grapples to resolve the issue of run-away violence in Zimbabwe. It shows Zimbabweans how to look back in order to go forward. The author takes readers back to the colonial era, showing how the government of the day employed violence as a repressive mechanism during the colonial period. Violence was used in the liberation struggle and was also adopted by the succeeding government, by ZANU and ZAPU. To some extent Abel Muzorewa (leader of UANC) and Ndabaningi Sithole (leader of Zanu-Ndonga) used violence, and even the MDC has adopted it. Some parties have employed violence to deal with intra-party conflict:

> Wittingly and unwittingly, some of the tactics and forms of violence tried and tested by Zanu-PF over the previous three decades have been adopted by elements within those organizations particularly at key moments of contests for power and other resources. The muscular approach to politics - use of physical attacks including assaults - has been imported into the ranks of opposition parties and CSOs (civil society organizations). While the official policies of the latter may be against the use of violence, some elements have nevertheless employed it to further their narrow interests. This has unfortunately raised the spectre of violence pervading political culture and practice as a whole.¹²⁰

Zimbabwe is depicted as a country of contradictions deeply mired in political violence and a moral crisis.

Sachikonye traces the roots of political violence back to the 1950s and ’60s, more than half a century ago. Those roots are found in the ruthless suppression of moderates. There were beatings, the use of dogs and guns against those who campaigned for independence. But violence came also from the nationalist parties themselves in the early 1960s, with the original ZANU and ZAPU - particularly in 1963 and 1964. They used stones, sticks and petrol bombs. During the liberation war violence was waged by the colonial forces against civilians and by the liberation armies against ‘sell-outs’.

Sachikonye’s book is thin on the religious dimension; it was written from a social-scientific perspective and does not deal with religion. Insights on how violence was used as an oppressive mechanism from this book will be used in this study. The UCCZ needs to understand the mechanism of violence in order to reflect realistically about the interface of religion and violence.

2.10.18  P. Moorcraft

Paul Moorcraft, in his book *Mugabe’s War Machine*, tracked the rise of Mugabe and decoded his psychology in the context of Zimbabwe’s military history. The book showed that Mugabe’s use of guerrilla army against white rule explained how he continued to rule Zimbabwe as though he were still running an insurgency. In the late 1990s:

Mugabe diverted the disaffection surrounding the war veterans – originally aimed at him – and focused it instead on white farmers and their “puppets” – the MDC. This was the ‘Third Chimurenga’. ...This involved 1500 war veterans – now largely recruited from the unemployed and led by 300 CIO officers. Over 1000 soldiers from the Fifth Brigade joined around 6000 ZANU-PF volunteers including Youth Brigades. The operation was targeted
Mugabe has managed to crush all his alleged opponents from the Ndebele, to white farmers, and then the media, judiciary, civic groups, churches, unions and homosexuals.

Moorcraft’s book presents Mugabe as an authoritarian ruler who has crushed any opposition under his feet. This study will assess whether the churches have been crushed to the extent that we cannot obtain their views. The prophetic voice of the Church is required in the democratization process of the country.

2.11 Conclusion

This chapter has critically reviewed literature relevant to the interface between religion and violence. The reviewed scholarly works have demonstrated that in the history of Christian tradition there has always been an ambiguous relationship between religion and violence. Consequently, there are a number of theories that explain the close relationship between religion and violence. Is the UCCZ’s attitude to political violence also characterized by ambivalence? The scholarly gap that this study intends to fill is centred on the ambivalence of the relationship between the Christian faith and violence. This study will focus on this central research question. The research uses the above scholarly works as a baseline upon which this thesis shall develop. There are important relationships and similarities between the current phenomenon of violence in Zimbabwe and the phenomenon of violence in different parts of the world and in different historical periods. This work explores some of the conflicting perspectives on political violence.

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among the followers of Christ in general, and Christian attitudes to political violence with reference to the UCCZ in particular. The next chapter will discuss the history and development of the UCCZ, structure, traditions, and its attitude to political violence from 1893 to 1980.

3.0 CHAPTER THREE: THE HISTORY AND STRUCTURE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN ZIMBABWE

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has drawn attention to the literature by scholars that is relevant to this study. This chapter discusses the structure, traditions, history and development of the UCCZ and its attitude to political violence from 1893 to 1980. The relationship between the UCCZ and political violence cannot be fully understood without a brief history of the church. Given this consideration, the researcher discusses briefly the history of Christianity and colonization in Zimbabwe and in particular the history of the advent of the American Board Mission enterprise and the subsequent impact it had on the Zimbabwean scene. Christianity’s hegemony over the socio-political, religious and cultural life of the Zimbabwean people presents an image of the violent nature of the
The colonial and post-colonial eras serve as easily identifiable historical periods in which political violence took place in Zimbabwe. Each era had its own political, economic and cultural causes of conflict. However, the different epochs have deeply influenced each other, thereby aggravating the situation:

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

History presents the link between Christianity and violence.

This chapter is divided into three main sections concerning: (a) the role of the UCCZ in politics and the structure and traditions of the UCCZ, (b) a brief history of the UCCZ, and (c) political tensions during the colonial period. The first section directs the reader’s attention immediately to the peoples’ expectation of the role of the UCCZ in politics and the structure and traditions of the UCCZ. The structure and guiding principles of this church have a bearing on the church’s involvement or lack of it in politics. A brief history of the church will help to bridge the gap between the beginnings of the church and the political violence of post-colonial Zimbabwe. The third section will enable the reader to appreciate the fact that political violence in independent Zimbabwe has its roots in the colonial era. This chapter will be concerned with the roles of the UCCZ as the individuals and as a corporate association in relation to political violence in colonial Zimbabwe.

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3.2 Colonialism: The Roots of Violence for Independent Zimbabwe

It must be noted from the outset that to trace the roots of political violence to the colonial era is not to provide any excuse for its later use, or its refinement under both the rule of Ian Smith and Robert Mugabe. Instead, I am attempting to explore the Church’s stance towards this method of choice by both leaders to maintain their grip on power. Political violence was used by Smith as an instrument for achieving the goals of suppressing the democratic will of the people and to close the political space for the opposition. Violence against opponents during the colonial and post-colonial eras was the main reason that hindered the free participation of citizens in politics, including raising their grievances.

For many scholars of religion, the close interaction between the Church and the state in Zimbabwe can be traced back to the presence of Christian ministers of religion in the 1890 Pioneer Column that spearheaded the colonization of Zimbabwe. Many missionaries were, in fact, torch bearers of colonization, and hence many of them had the same goals as the colonisers. It is interesting to note that in the present unwrapping of the history of colonization in Africa the missionary who carried the Bible was not a spiritual appendix but an intrinsic part of the colonization team of traders and explorers.

G. Muzorewa has observed:

The important point to bear in mind is that the planting of Christianity occurred simultaneously with colonization. Consequently, there is a thin line between the missionary intention and the intent of the colonizers.123

To a large extent, missionaries and colonial officers shared the same values of

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European superiority. D. Mungazi, a Zimbabwean historian, suggests that the mindset of the colonizers or the Europeans about the Africans can be captured in this way. "They equated the universal man with themselves, and Europeans were synonymous with the ‘universal man’."\(^{124}\) Although emphasis on the study of humanity formed a philosophy known as humanism, the concept of humanity excluded the African until studies were conducted to determine whether the Africans were actually human. Further, Cecil John Rhodes got a standing ovation in 1896 for saying in a Parliamentary debate in Cape Town:

I say that the natives are like children. They are just emerging from barbarism. They have a human mind but are like children, and we ought to do something to develop that mind, to treat the natives where they are, in a state of barbarism - we are to be lords over them. We will continue to treat them as a subject race as long as they continue to be in a state of barbarism.\(^{125}\)

The foregoing description of the African by the colonialists and missionaries paints a gloomy picture of what Africans were in their socio-cultural and religious outlook. The initial perception of Africans by colonialists and missionaries alike negated the possibility of tolerance towards their humanity, religion, and culture.

The impulsive promulgation of Christianity and the colonial agenda in Africa gave impetus and strength to the establishment of Christianity as the dominant religion. E. Chitando and L. Togarasei argued that Christianity established itself alongside colonial governments:

The close connection between the church and the state facilitated the rapid expansion of Christianity in Zimbabwe. … [Benefits] included access to land and having military power behind them. Although the missionaries had


\(^{125}\) Ibid., p.43.
struggled to gain converts prior to the colonial period, they enjoyed notable increases in the number of converts once the colonial administration was in place. Nonetheless, it is important to concede that in some instances, there were tensions between missionaries and colonialists, especially over the treatment of Africans.\textsuperscript{126}

Many missionaries benefited from colonialism. The European colonial powers saw the missionaries as partners in a campaign to civilize the ‘native’. W. J. Van der Merwe did acknowledge that in Zimbabwe, the establishment of a colony under a European flag facilitated missionary activity\textsuperscript{127}. Therefore, there was an obvious allegiance on the part of the missionary enterprise to the colonial government. Moreover, missionary enterprises sometimes became so closely associated with colonial government that they were largely identified with them.

3.2.1 Attempts to Establish Missions in Zimbabwe

The history of the UCCZ is in a way connected to the history of many missions in Zimbabwe. Thus, the expansion of the UCCZ to Zimbabwe must be seen within the context of the Christian missionary enterprise in Zimbabwe as a whole. However, this study will not provide a detailed account of the coming of Christianity to Zimbabwe as some informative accounts already exist.\textsuperscript{128} Roman Catholic missionaries were the first to arrive in Southern Africa, and even to penetrate inland into present day Zimbabwe. The first attempt to introduce Christianity to Mashonaland was made by a Portuguese Jesuit missionary, Fr. Gonzalo da Silviera, at the court of the Monomotapa dynasty until

he was murdered as a result of court intrigues in 1561.\textsuperscript{129} Although many Roman Catholic churches were planted, they had all disappeared by the time Protestant missions arrived in the nineteenth century. Protestant missions to Southern Africa effectively began with the Moravians in 1792. Right after them came a Dutchman, Johannes Van der Kemp, in 1799, who soon represented the newly formed London Missionary Society (LMS) in this newly claimed British colony.

The pioneers of Christian missions in Zimbabwe were members of the LMS who pioneered missionary enterprise in Matabeleland. The LMS missionary who helped launch Protestant missions into Zimbabwe was Robert Moffat. He set out for Africa at the age of 21 and served primarily at the mission station of Kuruman for fifty years, as missionary to the Tswana peoples.\textsuperscript{130} His major work was the translation of the Bible into Tswana, but he was also famous for his son-in-law David Livingstone, whom he helped recruit to come to Kuruman in 1840.\textsuperscript{131} Moffat’s greatest accomplishment for missions in Zimbabwe was his remarkable friendship with Mzilikazi, king of the Ndebele people, which created an enabling environment for the planting of missions in Zimbabwe. Moffat’s friendship with Mzilikazi resulted in the founding of the LMS’s first mission station at Inyati in 1859 and a second mission station at Hope Fountain in 1870.

\textsuperscript{131} J. S. Moffat, \textit{The Lives of Robert and Mary Moffat}, p.156.
Mzilikazi had fled from Chaka, the Zulu leader, with his people and crossed from coastal Zululand into Transvaal on the central plateau. In 1835 Moffat spent two months with Mzilikazi. Soon after this visit, however, Mzilikazi fled from the Transvaal due to skirmishes with Dutch Boers and retreated into south-western Zimbabwe. Moffat again visited him there for three months in 1853 and asked Mzilikazi’s assistance in locating his explorer son-in-law, Livingstone, who had disappeared into the depths of Africa beyond the Zambezi River.\textsuperscript{132}

Moffat himself also accompanied the missionary expedition to the Ndebele in July 1859. He was aware that Mzilikazi was wary of outsiders and would only accept missionaries if Moffat brought them. Mzilikazi and his people shared a deep conviction that the opening of the country to white men to come and settle would be the beginning of the end for Mzilikazi’s kingdom. They were “not far wrong there.”\textsuperscript{133} While the Ndebele king welcomed Moffat personally, he was reluctant to allocate a place for a permanent mission for the missionary families. According to C.J. Zvobgo, in his chapter “An Overview of the Methodist Church,” after several attempts at establishing missions in late December, 1859, Mzilikazi finally decided that the missionaries could build a mission station at Inyati, but since he no longer tolerated new openings to the outside world, he flatly refused any attempt to communicate with the Makololo missionary group.\textsuperscript{134}

\textsuperscript{133} J. S. Moffat, \textit{The Lives of Robert and Mary Moffat}, p.218.
3.2.2 Christian Missions Stalled

In 1870, Lobengula succeeded his father, Mzilikazi, as king of the Ndebele. It should be noted that by 1884 the mission had as yet been without visible success. Bhebe cited several reasons for this complete lack of conversions: the king was an absolute monarchy, and his military kingdom was squarely based on traditional religion; the Ndebele saw no need for learning to read or for other Western ideas; they saw no moral superiority of monogamy over polygamy and could not see why missionaries denounced their customs; Christianity did not seem to offer practical answers to the daily problems of Ndebele people, but answers were provided by their traditional religion; a high God of love did not square with the droughts and disasters they were experiencing.\(^\text{135}\) Lobengula prevented the spread of Christianity to the Shona ethnic groups, as Western missionaries increasingly clamoured to gain permission to enter his territory. For example, Francois Collard, of the Paris Missionary Society, was sent by a nascent indigenous church the society had planted in Lesotho to establish a new mission among the Shona people of south-eastern Zimbabwe.

As European imperialists like Cecil John Rhodes began to increasingly covet Lobengula's realm, the LMS missionaries stationed there:

had by the 1880's come to the conclusion that the Ndebele political system must be overthrown to pave the way for Christianity.\(^\text{136}\)

Lobengula used a LMS missionary, C. D. Helm, as an interpreter and adviser in the negotiations with Rhodes's men, and Mark Shaw claimed that Helm deliberately misinterpreted portions of the Rudd concession that gave Rhodes the right to enter

\(^{136}\) Ibid., p.82.
Shona areas to search for gold.¹³⁷ Rhodes had a vested interest in the continued expansion of white settlements in the region, so now with the cover of a legal mandate; he used the Gomara and Bere incidents, when the Ndebele attacked the Shona near Fort Victoria (now Masvingo) in 1893 as a pretext for attacking the kingdom of Lobengula. Lobengula first tried to rescind the agreement. This culminated in the outbreak of the Anglo-Ndebele war in 1893-4. M. R. Shaw stated that the first decisive battle was fought on November 1, 1893 when a laager was attacked on open ground near the Bembesi River by Imbezu and Ingubu regiments.¹³⁸ The Ndebele were defeated due to the military technology gap and tactical blunders, and this compelled Lobengula to flee northwards. Lobengula died in January 1894, and within a few months the British South Africa Company controlled Matabeleland and white settlers continued to arrive.

3.2.3 The Establishment of Mission Stations in Zimbabwe

With the end of Lobengula’s tenure, missionaries now saw an unprecedented opportunity for winning the Ndebele and Shona peoples of Zimbabwe to Christ. As the surviving leaders of the uprising were taken to the gallows, Jesuit priests persuaded many to accept baptism. C.J.M. Zvobgo, in his book A History of Christian Missions in Zimbabwe, pointed out that in Mashonaland, a female spirit medium named Nyakasikana of the Nehanda cult, however, remained defiant, refusing the Christian God, and died “screaming and yelling.”¹³⁹ Significantly, after independence and majority rule in Zimbabwe in 1980, Nyakasikana of the Nehanda cult became something of a cult figure. In fact, black nationalist freedom fighters teamed up with a spirit medium claiming to be possessed by Nehanda’s spirit in the guerrilla war that led up to

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¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 264.
To this day, she remains something of a patron saint of African traditional religion.

After the signing of the Rudd Concession (1888) between King Lobengula of the Ndebele state and Cecil Rhodes, a group of armed settlers, known as the Pioneer Column, began to invade Zimbabwe in 1890. C. J. Zvobgo pointed out that the arrival of the Pioneer Column in Mashonaland and the subsequent raising of the British flag (the Union Jack) at Fort Salisbury (now Harare) on 12 September 1890 marked the end of indigenous African independence. For ninety years the indigenous people experienced the brutal and violent history of colonialism. In 1891 an Order-in-Council declared Matabeleland and Mashonaland British protectorates. Rhodes was an atheist but he understood the uses of organized religion, and by numerous land grants and other incentives he tied the missionaries of many churches and societies to his Cape-to-Cairo vision.

In the 1890s missionaries flooded Zimbabwe and lined up to ask Rhodes for huge tracts of land on which to build mission stations. They expected a major turning to Christ. For example, the Roman Catholics returned in the wake of the occupation of Mashonaland by the British South African Company forces in 1890. In fact, Father Hartmann became chaplain to the “Pioneer Column” advancing on Mashonaland. In 1892 the Jesuits established a mission station at Chishawasha near Harare. In 1898 five missionaries

from the Pennsylvania-based Brethren in Christ Church (BICC) obtained 3,000 acres in the Matopo Hills for their Matopo Mission, because Rhodes said, “Missionaries are better than policemen and cheaper.”

Wesleyan Methodists opened four stations by 1914. The American Methodist Episcopal Church, now United Methodist Church, under Bishop Hartzell’s leadership, founded its first mission station at Old Mutare in 1898. The United Methodist Church received 13,000 acres at Old Mutare “free and clear” for their “great central mission” in 1898. The Berlin Missionary Society entered Zimbabwe in 1892 and built mission stations at Gutu, Zimuto, and Chivi, which were all taken over by the South African Dutch Reformed Church in 1907 when the Berlin Society experienced financial difficulties. The pioneer of Dutch Reformed missions in Zimbabwe was Andrew A. Louw, who founded Morgenster Mission in 1894 next to the Great Zimbabwe Ruins.

In 1894 Cecil Rhodes “granted missionaries of the Seventh Day Adventist Church a farm of 12,000 acres at Solusi.” Bishop Knight-Bruce founded St. Augustine’s Anglican mission near Penhalonga in 1891. The Salvation Army entered Zimbabwe in 1891, and received a farm of 3,000 acres in the Mazowe River valley. After 1898, several missionary groups entered Zimbabwe.

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146 Ibid.
3.3 The Coming of American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM)

C.J. Zvobgo pointed out that in 1893 missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), later named UCCZ, established their first mission station at Mount Selinda and the second at Chikore in 1895. Like other missionary societies, the ABCFM was given large areas of land by the British South Africa Company on which to build their mission stations. The ABCFM was later named UCCZ in 1981 soon after Zimbabwe attained its independence. The name UCCZ was in tune with the new dispensation of independence.

The history of the UCCZ, however, goes beyond Zimbabwe. The UCCZ traces its history to the outreach of the ABCFM which was formed in 1810 in the United States of America. It was a voluntary association of people united in their interest in foreign missions. The majority of the members had a Congregational background. Initially the church was interdenominational. However, in the early nineteenth century it sought independence from the Congregational church. Nevertheless, it was regarded as its (Congregational church) missionary wing. According to Rennie, until 1950 seven of the eleven presidents of the board were ordained Congregational clergy men. There developed very strong links between the missionary church in Zimbabwe and the

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American Board in the United States.

According to P. Sithole, in his article “Mission Work in Gazaland,” after the description of evangelism opportunities given by Dr John Philips, a prominent member of the London Missionary Society, the ABCFM decided to send two groups of missionaries to South Africa; three “Maritime Mission” families were assigned to Durban and three “Interior Mission” families were assigned to Chief Mzilikazi’s area. Of interest in this study are the Maritime missionaries who finally arrived in Durban in 1936. With permission from Dingane, Chaka’s successor, they started what was soon called the “Zulu Mission” in Natal. From the very beginning they knew of Zulu-speaking people to the north and it was their hope that one day they would be able to move to the interior.

The first mission of the American Board in Zimbabwe started at Mount Selinda in 1893 as a branch of the Zulu mission in South Africa, established in Natal in 1836. The mission to the north has been known by various names: “The East Central African Mission in Gazaland”, ”The Northern branch of the American Zulu Mission in Southern Africa”, “The Great African Mission”, “The Rhodesian Mission of the American Board”, and now “The United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe.” The mission was established three years after the Pioneer Column of 1890 had occupied Zimbabwe. In fact, the church came to Zimbabwe almost at the same time as the settlers.

In 1880 missionaries from Zululand had approached Mzila, chief of Gazaland,

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150 Ibid., p.4.
concerning the possibility of founding a mission in Gazaland. “Gazaland” refers to the region north and west of the Save River and extending to the coast. The area covers the Chipinge and Chimanimani districts of modern Zimbabwe. The Gaza state was founded by a breakaway movement of Nguni people from the Zulu state from between 1821 and 1831. The name “Gaza” is derived from Gaza - one of the Zulu chiefs who fled from the harsh rule of Chaka of the Zulu. It took six months before the missionaries could receive a reply.\textsuperscript{151} The missionaries could not withstand the delay, so they returned to Zululand. Everything conspired to prevent the establishment of a mission station until 1889, when Revs. G. Wilder and F. Bates reached Mzila's kraal. Mzila's successor Ngungunyana, told them: “your feet have tarried too long.”\textsuperscript{152} Even though they had failed to establish a mission station, the two reverends had seen the area where they wanted to preach the gospel. Ngungunyana encountered increasing pressure from concession hunters, missionaries, Portuguese political agents and, after 1890, the British South Africa Company. Of special concern was the growing resurgence of Portuguese interest in the area. When Ngungunyana went south to fight his rebellious Induna (headman) Chiperenyana, he was captured there by the Portuguese and never returned to Gazaland. Within a few years the power of his state had been broken. The opening made by the British into Gazaland in the early 1890s and the capture of Ngungunyana were a blessing for missionary work in Gazaland and an opportunity to obtain permission from the chief and to determine the location of the mission.\textsuperscript{153} Finally, in 1893 the missionaries Bates, Bunker, Thompson, and Wilder, and

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., p.8.
Miss Jones (a Negress), together with four Zulu evangelists and their families, made the long journey from Durban via Beira up the Buzi river and overland to Mount Selinda. The journey took four months and the rear of the procession reached the present site of the mission on October 19, 1893. The first missionaries camped near the present site of the mission.

There were two nationalities at the camping site: the Portuguese to the East and the American Board Missionaries to the West. The Portuguese town of Espungabeira had not yet been built, all that there was for the Portuguese was the present day border post. J. Rennie noted that the missionaries surveyed the area and marked their claim on "the slopes of Mount Selinda where there was a semi-circular opening in a magnificent forest overlooking a fertile valley." At this opening there was a tree of unknown nomenclature (nameless tree). The ownership of the site created a problem. The Portuguese claimed to own the place. It is said that the Portuguese had piled a heap of stones under the nameless tree earlier than the Englishmen. But when Cecil John Rhodes came he drove a nail into the soft tree trunk and in a short period of time the bark of the tree had covered the nail deep inside. This nail became convincing evidence of their earlier presence in their counter claim against the Portuguese. Dr Thompson played a leading role in the negotiations that led to the founding of Mount Selinda. He had discussed the issue with Rhodes during their first meeting at Beira. After a series of talks and negotiations a mission was officially established and named Mount Selinda on October 2, 1893.

The pioneer missionaries intended to begin opening mission stations from Beira. However, it was found more appropriate to start work at Mt Selinda to ward off the Portuguese expansion into Zimbabwe. Rhodes gave the American Board a farm at Mount Selinda. The mission farm at that time stretched far into present day Mozambique. In 1895 the American Board founded the second major mission at Chikore. Chikore Mission is situated thirty kilometres west of Mt Selinda and twenty five kilometres south of Chipinge. It is on an 18 000 acre tract of land that was given to the mission in compensation for land lost at Mt Selinda when the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border was defined.\textsuperscript{156} The main reason the ABCFM was given land far away from the capital city was the government’s suspicion that churches from America were too political and were bound to be revolutionary.

\section*{3.4 The Wars of Resistance 1893, 1896-7}

The ABCFM missionaries entered the country in the course of the 1893-1894 Anglo-Ndebele war in south-western Zimbabwe. Before the war Rhodes sent his partner and agent Rudd in 1888 to compel Lobengula to acquiesce to an important mining concession. R. Brown, a historian, holds that “the Rudd Concession was the key event in the scramble for Matabeleland…and indelibly marked the historical development of southern Rhodesia.”\textsuperscript{157} Lobengula realized too late that the white invaders had authority to take over his state. He was, thus, pushed into reluctant resistance by colonialists. Despite the Ndebele king's repeal of the concession, Rhodes, supported by the British crown, enacted a charter of the newly created British South Africa Company investing it

with an array of rights: the right to make treaties, to pass laws and to subject the natives to its police force, as well as to make grants of minerals and land to white settlers.

In 1891 the British Government officially recognized the Company's occupation and issued the Mashonaland Order-in-Council. A British governor took possession of Zimbabwean land on behalf of Queen Victoria. The leader of the white settlers' column, Dr. Jameson, behaved with harshness, imposing forced labour upon the Shona populations, which hitherto had almost willingly accepted white invasion as a means of escaping from Ndebele supremacy. When the whites found out that no gold was to be discovered in Mashonaland, they became more brutal and predatory. Each white settler was then granted a 6,000 acre farm. It should be realized that not all Shona groups paid allegiance to the Ndebele king.

Lobengula could not just stand by. He would not become a mere stooge at the hands of the white settlers. A Shona chief, Gomara, had his people cut five hundred yards of telegraphic wire between Fort Tuli and Fort Victoria, possibly to make snares. Gomara was asked by the company to either hand over the culprits or pay a fine. He opted for paying the fine, using cattle loaned to him by the Ndebele King. When Lobengula heard about this he sent his armies led by Mgandani and Mnyao, to teach the Shona a lesson. After this incident at Fort Victoria in 1893, the British troops invaded the whole Zimbabwean territory. Thus began the Ndebele War of Resistance of 1893. The indigenous people were defeated by superior European gun-fire at the two battles of Shangani River and Mbembezi. The conquerors took advantage of the natives' inner
divisions, with people of low castes remaining passive and some traitors even helping the invaders.

Zimbabwe was colonized in a manner that egregiously deprived the indigenous people of their fundamental freedoms. The ferocious oppression by the British conquerors became so appalling in later years that it probably outdid most other colonial arrangements in the late 19th century. The aftermath of the British conquest in Zimbabwe was that cattle were seized from the natives and their land taken. Taxation was imposed in an effort to compel black people to join in wage labour. The people who failed to pay hut tax had their cattle seized.

Three years later, the indigenous people rose up in arms against the colonial yoke in an effort to regain independence. In March 1896, the Ndebele revolted against the authority of the British South Africa Company in what is now celebrated in Zimbabwe as the First Chimurenga, i.e. the First War of independence. Mkwati, the Ndebele spiritual or religious leader, is credited with fomenting much of the anger that led to this confrontation. He convinced the Ndebele that the white settlers (almost 4 000 strong by then) were responsible for the drought, the locust plagues and the cattle disease rinderpest ravaging the country at the time. Mkwati’s call to battle was well-timed. Only a few months earlier, the British South Africa Company’s Administrator General for Matabeleland, Leander Starr Jameson, had sent most of his troops and armaments to fight the Transvaal Republic in the ill-fated Jameson Raid. This left the country’s security in disarray. In June 1896, the Shona too joined the war, but they stayed mostly on the defensive. The British immediately sent troops to suppress the Ndebele and the

Shona. It took months and cost many hundreds of lives before the territory was at peace. Shortly after learning of the assassination of Mkwati at the hands of the American Scout Frederick, Cecil John Rhodes showed great courage when he boldly walked unarmed into the Ndebele stronghold in Matopo Hills and persuaded the impi to lay down their arms, thus bringing the war to a close in October 1896.\textsuperscript{159} Matabeleland and Mashonaland continued on only as provinces of the larger state of Rhodesia.

The most popular folk heroes to emerge from the 1896-7 uprisings were two spirit mediums, people who were seen by the Shona as the link with their ancestral spirits. These were Nyakasikana of the Nehanda cult and Gumboreshumba of the Kaguvi cult who played the role of mobilising the people to fight the whites and politicising the people. But to the settlers, they were dangerous instigators. Nehanda and Kaguvi were captured and executed in 1898. These murenga-rebels or fighters were transformed into martyrs. Thus the guerrilla war that erupted seventy years later was known as the second Chimurenga, the second war of liberation. The word Chimurenga is derived from the Shona murenga meaning “rebel” or “fighter.”\textsuperscript{160} It was first applied to the uprisings of the indigenous blacks against settlers in 1896-7, and then the guerrilla against white minority rule in the 1960s and 1970s became known as the second war of liberation. The Ndebele equivalent is impi yenkululeko, war of liberation.

The Zimbabwean people revolted against their white masters. In March 1896 huge masses of the population rose up in arms under a variegated leadership, including Mkwati, a Shona ex-slave and a priest of the High God Mwari. That rebellion is called in

\textsuperscript{159} R. Brown, Op. Cit., p.75.
\textsuperscript{160} J. Frederiske, None But Ourselves: Masses vs. Media in the Making of Zimbabwe, Harare: Anvil Press, 1982, p.42
Zimbabwean history “the Chimurenga of 1896”. The uprising was crushed by the British, who to that end resorted to dynamiting broad areas wherein the natives' defensive caves had become militarily unassailable. The battle of Gwindingwi, which went on for two months (August and September 1896), was one of the greatest events of that war. A huge number of prisoners were executed. However, after the 1896 insurrection the white colonizers became a little more cautious. The hut tax was reduced from 2 pounds to 1 pound. Nevertheless new revolts took place in later years. Mapondera was the head of a Shona rebellion in 1900-1903. He was also defeated at long last and, mistreated, died in jail.

By March 1899 the whites had seized 15 762 364 acres. Between 1900 and 1920 18 000 black miners were to die in the country, the victims of bad food, flogging, awful dwelling conditions, accidents and disease. After several strikes, a Master and Servants Law was enacted by the British Royal authorities, making it a criminal offence to break a labour contract.

However, the effects of the 1893 and 1896-7 wars were not seriously felt in Gazaland. The settlers thought that the indigenous people had been defeated after the end of the Ndebele War in 1893. The Church was caught up in the middle of the uprisings against the white settlers who were led by Cecil Rhodes. The Ndebele uprising was crushed in October 1896 and the Shona uprising a year later.

The Roman Catholic and Protestant churches in Southern Rhodesia supported the spiritual needs of colonialism by providing chaplains for the white columns that defeated
the Ndebele in 1893. They preached the duty of the representatives of Christian civilisation to overthrow barbarism. The missionaries were generally uncompromising in condemning the Ndebele-Shona uprisings of 1896-97. By possessing land that was taken away from natives, the missionaries demonstrated that they were part and parcel of the colonization machinery. In Gazaland the natives were relocated to arid and mountainous areas not suitable for human habitation. The land issue was one of the major causes of the uprisings.

The colonial state itself was a major source of violence. Violence was a major prop for the institutions that the colonial state created. In the United Church of Christ’s areas of operation the Boers sometimes used corporal punishment, which amounted to brutal assault, to exact obedience and subservience from those on their farms. The American missionaries frequently appealed to state authorities and asked for British justice and fair play to be established. Unfortunately, local ‘justice’ was often meted out before appeals to the far-away government could be dealt with. Rev Wilder was a fearless champion of African rights. He argued that the Ndau had rights just like Europeans. His self-understanding entailed the church’s commitment to defend the weak against the strong in all circumstances. It is clear that Wilder was highly unpopular not only with the white community as a whole but with many missionaries at the time.

3.5 Evangelism
Missionaries saw the evangelization of Zimbabweans as a legitimate way of bringing civilization and development to the people.\textsuperscript{161} Linked to evangelization was the attempt by missionaries to make Christianity an arbiter of morality and religious values.\textsuperscript{162} The evangelization of Zimbabwe cannot be divorced from the “victor-conqueror” mentality being peddled by missionaries. Thus, Christianity was seen as victorious over other dominant religions in Zimbabwe.\textsuperscript{163} African Traditional Religions were driven underground and a new centre of authority was created by Western power structures.\textsuperscript{164} The UCCZ Mission established itself in Zimbabwe within a political context that favoured Christianity as the only valid and legitimate religion. Thus, a dominant negative attitude towards other faith traditions was already established.

As was mentioned above, the American Board established two important mission stations in Manicaland, the first at Mount Selinda in 1893 and the second at Chikore in 1895. Mt Selinda was founded, inter alia, to become an administrative centre for the Highlands area and Chikore was founded to become an administrative centre for the Lowlands. Later the mission stations were founded in Mozambique at Beira and at Gogoyo, 36 miles east of Mt Selinda. The pioneer missionaries brought a multi-faceted gospel which included evangelism, education, health care and industrial skill among others.

\textsuperscript{161} C.J.M. Zvobgo, \textit{Op.cit.}
3.5.1 A New Faith is Planted

The primary aim of the missionaries was evangelism. The missionaries longed for a time when: “The poor heathen shall learn to know their Creator and God and Jesus as their saviour from sin.” Missionaries were marking a foundation for the smooth functioning of colonial systems, although other missionaries later turned against colonial establishments. The practical objective of the missionary was to turn prospective converts into replicas of the missionaries. The missionary could measure his progress in terms of the degree to which the converts imitated him. The missionaries who brought Christianity to Zimbabwe believed that Africans had no religion or that their religion was not true. The notion by missionaries that Zimbabwean Traditional Religions were not true led to the religious intolerance. The collusion between missionaries and colonial administrators created an uneven playground for other faith traditions to freely exist. The main function of the missionary was Church work and the opening of a school to teach the skills.

The first Church meetings at Mt Selinda were held under the nameless tree. All people living in the mission farm were invited to attend Sunday service. Nobody on the mission farm was allowed to work on Sundays. To enforce this, a watchman was employed to go around the farm. Working on Sunday was a punishable offence. The punishment varied from expulsion from the mission farm to a day’s work on the mission fields. The first church building was constructed on the spot where the nameless tree had once

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167 In line with the missionary patriarchal ideology, most missionaries were men.
stood. The building was made of mahogany poles. The present Mt Selinda church was built on the ruins of the first church building.

The first white pastors were the Revs. Wilder (1893), Bates (1893), Bunker (1893), Maxwell (1896), King (1908), Dysart (1911), Dixon (1920), Meacham (1921), Marsh (1926), Abbott (1950), Heinrich (1952), and Blakeney (1955).\textsuperscript{168} Rev. Ngangeni Dhlakama was the first local African ordained minister. He began as an evangelist and then later in 1923 he was ordained. After him came Rev. Dzukuso and then Rev Hohoza Dube in mid 1932. Rev Tapera was ordained in late 1932, Rev. Hlekisana in 1941 and Rev Bede Simango in 1941 at Gogoyo. The American Board regarded missionaries as temporary. The Board encouraged the establishment of indigenous American Board Mission churches led by Africans. Missionaries were expected to ordain an indigenous clergy as soon as was practicable. The aim of the white missionaries was to bring people to Christ, not to change their social customs. However, this perspective was not shared by all missionaries. The majority espoused a total and radical break with all the values and ways of traditional society.

Before the white occupation and settlement in Gazaland most of the Ndau chiefs had been visited by missionaries and asked about their beliefs. Dr Thompson was quoted to have said:

\begin{quote}
These people of Gazaland are densely ignorant and are all African pagans. They held to the traditions and superstitions handed down to them by their ancestors with that tenacity which is born of religious fervour for the worship
\end{quote}

Missionaries attacked the heart of African life; bride-wealth was seen as turning a human being into property, and thus cursed. They ignored the social and religious aspect of bride wealth. According to Rev. Wilder, the characteristic features of African life were "polygamy, domestic slavery, ignorance or fetishism." For missionaries, everything African was primitive and pagan. Some went to the extent of saying the use by Africans of European names such as "Robert" or "Elizabeth" was a form of development and civilization. They regarded the "new way" they had brought as advanced and a blessing. The missionary attitude toward African customs and culture led to African discontent and nationalism, as will be revealed below.

The missionaries realised that in order for the Gospel to make much headway among the people, it was prudent to translate the scriptures into the vernacular to enable the people to read the scriptures on their own. In the beginning the vernacular used in church services was Zulu. Around 1906 the local Chindau was made compulsory. The Bible and hymn book translation was a co-operative work for early missionaries. Special reference should be made to Mrs. Meacham, Dr George Wilder, Mr Fuller and Mr. Dysart who spent long hours translating the Zulu bible into Chindau, hymn book and catechism. By 1910 the four gospels were published in Chindau; in 1913 the Ndua hymn book was produced. In 1919 the entire New Testament and a hymn book with

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169 Ibid.
music were published.\textsuperscript{172} This was done to make Christianity more palatable to local aspirants.

\subsection*{3.5.2 Leadership Development}

One of the central objectives of the ABCFM was to train and develop local leadership. In principle this was a good idea. However, in practice many clergymen were not given the chance to exercise that leadership. The missionaries generally did not encourage the Africans to think for themselves. Having an independent mind was tantamount to insubordination.

As previously noted, the first UCCZ African minister, Ngangeni Dhlakama, was ordained in 1923. It was the same year that the rule of the British South Africa Company was terminated and Southern Rhodesia annexed as a British colony with internal self-government. Self-government meant power was now in white hands. Britain had, consequently, given its tacit approval to racial legislation in support of white supremacy in Rhodesia. Dhlakama worked at Chikore Church until his untimely death in 1926. Lay preachers were also appointed to cope with increasing membership in the established preaching points. In 1941 Rev. Zuka Hlekisana was ordained. He worked at Chikore until 1947 when he was moved to Mt Selinda. He was the second African marriage officer. Rev. Elijah Mwadira, who was ordained in 1946, replaced Rev. Hlekisana and worked at Chikore until 1957, when he was transferred to Harare. In 1958 Rev. S.K. Mundeta was ordained. He established many preaching points around Chikore mission.

\footnote{172 P. Sithole, \textit{Op.cit.}, p.12.}
The mission increasingly encouraged the growth of the indigenous church. In 1948, the Mission Council, a corporate body of missionaries and African clergy and laity, was formed to govern all mission policy and action. The Mission Council was divided into smaller units to govern and guide the work of the church, the schools, the hospitals, and agriculture. The decision taken by the mission was a bold one and one that was likely to have far reaching results in the development of mission work. The topical discourse at the time was one of racism. The Mission Council afforded both African and missionaries an opportunity for advancement.

In the early 1950s new missionaries arrived whose ideas ran counter to those of the European settlers and the older missionaries. In June 1951 the Abbotts (Rev. Donald K. Abbott and Geraldine L. Abbott) and the Bergholts (Louis A. Bergholts and Doris M. Bergholts) presented a paper to the Mission Council stating their feelings concerning the Africans’ position in the Mission’s governing body and the social interaction between Africans and missionaries.¹⁷³ In the area of Mission government, the paper stressed the Africans’ stake in the Mission and the need to bring them into the decision making process by giving them responsibilities. Paternalism and the attitudes and patterns of behaviour of the local Europeans were discouraged.

In 1963 Rev E.T. Mwadira was chosen as the first African superintendent of churches. He was based at Chikore Mission. He was a competent leader. With the elevation of an African as a superintendent, some converts felt strengthened and much closer to the

Church. This led to significant growth of the Church.

In September 1977 the church offices moved to Roslin House in Harare. Rev. Dr F.J. Gomendo was elected Superintendent in 1977. It was in 1978 that the head of the denomination was designated President. Rev Gomendo was the first to bear the title. Rev. M.C. Kuchera was elected Vice-President. It was during this time that the war of liberation and violence escalated. Most of the tenants in mission lands were removed to protected villages. At times hostilities prevented congregations from meeting for worship.

3. 6 Education

Missionaries used formal education in Zimbabwe as a legitimate way to ‘civilize’ the natives as well as for other aims. Africans required education so that they could read the Bible and Church instructions for themselves.\(^{174}\) Between 1890 and 1896 the LMS made frantic efforts to bring civilization and development to Zimbabwe under the guise of conversions. Thus, colonization was meant to achieve both ends, namely conversion, and civilization and development.\(^{175}\) One of the most important contributions of the UCCZ has been in education. It was found that sowing the seeds of the gospel would be faster if the people could read and write. This would enable the Africans to read the word of God by themselves. It has already been stated that evangelism depended upon the literacy of the people the evangelists wished to evangelise. This led to the opening up of schools so as to enhance communication between Westerners and Africans and


to enable the local people to read, write and take instructions. Formal education was pioneered by missionaries. The missionaries whose primary role had been that of propagating the gospel, now changed their rule to that of an educationist.

It was in education that the greatest contribution was made by the American Board missionaries. Before two months had elapsed, the pioneers voted that "a day school be begun on December 11 and that people in the kraals be notified on Sunday December 3 to send their children."\textsuperscript{176} In 1894 the first formal school opened its doors to nine pupils - all boys. They were taught in Zulu. In 1896 the first brick house was erected and there were 22 boys and 2 girls as pupils. There was no gender balance in the enrolment of pupils. Most parents were not prepared to have girl-children into schools. They regarded girls as only fit for marriage. These first students were given clothes, books, and food as incentives to encourage them and other prospective pupils to attend school and learn. The mission school also extended its educational facilities to the children of European settlers, whose number had risen to 200 by 1894. In 1896 the primary school started to enrol children outside the mission station.

The first schools which opened around Mount Selinda area were Emerald School (1902), Beacon High School (1915), South Down (1916), and Gwenzi School which was opened in 1919. Some of the mission schools in Gazaland include Makoho (1917), Chipinge (1917), Zamuchiya (1919), Mutema (1919), Chisumbanje (1934), Tanganda (1931), Thuzuka (1934) and Chibuwe (before 1936). The American Board had 31 schools by 1930. The missionaries imposed compulsory education on mission farms.

\textsuperscript{176}Ibid., p.23.
Every parent on a mission farm was compelled to send his or her child(ren) to school or risk expulsion from the mission farm. If the child was sick the parents were obliged to report to the mission.

Dr. Wilder was asked to move to Chikore to begin work in 1895. In his autobiography, *The White African*, Wilder stated that he spent time each day assisting in the day school.\textsuperscript{177} He spoke of the opening of the Bible School and industrial training. Sawing logs for boards, brick-laying, and simple carpentry made up the ‘industrial curriculum’. When the Bible school was transferred to Mt Selinda in 1902, the Chikore students entered the industrial class.

Throughout the first term of 1916 there was a great famine but students were able to raise varying amounts of maize. In September 1918 the Chikore school was closed down to standards 1 to 3 owing to scarcity of food. Throughout the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s the school continued to be headed by missionaries resident at Chikore. In 1944 there were four Westerners and nine Africans on the staff with Miss Craig as headmistress at Chikore Primary School. Sewing, basketry, laundry, agriculture, woodwork, forestry, and animal husbandry were studied.

Chikore Secondary School was opened in 1954. Chikore Secondary School was the first secondary school in Gazaland. There were 33 mission out-schools with 6 night schools by 1954. Enrolment in the mission schools at the beginning of 1954 was 6319 pupils. In 1944 it was 2834 pupils and in 1950 it increased to 5167 pupils.

There was a higher standard of educational work in the mission than ever before. The Mount Selinda Teacher Training Course was begun in 1973. During the early pioneer period, African teachers were recruited from Natal and Cape Colony. This course followed the years of primary school. However, this collapsed in 1978 when all teachers were abducted by guerrillas. The government feared that educated people would continue enlisting with guerrillas coming from Mozambique.

At the time of writing (2012), Mt Selinda enjoyed a student population of over 2000 pupils, with about half of these in boarding facilities. The rest of the pupils lived within walking distance, some of whom walked for 3-6 kilometres a day. Mount Selinda Mission had become quite a village; ever expanding the dream once envisioned by the founders.

3.7 Theological Education
The United Theological College in Harare provides theological education and formation for all UCCZ pastoral students. This college is the largest interdenominational theological training school in Zimbabwe run by seven participating churches namely; the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, United Methodist Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, United Congregational Church in Southern Africa, Uniting Presbyterian Church and African Methodist Episcopal Church. The United Theological College was founded in 1954 as an institution of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. It became an ecumenical Protestant Seminary in 1955 when the
Methodist church in Zimbabwe. The United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa resolved to co-operate in sponsoring the college for the training of pastors and other Church workers. In 1976 the name was changed to United Theological College

Each denomination is responsible for its church polity. The UCCZ follows Calvinist traditions as its foundational principles. Calvin’s greatest gift was the systematization of Protestant theology and its application in practical terms. Calvin took over Luther’s doctrine of the two-fold rule of God. Calvin’s understanding of the two kingdoms was that the believer is a dual citizen of both kingdoms - the state and the Church. UCCZ pastors must be conversant with Calvinism.

Systematic catechisms is offered to all the five categories of membership as follows: active, less active, inactive, vaedzwa (trialists) and vatsvaki (those searching). The vaedzwa and vatsvaki are not full members of the Church, they receive religious instruction before gaining full membership. Catechesis is an education in the faith of children, young people and adults. It emphasises teaching of Christian doctrine with a view of initiating members into the fullness of Christian life. In the UCCZ the responsibility of religious instruction lies with a lay person called Sunday School superintendent.

3.8 The Church and Political Awareness

The education, vocational training, agriculture and health delivery systems established at mission stations increased literacy levels and political consciousness in the UCCZ
missions. C.S. Banana pointed out:

During the 1950s African nationalism, which was always latent, became a major force... This resurgence of African demands to control their own political, economic and social destiny affected all churches.\(^{178}\)

Great strides were taken by African Christians towards independence and self-government in the Church and in sharing the responsibility and council of the mission. In 1948 there was the historic first session of the Mission Council - an amalgam body of white missionaries and African clergy and laymen. Their task was to govern all mission policy and action.

The idea of independence and self-government was initiated in 1946 when the American secretary for the American Board visited Gazaland and started the plan for self-support and self-government of the churches.\(^{179}\) The church decided to send a minister yearly to visit people in the towns. Consequently, a new church was opened in Harare in 1955 by Rev. Heinrich. In 1957 a church was founded in Bulawayo. In 1955 three men were sent to study for the ministry in the United States of America, and among them was Ndabaningi Sithole, who was to become a key player in the nationalist struggle. He became the Principal of Chikore Mission when he returned from the United States. There was a scholarship fund for training African ministers and teachers. The dream, once envisioned by the pioneers, of an indigenous and self-supporting church became reality.

The missionary church hospitals and schools offered sources of new knowledge and


skills to Africans in Gazaland. Mt Selinda became a strong Christian force in the struggle to bring about a new African who could champion change and development in Zimbabwe. The church regarded itself as a guiding star for the locals. In some areas Western ideas were opposed as Africans argued that they had their tradition and medicines and hence did not need a mission, or to be taught to read and write.

The early missionaries faced serious hurdles that threatened to thwart the growth of the mission and frustrate the fast progress of Christianity and education in Gazaland. Some of the difficulties they encountered were wild animals, sickness and lack of carriers. The Christian church also faced such problems as illiteracy, tribal wars, general backwardness and poor transportation and communication. Here special mention must be made of to the resentment by some whites and Africans of the introduction of education and Christianity into the area. A local white, Johnson Jolley, used to intercept African children on their way to school. Children had to take a long and zigzag route to school. Jolley did not want Africans to acquire Western knowledge. Moreover, on the other side Africans were reluctant to accept missionary work; they feared to betray their traditional way of life and institutions. For example, the people of Gwenzi were afraid that if their daughters went to school they would refuse to marry old men. The mission had to rely on constant pressure upon parents and children to ensure the continuity and permanence of education.

The Church contributed to African political development through its contribution to African literacy and literature, African education, African religion and African health. The
mission stations raised the general standards of Africans and afforded the only ways Africans could acquire Western education and knowledge. Africans owed everything in their new life to the missionary and to the reasonable settler. However, Africans wanted to become partners with the missionaries and settlers. This explains why mission stations became hotbeds of the anti-colonial nationalist excitement that swelled the country with political parties, organizations, meetings, and strikes in the 1950s and 1960s.

One of the major criticisms levelled against the churches in the country was their consent to the exploitation of Africans. Perhaps this explains why Mount Selinda became a hotbed of nationalism. It became a rallying point for nationalist leaders such as Ndabaningi Sithole and Herbert Chitepo. Moberg asserts that: "Nationalistic revolutions in Africa have been authored largely by Christianity."180 This analysis is precise. The churches' involvement in the oppression and exploitation of Africans made them full accomplices. The establishment of missions in Gazaland was closely associated with imperialism and its brainchild colonialism. In fact, there was no clear-cut distinction between mission Christianity and colonialism. The United Church of Christ relied on government goodwill and military service. For example, the settlers were protectors of the missionaries against the tribal wars which were rife when they arrived in Gazaland. Missionary Christianity had, therefore, to comply with the establishment of the British settlement. The present order was taken for granted and assumed to be sacrosanct. It appeared as if the settlers were brought to Africa by divine right and thus

could not be challenged. As if this was not enough, missionaries taught Africans beliefs and values which entrenched colonialism and passivity. Thus they were vigorously bolstered up colonial rule. The gist of their teaching and preaching was submission and obedience to the powers that be. In this regard, Banana asserts:

The church spent years preaching peace and forgiveness in the midst of war and vengeance, preaching powerless love in a state of loveless power, preaching obedience in a state of rebellion and loyalty in a state of illegitimate authority.\(^{181}\)

This statement is an indictment of the churches’ blindness and anti-prophetic stance. For Africans, the churches were out of touch with reality. They were advancing the colonial cause of pacifying the Africans. Their preaching constituted nothing but a total neglect or disregard of the cause of the African masses: justice and the right to full citizenship. It has already been stated that missionaries espoused a total and radical break with all the values and ways of traditional society. Their attitude toward African traditions left no room for a sympathetic appreciation of all that was good in African culture and tradition. Joshua Nkomo argues:

In their zeal to proselytize the Africans, the missionaries pooh-poohed traditional religion because they believed that the imperative of the Christian mission did not permit peaceful coexistence with a non Christian culture and social organism.\(^{182}\)

African cultural values and religious beliefs were seen as a stumbling block to the establishment of Christian civilisation. Everything African was regarded as pagan and devilish. One might be justified in pointing out that Christianity was founded on false


premises in Gazaland. Missionaries were conducting a "double standards" policy; they wanted to please both Africans and settlers. Their preaching failed to penetrate to the heart of the African personality. For missionaries, traditional religion was mere mythology and thus incompatible with Christianity. The primitive, uncivilized and uneducated Africans had to repent of African tradition and embrace Christianity. Generally, missionary activities were preparing Africans to fit into the colonial economic system where they provided labour.

There is an additional point to be made about the Church's attitude to African life. Missionaries taught Africans that religion was concerned with salvation of the souls of humans and not with their economic relations or their social or political ideals. Religion was regarded as a private matter for the individual conscience. Missionaries and colonialists asserted that Africans were not ripe for the granting of full and equal rights. In this respect, they revealed some racial ethos. They believed in the superiority of Western culture through the eyes of racism. African Christians were made to believe that it was un-Christian to interfere in political, economic and social issues. The African was coming to hate the perpetual domination by the European. According to Ndabaningi Sithole, the African was now coming out of his cocoon, saying to the whites: "Coming ready or not". 183

Although the land dispute between the missionaries and settlers was settled, there still remained considerable friction over the treatment of Africans:

The colonial era was dominated by racial conflicts stemming from racial

discrimination in all sectors. Inferiority complexes developed among the blacks and superiority complexes developed among the whites. This created resentment among the blacks who then waged liberation struggles. These struggles further triggered hatred between the racial groups. These perceptions and feelings still do affect us today.\(^{184}\)

Racial discrimination largely contributed to violence. White rule was justified by the belief that blacks were not capable of governing themselves without white guidance.

### 3.9 Political Parties and Political Violence

The rise of nationalism saw the need for unity and organization to fight colonialism. As a result, several political parties were established. The establishment of political parties saw an increase in political violence.

In 1934 Aaron Jacha formed a political party called the African National Council (ANC). This council, though largely ineffective, increased political consciousness among Africans. In 1945 there was a strike by African railway workers and the ANC was revived under the leadership of Reverend Thompson Samkange. In 1955 the Youth League was formed; it later changed its name to the African National Youth League. The Public Order Act empowered the colonial administration to detain and restrict without trial all political activists\(^{185}\).

The dismantling of the Central African Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland by the British saw the emergence of extreme right-wing white minority political leaders who clamoured for the independence of Southern Rhodesia under white settler domination,


on the one hand, and sharper uncompromising demands for majority rule by African nationalist leaders, on the other. The replacement in 1958 of the moderate Garfield Todd government which was sympathetic to African nationalism accelerated the pace of violence against colonialism. White supremacy was ruthlessly pursued by Edgar Whitehead, Winston Field and Ian Smith\textsuperscript{186}.

The first major national Zimbabwean revolutionary to emerge was Joshua Nkomo. In 1957 the Youth League and ANC merged under the name ANC with Joshua Nkomo as President and Chikerema as Vice-President. In 1958 ANC meetings in rural areas were prohibited. The ANC was banned in 1959.\textsuperscript{187}

In 1960 the National Democratic Party (NDP) was formed with Michael Mawema as first President. He was later replaced by Joshua Nkomo. The NDP was banned in 1961 and replaced by the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) on 17 December 1961. ZAPU was banned in September 1962. It was not long before a split emerged in the party, which culminated in the formation of ZANU (the Zimbabwe African National Union) in 1963. ZANU was formed by members dissatisfied with Joshua Nkomo's leadership.\textsuperscript{188}

The period leading to the Second Chimurenga was one of stress for everyone in the country. During the 1960s and early 1970s African nationalism, which was always

\textsuperscript{186} G. Nyarota, Against the Grain: Memoirs of a Zimbabwean Newsman, Cape Town, Zebra Press, 2006, p.121.
\textsuperscript{187} Ibid. p.102.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid.
latent, became a major force when the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) was formed under Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole, a United Church of Christ minister. Rev Sithole went to the United States of America in 1955 as a student of Divinity, but his experiences in America transformed his political thinking and he came to the realization that a clergyman could not ignore political activities. This followed his experiences of civil rights movements in the United States of America championed by Martin Luther King Junior. Martin Luther King’s fiery and inspirational speeches galvanized many and Sithole was no exception. This transforming effect of King’s message is also attested by another icon of Zimbabwean nationalist politics, Bishop Abel Muzorewa, who went to the United States in the 1960s:

Dr Martin Luther King gave inspired leadership in the civil rights movements; it was plain that he was trying to change the unjust segregated system but he always spoke without hate in a steady and convincing way. This was something I never forgot. 189

It was when he was studying in the United States that Sithole wrote his famous book, African Nationalism. It was the first English book to be written by an African in Rhodesia. West pointed out that the strength of the book which became the ‘Bible’ of African nationalism, catapulted Sithole into the leadership of the anti-colonial movement in the early 1960s.190 The book won many souls for the anti-colonial struggle. Mtshali concluded that the book dramatized the injustice of imperialism and foreign rule.191 In addition to the book, Sithole was a regular contributor to the Rhodesian local paper. He wrote political articles which displeased the African Education Department. The political

articles struck the right chord with the African populace. It should be noted that in 1959 Sithole assumed the presidency of the African Teachers’ Association, a position which facilitated his shift into the political arena of Rhodesia. This organization operated under the Africa Education Department. It looked into the grievances of African teachers and working conditions.

Rev Sithole ministered at both Mt Selinda and Chikore missions. Sithole was a militant activist. For this reason, the American Board Mission Church was closely monitored and suspected of supporting the war of liberation. Sithole argued that Christianity played a major role in the African political development; missionary education, which was offered to Africans, was also a factor that enabled Africans to fight against colonial rule continentally. Zimbabwe was no exception.

Sithole was a gifted preacher who was able to convince his audience. His eloquence and skilful articulation of issues enabled him to win him more converts in the Chipinge area for the American Board Mission. This politically conscious ministry increased his visibility in the country. Consequently, he became a national figure. Other nationalist leaders recognized that his skills of being a pastor could be used to turn Africans in Rhodesia against the colonialists. As a minister in the Chipinge area he successfully challenged the Portuguese to stop the “Mutandisi” system in the border areas between Mozambique and Chipinge. The “Mutandisi” system was an arrangement whereby the Portuguese government in Mozambique sent labourers to South Africa, and instead of

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the worker being paid, the money was paid to the Portuguese authorities.\textsuperscript{193} It was a form of slavery. Sithole physically visited the “Mutandisi” transit town of Espungabeira near Mt Selinda and reprimanded the authorities there, telling them not to practice slavery. Sithole stopped the system in the area by writing a letter to the Portuguese East Africa authorities, warning them to stop their nefarious activities. The Portuguese obliged. This huge victory earned Sithole acceptance into mainstream politics because he demonstrated that he was able to challenge the colonial masters.

Sithole delivered political and revolutionary messages urging people to organize themselves and fight the colonizers, emphasizing that other African countries won their independence through the barrel of the gun and that Zimbabweans should do the same.\textsuperscript{194} By defying the rules and regulations of the African Education Department, Sithole was able to de-mystify the conception that challenging colonial masters was taboo and that teachers could not enter the political arena. Because of his belligerence, Sithole had crossed the containment lines and the African Education Department terminated his teaching licence.

Sithole embraced the belief that in order to dislodge the colonial regime, military means were the only options left to the nationalists. Meanwhile, Joshua Nkomo still held the view that negotiations were still possible to achieve the nationalist goal of independence; his maxim was \textit{Angifuni igazi} (I don’t want blood-shed) in the anti-


colonial struggle.  

The state used violence in order to suppress African nationalism:

Detentions of nationalist leaders and banning of their parties became common methods of the white minority regime to contain nationalism. Violence was deployed through beatings, the use of dogs in controlling gatherings, forceful arrests and shootings.  

Watyoka observed:

As the minority white regime became more ruthless in their attempts to silence the African majority, the Africans reacted violently in their demands for their country. Successive African political parties were banned and thousands of Africans gaoled, detained or restricted to remote areas of the country.  

There was also inter-party political violence within the African nationalist movement in Zimbabwe. The parties wanted to outdo and eliminate each other:

There was also a great deal of violence between the nationalist parties themselves. Instead of expending their energies and other resources against the white minority state, ZAPU and ZANU in 1963 and 1964 engaged in a bitter violent contest for political high ground. Each of the two parties sought to position itself for power in negotiations with the British imperial state and white minority state.  

Political parties used political violence to settle scores against each other. Political violence occurred between ZAPU under Joshua Nkomo and ZANU under Ndabaningi Sithole. Even though there were ethnic factors in the clashes, the gist of the matter within the nationalist parties was the struggle for power. The blame-game between the two political parties became the order of the years that led to independence, with no

196 L. Sachikonye, When a State Turns on its Citizens: 60 Years of Institutionalized Violence in Zimbabwe, p.1.  
party accepting responsibility. Accounts of inter-party violence are largely partisan and self-fulfilling. For example, Joshua Nkomo wrote:

Zanu was determined to make its mark by fair means or foul. Among my own supporters, there was real anger at the Zanu leadership's betrayal of national solidarity. On each side there was violence against the other, leading in particular to a campaign of petrol bombing in the townships that caused real distress. The government was obviously delighted at this split among its enemies, and did its best to foster confusion.\(^{199}\)

The leadership of both parties gave tacit approval to the inter-party violence; they did not publicly condemn the violence.

**3.10 Unilateral Declaration of Independence and Political Violence**

In November 1965, Ian Smith declared Rhodesia an independent state, which was illegal because Britain, still responsible for its colony, was not involved; the action was called the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). The African majority was not involved either, even though some chiefs made a compromise, the UDI meant whites would keep on controlling the country.\(^{200}\)

The Constitution declared that the people of Rhodesia believed in the supremacy and omnipotence of almighty God and acknowledged His ultimate direction. In November 1965, a holiday was declared with a request that on this day people of Rhodesia set some time aside to rededicate themselves to the Christian ideals which prompted the declaration of independence. Colonizers also saw themselves as preservers of justice, civilization and Christianity.


In response to UDI, the Rhodesian Council of Churches held a Meeting on 26th November 1965 at the Trinity Methodist Hall in Harare to review “The Position of the Church in the Present Circumstances”. The regime tried to use the Christian religion to sanctify its position. On the 15th of November 1969, Bishop Alderson of the Anglican Cathedral criticised Smith’s claims to defend Christian values by means of UDI. Andrew Ndhllela became the first indigenous leader of a recognised church in Rhodesia which had a substantial European membership. He was the leader of the Methodist Church. The Methodist Synod in January 1965 articulated its views on some of the controversial issues concerning the African franchise. The UDI was rejected by the churches as morally wrong and Christians were urged to execute the keenest vigilance against all forms of injustice, whether by individuals, by political groups or by the government itself.

### 3.11 The Second Chimurenga

When war broke out between the nationalists and the minority white government, violence engulfed the whole country. In 1964 a Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) military wing group, the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) ‘Crocodile Commando’, led by William Ndangana, killed the first white in an act of war since 1897. The Crocodile Gang carried out the first forms of physical violence which disturbed the white community. The activities of this militant group involved cutting telephone lines from Cashel to Chipinge, petrol bombing colonial structures and road blocks, and destroying of bridges. Such activities culminated in the assassination of

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Johannes Andries Oberholtzer on 4 July 1964.\textsuperscript{202} Guerrillas of the Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) entered the country in May 1965. With the Unilateral Declaration of independence being declared the same year, the Prime Minister Ian Smith declared a State of Emergency. The State of Emergency remained in place until independence in 1980.

In 1966 seven guerrillas of Zanu’s military wing, the Zimbabwe African Nationalist Liberation Army (ZANLA), died in a battle at Sinoia (now Chinhoyi) with Rhodesian forces.\textsuperscript{203} The anniversary of the battle, 28 April, was commemorated by Zanu as Chimurenga Day, the start of the armed struggle. In years that followed war escalated and violence engulfed the nation.

\textbf{3.12 Ecumenical Bodies and Political Violence}

Most church denominations were members of the Southern Rhodesia Christian Conference which brought them together at conferences to discuss and act on issues affecting their work in particular and the country in general. At these conferences people could pray for justice, peace and God’s guidance for the country and its leaders. Institutional injustice permeated all of Rhodesian society:

\begin{quote}
Among the notorious pieces of legislation the white minority regime had enacted was one called ‘The Hanging Bill’, which like many others made the death penalty mandatory for offences like throwing a petrol bomb into a dwelling house, whether the house was occupied or not at the time of the offence, and mere possession of arms of war. Courageous church leaders voiced concern against laws like this one and the general polarization of the races. They criticized the white regime for its oppression of the Black majority. Some white clergy were deported from Rhodesia to instil fear
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{203} Op.cit.
among white clergy who supported African calls for justice in the form of majority rule. The Church was accused of being ‘Communist-infiltrated’ by the minority regime.\textsuperscript{204}

Some church representatives ‘walked out’ in protest, accusing the Christian Conference of ‘getting involved in politics’.\textsuperscript{205} The critical question of whether Christians should participate in armed conflicts has always been a controversial one. It would appear that during this period under review the issue of participation was never contested. Largely the feelings of ‘kith and kin’ were the main motivating factors, with the issue of African rights soundly peripheral. Following that debate it was agreed that a separate organization, which could address itself to the political, social and economic situation in the country be formed. This is how the Southern Rhodesia Christian Council was born.

The formation in 1962 of an ecumenical organisation, the Rhodesian Council of Churches, now known as the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, must be interpreted against the background of the need for socio-political relevance of Zimbabwean Protestant Churches. The churches wanted to find their feet in the impending political and ideological crisis created by the push for the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) by the white regime in 1962. UDI came into existence in 1965. The Zimbabwe Council of Churches is a major ecumenical body of the Protestant denominations of Zimbabwe, while the Roman Catholics hold only an observer status. The Catholics did not join and they formed their own Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), which was the social arm for the Church.

\textsuperscript{205} Ibid, p.2.
The following churches were members of the Council at its formation: United Church of Christ (American Board), the Anglican Church, the Methodist Church (UK), the Church of Southern Africa, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the London Missionary Society, the Methodist Church Conference (USA), the Independent African Church, the African Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, the Society of Friends, the Southern Rhodesia Christian Conference, the Salvation Army, the Bible Society, the Salisbury Council of Churches, the Christian Marching Church, and the Young Women’s Christian Association. Bishop Kennedy Skelton of the Anglican Church became the first chairman of the constituting assembly of the new Christian Council structure. He was sympathetic to the African cause. Through Bishop Ralph Dodge, the Council issued at its constitutional assembly a serious warning to the Prime Minister, who was a member of the Central Presbyterian Church. Mr G.C. Grant, of the United Church of Christ (American Board) became the first treasurer of the Council.\textsuperscript{206}

J. Dube pointed out that the body:

\begin{quote}
filled a void that was created when the white regime under Ian Smith, the last white Prime Minister of Rhodesia, became repressive and intolerant of civil society groups that opposed the unlawful declaration of independence from the United Kingdom.\textsuperscript{207}
\end{quote}

The churches wanted strength in numbers and to speak with one voice. However, neither the Council nor individual denominations responded adequately to the crisis.

\begin{footnotes}
\end{footnotes}
The purported advantage of executing common tasks ultimately proved to be one of the reasons behind the failure of individual denominations:

The disadvantages of individual churches waiting for the Council to act are obvious and innumerable. This is partly because on occasions when the Council is afraid to take prophetic stand, and during those times when the Council lacks strong leadership or when it is in chaos itself, then there is a vacuum in the public square with no theological voice raised on critical issues that touch the lives of the citizens. This becomes more critical, especially if we take into account the fact that no one individual is accountable in the Council since leadership of the Council rotates among various denominational leaders. This has led the Council often to choose a middle ground position in order to maintain the coalition of the denominations that form it.  

Church-state relations during this period of political parties were frosty:

Church-state relationships in Zimbabwe during this phase were increasingly qualified by more outspoken claims for political and religious independence within the African population on the one hand and deliberate attempts to reinforce European and missionary control of Zimbabwean church-life on the part of the settler community on the other.

After the introduction of the UDI, church and government found themselves on a collision course.

A number of pastoral letters were written and most European Catholics in the country disapproved of their Bishops' critical stand on UDI. The Bishop of Umtali (now Mutare), Donald Lamont, drafted a letter entitled “Purchased People” in which he criticised Smith’s summary arrest and restriction of political opponents and use of guns and dogs. He was openly critical of the racial policies of the government of the day; it was meant to be a reference point for all Bishops. Ten years later, the Catholic Bishops together raised publicly the real possibility of armed confrontation in their message. The two influential church organisations which were clearly taking sides at the time were Mambo Press and Moto magazine; they were at the forefront voicing African opinion.

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208 Ibid., p.46.
churches together offered a concrete analysis of the unacceptable elements of the proposals.

The church’s entry into politics intensified after the 1969 constitution which entrenched racism and segregation. The church was averse to injustice. It became prophetic and stood as a pillar of hope and motivation to the majority. Bishop Muzorewa is reported as saying, "If religion just means to go to church and pray, then it is a scandal ..." The gospel is concerned about where a human being sleeps, what a person earns and how he/she is treated by the government.

The relationship between the church and state became hostile when the World Council of Churches resolved to aid liberation movements, which the Council supported by a majority of 23 to 4 votes. The World Council of Churches, through its Programme to Combat Racism, supported the liberation movement in Zimbabwe. The aid was linked to humanitarian work. The support was clearly stated as covering only humanitarian purposes, such as assistance to wives and children of political prisoners. Some members of the Council were detained, incarcerated and deported.

Discrimination culminated in the 1969 Land Tenure Act, which, while repealing the Land Appointment Act, re-enacted and strengthened its provisions by dividing the land in half with 44.9 million acres allocated to each race. The policy was entrenched in a new constitution. These measures led to further overstocking, very high population densities,

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serious environmental damage, reduced agricultural productivity and poverty in the communal areas. Overcrowding led many people to settle on river banks, steep slopes, grazing areas and fragile land, posing great environmental risks. It is therefore against this background that land ranked highest among the grievances that motivated the indigenous black majority to launch the Second Chimurenga / Imfazwe to free the country from colonial oppression. It is worthy of note that in the period preceding the liberation war, “mwana wevhu / umntwana womhlabati” (child of the soil) became the nationalists’ rallying call. The Land Tenure Act also faced serious opposition from the church. The Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference through Rev. R. Randolph took the lead in opposing the amendment.

Churches were deeply involved in securing the liberation of Zimbabwe. Some notable white bishops like Bishops Lamont and Skelton were deported by the colonial government for supporting blacks. War also affected the UCCZ directly as the section below will show.

3.13 The UCCZ and War of Liberation

When the government banned the Zimbabwe African Peoples’ Union (ZAPU) on September 20th 1962, there was general political unrest at Chikore Primary and Secondary Schools. On 23rd September 1962 the Chikore School white authorities resolved to punish four students by suspending them from school for two weeks. This led to student unrest. The suspended students were suspected of being members of ZAPU.
3.13.1 Unstable Political Situation

The 1960s and 1970s were times of confusion and suffering due to the unstable political situation in the country which culminated in the war of liberation. The church and government increasingly found themselves on a collision course. Revs S.K. Mundeta, T. Rufasha, W. Mkwakwami, M. Kuchera, L. Mzite, H. Perry, E. Luther and D. Levitt served the church during the testing times of the Second Chimurenga.

The atmosphere of insecurity in the community was so intense that:

In 1977, during the second term when war was intensifying, the deputy head of the T.T. (Teacher Training) programme, Mr Ephraim Mapungwana, was killed by the guerrillas at his home. The head of the TT department, Mr. Morris Mhlanga, fled to Botswana fearing for his life. Mr Lincoln Nduna became the acting head of the TT department. Both teachers and students suffered harassment at the hands of the opposing forces, each of which wanted the total support of both teachers and pupils.213

Rev. Mzite was compelled to leave Mt Selinda in 1978 before the completion of his term of service. The church at Mt Selinda operated without a pastor throughout 1979.

Mr G.C. Grant, the headmaster of Chikore School, was called to a meeting with Education Department officials in Salisbury. He brought the shattering news that “the authorities had kindly decided not to close the schools and expel the students but that all the pupils from both schools were to be rusticated until the following year”.214 This meant 370 pupils were to be sent out of school six weeks before their final examinations and they had to repeat the following year.

214 Ibid., p.53.
In 1976 Chikore Secondary School and the rest of the country experienced the effects of the bitter Chimurenga war which had escalated all along the Eastern border. The government suspected, on hearsay, not evidence, that the school was harbouring guerrillas. A massive search of the whole mission station conducted by hundreds of soldiers and reserve police from 5.30 am to 1 pm on 4th March revealed nothing amiss, but their suspicions were not allayed.\textsuperscript{215}

March 1976 was a month of intimidation and interrogation. The most gruesome intimidation was the display of corpses for identification. On March 1, one corpse was displayed at the school and students were forced to file past to identify the bodies.\textsuperscript{216} The security forces were claimed that they were ex-students of the school. The intended message was: “This will happen to you too.”

\subsection*{3.13.2 Closure of Chikore Mission School}

Chikore mission did not know that a petition signed by about 150 white residents of the Chipinge district was handed to the Minister of Defence in March. “The petition called for the closure of all mission schools in the area and demanded that land owned by the mission be expropriated.”\textsuperscript{217} In later Parliamentary debate on the issue (reported in the Herald 18.08.76) Mr Wright, MP for Chipinge, “named Chikore and other missions as places where there had been a lack of land protection” but he could not fully substantiate these allegations.

\textsuperscript{216} \textit{Ibid.}  
\textsuperscript{217} \textit{Ibid.}
On Monday 16th August 1976, as members of staff were busy with end of term reports and similar activities, a large contingent of soldiers arrived at the school to announce:\(^\text{218}\)

a) that the Chikore mission school was to be closed immediately;

b) that 10 people namely Mr. and Mrs. J. Lowe, Mr. J.H. Sithole, Mr. and Mrs. P. Mutema, Mr. M. G. Chahweta, Rev. and Mrs. W. Mkwakwami, Rev. Mwadira and Mr. Amos Magaisa were prohibited from remaining on or entering the Chikore Mission farm as of Monday 23rd August until further notice.\(^\text{219}\)

The prohibition order caused confusion and panic among mission residents. It was a week of loving support, generous offers of help, and prayers for the future of those going and those staying, and tearful farewells.

In fact, the school re-opened in the third term as a government school for Forms 1 and 2. The Form 3’s and 4’s were transferred to other schools all over Manicaland and Mashonaland. The Ministry of Education made all the necessary arrangements for the Form 4’s, who had already paid their exam fees, to write their exams in their new schools. Later, many schools were closed outright with no thought at all for the future of the pupils, so Chikore was indeed an exception.

Two teachers at Mt Selinda lost their lives in the early days of the Chimurenga war.\(^\text{220}\)

\(^{218}\) Herald 18.08.76.
\(^{219}\) Ibid.
Mr J.F. Dhlakama was shot dead in 1977. Both the Rhodesian Front forces and the liberation forces denied responsibility. In 1977, during the second term when the war was intensifying, the deputy head of the Teacher Training programme, Mr Ephraim Mapungwana, was killed by guerrillas at his home. He was alleged to be a sell-out. Teachers and students were harassed and tortured at the hands of the opposing forces, each of which wanted the total support of their causes.

After independence in 1980, the UCCZ asked the Ministry of Education to return the school to the church. Permission was granted, and in the third term of 1980 Mr L. Nduna, who taught at Chikore for many years, was appointed headmaster.

3.14 The UCCZ and Political Violence in Zimbabwe

‘Why doesn’t the Church do something about it?’ This is a question that is frequently asked by the critics of Christianity, more especially by those who have a particular axe to grind and are disappointed that the officials of the Church do not enthusiastically assist them in that process. On the other hand there is always a minority who complain bitterly that the Church is ‘interfering’ in matters that are not its concern.  

The above injunction specifies a particularly pertinent task for those investigating the relationship between political violence and Christian faith, and for Christians in Zimbabwe. There is a danger of confining ‘the Church’ to its official leaders and organs. The work and witness of the Christian church is of such panoramic proportions that it impinges on the entire course of life of every Christian living in Zimbabwe. R.W. Stott observes that:

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Jesus calls his disciples to exert a double influence on the secular community, a negative influence by arresting its decay and a positive influence by bringing light into its darkness.\textsuperscript{222}

The prophetic ministry of the Church should not be the monopoly of the ecclesiastical leadership. The church as the entire total of the children of God shares in Christ's prophetic office by means of bearing witness to the Gospel. In the words of Taylor:

\begin{quote}
in the social and political field the Church's contribution is being made by a countless number of Christian people who are journalists, social workers, civil servants, local administrators, or members of legislative councils and assemblies; it is made by Christians who speak in meetings, who organize local branches of societies for social improvement, who write letters to the press; it is made by every Christian who casts his vote.\textsuperscript{223}
\end{quote}

This is not to say that Church leadership and organs should not play a prophetic role in challenging political violence in their communities. The church in its corporate life and through its official organs has a witness to bear, and should protect its members.

A number of theorists in the sociology of religion cling tenaciously to the notion that denominations have remained vital by decentralizing power, and shifting control from central hierarchies to individual congregations. Thus, the power of denominations to structure and define the religious lives of their constituents is waning relative to the waxing power of congregations. This decentralization of religious authority prompts D.E. Miller to write: “The style of Christianity dominated by . . . bureaucratized layers of social organization is gradually dying”.\textsuperscript{224} The decline of denominations heralds the rise of a polity dubbed “\textit{de facto} congregationalism,” wherein decisions about how local religious


\textsuperscript{223} J. Taylor, \textit{Op.cit.}

communities are governed are increasingly made at the grassroots level. De facto congregationalism is found within Protestant Churches. Local control allows autonomous congregations to find unique niches in pluralistic environs, and tailor their programmes to the specific needs of church members. The flexibility of de facto congregationalism is reshaping religious communities in the world. Church membership is now based more on individual religious tastes than on rigid characteristics, and congregation boundaries are largely symbolic and ideological, rather than geographic. This flexibility promotes religious vitality.

3.15 The Structure of the UCCZ

The flexibility of the UCCZ mentioned above is closely linked to its structure. The structure of the church is very important as regards its operational efficiency. The UCCZ is a congregational church. From the standpoint of the practical implementation of decisions, the key issue is where the authority is vested. In the congregational form of church government, the impetus is with the local congregation.

The structure of the UCCZ is made up of the following Units:

(a) Churches:

A church consists of 40 or more voting members who have agreed to worship regularly together as a congregation and generally to do God’s work in the

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226 Ibid.

227 Ibid., pp.73–78.
community. A church participates in the governance of the UCCZ by sending delegates to appropriate organs such as Conferences and the Synod.

(b) Conferences:

A Conference is an assembly of churches in a defined geographic area who meet together to put the evangelism and developmental work of the UCCZ into action. Currently there are three conferences: the Eastern Conference with its office in Chipinge town, the Western Conference with its office in Gweru and the Northern Conference with its office in Harare. All conferences have the same constitution.

(c) Councils:

The work of the UCCZ is conducted through councils. A council is an autonomous unit within the confines of the Synod Constitution. The Synod, which is the umbrella body, recognizes the following councils: the Medical Council, the Education Council, the Agricultural Council, the Ruwandzano Council, the Christian Youth Fellowship Council, the Volunteers Council, Conferences, and Station Councils. All these spiritual councils operate within structures of churches, conferences and the synod structures.

All these units are governed by the Synod Constitution. The governance organs of the UCCZ are: the Synod Annual General Meeting, the Synod Executive Committee and the Presidency. The Synod is the assembly of lay delegates and ordained ministers of the UCCZ gathered to put the purpose of the whole church into action. The Synod holds
Annual General Meeting meets once a year whilst the synod Executive Committee meets three times a year. The purpose of the Synod is to:

Provide an opportunity for the member churches to take counsel together concerning the spread of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ through Christian living as exemplified by preaching, healing, teaching, farming and stewardship; to promote Christian fellowship among all member churches, to build strong communities; to witness in every possible way to our faith in Christ and His kingdom."228

Though congregations often cooperate in many diverse programmes, the final decision lies with the congregation, which is the local authority. Participation is not compulsory for each local church body. There is no penalty for not attending synod meetings and activities. The governance organs have little influence on political ethics and social teachings except for the desire to build strong communities. The church should mirror society. Webster observes: “Being a disciple of Jesus is not a hobby. …Following Jesus requires everything else in life to be integrated with our commitment to Christ.”229

Thus, Christianity encompasses the totality of human existence. It should be the yardstick of values in any given social milieu. The political and social sectors should not be left to politicians alone.

On paper, the power of the UCCZ lies in the Synod. The presidency, the head of the UCCZ, implements the decisions of the Synod and is in charge of the day to day running of the affairs of the church. Below the president is the vice president. The Synod meetings are chaired by a moderator, the third most influential position in the

228 Constitution of the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, p.8.
church. The moderator is always a lay person. Other key officers of the synod are the vice moderator, secretary, vice secretary, treasurer and vice treasurer. The three conferences of the UCCZ across the country are headed by the superintendents. The key officials at the church level are usually the deacon (Phil 1:1, 1 Tim 3: 8, 12) and the pastor. Under congregational polity a church can run without a pastor but cannot run without a deacon. The deacon is the chief executive and chairs all administrative meetings while the pastor is responsible generally for the overall spiritual aspects of the congregation. Each local church appoints a pastor and is responsible for his upkeep and welfare.

Church governance in the UCCZ is a congregational; power is in the hands of congregations rather than the Synod. Congregations are autonomous. Each local congregation is ultimately responsible for itself. This decentralized quality of the Congregationalists’ structuring also helps to explain why they failed to speak with one voice as regards political violence. The Congregationalists’ structuring limits its political influence. It consists of autonomous churches linked in a federation. In addition, involvement in social and political issues in the crisis depends on church traditions that will be discussed below. The congregational church has been as conspicuously absent as the Church as a whole in opposing political violence; in part this is due to its small size. There are about only 50,000 members of the UCCZ across the country.

3.16 The UCCZ and Calvinist Traditions

The preamble of the Constitution of the UCCZ maintains that the church:
claims as its own the faith of the historic church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers.  

As stated above, the UCCZ follows Calvinist traditions. Calvin’s greatest gift was the systematization of Protestant theology and its application in practical terms. Calvin took over Luther’s doctrine of the two-fold rule of God. Calvin's understanding of the two kingdoms was that the believer is a dual citizen of both kingdoms - the state and the Church. The two must be taken together to arrest the anarchy of the subjects and the self-absolutization of the state leaders. While Christians were still on earth they needed political structure. Calvin was most emphatic in his insistence on the obedience due to civil authority. Subjects had to always remember that in obeying the magistrate, they were obeying God, "since the rulers’ power is from God”  

The magistrate could not be resisted without God being resisted; these two realms were intricately intertwined. Private citizens, moreover, were to have no voice in governmental affairs; their duty was simply to obey:

private citizens . . . may not deliberately intrude in public affairs . . . or undertake anything at all politically. If anything in a public ordinance requires amendment . . . let them commit the matter to the judgment of the magistrate, whose hand alone here is free.  

Obedience was due even to unjust rulers. Calvin insisted that absolute obedience was due not only to the benevolent ruler, but also to the tyrant. A wicked ruler could, in fact, be the judgment of God:

We are not only subject to the authority of princes who perform their office toward us uprightly and faithfully as they ought, but also to the authority of all

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232 Ibid., p.164.
who, by whatever means, have got control of their affairs . . . whoever they may be, they have their authority solely from him.\textsuperscript{233}

The political sphere is part of the Christian’s business as well.

Calvin’s understanding of the Church-state model can be represented diagrammatically:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
  \node[draw, ellipse] (god) at (0,0) {GOD};
  \node[draw, ellipse] (church) at (-3,-2.5) {CHURCH};
  \node[draw, ellipse] (state) at (3,-2.5) {STATE};
  \node[draw, rectangle] (resist) at (0,-5) {Church can Resist the State};
  \node[draw, ellipse] (believers) at (-3,-5) {BELIEVERS};
  \node[draw, ellipse] (unbelievers) at (3,-5) {UNBELIEVERS};
  \path[->] (god) edge (church);
  \path[->] (god) edge (state);
  \path[->] (church) edge (resist);
  \path[->] (resist) edge (state);
  \path[->] (church) edge (believers);
  \path[->] (church) edge (unbelievers);
  \path[->] (state) edge (believers);
  \path[->] (state) edge (unbelievers);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

Calvin recognized that the state’s authority over the believer was limited to that which God had given to the state. If the state strayed beyond that authority, it acted without legitimacy, and believers were to resist it. Calvin believed that Christians had the right to challenge an unjust state. Calvin discussed the problem of bad government in his theology. He postulated that princes (state leadership) should be the fathers of the fatherless and the shepherds of the people. He castigated oppressive and exploitative state authorities. In such cases the subjects would see nothing of the rationale of a government. The government had to be the servant of God who rewarded the righteous and punished evil (Rom 13:4). Calvin taught that bad governments were God’s

\textsuperscript{233} Ibid., pp.164-165.
punishment and curse for the sins of the people. Even the most corrupt prince was the bearer of God’s majesty, authority and power. God in his providence appointed and deposed kings as he willed. For example, even cruel tyrants such as the biblical Nebuchadnezzar and Nero were God’s servants. It was incumbent upon princes as servants to behave like servants of God. They would be punished by God for their disobedience. The subjects had no right to rebel. Subjects had to obey and endure. They had to be humble and patient, and pray to God in whose hands the fate of all kings resides.

There are exceptions to this command of unconditional obedience. Calvin allowed two exceptions to this absolute obedience. Obedience to man was not to be allowed to interfere with obedience to God:

Such obedience is never to lead us away from obedience to him, to whose will the desires of all kings ought to be subject, to whose decrees all their commands ought to yield, to whose majesty their sceptres ought to be submitted . . . The Lord . . . is the King of Kings, who, when he has opened his sacred mouth, must alone be heard, before and above all men.  

Calvin used Nebuchadnezzar (the Babylonian king who crushed Jerusalem c. 587/586 BCE, then dragged the Judean population into captivity, cutting off "the heads of the high priest and of the rulers" according to Josephus) as an example of a wicked ruler to whom obedience was nevertheless owed.

3.17 Grounds for Removing Government

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234 Ibid., p.168.
235 Josephus, Antiquities X.viii.5, p.220.
Calvin outlined only two exceptions as grounds for removing a government. Both exceptions are largely used by revolutionaries to challenge oppressive regimes. The first exception obtained when God raised public avengers who took an unjust government to task, or used the anger of the common crowd to bring about change. Public avengers were legitimate because they acted in the name of God. They were used by God for his redemptive purposes. Sometimes God “raises up open avengers from among his servants, and arms them with his command to punish the wicked from miserable calamity.” This appeared to open the door to the possibility of justified overthrow of a wicked ruler. This kind of "avenger" was "armed from heaven" and subdued "the lesser power [the unjust ruler] with the greater [the power and justice of God], just as it is lawful for kings to punish their subordinates." Even though Calvin's intention in this passage seemed clearly antithetical to revolutions by the people, many revolutionaries find justification in this in their struggle for freedom.

The second exception was when authorities commanded disobedience against God. Calvin implored Christians to act on behalf of God in removing an anti-God government:

How foolish would that not be if one tried to satisfy humans and offended him for the sake of whom one obeys those humans in the first place? A command directed against God lacks all validity and one should ignore the dignity of the authorities in such a case. The Hebrews were punished because they had been too obedient to a godless king.

Calvin realized that such resilience would be costly because rulers did not like to be disobeyed. If politics is solely the struggle for power, then those seriously engaged in politics are mentally faced with the question of how to ensure that those who resist a proposed programme of action can be persuaded to conform. This involves violence.

237 Ibid.
238 Ibid., p.168.
Violence constitutes the improper use of force; violence is not sanctioned by law. In the same vein Desmond Tutu writes:

Many who benefit from an unjust and repressive dispensation want to maintain the status quo - often at any cost. They reject any attempt to challenge or destroy such structures that are to their benefit, and if force is employed to attain this goal, it is invariably regarded as totally illegitimate, being dismissed as terrorism so that it becomes justifiable to unleash any degree of repressive violence against it. Yet such violence is not seen as violence by the ruling class; it is regarded as the legitimate use of “the sword.”

No autocratic leader accepts change without a fight. Those in power who do not like change use their power to deal with all threats, and to them violence is whatever disturbs the status quo. But those who suffer under prevailing socio-economic and political conditions and want change view violence differently. To them violence is whatever precludes them from building a better tomorrow but maintains their suffering.

Calvin’s two-fold rule of God can be illustrated by the diagram below (Source: K. Nurnberger:1996):


There are two exceptional courses available for Christians living under tyrannical rule according to Calvin as illustrated by the diagram above.

### 3.17.2 Task of Political Rule
Calvin believed that political rule had the task of enhancing and protecting the outer framework of religion, true doctrine, and piety and the status of the Church. Furthermore, its task was to organize Christian life in the community, to train Christians in civil righteousness, to unite them, and to ensure peace. Calvin was influenced in his thought by the model of a ‘theocracy’ found in the Old Testament.

Calvin assigned great importance to the state and to all leadership and authority. In his view the state was instituted by God and had received its task from God. It was the servant of divine justice and could not allow any unrighteousness to spread in public life. In principle, this is a cardinal belief in the UCCZ. Political violence is an example of unrighteousness.

The Constitution of the UCCZ embraces practical action in liaison with other Christian bodies:

The purposes of the UCCZ are... to provide an organization through which Christians can work together in local and national groups to be an effective part of the body of Christ in action in Zimbabwe.\(^{241}\)

In this regard, the UCCZ concurs with Calvin who argued that the mission of the church was to renovate the world, including the state according to Christian concepts.

The UCCZ’s practical action will be evaluated against the Calvinist understanding of the Church-State model. In the same vein, Philip Wogaman, whose theology was discussed above, observed that there was no ethical justification for violence; the stronger governed because they had the power and, consequently, they ruled in their own

\(^{241}\) Constitution of the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, p.2.
interests.\textsuperscript{242} The weaker obeyed because they could not help it; they were the tools of the rulers. Therefore, violence was seen as immoral. However, merely moralizing about war in a country ravaged by violence is insufficient. There is need for Zimbabwean theologians to work along different lines. This is the time for theologians to organize and modify the just war tradition inherited from St Augustine.

3.18 Conclusion

The first endeavour was to establish the UCCZ traditions and structure and relate them to Calvinist political traditions. On paper the UCCZ follows Calvinist traditions. Zimbabwe has a long history of gross political violence. Even after independence political violence continued to exist. Christianity was the torch bearer of the colonization of Zimbabwe and it played a vital role in the survival and sustenance of the colonial system. In order to firmly establish itself in Zimbabwe, Christianity worked hand in glove with the colonial government of the day; or rather, the colonial government used Christianity for the furtherance of its political goals and ends. In their administration, missionaries and colonialists employed violent tactics and excluded blacks from the political sphere. This was evident in racial discrimination in all sectors of society including employment opportunities and politics. Racial and inhuman sentiments were levelled against the blacks of Zimbabwe. To this end, the dignity and integrity of the Zimbabwean people and their socio-cultural and religious outlook was undermined. Thus, the coming of the missionaries to Zimbabwe was inconveniently marred by racial and colonial prejudices. It would appear that during the war feelings of “kith and kin” ran high among early ABCFM missionaries, with the exception of a few. Political violence

has been, irrefutably, a very common feature of colonial rule in Zimbabwe, in which gross human rights violations were often deliberately committed as a means to maintain the status quo.

During the war of liberation in the 1960s and 1970s the churches became more outspoken and this was evident in their criticism and condemnation of political violence. There is no doubt that “the churchmen and church women of our country rose to the occasion and held the torch of salvation.” They spoke out loudly and clearly, without fear of the consequences to themselves, against the white minority regime’s oppression and injustices in the face of criticisms.

At independence in 1980, the new government did not abandon the methods of government borrowed from the colonial period. There was a change of personnel at the top but the oppressive machinery remained in place. The colonial and post-colonial government used violence as a strategy to remain in power. The next chapter will show that the voice of the churches remained like a ringing bell in the cathedral, too far removed from the people.

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4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: THE CHURCH AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on historical perspective on the UCCZ and on how political independence in Zimbabwe was achieved through violence in response to colonialism and imperialism. This chapter shifts attention to interrogate the “voice of the church” in the dynamics of violence within the Zimbabwean political system and to show how violence has been constructed as a tool to manufacture political consent or the tearing down of communities. The chapter attempts to locate and identify the major loci around which violent political expression oscillated, and reveal the inner dynamics embedded within systems of violence - what sustained political violence and nurtured it into an overpowering institution. Girard explains the central dynamics of human desire, behaviour, patterns of violence, and the meaning of biblical revelation through the construction of desire to imitate our model. This imitation leads models to quickly become rivals as they fear challengers from imitators and this causes violence.

B. Badza observed that over the past thirty years the national pride and euphoria of independence have been lost in the stark reality of:

political violence (that) has been, irrefutably, a very common feature of elections in Zimbabwe, in which gross human rights violations are often deliberately committed as a campaign and punishment tool. ...while some of

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these violations have often been institutionalized, others have not been so and, in fact, are often committed in acts of self-defence.\textsuperscript{245}

Zimbabwe was essentially a nation divided, traumatized and impoverished by those crises of political violence and social polarization crises. Political violence was not only witnessed during elections, but was rife in many other spheres of life as well. This chapter will show that in some instances the church was pro-active while in others it was passive.

\section{4.2 Christian Worldview in the Midst of Political Violence}

A beacon of hope at independence in 1980 and the early 1980s, Zimbabwe witnessed at the turn of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century spiralling economic decline, social polarization and a reversion to deeply entrenched patterns of coercion and violence in political life. S. Eppel succinctly expressed this opinion:

\begin{quote}
Although there have been repeated cycles of state violence, Zimbabwe in the last three decades has avoided facing the truth and punishing perpetrators for politically-motivated atrocities. The failure to deal with the truth of events of the 1970s, and again with the truth of the massacres of the 1980s, has contributed to the fact that after one civil war, and one period of brutal state repression, our nation is embroiled once more in a cycle of state-orchestrated violence and denial, and seems to have learned very little at the official, national level in terms of accountability, truth telling, and peace building.\textsuperscript{246}
\end{quote}

This situation intensified to the point of crisis and a highly charged political atmosphere, precipitating a conflict that had far-reaching theological and moral implications for

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Zimbabwe, the southern African region, and democracy in Africa. Violence is a negation of democratic principles.

Christians are committed to living out their faith, seeing the world as God sees it, viewing reality through the lens of divine revelation. Thus, the way they see the world can change the world. Christians in Zimbabwe grappled with a war culture in which violence, repression and brutality were destroying civility and endangering the very life of communities. C. Colson and N. Pearcey state:

To engage the world, however, requires that we (Christians) understand the great ideas that compete for people’s minds and hearts. ...it is the great ideas that inform the mind, fire the imagination, move the heart, and shape a culture. ...the real war is a cosmic struggle between worldviews - between the Christian worldview and the various secular ...worldviews arrayed against it.247

A debilitating weakness among Christians in Zimbabwe is that they have been fighting political skirmishes on all sides without knowing what the war itself is about. E. Masunungure observes that in Zimbabwe the state has successively been used, or abused in the service of the ruling party:

Zanu-PF learnt the important lesson of constructing and managing an effective political organizational structure so as to ensure the party’s hegemony in society and politics.248

In his view the public’s response (the Church included) to Zanu-PF’s quest for hegemony can be described in two words: subordination and acquiescence.

In the Zimbabwean experience, while violence was a decisive instrument in the attainment of independence, it was also a major divisive force afterwards. In the words of L. Sachikonye, “it has remained a cancer that corrodes the country’s political culture and blocks its democratic advance.” The Zimbabwean socio-political context which forms the background of this study is a case in point favouring the rejection of claims of the therapeutic nature of political violence. This shows how the Church failed to stand in solidarity with politically oppressed masses.

Soon after independence churches intensively focused on preaching peace and making moral statements and vilifying the violence without consciously and critically attempting to locate inner forces and currents in the creation and deployment of political violence. While violence is eminently a moral issue because of the far-reaching consequences of violent activities, Christians should not only make moral utterances, but should develop a system to counter government violence. It is the objective of this chapter to refrain from making moral and ethical assessments of violence that distract from constructing a comprehensive theological system.

In fact, most scholars who have examined the dynamics of violence in most post-colonial African societies have tended to view Africa as a universe of meaningless and primordial violence, violence which cannot be explained logically or rationally. Scholars such as David Campbell and Michael Dillon have failed to grasp the essential

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dynamics inherent within structures of violence in these states. A critical reading and understanding of violence is thus necessary before constructing generalizations which seek to present political violence as a species of force which violates, breaks or destroys a normative state of affairs, and is often used to designate power without legitimacy. It is thus important to generate a holistic reading of political violence, a reading that locates political violence within a relevant historical context, and sees it as the progeny of socio-productive and dialectical historical forces. In short, political violence has many dynamics and unpacking these dynamics, is essential for a comprehensive understanding of what political violence entails in a post-colonial African setting. The concept of political violence needs to be systematized so as to transcend the narrow generalizations of mainstream thought. The beginning of this reconstruction process must take into cognizance the elusive nature of thoroughly conceptualizing political violence within the context of modernity.

Political violence must not be viewed in isolation, or viewed subjectively. There are a lot of symbols and signifiers that underlie how violence is either consciously or subconsciously created in a society. The Zimbabwe case highlights how political violence has been used as a tool for political consolidation and for the creation of new national identities, for the erosion of the colonial constructions and the projection of the nationalist state project. In all these cases violence as a tool of politics was legitimized and accepted by some within national discourse. The political violence which rocked Zimbabwean politics for over three decades critically polarized the country.
4.3 Zimbabwe: A New Nation

This section will contextualize the political violence in the period soon after the attainment of independence in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe gained its independence from British rule in April 1980 with Robert Mugabe as Prime Minister at the head of a coalition government largely composed of Zanu-PF and PF ZAPU. As demonstrated in Chapter Three, Zimbabwe attained its independence after what has been known traditionally as the 2nd Chimurenga, which was characterized by fierce fighting and the loss of lives. During 90 years of colonial rule, a white settler government had strictly enforced a system of rigid racial discrimination and political disenfranchisement. Political space for Africans was virtually closed. A. Chigwedere observed:

> Southern Rhodesia was occupied as a settler colony i.e. as a permanent home for the incoming whites. From the start, it was a white colony in which the Africans could be tolerated only for the convenience of the white man.\(^\text{251}\)

During the liberation war of the 1970s hundreds of black nationalists were detained and the Rhodesian army brutally repressed the rural population. C. S. Banana noted that the Church was not spared from the colonial brutality:

> Our church friends were few and far between, and became targets of victimisation by the regime’s forces. Those who were lucky got deported or jailed. But the unlucky ones met cruel death at the hands of the settler forces. These were indeed the true servants of God who became martyrs of our struggle. Like our freedom fighters on the battlefield, they paid the supreme price for their convictions. They were the flickering ray of hope within the quenched flames of an indifferent Church.\(^\text{252}\)


Because of the handicap arising from their historical past, which was characterized by their siding with settlers, the churches were not psychologically and spiritually prepared for the birth of a new Zimbabwe.

The election was held in March 1980 and was a huge triumph for Robert Mugabe and his Zanu-PF party. Zanu-PF won 57 of the 80 African seats in the House of Assembly, thereby gaining a clear majority of the 100 seats in the House. The other 20 seats were reserved for white electorate under the Lancaster House Constitution. After these historic independence events many the world over expected a non-violent, free peaceful atmosphere to engulf Zimbabwe. However, the country has been subject to political violence from 1982-1987, from 2000-2002, during 2005, and from 2007-2008.

4.4 Government of National Unity and Reconciliation

When Robert Mugabe assumed power in Zimbabwe in 1980 he was confronted with a crisis of expectation from the black majority and a crisis of fear from the tiny minority white population, who believed that he was the anti-Christ incarnate. The News of the World had referred to him as the “The Black Hitler.”²⁵³ He took advice and wisdom from the Frontline States. For example, in Mozambique, shortly before Mugabe’s return to the then Salisbury, President Samora Machel had warned Mugabe against fighting an election on a revolutionary and vindictive platform.

It should be noted that Mozambique was reeling under the massive disruption caused at independence in 1975 by the exodus of the defeated Portuguese running away from the Marxist ideology established in the country. Addressing members of Zanu-PF’s Central Committee, Machel categorically warned: “Don’t play make-believe Marxist games when you get home. You will face ruin if you force the whites there into precipitate flight.”

Zanu-PF took heed. This message of moderation was reflected in Zanu-PF’s election manifesto:

Zanu wishes to give the fullest assurance to the white community, the Asian and coloured communities that a Zanu government can never in principle, or in social or government practice, discriminate against them. Racism, whether practiced by whites or blacks, is anathema to the humanitarian philosophy of Zanu. It is as primitive a dogma as tribalism or regionalism. Zimbabwe cannot just be a country of blacks. It is and should remain our country, and all of us together.

After winning the election, Mugabe unexpectedly endeavoured to confront white fears by appearing on television on the evening of his electoral victory to preach the virtues of racial reconciliation. He said:

There is no intention on our part to use our majority to victimize the minority. We will ensure there is a place for everyone in this country. We want to ensure a sense of security for both the winners and the losers. Let us deepen our sense of belonging and engender a common interest that knows no race, colour or creed. Let us truly become Zimbabweans with a single loyalty.

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255 Ibid., pp.9-10.
His theme was reconciliation. Mugabe’s “let bygones be bygones” philosophy received wide international praise; his tolerance of the Rhodesian politicians and security personnel who had incarcerated him and killed many of his people was acclaimed.

The new government was a “family affair” reflective of major political stakeholders in the new nation:

Reconciliation in Zimbabwe was truly a miracle. In spite of the sufferings of war and gross injustices of colonialism, there were no Nuremberg trials, little evidence of racial hatred, and no radical attempts to dispossess the whites after independence…

As was mentioned in Chapter One, in Zimbabwe the word “reconciliation” generally relates to race relations. For example, it referred to relations between blacks and whites. However, in this study, it means political dialogue, the promotion of tolerance among and within communities, and the peaceful coexistence of people and communities with varied political affiliation.

When building his new government, Mugabe offered Nkomo the post of president, a ceremonial position with no executive power. Nkomo declined the offer and settled for the Ministry of Home Affairs, with control of the police. Mugabe strove to build a good working relationship with his former adversaries. Ian Smith remained a Member of Parliament in his government. Mugabe also appointed two white ministers in the government: David Smith and Dennis Norman. Norman became the Minister of the key Ministry of Agriculture. General Walls, who was the commander of the Rhodesian

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forces, was appointed head of the Joint High Command. Many officials known to have been responsible for gross human rights violations retained their positions in government.\textsuperscript{258} The intelligence and police were inherited intact and have survived more or less unchanged.

The government of national unity did not allow any democratic space for opposition politics. Since independence in 1980, several politicians have been arrested on charges of espionage or treason including the likes of Ndabaningi Sithole, Lookout Masuku, Dumiso Dabengwa, Morgan Tsvangirai and others. In a dirty game of politics, Christians were not spared from political violence. It has become the norm that the ruling party deals ruthlessly with opponents. Treason and espionage charges have too often in the past been used as political weapons – to exterminate, dismember, disadvantage and punish innocent people and perceived adversaries or competitors. In fact, Zanu-PF became the domineering and only viable party in independent Zimbabwe. In 1982, Prime Minister Robert Mugabe was quoted saying:

\textit{When all people carried party cards, the present national registration cards would be abolished, because they would serve no purpose. It would also be easier to identify the enemy.}\textsuperscript{259}

With this kind of statement, the ingredients of one-partyism in independent Zimbabwe were in place. Mugabe’s Zanu-PF made clear its intention that Zimbabwe should be a one-party state. Richard Sklar labelled Zimbabwe a one-party state in the mid 1980s.

\textsuperscript{259} The \textit{Herald}, 25 January 1982.
According to him, “Zanu-PF became a vanguard party, one committed to enforce its political truth as an official orthodoxy.” 260

Mugabe’s policy of reconciliation was preceded by the Amnesty Ordinance 3 of 1979 and the Amnesty (General Pardon) Ordinance 12 of 1980, both of which had been passed during the interregnum of Lord Soames who governed Zimbabwe just before independence. These ordinances ensured that no prosecution could lawfully take place for those involved in political violence. According to the All Africa Watch Report of October 1989, all ministers and government servants were indemnified under Rhodesian Law for “acts carried out in good faith in defence of national security.”261

Mugabe also offered peaceful co-existence to South Africa: “Let us forgive and forget, let us join hands in a new amity.”262 This was seriously disturbing to a South African government whose existence revolved around the apartheid system. Reconciliation was anathema to the segregatory and racist apartheid philosophy.

4.5 Religious Bodies at Work in Zimbabwe

Various ecclesiastical bodies existed in the new country. The main bodies on the religious map were the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), the Zimbabwe Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference (ZCBC), and the Heads of Denominations. The ZCC comprised a collection of mainline churches, independent churches and Pentecostal

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movements. The ZCBC was made up of Roman Catholic bishops from dioceses in Zimbabwe and catered for specifically Roman Catholic interests. The Heads of Denominations consisted of leaders of both Protestant and Catholic churches. Both the ZCC and the ZCBC existed prior to 1980. The uneasy relations between religious bodies should be understood in the context of the second Chimurenga. C. Hallencreutz stated that while the Rhodesian Catholic Bishops’ Conference began to recognize the Patriotic Front in the 1970s and took an adversarial stance towards the Rhodesian regime with regard to atrocities perpetrated by its security forces, the Christian Council initially supported the pliable Bishop Abel Muzorewa’s United African National Congress.\footnote{C.F. Hallencreutz , “Ecumenical Challenges in Independent Zimbabwe,” in C.F. Hallencreutz and A.M. Moyo(eds) Church and State in Zimbabwe, Gweru: Mambo Press,1988, pp.252-253.} In addition, the Christian Council backed the Internal Settlement negotiated between Ian Smith and Abel Muzorewa. The settlement excluded the Patriotic Front. The situation was worsened by the fact that Muzorewa remained in the ZCC soon after independence. The Secretary General of the ZCC, C.D. Watyoka, a member of Muzorewa’s United Methodist Church, was the chief architect in the decision to support the Internal Settlement. Muzorewa doubled as the head of the United Methodist Church as well as leader of his party. His church’s utterances were always suspected of being political and anti-government. Much to the chagrin of the ruling party, Muzorewa was always making unsubstantiated claims that Zanu-PF posed a threat to Christianity and capitalism.

4.6 UCCZ Minister Elevated to the Helm of the ZCC

A new phase in the relations between the ZCC and the state arose on 30 April 1982. The Herald reported that Banana, the State President, lambasted the ZCC for adopting a “wait and see” attitude towards government reconstruction and development strategies.\(^{264}\) This precipitated a series of events that resulted in Watyoka’s dismissal as Secretary General of the ZCC on 30\(^{th}\) April 1982. Of critical importance for this research was the elevation of Rev. Murombedzi Chikanga Kuchera to the vacated office of secretary general of the ZCC. According to J. Abbot, Rev. Murombedzi Kuchera was ordained in 1973 in Harare as a minister in the UCCZ and was a colleague of Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole.\(^{265}\) He belonged to the anti-Muzorewa faction of the ZCC. S. Zwana avowed that both Muzorewa and Sithole “remained active after independence as leaders of opposition parties and also commanded considerable respect and influence in their respective churches.”\(^{266}\) In addition, both Sithole and Muzorewa came from the same province of Manicaland. Consequently, the two clerics were often considered a potential political risk.

With the new faces in power, relations began to thaw. On the same day that Rev M. C. Kuchera assumed leadership of the beleaguered ZCC, the Prime Minister addressed the Heads of Denominations, exhorting them to partner the government in the

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\(^{264}\) Herald, 10 November 1981.


Transitional National Development Plan.\textsuperscript{267} The State President, Rev C.S. Banana, implored the churches to embrace technology as a liberating force:

The physical, material and economic aspects of man are as important to minister to as his spiritual side. Our Christian mission will be futile, ineffective and meaningless if it ignores the bread and butter issues of the people. Churches have to use science and technology to mediate and ameliorate the physical environment for the benefit of humanity.\textsuperscript{268}

The church subsequently initiated its own Five Year Development Plan to complement the government plan.

Churches feared to be irrelevant in this new dispensation in Zimbabwe. Indeed, many churches in the new Zimbabwe faced an identity crisis due to their association with the former colonial regime. In order to ward off this suspicion, church hierarchies identified and endorsed state-directed programmes. In the words of D. J. Maxwell, the Church feared that:

...their compromised relationship with the former Rhodesian state would cause the new regime to pass them over in favour of independent churches and “traditional religion.”\textsuperscript{269}

The church was only too willing to accommodate the state’s agenda for development. The church became a partner of the state in development and social transformation. Church-state relations could be characterized as friendly as opposed to unfriendly or frosty. C.S. Banana characterized the relationship as a “symbiosis.”\textsuperscript{270} Zanu-PF’s

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
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appreciation of Catholic support during the second Chimurenga was best demonstrated by the invitation of the Archbishop of Harare, Patrick Chakaipa, to bless the Zimbabwe flag at Independence celebrations on the 17\textsuperscript{th} and 18\textsuperscript{th} of April 1980. However, in practice there was not much coordination and liaison in Church-state development activities.

Dube pointed out that the ecumenical ZCC body had inherent weaknesses:

… the Council is not a grassroots organization. No matter how polished its statements are, the local people in a local congregation level may choose not to align themselves with the decisions of the Council and, instead, stand with the government in perpetuating violence among the communities. Thus, one can see that it is a fallacy to argue in support of the Council as a champion for the rights of the people because the local Christians know and experience “church” in their local communities through their local congregations, not through the Council with its regional offices located in inaccessible big cities.\textsuperscript{271}

Dube’s assessment is apt. The churches must not abdicate their theological and prophetic role to ecumenical bodies.

4.7 Destabilization / Armed Aggression Campaigns: Violence Visits the New Nation

To understand events in Zimbabwe in the period soon after independence, it is necessary to grasp the overall geopolitical situation in southern Africa. South Africa was not prepared to give up apartheid without a fight. South Africa launched overt military raids and covert sabotage operations against Zimbabwe. The South African government also supplied arms to surrogate organizations such as the Mozambique National

\textsuperscript{271} J. Dube, \textit{Op.Cit.}, p.46.
Resistance - known as RENAMO or MNR - fighting the governments of Mozambique and Zimbabwe.\textsuperscript{272}

The South African government preferred that the pliable United African National Council of Bishop Abel Muzorewa, along with the faction of ZANU led by the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole to win the elections in 1980. New Marxist liberation parties had assumed power in Angola and Mozambique. As a result, the South African government embarked on destabilization / armed aggression campaign against its neighbours - the Frontline States - in order to prolong its own stay in power. The South African Defence Forces armed and funded the opposition UNITA in Angola and RENAMO in Mozambique. Banditry activities increased and destabilized the region.\textsuperscript{273}

The South African Defence Forces also launched pre-emptive raids of destabilization in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe experienced South-African-sponsored spy scandals, involving white members of the army, Air Force, and Central Intelligence Agency. Targeted bombings of important strategic structures and individuals rocked the new nation. According to R. Palmer, “Direct sabotage cost Zimbabwe an estimated total of US$ 180 million between 1980 and 1988.”\textsuperscript{274} In addition, imports of vital spare parts were deliberately delayed in South Africa. The South African Broadcasting Corporation and pirate radio stations relayed misinformation about the new country. Far more disturbing for Zimbabwe was the sabotaging of the railway system by RENAMO in Mozambique.

\textsuperscript{273} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{274} \textit{Ibid.}, p.12.
Renamo bandits attacked the railway lines to Beira and Maputo in an effort to force Zimbabwe to use the expensive South African routes for its imports and exports.

Mozambique’s struggle for survival against the depredations of MNR, originally recruited by the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organization to fight the Mozambique freedom fighters, and now trained and funded by South Africa, was a fight which was crucial to Zimbabwe’s own economic survival, depending as it did on routes through Mozambique to the sea.\(^{275}\) MNR bandits were responsible for serious human rights abuses, particularly in the north-eastern part of Zimbabwe and in Chipinge in the southeast, from 1988 onwards. According to the *All Africa Watch Report*, the effects of this political violence were extremely harsh for those civilians involved:

> RENAMO abuses within Mozambique have been well documented and have received wide international publicity. The guerrillas have carried out frequent killings, including large-scale massacres, and horrific mutilations of civilians, by cutting off ears, lips, noses and fingers. It is not widely appreciated internationally that RENAMO is perpetrating similar acts in the Eastern districts of Zimbabwe. Worst affected are Rushinga and Mount Darwin in the north east and Chipinge, Chiredzi and Chisumbanje in the South East.\(^{276}\)

Scores of innocent people in this region were murdered, mutilated, or had to live with daily insecurity as a result of this conflict.

Zimbabwe swiftly responded to the RENAMO threat by sending its troops into Mozambique to defend the Beira Corridor and partner the Mozambique ruling party,


attacking soft targets in the Manicaland province. It is apparent that RENAMO embarked on an explosive cocktail of destabilising factors; schools and hospitals along the border areas were hit, roads were mined, agricultural estates were sabotaged and a sense of panic and insecurity was created. People lived in fear. Peace talks in Italy in the early 1990s brought respite and peace to the Eastern border areas of Zimbabwe.

War in Mozambique resulted in a steady stream of refugees pouring into Zimbabwe:

Historically there have been large numbers of Mozambican migrant workers in Eastern Zimbabwe, particularly on the large farms and the tea and sugar plantations. In recent years these numbers have been swelled by refugees fleeing the political violence in Mozambique. Official figures put the number of refugees in camps at 75,000, with some 100,000 spontaneously settled elsewhere. Mozambicans in Zimbabwe have borne the brunt of the government’s frustration at its inability to deter RENAMO attacks. According to refugee organisations, between 8,000 and 9,000 Mozambicans were illegally and summarily expelled from Zimbabwe, usually on the allegation that they were RENAMO supporters and often in direct response to a particular RENAMO attack.

Consequently, refugee camps such as Tongogara in Chipinge district were established. The report noted evidence of abuse by the Zimbabwean army against Mozambican refugees.

Apart from external forces causing havoc in the country, violence and repression affected internal politics in the country. The case of the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole below is a good example of the internal politics of a despotic system.

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278 Ibid., p.83.
4.8 The Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole: An Ordained Minister in the UCCZ and State Repression

This section will show how state violence was directed towards an ordained minister of the UCCZ. Rev Sithole became a scapegoat in Zimbabwe’s political sphere. Girard argues that mimetic violence has taught humans:

> Just as the group was about to destroy itself in mutual violence, the death or expulsion of a particular individual or group of individuals had a mysterious, calming effect.\(^{279}\)

In other words, the most effective way to prevent uncontrolled violence was to discharge the tensions of the group onto particular individuals. Violence was directed at a surrogate victim or scapegoat. The Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole was one of the Zimbabwean politicians who championed the cause of opposition politics in post-colonial Zimbabwe. Sithole’s ZANU (Ndonga) party offered meaningful opposition to the ruling party until the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change in 1999. Without ZANU (Ndonga) Mugabe would have achieved his goal of creating a one party state in Zimbabwe. Sithole had a frosty and hostile relationship with Zanu-PF. Sithole’s history is littered with both religious and political intrigue. As a politician he was accused of plotting to overthrow the 1980 elected Government by joining hands with the MNR. As a minister in the UCCZ he was suspected by the ruling party of taking advantage of the church and scheming to use the church mission schools as a source of manpower for

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his poorly planned political ambition. Young people in Chipinge were supposedly taken to South Africa for military training. It is alleged that his movement worked hand in hand with the MNR in fighting the Government of Zimbabwe. However, there is need to analyse these allegations from a critical and objective perspective.

4.8.1 The Reverend Sithole Deposed as ZANU Leader

M. Tsvangirai stated that Sithole’s downfall from the leadership of Zanu-PF in the mid-1970s was acrimonious and dirty:

The story went that Sithole lost his Zanu leadership position to Robert Mugabe, his secretary general, through a palace coup while the Zanu nationalists were in custody. This added to the confusion, but the impact was invisible to illiterate villagers, urban workers and ordinary guerrilla supporters on the ground.280

The officers who were backing Sithole were killed and all the songs which praised him were banned. Sithole was declared the enemy of the revolution. Sithole was a signatory of the Internal Settlement in 1978 which was supposed to usher in independence for Zimbabwe. It failed. This earned him the title ‘sell-out’.281

The period leading to the 1980 elections witnessed protracted court battles between Mugabe and Sithole over the use of the name Zanu. Sithole won the court case and retained the name Zanu. Mugabe’s party officially became Zanu-PF to distinguish it from Sithole’s Zanu. However, Sithole failed to win any seat in the elections.

281 O. Sigauke, Re-Interpreting the Political Career of an Unsung Hero: The case of Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole, Dissertation, History Department, University of Zimbabwe, August 2010, p.41.
4.8.2 Assassination Attempt on the Reverend Sithole

In 1983 Sithole survived an assassination attempt on his life. Sithole was holding a rally at Chibuwe village and it was during this rally that an attempt on his life was made. The plot was masterminded by men dressed in armed uniforms and using armed forces vehicles.\textsuperscript{282} Sithole evaded the security forces at the rally and found refuge in the house of D.K. Mhloyi. Mhloyi was the founder of Chibuwe Township. Sigauke reported:

> The security forces followed to the house and killed Sithole’s body guard called Chibagwa who was preventing their entrance. While the security forces were fighting to get entrance, Sithole jumped through the window and was given a woman’s dress which he used to disguise himself. In this way he was able to survive this plot on his life which was meant to silence Sithole’s political outbursts.\textsuperscript{283}

The attempted assassination was reported to the police at Chipinge but nothing came out of the report. Edwin Nguwa argued that the assassination plot emanated from filing of a case by Sithole in 1983 that Zanu-PF was using the name Zanu without the tail “PF” and from the wrangle on the case of the name Zanu.\textsuperscript{284} In case number HC 2642/84, Zanu was granted a High Court order instructing Zanu-PF not to use the name Zanu without PF. Sithole was not there to witness this court victory. He was already in exile in the United States of America running away from assassination.

4.8.3 The Reverend Sithole Thwarts Institutionalization of the One Party in Zimbabwe

In 1985 ZANU prevented the institutionalization of the one party in Zimbabwe. With civil war raging on in south-western Zimbabwe, Mugabe experienced electoral defeat in

\textsuperscript{282} Ibid., p.42.

\textsuperscript{283} O. Sigauke, ‘Re-Interpreting the Political Career of an Unsung Hero: The case of Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole’, Dissertation, History Department, University of Zimbabwe, August 2010, p.43.

\textsuperscript{284} E.C. Nguwa, A Brief Historical Background: Claims for Damage Against Zanu PF, p.123.
Chipinge South. In the parliamentary elections of 1985 the voters of Chipinge South voted for Mr. Mabhaudhi Zengeni of ZANU (Ndonga).  

The victory was achieved in the wake of electioneering tricks by Zanu-PF. For instance, the ruling party banned the flaming torch as the symbol of the Zanu party. Consequently, the party adopted the walking stick (Ndonga) as its symbol. Zanu-PF wanted to confuse the electorate in the Chipinge constituency. However, this did not work for the ruling party.

In the 1985 general election Chipinge was the only constituency in the Shona-speaking area of the country to return a Member of Parliament who was not a member of Zanu-PF. The Member of Parliament was Goodson Sithole, of the party ZANU-Ndonga which was led from exile by the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole. The government repeatedly accused the Reverend Sithole of being in league with RENAMO. The accusations against Sithole were never substantiated. Zanu-PF attempted to consolidate power by diverting challenges to its political legitimacy as threats to state security. In May 1989 Goodson Sithole was arrested in connection with unpaid debts. Such tactics dampened the resolve of UCCZ, causing it to remain silent on state repression and political violence in the Chipinge district.

4.8.4 The Reverend Sithole: A Security Threat?

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Sithole was presented by the ruling party as a security threat. The state manipulated Sithole’s sympathies with the RENAMO cause and his opposition to the government to make allegations of treason, saying that he had entered into a pact with Alfonso Dhlakama of RENAMO to overthrow the government of Zimbabwe. In 1990 the Minister of Home Affairs, Moven Mahachi, was quoted as saying, “We have evidence that Ndonga had approached MNR to train recruits and infiltrate them through Chipinge.”

This led to the government’s indiscriminate crack-down on the Eastern border. It should be noted that the leader of RENAMO, Alfonso Dhlakama, and Sithole and most of their supporters belonged to the same Ndau ethnic group in the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border areas. Opposition was also likely to be considerable among the Ndau who live in the Chipinge area on the Zimbabwean side of the border, because of their ethnic affinity with many of the *Matsangas* (RENAMO).

*The Midlands Observer* (Friday 5th December 1986) quoted Emerson Mnangagwa, Minister of State (Security), as saying:

> Government is aware that a recruitment drive has been started in Chipinge and many young people are going to South Africa on the pretext that they are going to be given jobs on farms and mines in that country."\(^{288}\)

He further said that the Reverend was recruiting hundreds of Zimbabwean school children from Mt Selinda Mission and Chikore High Schools in particular. This implied that the church was working in cahoots with Sithole. The Minister also alleged that the Reverend had concluded an agreement to join hands with the MRN bandits to fight the Government of Zimbabwe.

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\(^{288}\) *The Midlands Observer*, Friday 5 December 1986.
4.8.5 The Reverend Sithole in Self-Imposed Exile in the United States of America

In 1987 Rev Sithole went on a self-imposed exile in the United States of America saying that he feared for his safety and life. Mnangagwa warned Sithole against returning to the country for he would face prosecution, as he wanted to fight a democratically elected Government.\textsuperscript{289} Sithole would be charged of illegally recruiting youths into his Chimwenje movement for guerrilla training in South Africa. The Chimwenje group was said to be under the control of Sithole and aimed at destabilizing Zimbabwe. Sithole vowed not to come back to Zimbabwe, despite assurance from the Prime Minister Robert Mugabe that the government would not retaliate against its political opponents. Sithole said he knew prosecution in Zimbabwe and did not trust the words of Mugabe.

4.8.6 The Reverend Sithole Returns to Zimbabwe

Sithole returned to Zimbabwe in 1992 to offer further political challenge to the ruling party. In response, the government arbitrarily used the Land Acquisition Act of 1992 to acquire Sithole’s farms. Sigauke pointed out that Sithole’s farms:

\begin{quote}
were deemed military bases for rebels destabilizing Zimbabwe [and] provided an economic base which backed his political activities. So it could have been in the interest of Zanu-PF to hit at that economic base if Sithole was to be silenced politically.\textsuperscript{290}
\end{quote}

Sithole was the first victim of the Land Acquisition Act. Sithole’s Churu farm near the Glenview suburb of Harare was first taken by the Harare City Council on the grounds that the outbreak of cholera was a health threat to the community. The Albany farm in

\textsuperscript{289} Ibid.

Chimanimani was acquired on the grounds that it was being used as a military base for the notorious Chimwenje rebels. The Chimwenje group operated in the Eastern border areas of Zimbabwe. It was difficult to attribute heinous crimes such as murder, rape and kidnapping to Chimwenje because RENAMO was operating in the same area and guilty of the same crimes.  

Far more serious to Sithole’s political career and freedom were the allegations that he had attempted to kill the sitting president, Robert Mugabe, as his motorcade passed by the National Sports Stadium in Harare. Sithole was alleged to have employed Simba Mhlanga, who was the shadow leader of Chimwenje, to assassinate the Head of State. Mhlanga was arrested in Mozambique following the arrest of his accomplices at the crime scene. Mhlanga implicated Sithole as the leader of Chimwenje, leading to the arrest of the ZANU (Ndonga) leader on the 14th of October 1995. His arrest led to a long legal battle which resulted in his conviction for trying to unseat an elected president and conscripting youths for military training in order to destabilize the country in 1997. Consequently, Sithole was disqualified from Parliament in 1997. Sithole was represented by Tendai Biti of Honey and Blakenbery legal firm who argued that the allegations lacked specification and were vague. The Daily News of the 20th of December 2000 said that the assassination plot was stage-managed in order to diminish Sithole’s support in the 1996 presidential elections where he wanted to be a candidate.

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4.8.7 The Death of the Reverend Sithole

Sithole died in the United States of America in 2000 and was denied hero status by the Zanu-PF led government. When Zimbabwe embarked on the disastrous Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), as policy changes were required for an economic turn-around and the restoration of economic stability in the 1990s, Zimbabweans said that actually ESAP was, “Edzai Sithole Apa Paramba!” (Lit. Try Sithole, ESAP has failed, i.e. regime change – Mugabe has failed, try Sithole!).

Ordinary Christians were both in the bystanders and perpetrators’ camps. There were no shining examples of any ordinary Christians who took a moral stand against the government during this period. Christians often play different roles, depending on their positions and the influence they command in society. Among the Christians in Zimbabwe were survivors, perpetrators, witnesses and bystanders. Sithole’s political career and persecution by Zanu-PF spanned terms of Reverends Kuchera, Mkwakwami and Gomendo as presidents of the UCCZ. They adopted the “see no evil, hear no evil and speak no evil” policy while their colleague was in the deep end of political torture.

4.9 The Crisis in Matabeleland

Government suppression of dissent was not limited to ZANU Ndonga. The Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole did not pose as serious threat as Joshua Nkomo and his ZAPU party, as this section will show. Just before independence in 1980 President Nyerere of Tanzania had spoken to Mugabe: “You have the jewel of Africa in your hands…Now look after it.” The onus was on Mugabe to be responsible, protect the interests of the

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nation and be a peace maker. This wise advice fell on deaf ears. Sensing danger from Matabeleland, Mugabe became intransigent and belligerent. He unleashed *Gukurahundi* on fellow citizens.

*Gukurahundi* is a Shona term that literally refers to the first rain of summer that washes away the chaff left from the previous season. In this work it refers to the civil war in Matabeleland and the Midlands provinces in which up to 20 000 people lost their lives, during which government security forces hunted down and killed many civilians in the Western part of the country.\(^{294}\) The political and military violence resulted in immense losses for the citizens of Zimbabwe, in terms of human life, infrastructure and economic development in affected areas. The 1997 Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace report provided comprehensive details of this period of massacres in Matabeleland and the Midlands regions of Zimbabwe. It is clear that Zanu-PF found an opportunity to create a one-party state since the time it came into power, and the volatile situation provided an excuse to suppress ZAPU-supporting regions ruthlessly.

### 4.9.1 Outbreak of Civil War

The government’s first major internal political violence, assault on democracy, and rejection of rule of law occurred in 1982. At independence the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army, the military wing of Zanu, the Zimbabwe People’s Liberation Army; the military wing of ZAPU, and the Rhodesian forces were integrated into a single

\(^{294}\) *Ibid.*
national army. Conflict blew up in the integrated armed forces. It should be noted that the 1980 election largely followed ethnic patterns in the country. All ZAPU’s 20 seats came from Matabeleland and the Midlands where the majority ethnic group was the Ndebele and Zanu won seats from predominantly Shona-speaking areas of the country. This perception also existed in the army. In addition, the fighters felt that the policy of reconciliation had resulted in those who sacrificed more for Zimbabwe’s liberation having the least share in its benefits. Such disillusionment resulted in the gunfire skirmishes between former ZIPRA and ZANLA fighters encamped at Entumbane in Bulawayo on the 9th of November 1980. This fight was promptly extinguished by the government. It was a precursor to the hellfire that was coming. The Africa Watch Report states that a second outburst in February 1981, which spread to other groups of fighters awaiting integration, “was only ended when the government deployed ex-Rhodesian units and the air force against former ZIPRA personnel, killing more than 100.” The aim of ZIPRA elements was to occupy Bulawayo. Thus the combatants had secessionist tendencies.

When a cache of arms was discovered on ZAPU properties in 1982, the ruling party decided to use violence to force people into unity. Many ex-ZIPRA members deserted the army and went into the bush with their weapons. As stated above, the government unleashed Gukurahundi against dissidents mainly made up of former ZIPRA forces. Thus, between 1982 and 1987, a devastating ethnic conflict engulfed Matabeleland and the Midlands areas which almost tore the country apart. Zanu-PF was drawing its

support mainly from Shona-speaking areas, while ZAPU was largely based in the Ndebele-speaking areas of Matabeleland and the Midlands.

4.9.2 Violence as Political Strategy for ‘Nation Building’

Political violence did not just mushroom; it was not spontaneous, but emerged in a context of conflict and strife. Ethnic discourse became important as a way of connecting moral principle and interest; thus, behind every violent act there lay the discourse. The independence elections followed ethnic lines. The 1980 elections effectively made Zimbabwe a dual society, made up of two major ethnic groups: the Shona and the Ndebele. Zanu-PF did not win any seats in Matabeleland; all 20 seats for ZAPU came from Matabeleland and the Midlands areas. It should be noted that, historically, ZAPU was never a “Ndebele” party. Nkomo, “Chibwechitedza”, was supported across the country. His burial at the National Heroes Acre attracted people from many political parties and diverse sectors of society. Shona politicians such as Joseph Musikavanhu, Josiah Chinamano and George Kahari held positions in ZAPU. Zanu-PF drew most of its support from the majority Shona people. M. Meredith stated:

Determined to achieve a one party state, Mugabe provoked a war against ZAPU (the official political opposition party dominated by the Ndebele people) and its Ndebele and Kalanga supporters, preparing for it well in advance by establishing his own political army, recruited exclusively from Shona supporters and trained by North Korea for special combat duties.\(^{296}\)

For Enos Nkala, the then Minister of Home Affairs, Gukurahundi was coordinated war against the Ndebele who were perceived to be a threat to the ruling party’s goal of

creating a one party state. Thus, in Zanu-PF’s perception, ZAPU was a threat to one-partyism.

4.9.3 ZAPU Dismantled?

In order to achieve a ‘nation state’, many ZAPU assets were seized and confiscated; ZAPU ministers were dismissed from government and there was cleansing in the security forces. Immediately, “the government responded with a massive security clamp-down on Matabeleland and parts of the Midlands”\textsuperscript{297} The Prime Minister then sacked Nkomo from his cabinet and unleashed the Fifth Brigade, the army and the Central Intelligence Officers (CIO) into the restive regions. Curfews, mass killings, rapes and torture were the order of the day in this period that the President recently labelled as a time of madness. The violent period stretched from 1982 up until the Unity Accord in 1987. ZAPU members of the coalition government were dismissed and former ZIPRA commanders Dumiso Dabengwa and Lookout Masuku were detained illegally for many months. This led to massive desertions from the army; former ZAPU military cadres joined the ‘dissidents’. The ‘dissidents’ attacked government targets such as commercial farmers with the aim of tarnishing the image of the government and regionalizing and internationalizing their cause of the underdevelopment of their areas. Bands of “dissidents” were killing civilians and destroying property.

Initially a military Task Force from the army was sent to quell the disturbances; this force was headed by Lieutenant-Colonel Lionel Dyke, a former Rhodesian officer. The

government became more aggressive in January 1983 by replacing the Task Force with the North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade. This brigade, which was sent into Matabeleland and the Midlands provinces, was outside the normal command structure of the army and reported directly to the Prime Minister’s office.

4.9.4 Gukurahundi: Reactionary or Revolutionary Violence?

J. A. Kirk-Duggan, in his book *Theology Encounters Revolution*, submits that it is generally recognized that there are two types of violence. The first type is that which imposes the will of a regime upon people who do not want it - this violence is called repressive or reactionary violence. The second type is that which seeks to overthrow an unwanted regime, this violence is called revolutionary violence. *Gukurahundi* belonged to both categories. The state was repressive in that it wanted to crush opposition from the Matabeleland and Midlands areas. When the state uses violence indiscriminately to suppress potential opposition and to silence all forms of non-violent dissent it can be characterized as authoritarian irrespective of its particular ideological banner. On the other hand, the people of Matabeleland felt undermined and rejected by the ruling party and had secessionist ambitions.

4.9.5 The Church and Gukurahundi Violence

Commenting on the churches’ feeble voices of protest against *Gukurahundi*, J. Dube argued:

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Five years is long enough, let alone in a period of conflict, for a church to formulate its position on major theological and ethical thinking about political conflict. But for the five years of genocide in Zimbabwe no denomination issued a public statement against the government’s brutality, save for the Catholic bishops who protested toward the end of the genocide.299

Gukurahundi brought the church and state into conflict; the honeymoon of symbiotic relations came to an abrupt end. The Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, as one of the few independent human rights organizations active in the country, played an important, politically impartial role in the 1980s, through publicizing these abuses internationally. The commission was formed by the national Catholic Bishops’ Conference in March 1972 and was tasked with, among other things education in human rights; research into areas of institutionalized violations; the monitoring, recording and reporting of violations; and action in the protection of the violated. The Commission worked through church structures in eight dioceses, a national office and two regional offices. It was affiliated to the Pontifical Council Justitia et Pax and had active contact with Commissions in other countries.300 The Commission published research findings and published human rights violations.

The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe reported in their document Breaking the Silence: Building True Peace that the first organized acts of political violence in Zimbabwe were experienced in Matabeleland and the Midlands regions. Such acts were engineered by the government after the discovery of the so-called arms caches in Bulawayo. The church had a role to play in the midst of political

violence in Matabeleland and the Midlands provinces as the section below will demonstrate.

4.9.5.1 Church’s Response: The Church Leads by Example

Events during Gukurahundi forced the church to respond to the crisis. In the midst of political violence and instability in the regions of the Midlands and Matabeleland, the Catholic Church, through the CCJP, rediscovered its prophetic voice. The church became the voice of political victims. In fact, it was the then Archbishop of Bulawayo Henry Karlen who blew the whistle on the whole political saga. According to Bhebe, on 16 March 1983, Catholic representatives consisting of CCJP chairman Mike Auret, Archbishop Karlen and Bishop Mutume met with Prime Minister Mugabe and presented him with comprehensive and irrefutable evidence of mass killings.\(^{301}\) On Easter Day 1983 the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Conference wrote a statement entitled Reconciliation is Still Possible, making it categorically clear that the ZCBC continued to condemn dissident atrocities and recognized the government’s need to maintain law and order in Zimbabwe:

> Violent reaction against dissident activity has, to our certain knowledge, brought about the maiming and death of hundreds of innocent people who are neither dissidents nor collaborators.\(^{302}\)

In presenting the Prime Minister with this paper, the Catholic bishops spoke with the courage of their convictions. In the statement the bishops appealed to the government to find ways of reconciling with involved parties and adopting less harsh strategies in

\(^{301}\) Zimbabwe Parliamentary Debates, January 24, 1989.

areas of disturbances. Mugabe denounced the bishops’ pastoral letter of concern (Reconciliation is Still Possible), calling them a “band of Jeremiahs” and “sanctimonious prelates.”

Mugabe was averse to criticism of human rights abuses and of failure in the policy of reconciliation.

In 1985 some ‘dissidents’ killed twenty-two Shona speaking civilians in Mwenezi in south-western Zimbabwe. In response to this the CCJP together with the ZCBC sent a confidential report to Prime Minister Mugabe calling for action to end political violence. This letter followed Reconciliation is Still Possible, a joint paper by the CCJP and the ZCBC of March 1983 which expressed the church’s concern at the excess of defence and security forces in the two provinces. This confidential report entitled Peace, Unity, and Freedom, avowed that “shouting slogans against fellow Zimbabweans, individuals or groups such as down with so and so ...engenders feelings of hatred in the hearts of people...you Christians must refrain from such...let us build, not destroy, let unite and not divide.”

The Prime Minister professed to be Catholic. The Gukurahundi event gave the Church the platform to express her prophetic role, yet we found few religious leaders claiming to speak out or to write against the violence.

4.9.5.2 The Heads of Christian Denominations Meet the Prime Minister

The encounter of the Prime Minister with the Heads of Christian Denominations on the 18th of April 1984 resulted in the Prime Minister challenging the churches to play a creative role together with state institutions. Despite the ‘dissident’ problem in

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304 Herald, 6 April 1984.
Matabeleland Mugabe impressed upon the delegation the need for continued cooperation between church and state in development. Mugabe declared:

We shall be entitled to ask...what your plans, all of you, are for improving the educational and health facilities of the country, alongside the plans of the government.\(^{305}\)

On the other hand, the Heads of Denominations urged the need to respect multi-party politics in the country. Political violence was a threat to multi-party democracy.

### 4.9.5.3 Slowness and Lack of Prophetic Ministry

There is no doubt that it took the church a long time to play its prophetic role of championing democratic issues of good governance:

The church entered the new dispensation of the new Zimbabwe with largely otherworldly detachment from things social and political except for the Roman Catholic, CCJP and the ZCC, who even amid objections from some of its members, thought through the relevance of the Gospel values to the political and economic realities of the nation. Issues of democracy, human rights and development were, by and large, viewed as out of the jurisdiction of church activity. Some churches fell into the pit of political appeasement at the expense of maintaining the integrity of the church.\(^{306}\)

This aloofness in the midst of harassment, intimidation, brutality, war and death made many churches lose relevance in the country. For example, the Pentecostal churches were largely absent in the political ministry of the church.

The ZCC was conspicuous by its lack of prophetic function during the *Gukurahundi* era. The UCCZ, the Methodists, the Anglicans and the Lutherans, all members of ZCC, were incapacitated by internal institutional problems. This was the time they were ‘breaking the umbilical cord’ with their mother churches in the West, which left them struggling to

\(^{305}\) *Herald*, 10 Nov, 1981.
sustain their prophetic function. Many mainline churches were busy restoring ecclesiastical hierarchies broken down during the second Chimurenga and were also reluctantly being weaned by their mother churches in the First World. As mentioned in Chapter Three, in 1981 the American Board Mission was renamed the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe. The church wanted to be in tune with the new dispensation of independence. Established churches also had difficulties in working with a strong Socialist right-oriented Zanu-PF government.

4.9.5.5 Impact of Gukurahundi

According to the G. Hill, “between 8 000 and 40 000 of Nkomo’s supporters were murdered and thousands more tortured in Southern Africa’s only modern-day genocide....”307 The Fifth Brigade was accused of gross human rights abuses. Suspicion and hatred between Ndebele and Shona ethnic groups greatly increased. The Dumbutshena Commission of Inquiry into these Gukurahundi events has been suppressed up to date. Gukurahundi remains one of the most emotive issues to the people of Matabeleland, and its legacy is still being felt today. No healing process was ever done. Many people in the Matabeleland and Midlands region are still bitter at the Gukurahundi because many innocent civilians were killed by the North Korean trained Fifth Brigade. Most people have not forgiven Zanu-PF, because it has not openly accepted responsibility for its active role in the massacres; and so Ndebele people continue to show their disapproval by voting against Zanu-PF candidates in national elections. In the 1980s, Joshua Nkomo’s PF ZAPU dominated in the region and the

MDC-T led by Morgan Tsvangirai in later years snatched most of the votes in this region.

4.9.6  A Political Solution

Behind the scenes a political solution to the violence was sought. C.S. Banana, in his book *The Church and the Struggle for Zimbabwe: From the Programme to Combat Racism to Combat Theology*, pointed out that:

New and more effective strategies were now being called for. Dissidents were widely viewed as being anti-Zanu-PF and therefore the onus rested upon the leaders of the two dominant parties in Zimbabwe at the time to resolve their obvious differences, if not for their own sake, for that of the nation in particular and the region at large. The only viable option to war and bloodshed was peace and unity.\(^{308}\)

Members of the CCJP were negotiating with both PF ZAPU and Zanu-PF. In addition, the Heads of Christian Denominations visited President Banana asking him to mediate. Banana was a minister of religion and his Christian understanding of human relations came in handy. On the 22\(^{nd}\) of December 1987 Zimbabwe’s political landscape changed dramatically with the signing of the agreement between Zanu-PF and PF ZAPU. The agreement became known as the Unity Accord. Peace was finally restored by the Zanu-ZAPU Unity Accord. The major aim of the Unity Accord of 1987 was to eliminate political violence in the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces. The dissidents were pardoned and reintegrated into society.

4.9.6.1 Disappearance of Effective Opposition

The Accord did not improve democracy. It witnessed the disappearance of effective opposition. In 1989, Zanu and ZAPU finally merged to form one political party - the new Zanu-PF. ZAPU MPs joined the government. With the accord in place, the seeds of one-partyism were sown. It should be noted that the 20 seats which had been reserved for the white community had been abolished by act of Parliament in 1987. Commenting in 2004, M. Rukuni pointed out that “the old guard in ZAPU believed that the Unity Accord, signed on the 22\textsuperscript{nd} of December 1987, was responsible for the present crisis in the country, especially ZANU PF’s intolerance of opposition”\textsuperscript{309}. The same view was shared by Ndlovu-Gatsheni who argued that the accord “was imposed on the people by the political elite and as such it was one of the authoritarian nation building strategies of Zanu-PF.”\textsuperscript{310} D. Mafinyani, the secretary general of the ZCC during the turbulent year of 2008, argued that this line of thinking was faulty and not sustainable:

PF ZAPU was not a small party. It had a sound think-tank. The party was not swallowed; Nkomo had to put national interests at heart. There is a Government of National Unity in Germany as we speak but no one speaks of a party being swallowed in Germany. There was joy and ululation among the Shona and Ndebele when ZAPU and Zanu joined forces on 22\textsuperscript{nd} December 1987. The presence of many political parties does not mean there is democracy. Democracy is how people feel.\textsuperscript{311}

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

\textsuperscript{309} M. Rukuni, The Inside June 2004, p.17.
\textsuperscript{311} Interview with D. Mafinyani, Mbuya Nehanda Street, Harare, 21 May 2008.
The Unity Accord gave the government the impetus to legislate for one party dictatorship. G. Hill, in his book *What Happens After Mugabe?*, stated:

In 1987, with his home province in ruins, Nkomo dissolved his party and merged with Zanu-PF and Mugabe became president with new powers that allowed him to rule by decree. Zimbabwe entered a decade of uneasy peace in which every aspect of daily life was controlled in some way by Zanu-PF.\(^{312}\)

The role of civic society was prominent in the defence and support of multi-party democracy. Among the civic organizations which took centre stage against one-partyism were the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), the Zimbabwe Human Rights Organization (ZIMRIGHTS), and the University of Zimbabwe Students Representative Council (SRC). The Catholic Bishops’ Conference and ZCC were at the forefront of supporting multi-party democracy. Put differently, the church bodies played a pivotal watchdog role in the process of democratization. The Catholic magazine *Moto* observed:

Of late it has increasingly seemed as if unity is synonymous with the one-party state in Zimbabwe, and those who want to form another political party are against national unity. That is unfortunate …it will be a sad day when in our beloved motherland opinions divergent from the “party line” can only be whispered fearfully.\(^{313}\)

By admonishing the ruling parties (Zanu-PF and ZAPU) against establishing one-party dictatorship, the churches fulfilled their prophetic mission/function of being the salt of the earth and light of the world (Matt 5:13-16). D. J. Maxwell stated that in July 1990 the ZCC endorsed the Anglican and Catholic churches’ opposition of the government’s intent to form a one-party state as offering the threat of authoritarian rule.\(^{314}\) The ZCC

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\(^{313}\) *Moto*, No 77, June 1989.

together with the CCJP also organized a seminar on human rights. The Evangelical Lutheran Church also petitioned against a one-party state.

4.9.6.2 The Concept of the Nation State

Zanu-PF’s violence in the 1980s can closely be linked to the concept of the modern nation state. Violence as a phenomenon is intricately linked to one major component, which is the rise of the nation state. In the genesis of the nation state in European history, violence was an indispensable component of nation building. The peace of Westphalia established the notion of the nation state which gradually grew after the French Revolution into becoming a strong ideology. Max Weber viewed the state as the first human community that claimed the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory.\(^{315}\) While many pre-existing institutions have known the use of physical force as quite normal in the modern era, the relationship between the state and violence is a very intimate one. It was this violence that played a major role in the process of nation building in Europe, in the two world wars, in the Jewish holocaust and in the violence of fascism. The flowering of the ideas of the nation state and nationalism in Europe coincided with the colonization of Africa and the creation of the nation state in Africa, and the banding together of various chiefdoms and kingdoms into single administrative entities regardless of linguistic and cultural heterogeneities. At independence the African political elite inherited this political legacy and began to build their states along the lines of Westphalian state systems. While post-colonial political violence such as *Gukurahundi* was an ugly phenomenon, in Zanu-PF’s warped thinking

it was an inevitable outcome of the new state struggling to create internal cohesion and stability through the same processes which had given birth to the nation states in Europe.

4.10 Political Violence in the 1990s

The previous section discussed political violence in the 1980s and the Christian response to this phenomenon. This section will demonstrate that violence was not limited to the first decade after independence. It persisted in the 1990s in Zimbabwe but in a very latent manner. The authorities began a sustained campaign of harassment and detention of opposition political figures. Most opponents were charged under the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act and the Emergency Powers Act inherited from the colonial period. Political violence became a matter of critical public concern with the formation of the MDC in 1999. The churches led the way in lambasting the state for retaining and using draconian Rhodesian laws in independent Zimbabwe:

Our political history is characterized by the use of state institutions as partisan tools to support the ruling party. Those who have opposed the ruling party have been marginalized and sometimes criminalized. In our history, there has not been space created to allow for healthy political debates and contestation. This has caused a lot of frustration and resentment.\(^{316}\)

The ruling party monopolized state institutions and used them for political control to the chagrin of opposition political opponents.

4.10.1 Edgar Tekere and the One-Party State

\(^{316}\) Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Conference, Pastoral Letter on National Healing and Reconciliation, God can Heal the Wounds of the Afflicted, p.4.
In 1988 Edgar Tekere, a former key cadre in Zanu-PF, was expelled from Zanu-PF for speaking out against corruption and the one party state, a stance which made him very popular in the country. He proceeded to form a new political party called the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) in 1989. The party was opposed to Zanu-PF’s campaign to impose a one-party state. Prominent members were repeatedly harassed, detained, arrested and incarcerated on various charges ranging from convening public meetings without authority to treason.\(^{317}\) The March 1990 parliamentary elections demonstrated that ZUM enjoyed a lot of support by getting a number of votes in the elections.

### 4.10.2 The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) and the Introduction of War Veterans

In the mid-1990s, the Zimbabwean economy was starting to decline and the World Bank encouraged the country to structurally adjust its economy and remove protective import-export barriers. In the battle to find solutions, Zimbabwe embarked on the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), introducing policy changes required for an economic turn-around and the restoration of economic stability. According to G. Kanyenze, in his article “The Zimbabwe Economy 1980-2003: A ZCTU Perspective,” many small-scale co-operatives that had survived the 1980s could not cope with the competitive environment of ESAP and were forced to close.\(^{318}\)

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\(^{317}\) Manica Post, June 30, 1989.

The major war veterans’ enterprises closed shop as well. Most of the money payouts together with a little skills training did not benefit the war veterans much. Ex-combatants had one major skill that could be used positively, and that was to mobilize communities around a specific cause. However, in the late 1990s Zanu-PF used this ex-combatants' skill negatively - committing violence against political opponents.

In the late 1990s the Zimbabwe National Liberators War Veterans’ Association (ZNLWVA) was reorganized under the astute and unscrupulous leadership of Chenjerai “Hitler” Hunzvi. Hunzvi reorganized the ex-combatants into an effective lobbying force. He used threats of violence against Zanu-PF and its leader Robert Mugabe, if certain demands were not met. Fearing to lose the war veterans’ support, Mugabe gave in to their demands. On Friday November 14th, 1997, the Zimbabwean dollar collapsed as a consequence of the Z$ 5 billion dollar award to the war veterans. This was known as “Black Friday”. Mugabe offered approximately 50 000 ex-combatants cash gratuities of Z$50 000 each, free healthcare and education for their families, and Z$2 000 monthly pensions for life. Z$50 000 was worth around US 10 000 then. This resulted in the crash of the Zimbabwean dollar, and inflation set in. It also led to a spontaneous “stay-away” by workers that brought production to a halt for two weeks. This collective mass action precipitated in skirmishes and food riots in the early months of 1998.

4.10.3 Elections without the Rule of Law

During the 1990s President Mugabe strove tirelessly to create a one-party state in Zimbabwe. There was fierce resistance from opposition MPs, and the civil rights movement which included students, lawyers, journalists, intellectuals and men and women of the cloth.\(^{319}\) Repressive legislation in 1990 undermined their efforts. The Zimbabwe Unity Movement and the Forum Party both made attempts in the ensuing ten years to establish a viable opposition, but were infiltrated and destroyed. The full history of these parties is not the topic of this chapter.

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace monitored the 1995 elections and produced reports that were critical of the election process and environment.

The launch of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) in June 1997 marked a new beginning in the campaign against repressive laws and the promotion of democracy in Zimbabwe. The NCA was made up of an array of civil society groups such as churches, trade unions, women’s organizations political parties, human rights groups, students, and other interested groups.\(^{320}\) It was an amalgamation against the repressive and undemocratic Zimbabwean constitution. Through workshops, seminars, media campaigns, public lectures, rallies, stay-aways, posters and demonstrations the NCA conscientized the nation about the need for democracy and constitutional reform. The ZCC was instrumental in the formation of the NCA.


Of importance in relation to the NCA is Lovemore Madhuku, the second person to assume the leadership of this vibrant interest group in 2001. He was a founding member of the NCA, assuming the position of Vice-Chairman of the organisation at its formation in 1997. Madhuku has been a thorn in the flesh of both President Robert Mugabe’s government and the current inclusive government since he took over as chairman of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) in 2001. He has been fighting for one thing, a people-driven national constitution. Madhuku was the moderator of the UCCZ since 1998 to the present day, occupying the third most influential position in the church. He chairs the Synod, the highest decision-making body of the UCCZ, as will be discussed in the next chapter. On many occasions Madhuku has been a victim of political violence in Zimbabwe. As chairman of the NCA, Madhuku has been championing the pro-democracy movement against President Mugabe’s authoritarian rule. Ordinary Zimbabweans have suffered some of the heaviest violations of human rights by Zanu-PF, including violence, torture and rape.

The NCA successfully urged the people to reject the Constitutional Commission’s proposed draft constitution in February 2002. Elements of the mainline church were at the forefront of demands for electoral reform and democratic political space. The Zimbabwe Council of Churches provided secretarial assistance to the NCA. The NCA encouraged a culture of popular participation in decision-making.

A few years later the ZCC, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), and the ZCBC concurred with the NCA’s call for a home grown constitution:
We have already stated that the current Lancaster House constitution was not inspired by the collective consent and consensus of the people of Zimbabwe. The overriding interests in any constitutional reform process should be to create an enabling and conducive framework for good, peaceful and stable governance.  

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

All these indicators of Mugabe’s failure paved the way for the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) political party in 1999; and the earliest litmus test for Mugabe’s power was the 2000 No-Vote defeat in the constitutional referendum of February 2000.

4.11 Political Violence at the Turn of the 21st Century

From 19 to 21 January 1999 most high density suburbs of Harare and Chitungwiza town turned “into virtual war-zones as soldiers deployed by the government to help police quell food riots shot and injured many unsuspecting civilians.”

The Moto of September / October 2007 reported that the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Conference spoke out against the violence perpetrated by the state machinery on civilians as uncalled for:

…the forces of law and order must not be used for political purposes….the government must respect the freedom of political expression and association in order to avert street demonstrations.

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321 Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Conference, Pastoral Letter on National Healing and Reconciliation, *God can Heal the Wounds of the Afflicted*, p.4.


The Bishops further reiterated that such clashes were symptoms of bad governance. Governance is the way the state governs its people and manages the resources of a country.

In the year 2000, with the rejection of the proposed new constitution, political violence increased in the country. Youth militias, war veterans and Central Intelligence officers were on the prowl looking for opposition sympathizers. Politically-motivated organized violence and torture, lynching, rape, arson and murder increased. Farm invasions began at the behest of the ruling party leadership.

In my view, violence did not imply the absence of human rationality and modernism; instead, violence reinforced rationality. It was an indication of the working of dialectical historical forces towards the final resolution of ideological antagonisms. The ruling party championed a Pan-African ethos and sovereignty while the opposition was perceived to be pro-Western and capitalistic. In Zimbabwe, the discourse of political violence was constructed around the doctrines of nationalism. J. Muzondidya, in his article “Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans,” observed that:

> In the post-2000 scenario, the nation state has increasingly been conceived as the political expression of a single or a dominant and relatively homogenous ethnic or racial group: ‘native Africans’.  

A militant nationalism that created a sense of a nation under siege from Western imperialism was created. Propaganda meant to infuse new meaning into the political terrain became the order of the day for 21st century Zimbabwe. In this emerging

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discourse, there was the invention of certain categories of description meant to reinforce these ideological divisions and sanction them as givens. The deployment of words, symbols and metaphors played a great role in manufacturing coercion and consent. Such phrases as “British sponsored”, “the imperialist West” and *zvimbwasona* (Western stooges) were used as vituperative epithets to sanction certain forms of violent behaviour. S. Ndlovu-Gatsheni characterized Zanu-PF’s belligerence as a strategy of the failed state:

>This “quasi-nationalism” was a product of failed nation-building as well as the flawed and narrow ZANU-PF strategy of national construction premised on the assumption of absolute power and moral authority within a one-party political and ideological framework. The catastrophe of “quasi-nationalism” as opposed to pan-ethnic nationalism is that it legitimised and authorized violence against all those that were perceived to be opposed to the new ZANU-PF agenda.\(^{325}\)

The strategy was the division of the population into sell-outs and revolutionaries and the utilization of formal education institutions, music and youth camps, as well as the creation of patriotic history. This escalated the polarization of the population into Zanu-PF and MDC supporters.

In the struggle over ownership of past achievements in history, as T.O. Ranger pointed out:

The Zimbabwean opposition and the British, European and North American sponsors have expressed themselves as forces opposed to Mugabe as Pan-Africanist.\(^{326}\)

The opposition was portrayed as an imperialist party with a counter revolutionary programme, retrogressive and malicious towards the national interest. The branding of supporters of the opposition as outside the category of legitimate citizens made it possible for the ruling party to commit heinous crimes against them with impunity. During this particular period National Radio and Television broadcast aggressive war songs, most of which celebrated killing and torture as well as national sacrifice. M. Chikowero pointed out that the motif of bloodshed and aggression recurred in much of the music and songs that were used as state propaganda during election campaigns. The songs were used either as a form of political intimidation or as a way of legitimizing the use of violence:

> The post-2000 Zanu-PF government sponsored music and songs as a crucial instrument of its machinery to frame and articulate its ultra-nationalistic discourse, which it dubbed the \textit{Third Chimurenga}. Orality, especially (radio) song, was central to Zanu-PF’s \textit{Third Chimurenga} ideology.\(^{327}\)

Most of the popular songs always reiterated the constant element of war, “Zimbabwe ndeyeropa” (Zimbabwe came through blood), “Zimbabwe yakauya nehondo” (Zimbabwe was brought by war). Popular local musicians participated in this manufacture of consent and composed jingles which in most cases derided the West and all opposition groups and their supporters:


The invocation of liberation war memory through song and narrative was designed to convince voters that the MDC was a puppet party of the same evil white colonists who killed and brutalised them and their relatives.\textsuperscript{328}

Sovereignty was projected as representing a particular worldview identifiable with the state’s views of political reality; anything outside that worldview became heretical and dangerous dissent which threatened the status quo and national survival. National radio and newspaper propaganda was always at pains to portray the nation as under siege and at war. The creation of the illusion of a war thus warranted murder, torture and arson to deal with political miscreants.

\textbf{4.12 The Response of the Church: The State Plays Off One Group of Churches against the Other}

The state wanted to play off one group of churches against the other. In the words of D.T. Muchena, for the state to achieve this it had to rely on a select group of church leaders who “see no evil, hear no evil and speak no evil.”\textsuperscript{329} The state plan was to divide the church and benefit from the ‘divide and rule policy.’ Church leaders such as Nolbert Kunonga and Obadiah Musindo regularly appeared on state television, before the press and at functions as representing the voice of the church.

Within this context dominated by violence, just before the 2000 parliamentary elections, the Catholic Bishops and the Heads of Christian Denominations chaired by Rev Murombedzi Kuchera appealed to the people of Zimbabwe to refrain from violence:

\textsuperscript{328} \textit{Ibid.}, p.311.
The people of Zimbabwe have seen the horrors of war and political violence. As we celebrate Easter we the ZCBC and leaders of Christian Churches implore all citizens of this country to refrain from violence and urge them to settle conflicts peacefully.\textsuperscript{330}

In the same vein, Arch-bishop Pius Ncube and the lay-faithful of Bulawayo also wrote and spoke out against the culture of violence. The Bishops of Catholic Church in Bulawayo wrote:

\begin{quote}
We also condemn the supply of civilians with armoury, some of whom are young. We call on all people to pray and work for peace.\textsuperscript{331}
\end{quote}

Ncube espoused the belief that when a government seriously attacked human rights and the common good of the nation, when the situation became unbearable and channels of dialogue, understanding and rationality were closed, the church had to speak of the legitimate right of defence.

The church was also targeted by the violent state machinery. As O. Vengeyi observed:

\begin{quote}
Most of the churchmen who criticise the government in Zimbabwe founded advocacy groups and pro-democracy church organisations such as Christian Alliance, the Save Zimbabwe Campaign, among others. These have also been targets and victims of state orchestrated violence.\textsuperscript{332}
\end{quote}

Amazingly, church leaders like Rev. Obadiah Musindo of the controversial Destiny for Africa Ministries were singing a litany of praises for the government, and it was at this time that he acclaimed President Mugabe as divinely appointed and the new Moses. The same could be said of Nolbert Kunonga, the Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Harare. According to M.R. Gunda, Kunonga was a self-serving empire builder:

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{331} P. Ncube, Newsletter; \textit{Prayer for Peace}; Bulawayo: 2000, p.2.
\end{footnotes}
Kunonga has branded himself as a nationalist Bishop fighting for the cause of common Africans and has centred his tenure on “land theology” in direct agreement with the State and its haphazard land reform programme. While Kunonga understands himself, at least in public, as a nationalist Bishop, others have questioned his motives and linked them to a systematic programme of empire building.\footnote{333}

He compromised with the state and demonized leaders who held divergent views as sell-outs and stooges of the West:

Interestingly, Bishop Kunonga’s perception of the political establishment is divorced from that of the majority of common people, including many Anglicans in Zimbabwe. While many people have accused the government of Robert Mugabe of economic mismanagement and of pursuing disastrous political policies, in his wisdom, Kunonga sees Mugabe as an “agent of God”.\footnote{334}

The position taken by Kunonga endeared him to the political establishment in Zimbabwe. Gunda opined that Kunonga had failed to embark on the prophetic ministry for he had taken sides with Zanu-PF:

That Kunonga has become a willing ally of Robert Mugabe in running down the country makes him closer to former Anglican priests in Rhodesia whose interest lay with the defence of the political establishment despite its excesses. The contempt with which Kunonga looks down upon all Zimbabweans who do not share in his misplaced nationalism is similar both in tone and veracity to the contempt with which Africans were regarded by many white priests during the colonial era. It is surprising that Kunonga does not realise that the colonial structure which Zimbabweans fought against is the same structure that Robert Mugabe is using, that he himself is defending the structure that he says is evil.\footnote{335}

The church entered the 21st century divided and pursuing different goals.

4.13 The Start of \textit{Jambanja} (Violent Disorder) in Zimbabwe

\textsuperscript{334} \textit{Ibid.}, p.311.  
\textsuperscript{335} \textit{Ibid.}, p.314.
On the 15th of February 2000 the Mugabe government lost a referendum on its package of constitutional changes. The referendum rejected the position preferred by government in a move perceived as representing the stance of the opposition and civil society. On the 16th of February of the same year, war veterans began occupying commercial farms. On the 17th of March the High Court ordered that the seizures stop and that the police remove illegal occupiers from farms. This order fell on deaf ears.

The government began a major assault on white Zimbabwe. This start of jambanja (violent disorder) in February 2000 represented a new phase relating to the land question that had been smouldering for the better part of the 1990s. According to S. Moyo, in his article “The Land Occupation Movement and Democratization in Zimbabwe: Contradictions of Neo-liberalism,” the mode in which the land programme was implemented generated a great deal of heated debate domestically and internationally. In the same vein, L. Sachikonye stated:

This constellation of factors set off alarm bells for the Mugabe government in February 2000 when it lost a referendum on the draft constitution. The land issue now became an issue of political survival in an election year. Land hunger could be manipulated to improve the electoral fortunes of Zanu-PF, apart from finally resolving the land question ‘once and for all’. This was the immediate context of the fast-track programme (jambanja or Third Chimurenga).

It worsened relations between blacks and whites in country. Property rights and land rights were discarded in this agrarian revolution. The war veterans and the generality of

the people, dissatisfied with the pace of the land redistribution programme, embarked on land occupations.

Against the background of land occupations by the impatient landless people, the absence of international support for land reform notwithstanding Government’s desire to engage the former colonial power and the international community and the rejection of the 2000 Draft Constitution; and the continued legal challenges by white commercial farmers. The Government embarked on the Fast Track land programme which was launched on 15 July 2000, was designed to be undertaken in an accelerated manner and with reliance on domestic resources. The Programme was a fundamental departure from previous philosophy, practices and procedures of acquiring land and resettling people.

4.14 Vibrant Opposition and Political Violence

The coming of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) onto the Zimbabwe political scene in 1999 was closely associated with the jambanja discussed above. In the general elections of June 2000 the first substantive opposition party in Zimbabwe, the MDC, captured 57 parliamentary seats in contrast to the 62 seats won by the ruling party emerged. The opposition claimed to have achieved this feat within the context of state-sponsored political violence. According to E. Chitando, in his article “Prayers, Politics and Peace: the Church’s Role in Zimbabwe’s Crisis,” post-colonial Zimbabwe has been characterized by political violence:

The animosity between the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU-PF) and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) has resulted in violence and heightened political tension in the country over the past decade but there
has been tension since independence. ..In many instances, ZANU-PF has used violence as a political weapon, particularly during the decade-long battle with the MDC.\textsuperscript{339}

The MDC alleged that there had been rigging of elections, including ballot stuffing, in favour of the ruling party. Although the MDC failed to garner the majority of the parliamentary seats in the polls, when it challenged a number of constituencies’ results in courts of law, it gained some constituencies. The MDC argued convincingly that it had been unable to campaign owing to the political violence unleashed by Zanu-PF, employing state, defence and security structures. The MDC manifesto included political issues such as the return to democratization, the rule of law, constitutional reform and transparent land reform. In the March 2005 general elections the MDC garnered 41 seats but claimed that violence unleashed by the ruling party and the government’s refusal to allow civil society to set the terms for civil politics compromised the government’s legitimacy.

Notwithstanding the emergence of a strong opposition party to challenge the ruling party for alternative government, Tendayi Chikuku, the Director of Ecumenical Documentation and Information for Central and Southern Africa (EDICESA), argued for strong civic organizations:

The role of civic organizations is increasingly needed even if there is change of Government. The civil society should be strengthened to avoid the Zambian syndrome. The coming to power of Fredrick Chiluba saw the demise of civic organizations. This explains why Chiluba was at liberty to abuse national resources in Zambia. Civic organizations should be strengthened to play their prophetic watchdog role.\textsuperscript{340}

\textsuperscript{339} E. Chitando, “Prayers, Politics and Peace: the Church’s Role in Zimbabwe’s Crisis,” in Zimbabwe at the Crossroads, Openspace, Issue 1, June 2011, p.44.
\textsuperscript{340} Interview with Tendai Chikuku, EDICESA, Harare 21 May 2008.
While Chikuku’s argument is sound and valid, civic organizations have failed to exonerate themselves from the damning accusations of being agents of opposition political parties in the country. The ruling party accused civic organizations of championing regime change in Zimbabwe. Civic organizations should be non-partisan and stand for justice.

On the 21st December 2001 President George W. Bush of the United States of America signed into law S494, the “Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001”. The law instructed American officials in international financial institutions to oppose and vote against any extension by the respective institution of any loan, credit, or guarantee to the Government of Zimbabwe and to vote against any reduction or cancellation of indebtedness owed by the government of Zimbabwe. In addition to this, in 2002 European Union foreign ministers voted unanimously to impose sanctions on Zimbabwe. All financial aid would be reoriented towards support of the population, in particular towards the social sectors, democratization, respect for human rights and the rule of law. Government policies had made Zimbabwe a pariah state in the global community.

There were disputed presidential elections in 2002. This resulted in Zimbabwe being commonly described as a “pseudo-democratic” and “illiberal” country where an elected government acted the same way as its authoritarian predecessor, depriving citizens of human rights and ignoring constitutional limits on power. Tsvangirai, the leader of the

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MDC, was arrested by the police on political grounds for the second time. In response to this, the churches of Zimbabwe called for dialogue and reconciliation between the ruling party and opposition leaders.

4.15 Prophetic Ministry in Times of Crisis

C. Villa-Vicencio postulated that even though it was dangerous to challenge a repressive state, the church as the mouthpiece of God needed to know that:

   God does not stand impartially in the midst of human conflict; God stands at every time unconditionally and passionately on this and only on this side, always against the exalted and for the lowly, against those who already have rights and for those from whom they are robbed and taken away.\(^{342}\)

This is a call to embark on the prophetic ministry.

Commenting on the response of churches to the rampant political violence, M. Tsvangirai said:

   The church, like business, was equally concerned about the political stalemate. While a number of denominations - some in the leadership of the Anglican Church, a few Apostolic Church sects and Pentecostals - sided with Mugabe and Zanu-PF, the majority voiced their disgust about rising violence against innocent people. Others professed neutrality.\(^{343}\)

In February 2002, the Zimbabwe National Pastors’ Conference hosted a conference in Gweru with the theme *Prophetic Ministry in Times of Crisis*. The conference documented the extent of political violence in the country and encouraged pastoral visits to politically troubled spots in the country. The Zimbabwe National Pastors’ Conference

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consisted of members from various churches. Its goal was to promote peace, tolerance, human rights and good governance.

N. Mkaronda observed that when the violence was escalating to unprecedented levels in Zimbabwe, very few voices from the church voiced a position.\textsuperscript{344} Traditionally, Christians have looked up to their leaders and to such church bodies as the ZCC, EFZ, and ZCBC to speak out on behalf of Christians. The main demand was for peace and the development of the nation for a better Zimbabwe. Fr. Oskar Wermter, a Catholic priest, described the political dispensation of the time as dictatorship.\textsuperscript{345} He recommended that church leaders in Zimbabwe work in such a way that they would become part of the solution to the nation’s problems rather than part of the problem itself. In May 2002, Sebastian Bakare, the bishop of the Anglican diocese of Manicaland, admonished Zimbabweans to reject political violence and called for unity and peace among the people of Zimbabwe.\textsuperscript{346} In the same year, Archbishop Pius Ncube conducted a service for peace and justice in Bulawayo.\textsuperscript{347} Together with the faithful at St Mary’s Catholic Cathedral, Ncube embarked on a peace campaign march on the 6\textsuperscript{th} of June 2002.

In an editorial “Zimbabwe Council of Churches: Are you ready for Judgement Day?” The \textit{Standard} bemoaned the church’s silence in the midst of political violence:

\begin{quote}
There has been so much comment in the past two-and-half years about the role the churches and church leaders are playing, or should be playing in the
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{345} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{346} \textit{Ibid.}
\end{footnotes}
political life of Zimbabwe. There is a very important reason why the church, in partnership with the media, should be involved in this process. The church should be concerned about the whole issue of the struggle for peace, justice and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. This is a task that the church cannot in any way be absolved of, or hand over the responsibility to others. Indeed that should be the central mission of the church anywhere in the world.  

In July 2003, Bishop Patrick Mutume of the Catholic Church, Bishop Trevor Manhanga, the President of the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, and Bishop Sebastian Bakare, the President of the ZCC, held their first ever meetings with President Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai. The bishops challenged the two leaders to relax their belligerent positions and make peace. Reporting on the mission by the three church leaders, M. Tsvangirai narrated the incident:

...three Manicaland bishops, Patrick Mutume (Catholic), Sebastian Bakare (Anglican) and Trevor Manhanga (Pentecostal) also tried to get involved on a separate mission. They said their effort was equally supported by their South African counterparts. Again, they met Mugabe and me on separate occasions, but they hardly moved beyond the preliminary talks.

They argued that if Zimbabwe was to be free of political violence Mugabe and Tsvangirai had to set an example by reaching out to one another. Despite these ground-breaking meetings, polarization continued in the country. There were several efforts made by civic leaders to try to resolve the crisis. However, these efforts failed.

D. T. Muchena, in his article “The Church and Reconciliation”, stated that in September 2004, in preparation for elections the following year, the South African Council of Churches in conjunction with the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), the Centre for Policy Studies and the Institute of Justice and Reconciliation in South Africa

348 The Standard, December 8, 2002.
worked in partnership with churches in Zimbabwe to organize a conference in Pretoria.\textsuperscript{350} The theme of the conference was \textit{Minimum Standards for Elections in Zimbabwe}. They discussed the importance of creating an enabling environment and political will before, during and after elections. The conference encouraged church leaders to be fearless and courageous in dealing with complex political situations. The churches called for the levelling of the playing field in accordance with the SADC Guidelines on Elections adopted by the Heads of SADC countries in Mauritius in August 2004. The guidelines aimed at enhancing the transparency and credibility of elections and democratic governance as well as ensuring the acceptance of election results by all contesting parties.

From the 8th to the 12th of November 2004 the Association of Evangelical Alliances in Africa convened a conference in Bulawayo. The conference was attended by 38 delegates from 12 SADC states.\textsuperscript{351} The conference was designed to support and energize the efforts of local church leadership to reconcile communities torn apart by political violence; it explored the political situation in the country and called for political accountability, free and fair elections and peaceful coexistence.

While many church leaders embraced the prophetic ministry, others supported state repression. O. Vengeyi argues that some church leaders acquiesced with politicians:

\begin{quote}
While the orgy of violence engulfed the nation from the year 2000 until February 2009, church leaders, such as Bishop N. Kunonga of the Harare diocese of the Anglican Church, O. Musindo of New Generation Church and
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{351} \textit{Ibid.}, p.266.
Elizabeth Chinouriri of the Family of God among others, have never criticised the perpetrators. Like the government they condemned the victims as they celebrated and prophesied blessings on the perpetrators.\

The church was divided in its position on political violence.

4.16 Elections and Political Violence

Political violence has been a very common feature of elections in Zimbabwe, in which gross human rights violations are often deliberately committed as a campaign and punishment tool. In the 2005 elections some people were tortured while some were made to disappear. NGO Forum’s Political Violence Report of 29 March 2005 reported:

> at least 16 villagers from Chipinge south fled their homes into Mozambique after they were allegedly brutally attacked by Zanu-PF supporters and youth militia for supporting the opposition MDC.\(^{353}\)

This violence spread country wide. The ZCBC wrote a pastoral letter entitled \textit{Steps To Be Taken Before An Election Which Should Be Credible}.\(^{354}\) The letter bemoaned the fact that since coming to power in 1980, Zanu-PF had been predisposed to using youth indoctrinated with its propaganda to commit violence against political opposition – since 2000 youth militia had once more been a tool of the ruling party. Free and fair elections were not achievable owing to these marauding youth militias.

In May 2005 the government launched \textit{Murambatsvina}, “Operation Restore Order,’ a countrywide police blitz on shanties, stalls and cottages deemed to have been built illegally. The government said the operation was meant to stamp out the black market

and reduce pressure on overcrowded urban areas. Civic and human rights groups condemned the operation as a violation of human rights and urged the government to restore the rule of law. The UN estimated that the campaign left at least 700,000 of the poorest people homeless.

This operation was carried out in a very violent and dehumanizing manner. S. Chirongoma pointed out the adverse impact the operation had on those affected by HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe.355 Many people including the sick, young children and the elderly were left out in the cold and in the open. The church document The Zimbabwe We Want castigated this clean-up project, not for its objectives but its methods. This document also condemned all forms of political evil that had taken place before 2006. The Zimbabwe Christian Alliance, the Council of Churches and the Lutheran Church called for an end to this political violence. The Catholic Bishops accused the government of “a grave crime committed against the poor and the helpless …for which they will be held individually accountable.”356 The Catholic Bishops’ Conference also lambasted “…the degrading of human dignity by the authorities and called for an immediate stop to the violent operation.”357 The Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the Churches in Manicaland were also loud voices in challenging the authorities to stop the cruel operation. G. Mambipiri, in his article “The Role of the Christian Communities in Government Matters”, asks, “…where were the other Churches? Is it that they seek

357 www.google/Murambatsvina.com:1
shade under the Council of Churches when it is time for `confrontations` and stand on their own when it is praise singing?"\textsuperscript{358}

C. S. Banana argued that the church had to continue to be the watchdog of democracy and ensure that no impediments were placed in the path of those wishing to exercise their constitutional right to vote.\textsuperscript{359} According to the Zimbabwe Council of Churches’ 2005 Parliamentary Report, a climate of tolerance and respect among citizens and political parties or even among various factions within a party strengthened democracy and facilitated peaceful political competition.\textsuperscript{360}

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

> Political intolerance has unfortunately become a culture in Zimbabwe. The trading of insults, violence with impunity, lawlessness and hate speech has unfortunately been characteristic of inter-party and intra-political parties. \textit{The Zimbabwe We Want} must cherish, embrace and celebrate a culture of tolerance of dissent, political plurality and a willingness to accommodate political differences. Intolerance breeds hatred and hatred breeds violence. Violence, in turn, leads to destruction and social rupture. These vices cannot build \textit{The Zimbabwe We Want}.\textsuperscript{361}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{358} G. Mambipiri, “The Role of the Christian Communities in Government Matters”, \textit{Mukai - Journal for Zimbabwe}, No.42., 2008, p.11.
\item \textsuperscript{359} C.S.Banana, \textit{Politics of Repression and Resistance. Face to Face with Combat Theology}, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1996, p.78.
\item \textsuperscript{361} Zimbabwe Council of Churches, \textit{The Zimbabwe We Want}, 2006, p.8.
\end{itemize}
In *The Zimbabwe We Want* document, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Conference and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches attacked any form of violence:

> … and now, in common desire to bring an end to violence the church has come together to speak with one voice, one faith, in order to bring about the peaceful Zimbabwe that we all want.\(^{362}\)

On 6\(^{th}\) of June 2006 the churches, in the wake of increasing political violence, called on the government to restore peace and development. On that same evening, the Archbishop of Bulawayo held a service for justice and peace at St. Mary’s Catholic Cathedral. After that service, there was a peaceful, prayerful walk around the streets of Bulawayo in protest against violence and the maladministration of national coffers.”\(^{363}\)

In 2008 living standards in Zimbabwe deteriorated sharply. Civic and human rights groups accused the government of harassing charities, voluntary organizations and independent journalists and restricting fundamental rights of freedom of movement, free expression, equal protection of the law and access to the nation’s courts for redress.

### 4.17 The 2008 Presidential Run-off

This section will discuss the political paralysis that characterized the June 2008 elections. In the June 2008 presidential run-off the country witnessed a magnitude of violence only comparable to *Gukurahundi*. In order to cement his hold on power, the President used state security agents, party militias, and war veterans to intimidate the voters.

\(^{362}\) Ibid.

\(^{363}\) [www.zimsituation.com/06/06/06:3](http://www.zimsituation.com/06/06/06:3).
M. Ruzivo pointed out that another moment that was characterized by political violence was the time of the post-29th-March-2008 harmonized elections:

After the announcement of results, violence reared its ugly head in all provinces of the country. In the Chinhoyi diocese there were reports of violence in all its parishes. Those whose homes had been burned came to the cathedral seeking shelter and the Bishop created safe havens for them. Safe houses were also created by the MDC, whose supporters were the major victims, in a number of locations.364

The Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Conference, The Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches said that unpleasant instances of political intolerance, violence, impunity…continued to inflict a heavy toll on the general populace of Zimbabwe.365 In the wake of this, Zimbabwean churches called for an end to political violence. The Catholic Bishops issued a pastoral letter, Zimbabwe Elections 2008: Only When Power Stands Under God’s blessing can it be Trusted.366 This document came after the controversial pastoral letter God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed (2007). These two documents attacked and condemned political violence. The ZCBC urged political parties not to be provocative in their campaigns and to be magnanimous in victory and gracious in defeat.

On the 26th of May 2008 Pastor Goodwill Shana, the chairman of the Christian Leaders of Denominations in Zimbabwe, an organisation composed of Church leaders from the

365 www.huffintheapost.com22/04/08:3.
Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe and the ZCBC, appealed for peace and stability in Zimbabwe.

He stated:

...as a church we would like to see peace and, stability in the country. We are the church that is why with what is coming (presidential run-off) we have to bring a peaceful resolution to what is happening.367

His appeal was ignored.

Political tolerance is an important ingredient in the efforts towards democratic consolidation in Zimbabwe. The following text was released by the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Conference (ZCBC), The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) and The Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) expressing deep concern over the deteriorating situation with regard to politics, security, the economy and human rights in Zimbabwe following the national elections of March 29, 2008:

Before the elections, we issued statements urging Zimbabweans to conduct themselves peacefully and with tolerance towards those who held different views and political affiliation from one’s own. After the elections, we issued statements commending Zimbabweans for the generally peaceful and politically mature manner in which they conducted themselves before, during and soon after the elections.... Reports that are coming through to us from our Churches and members throughout the country indicate that the peaceful environment has, regrettably, changed:

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

People are being abducted, tortured, humiliated by being asked to repeat slogans of the political party they are alleged not to support, ordered to attend mass meetings where they are told they voted for the ‘wrong’

367 www.huffinthepost.com22/04/08:3.
candidate and should never repeat it in the run-off election for President, and, in some cases, people are murdered.\textsuperscript{368}

The Pre-Election No. 1 Press Statement on the \textit{Zimbabwean Harmonized Elections on 27\textsuperscript{th} March 20, 2008} by church leaders from the Regional Faith based Initiative Observer Mission read:

We appeal to political leaders to pursue the path of peace and to restrain their supporters from violence, during this period and after the elections. We also appeal to ZEC to speed up the process of election announcement.\textsuperscript{369}

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

The process of voter registration, access to the media and freedom to campaign by the opposition were somehow encumbered, to some extent, by the incumbent and agents of the ruling party, Zanu-PF. Uniformed forces openly intimidated the voter population in the days preceding the poll.\textsuperscript{370}

The events leading to Election Day play a critical role in determining the fairness or lack thereof of the election process. The above paralysis led to the Global Political Agreement that will be discussed below.

\subsection*{4.18 The Global Political Agreement}

The Global Political Agreement (GPA) was signed by Zanu-PF and the two MDC factions and provided for the formation of the Inclusive Government of Zimbabwe in

\textsuperscript{369} The Pre-Election No. 1 Press Statement on the Zimbabwean Harmonized Elections on 27\textsuperscript{th} March 20, 2008.
\textsuperscript{370} WCC/AACC report released in Nairobi. 6 May 2008.
February 2009. In order to break the impasse outlined above the Global Political Agreement of the 15th of September 2008, an agreement between Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF) and the two Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) factions on resolving the challenges facing Zimbabwe, acknowledged the need to:

Build a society free of violence, fear, intimidation, hatred, patronage,…and act in a manner that demonstrates respect for the democratic values of justice, fairness, openness, tolerance, equality, respect of all persons and human rights.\(^{371}\)

The Agreement recognized the security of persons and the need for prevention of violence as parties agreed to renounce and desist from the promotion and use of violence. The parties renounced political violence as a means of resolving political differences and attaining political ends. They agreed that there should be free political activity throughout Zimbabwe within the ambit of the law, in which all political parties were able to propagate their views and canvass for support, free of harassment and intimidation. This was recognition that violence dehumanized and engendered feelings of hatred and polarization within the country. This agreement will receive its greatest test in the forthcoming elections.

The years 2009-2010 have seen churches like the United Reformed Churches, the Episcopal Churches and the United Methodist Church in Zimbabwe joining other churches in condemning political violence through their official websites. On August 12 2009, the Episcopal Church posted on their website an article entitled “A Peaceful Nation” in which they advocated for the “creation of a commission to hear cases of political violence and determine punishment for perpetrators and compensation for

\(^{371}\) The Global Political Agreement, 15 September 2008: p1.
victims.” No such statements were received from the UCCZ. There is hardly anything on social or political involvement on its official website.

With some church leaders rightly expressing the role of the church in political violence in Zimbabwe there were some who argued otherwise concerning the church’s involvement in politics. Didymus Mutasa, the Administration Secretary of Zanu-PF, warned pastors against carrying the guns to the pulpit, suggesting that politicians should be left alone to deal with matters of running state affairs without interference from the churches. A. Kpanie opined that people of Mutasa’s calibre should be reminded:

the spiritual life cannot be separated from political community, cultural individual, economic and social life…it is clear that humanity does not stand in a vertical relationship with God and in horizontal relationship with his fellow men or politics.

The church would become irrelevant to people if it did not participate in challenging the social structures and economic organization that condemned people to poverty and humiliation.

The struggle for a violence-free Zimbabwe was not without its martyrs. Political violence in Independent Zimbabwe had its own ecclesiastical victims. Some Christians were forced to ‘carry the cross of suffering’ for the betterment of Zimbabweans. Allegations of adultery were levelled against the Roman Catholic Archbishop Pius Ncube. He was tarnished and demonized by the state press and was eventually silenced and withdrew from the public. Prominent church leaders such as Bishops Bakare, Mutume and

374 Ibid.
Ncube, who were perceived as critical of government experienced intimidation, harassment and political labelling. Many activist Christians were on the surveillance radar.

The Presbyterian Church was not spared from political violence:

In August 2004, the office of a Presbyterian pastor fiercely committed to the promotion of human rights was gutted by fire. It is not known who started the fire. Tests by officers from the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority ruled out any electrical fault. ‘Investigations’ by police have not yielded any results, while curiously the investigating officers on the case have been replaced. Parishioners are fearful for their pastors’ life as it is not far-fetched to ascribe the burning of the office to political motives.375

Cases of this nature were numerous throughout the country. The state agenda was to muzzle the church.

4.19 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that political violence has become entrenched in the state machinery of Zimbabwe. Political violence was employed as a political instrument - a continuation of political commerce - political violence was traded everywhere. It was a means for achieving goals in the same way as negotiation was in a democratic country. The church in Zimbabwe responded to political violence in various ways. Mostly the Catholic Bishops’ Conference was at the fore-front in condemning violence through its pastoral letters. P. Gundani argued that in the analysis of changing relations between the Catholic Church and state pastoral letters “are ready resources available for any study of the Catholic Church because they are published for public

consumption.” However, it is of significance that many Churches have joined in, though their materials are only available on their websites.

This chapter has argued that political violence must not be viewed in isolation, or viewed subjectively. There are a lot of symbols and signifiers that underlie how violence is either consciously or subconsciously created in a society. The Zimbabwe case highlights how political violence has been employed as a tool of political consolidation and the creation of new national identities.

Even though some Church leaders in Zimbabwe have been only too willing to accommodate the state’s agenda of political violence in order to silence multi-party democracy for the purpose of selfish gain, the majority of churches have embraced the prophetic ministry. A few church leaders have been self-serving and have abandoned the prophetic ministry. Events in Zimbabwe have clearly demonstrated that the Church is well-positioned to lead the way and motivate dialogue in a polarized society. The Church was in a similar position before, during second Chimurenga. It extricated itself from the dangers and excesses of colonialism.

In this political malaise the church has played a critical role in the political life of independent Zimbabwe. D.T. Muchena declared that:

…it is clear that the historical role of the church in Zimbabwe, its part in the liberation struggle, its ministry, its presence and its social role today place it at the centre of the search for national solutions in the country. It can play a

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meaningful role in bringing the country’s crisis to an end. Playing this role is an important component of the Church’s pastoral, partnership and prophetic functions. Indeed, the Church has been the conscience of society; it has castigated violence in favour of peace and dialogue. Consequently, the Church has given voice, self-respect and dignity to the Zimbabwean people.

The next chapter will present and analyse data collected through the questionnaires and interviews mentioned in Chapter One. It seeks to show the UCCZ theological understanding of political violence from the concrete life-experiences of its members.

5.0 CHAPTER FIVE: THE UCCZ AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present, analyse and interpret data collected through questionnaires and interview schedules on how the church responded to the politically-driven violence in post-Independent Zimbabwe. While Chapter Four analysed, in general, the churches’ response to political violence, this chapter will specifically present and analyse data from the UCCZ. We are moving from the general to the particular. Thus, the aim is to present the research findings as stated in the methodology section in Chapter One. Presenting and analyzing the data gathered is the climax of the whole research undertaking. G. Vulliamy states that “communicating the findings of research is arguably the most important aspect of the research process.”

The study sampled politicians, church leaders, reverends, employees of UCCZ, survivors of political violence and lay members of the church as shown by the table below. The participants’ Christological, Pneumatological, ecclesiastical, anthropological, and soteriological understanding of reality form the basis of this chapter. Politicians are relevant to this research mainly because they are directly involved in the implementation of government policies or they are trying to gain power. In this research, church leaders and reverends were critical participants as “men of God” or “women of God” who should be very instrumental in articulating the prophetic ministry challenging injustices and the shortcomings of the government and opposition parties on issues of political violence. In order to allow the phenomena to “speak for themselves”, the researcher targeted survivors of political violence. In pursuit of the demands of the topic to build theological

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perspectives, the key informants were Christians. This chapter seeks to find out whether members of the UCCZ were guided by Rene Girard's mimetic theory that Christ broke into the vicious circle of violence by taking upon himself the violence of humanity to pay back violence for violence?

Data gathered through questionnaires will be presented first, using tables structured around sub-problems for clarity. Data from interviews conducted to achieve data triangulation will follow. An analysis and interpretation of data will be made in light of the reviewed literature for possible synergy and where the findings supported or contradict literature on the topic the researcher indicates this. Data analysis and interpretation were carried out to assess whether the findings addressed the research problem adequately.

5.2 Questionnaires

As indicated in Chapter One, the researcher undertook to collect data through questionnaires with the aim of establishing the UCCZ’s theological perspectives on political violence. A questionnaire is a pre-formulated set of questions designed to flow chronologically while answering the research questions and paying attention to the objectives of the research. Questionnaires were used to obtain primary data. In drafting the questionnaires the principles of clarity and preciseness were strictly adhered to in order to enhance the quality of data collected. The questionnaires generated data in a


380 See Appendix 1.
very systematic and ordered fashion. Responses to the questions have been qualified, categorized and subjected to thematic analysis.

5.2.1 Questionnaire Participants

As indicated in Chapter One, fifty questionnaires were distributed during the UCCZ Annual General Meeting in November 2011 to a sampled population of fifty people, randomly sampled from the targeted population of two hundred and sixty people at Mount Selinda Mission - the mother church in Zimbabwe. The researcher also interviewed members outside the church who had useful information, Tendayi Chikuku of EDICESA and Dennis Mafinyani the secretary general of ZCC in 2010, as indicated in Chapter Four. Stratified random sampling was adopted because of the need to collect the views of smaller sub-groups of the UCCZ. In pursuit of the above, the researcher distributed fifty questionnaires to fifty respondents, who included the UCCZ reverends, ordinary members, employees and victims of political violence. The researcher was expecting to obtain a hundred-percent return from respondents. However, three questionnaires were not returned. Two of the respondents who did not return the questionnaires said they were suspicious of the intention of the questionnaire as it could result in them being arrested by state agents. Despite assurance from the researcher that the questionnaires would remain anonymous and were for academic purposes, the respondents became evasive and eventually said they had misplaced the questionnaires. This indicated that some church members were still gripped by fear and felt insecure. The researcher could not locate the third respondent and later learnt that she had gone home before the end of the meeting.
The results are captured in the table below:

Table 1: Sample of respondents on the distributed questionnaires.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY OF RESPONDENT</th>
<th>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UCCZ Reverend</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of UCCZ</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCCZ Employee</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affected Member</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-returner</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistics in Table 1 above show the participation of key stakeholders in the UCCZ. According to the respondents, sixteen of them were reverends in the church, seventeen were ordinary members of the church, five were employees of the church and nine were members affected by political violence. The questionnaire was representative of the devotees across the hierarchy of the UCCZ.

5.2.2 Participants Who Witnessed Political Violence

The question focused on drawing out information on Christians who witnessed political violence. Members of UCCZ who participated in violence will be analysed in section
5.2.10. Thirteen of the sixteen reverends sampled said they had witnessed political violence. Thus, 26% of the total research sample for all categories witnessed political violence. Twelve of the seventeen ordinary church members sampled acknowledged that they witnessed political violence. This represents 24% of the total research sample and 70.6% of ordinary church members sampled. Four of the five employees sampled witnessed political violence and they most likely witnessed it at UCCZ institutions.

It should be realised that the present situation in Zimbabwe is one in which the church has no choice about whether to engage with violence or not. Its members have already been engulfed by the violence. Violence is a reality in Zimbabwe and it affects Christians as well. Political violence also visited areas under control of the church. Nine members of the church were affected by political violence. Their testimonies form the core of this chapter. All these categories of respondents totalling 38/50, translating to 68% of the total population sample, witnessed political violence as shown below:

Table 2: Participants Who Witnessed Political Violence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY OF RESPONDENT</th>
<th>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCCZ Reverend</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of UCCZ</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCCZ Employee</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affected Member</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 above shows that political violence was ubiquitous. The majority of the respondents witnessed political violence. Only 32% did not witness political violence and the percentage includes questionnaires that were not returned. Pacifists, as pointed out in Chapter One, would argue that the ubiquity of violence was countered by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount with the image of non-violence.

James McClendon and John Howard Yoder, both theologians whose works are reviewed in Chapter Two, considered the use of violence to be inconsistent with Christian faith. The two scholars were simply negative about the use of violence. Christians had to be involved in social justice but they did not use the methods of violence in struggle. McClendon’s and Yoder’s oversimplification of the complex problem of violence would lead to a superficial theology in Zimbabwe.

### 5.2.3 Political Violence Witnessed by the Respondents

Question Two (d) focused on drawing out information on the political violence witnessed by the UCCZ since independence in 1980. Political violence has spread over the years; Christians were fighting a cancer that was spreading and refusing to go away.

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Political violence has been an unwelcome visitor in the Zimbabwe’s political landscape since independence. The occurrence of political violence in peoples’ daily life is something that is common; this is shown by the questionnaire results of the research.

5.2.3.1 **Gukurahundi**

Eight respondents witnessed *Gukurahundi* violence. The UCCZ has churches in Matabeleland and the Midlands provinces where the most heinous atrocities were committed by both state security forces and ‘dissidents’. The UCCZ churches in both provinces are in urban centres, such as Bulawayo, Gweru and Hwange, while most of the violence was concentrated in the rural areas. However, two of the pastors who witnessed the atrocities were not pastors by the time *Gukurahundi* occurred. They were laymen when they witnessed *Gukurahundi*. The questionnaire could not ascertain whether they were practising Christians by then. Their interpretation is now through the spectacles of trained clergymen. Five ordinary members of the church and one employee also witnessed political violence. The low percentage of 16% is largely explicable by the small number of churches in the Matabeleland and Midlands rural areas of the country. Be that as it may, this is not enough to exonerate the church. The absence of any public rebuke of the state while the church was busy winning converts is tantamount to irresponsibility.

The church has a responsibility to champion the rights of political victims and affect positively both the spiritual and earthly realms. “The disciples…must not only think of heaven; they have an earthly task as well,” writes D. Bonhoeffer, “now that they are
bound exclusively to Jesus they are told to look at the earth whose salt they are.”\textsuperscript{382} This is what Chitando and Togarasei, as highlighted in Chapter Two, bemoaned: “Sermons in some Zimbabwean churches continued to focus mainly on how to go to heaven at the expense of addressing political violence as an integral part of the mission of the church.”\textsuperscript{383} Theological rigidity in terms of challenging the state forced most churches to abdicate their social responsibility by focusing on the next world. The Church became otherworldly. All political Christologies focus their reading of Jesus in his prophetic proclamation of the reign of God: 'The reign of God is at hand: repent and believe in the gospel' (Mark 1:15). This proclamation was inclusive of all, but especially of the 'little ones': the poor and the persecuted, those who suffer and mourn, the ones who work for justice, the merciful and the peace-makers (Matt 5:3-10). Political Christologies emphasize that these kingdom-values involve both personal and social conversion. They challenge the violence and selfishness that oppress human lives and they invite people to a new way of life together. The Church too stands in need of ecclesial conversion: to return to the kingdom-values by confronting its own tendencies to opt other-worldly views. The Church was not visible as an institution in challenging the state during the political crisis. Various scholars have written about the Gukurahundi era and have shown that it was characterized by vicious brutality as shown in Chapter Four above.

\textbf{5.2.3.2 RENAMO and Chimwenje Political Violence}


Five of the informants responded that they had witnessed RENAMO political violence. These included three pastors, one member and one employee. The general average age of respondents of about 25 years explains why people could not answer that they had witnessed RENAMO political violence. Most of the respondents were too young to understand what was going on during the spree of atrocities engineered by RENAMO in the Eastern border areas of Zimbabwe.

Only four respondents witnessed the Chimwenje political violence of the 1980s. Chimwenje atrocities took place during the height of RENAMO war with the result that they were hardly recognizable. One respondent, a pastor, remarked that “it was a fictitious group created by government media to tarnish our colleague Rev Ndabaningi Sithole.” This observation is similar to that made by Kaulemu:

> It is not difficult to see how violence became part of Zanu-PF strategy. Ever since it engaged in the struggle for independence, Zanu-PF has developed the structures, language, and agencies of politically inspired violence against its opponents.³⁸⁴

Sithole was a victim of governmental politically-motivated violence and a media smear campaign as explained in Chapter Four. Two pastors, one member and one employee made up this category of respondents who witnessed Chimwenje.

### 5.2.3.3 Elections and Political Violence in the 1980s and 1990s

Zimbabwe had two elections in the 1980s: the 1980 and 1985 elections. Zanu (Ndonga), Reverend Sithole’s party, got a number of votes in 1980 and won a seat in

the 1985 elections, as shown in Chapter Four, in its stronghold of Chipinge where the UCCZ has most of its churches and members. The UCCZ Reports to the 36th Synod Annual General Meeting indicate that the Eastern Conference, referred to in Chapter Three, has 32 churches, 26 of which are in Chipinge district. Zanu-PF has always viewed political competition with suspicion and open hostility. Its leadership has always been highly commandist, expecting unconditional conformity and accepting no rivalry. It was in this context that the Youth League was created. It brooked no opposition to Mugabe’s leadership from within the party and from opposition political parties. The prevalence of political violence in elections in the 1980s is indicated by the 28% of the respondents compared to 10% who witnessed Renamo violence during the same period. Seven pastors, four ordinary members of the church, two employees and one victim of political violence witnessed election violence in the 1980s.

16% of the respondents witnessed political violence during elections in the 1990s. Two political parties appeared to threaten the dominance of Zanu-PF in the 1990s: the Forum Party led by Enoch Dumbutshena and the Zimbabwe Unity Movement of Edgar Tekere, as shown in Chapter Four. Zimbabwe was virtually a one party state in the 1990s as both political parties failed to break Zanu-PF dominance. Democratic space was closed. Opposition political parties were labelled as enemies of the state to be annihilated. The onus was on the Youth League to propel the party into winning the elections at all costs. On the campaign trail the youth engaged in toyi-toyi, an intimidating military-style war march, chanting party slogans, and denouncing and threatening the opposition.
5.2.3.4 Elections and Political Violence in the 2000s

Respondents overwhelmingly attested to the prevalence of political violence in elections in the 2000s. 62% of the respondents characterized the 2000s as times of political violence. In the run-up to the 2000 parliamentary elections the Zanu-PF Youth League joined with another party-sponsored organization, the Zimbabwe Liberation War Veterans’ Association, allies of the ruling party and unflinching supporters of the land occupations. Both groups went on a killing spree which targeted opposition members and white commercial farmers and their property. The opposition did not fold its hands and ‘turn the other cheek’ - the country was plunged into an orgy of political violence. Political violence also helped President Mugabe to beat Morgan Tsvangirai of the MDC by 50% to 42% in the 2002 presidential election.385

A summary of the political violence witnessed by the respondents is tabulated below.

Table 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLITICAL VIOLENCE WITNESSED</th>
<th>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gukurahundi</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renamo</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chimwenje</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elections in the 1980s</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows the respondents who witnessed political violence from 1980s to 2000s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1990s</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elections in the 1990s</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elections after 2000</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Occupations after</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the above</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-return, not filled</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 29th of March 2005 NGO Forum’s Political Violence Report reported:

At least 16 villagers from Chipinge South (Mariya and Zamchiya areas) fled their homes into Mozambique after they were allegedly brutally attacked by Zanu-PF supporters and youth militia for supporting the opposition MDC. Apparently about 15 youths travelling in a Mazda B1800 truck belonging to Enoch Porusingazi, the Zanu-PF Parliamentary candidate for Chipinge South Constituency in the forthcoming elections, went about raiding homes of suspected MDC supporters, assaulting everyone they saw including children and the elderly. It is further reported that the truck was being driven by Porusingazi's chief campaign manager, Simon Mapfumo. One of the victims, Olismos Mutseyami of Ward 25 in Mariya, allegedly spent 8 days in Mozambique. It is claimed that the police took no action and that Porusingazi has provided the police with a base at his complex, which also houses the youth militia. Among the people who fled are Edgar Nyika, Cadman Chapu, Chimene Chapu, Gultone Maronga, Austin Mlambo, John Maphakame and Hlabati. Mutseyami reports that the Zanu-PF youths raided his house while he was away and on learning that he was away, they allegedly assaulted his wife Leslie Mushunje and 3 other victims including Itayi Sithole and James Dhliwayo who were rushed to Mutare by other party members after the assault. A report was made to the police but so far, nothing has been done.\(^{386}\)

\(^{386}\) The 29 March 2005 NGO Forum’s Political Violence Report.
According to D. J. Francis, the state can be a source of threat to the security of the people. The Zimbabwean governing institutions such as the military, police, youth brigades and intelligence agents became viable instruments of destruction in the hands of the ruling party. They coerced the large sections of the population into submission and clamped down on the opposition MDC. The creation and arming of the Green Bombers, a Zanu-PF militia, along with the war veterans was well calculated to arrest the current winds of change and sabotage the opposition and any successive government. A Green Bomber was quoted in the local paper as saying, “We’re Zanu-PF’s ‘B’ team. The army is the ‘A’ team, and we do the things government does not want the ‘A’ team to do.” They acted with absolute impunity. The 2005 parliamentary elections were also violent.

G. Nzongola-Ntalaja argues that “in themselves elections do not ensure democracy.” They can be manipulated through rules of the game that reduce the chances for fairness and by electoral fraud. The above statement is relevant to the context of violent elections in Zimbabwe in 2008. The 2008 Parliamentary and Presidential elections were characterized by political violence and intolerance. The State unleashed untold violence on the opposition, killing and displacing many Zimbabweans. The results of the elections were disputed. Announcement of results of the first round of the 2008 presidential elections was deliberately delayed by more than two months, thus heightening political tension amid fears of rigging and manipulation. Tsvangirai, who

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had won the first round of the vote, was eventually forced to boycott the run-off poll of the 27th of June 2008 by violence inflicted on his supporters, and blamed on security forces.\textsuperscript{390} There arose the need to restore normalcy and to reconcile people, after the election failed to produce an ultimate winner, and to consider the prospects of forming a coalition government. The leaders of the church were committed to help the country achieve normalcy. The church through its various representative bodies continued pushing for a negotiated settlement which culminated in the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU).

5.2.3.5 Violent Land Occupations

32\% percent of the sampled population witnessed the violent land occupations which began in 2000. The land question has always been, and remains, at the core of Zimbabwe’s political, economic and social development - it is the linchpin of the economy. Indeed, now as in the past, it remains at the root of the political tension within the country and with the former colonial power, Britain. It is an issue which has been discussed in many forums in and outside Zimbabwe. The Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe is viewed as having two major phases. The first phase in 1980-1997 was slow but orderly. The second phase was “comprehensive but disorderly and controversial phase was between 2000 and 2002 when 11 million hectares were confiscated from 4000 white farmers…”\textsuperscript{391}


Many people in Zimbabwe realized the urgency for land reform, but questioned the chaotic and violent manner in which it was done. The UNDP (2000) Report revealed that six thousand white farmers owned 42% of Zimbabwe’s productive farmlands and up to only 35% of the farmland was utilized. The information made available by the UNDP reveals that politics brings unfair treatment of the people, because it is all about struggle for control of interest. The conflict in Zimbabwe has been of epic proportions. Regardless of the time frame and configuration, conflict and its aftermath routinely lead to the breakdown of coping mechanisms, with vulnerable groups often being the hardest hit. As indicated by the above statistics, the majority of Zimbabweans did not have land to farm; this then contributed to the suffering of the vulnerable groups of society.

The church supported the idea of giving back the land to its rightful owners, as is proven by the publication of Reverend S. Bakare's book, “My Right to Land”, reviewed in Chapter Two, which was sponsored by the Zimbabwe Council of Churches. The publication clearly points out that the land situation in Zimbabwe was a necessity and suggests ways of reversing the situation. After a Conference on Land Reform in Zimbabwe in 2000 the ZCC passed resolutions which included that of carrying out an audit on the Government's Land Reform, intended to determine whether it benefited the targeted beneficiaries who are the masses of Zimbabwe.

The prevalence of political violence shown above tallies with the ZCC’s observation that:

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393 The Zimbabwe We Want, p.2.
It is well to remember that the liquidation of colonialism in Africa did not automatically deliver genuine participatory democracy. One of the consequences of Africa’s flirting with one party states, whether de facto or de jure, was to prevent, or at least delay, democracy, both in theory and practice from taking root. Zimbabwe, as a fledgling democracy that is still grappling with the teething problems of this phenomenon, is no exception. Unpleasant instances of political intolerance, violence, impunity and lack of transparency and accountability continue to rear their ugly head within our evolving national democratic culture. Throughout the post-independence period the country has not been able to respond adequately to the fundamental challenges of mobilizing consensus on constitutional and governance arrangements and the forging of a shared national vision and values.  

The violence that was experienced in the country was largely by the state against the citizenry.

However, there are some scholars who criticize aspects of The Zimbabwe We Want. For example, E. Chitando and M. Manyonganise argued that:

Although The Zimbabwe We Want initiative could not sustain a high profile, it represents a significant stage in post-colonial church-state relations. Through it, the church was saying that if politicians, including those charged with the responsibility of providing a vision for the nation, failed to execute their duties, the church would step in to assist in the process. In order to forestall the charge of dabbling in politics, the churches strategically called it, a ‘discussion document’.  

There is no question that The Zimbabwe We Want was a step in the right direction for the church in Zimbabwe.

5.2.4 Forms of Political Violence Witnessed
The research also focused on drawing out information on the forms of political violence witnessed in Zimbabwe. The report shows that many of the respondents had encountered some form of violence, with most harbouring bitter feelings or struggling to cope with the after-effects of the violence. These forms of political violence range from rape cases to murder. In response to this, a Reverend pointed out that “opposition activists were abducted and beaten. There was burning of houses during Gukurahundi, the elections in the 1980s, the 1990s 2000s and the land occupations.” A member of the UCCZ writes of “shooting in Matabeleland and Midlands during Gukurahundi and beatings after the 2008 elections.” Another member wrote about “political killings during Gukurahundi.” Three respondents reported beatings and displacement of people from their original homes and all categories of political violence. Others were being abducted, raped and ‘misplaced’ from their homes.  A Reverend of the UCCZ reported being “displaced by the Renamo war” and wrote of people being killed in banditry wars. A member of the church reported “kupiswa kwedzimba, kuurawa kwevanhu” (burning of houses and killing of people) in the 1980s. During elections in the 1980s, a Reverend in an urban setting said, “people were tortured in their houses, forced to go and attend political meetings and close their market stalls.” One respondent reported that “people were beaten up and forced to attend political rallies in the 1990s elections” while another was writing about “killings, destruction of property and houses.” “People were burnt to ashes in the land grabs and 2000 elections”, said one respondent. Another respondent said people were being “tortured in their homes and were beaten so that they would go and vote.” A respondent wrote about “farm invasion
by people and war veterans” during the land occupations of 2000. In the elections after 2000 “people were forced to attend political meetings and beaten up randomly”, said an employee of the UCCZ. A victim of political violence of the 2000s reported witnessing “people being skinned alive, houses being burnt, torture of people and I was also tortured.” People were tortured, beaten and even killed during the violent land occupations.

According to Amani Trust, the Network of Independent Monitors (South Africa) and Physicians for Human Rights, the average number of selected politically-motivated human rights violations (excluding commercial farm violence) in 2000-2001 was as follows: 396

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Summary of politically-motivated human rights violations:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 February to 26 June 2000: per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Assaults</th>
<th>569</th>
<th>176</th>
<th>192</th>
<th>548</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detention/Abduction</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault Threats</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death Threats</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Offences</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displacement</td>
<td>&gt;2000</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>&gt;4000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows that Zimbabwe was engulfed in political crisis characterized by sophisticated violence. Alistair Kee’s concept of violence, articulated in Chapter One, is that it is excessive, unrestrained or unjustifiable use of force, which is always evil. Jesus boldly proclaimed the kingdom in the face of opposition and was then led to his death in a state of utter human depravity. The UCCZ’s own identification with the dangerous and suffering Jesus shook them out of their complacency, enabled them to feel empathy with the victims of history, and then empower them to be proclaimers of God’s reign in our own lives, the Church and society at large.

5.2.5 Rating the relationship between the UCCZ and Government

The rating of the UCCZ is of paramount importance in this research because it demonstrates whether the church could be characterized as pro-active or not. The researcher carried out an investigation on the involvement of the UCCZ in the prophetic ministry. The respondents were required to respond, indicating whether the church’s involvement was very good, good, not good or suspicious. The summary of the findings is tabulated below.

Only 20% of the respondents thought that the UCCZ’s relationship with government during this period of political crisis was very good. This low percentage of 20% is a serious indictment of the church - it indicates lethargy on the part of the UCCZ. This is matched by the response given in Question Seven where they lowly scaled the UCCZ’s effectiveness. The church has been largely absent as a force against political violence. The majority of the respondents in this category were ordinary church members. Only two pastors categorized the relationship as very good.

The results of the survey show that 54% of the participants characterized the relationship as good. A church whose relationship is characterized as such in the middle of violence is failing to follow its mandate of being the salt and light of the earth - the church should have a preservative influence on the community. Only 10% of the respondents said the relationship was not good. There is hardly any recognizable member of the church who championed and upheld the cause of the survivors of political violence. Another 10% of the respondents characterized the relationship as suspicious. The state cannot be suspicious of a church that does not question its
nefarious activities. The church must always be in a position to make moral judgements, even on political matters, when fundamental human rights are violated.

Table 5: Summary of views on involvement of the UCCZ in the prophetic ministry:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship between Government and UCCZ</th>
<th>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Good</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspicious</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-return</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.6 Why Relationship was as Rated in Question 4.

Question Five was a follow up to Question Four that sought to obtain reasons for rating the church as indicated in question 4 above. Respondents provided various reasons ranging from “I did not witness anything bad between them” to “we are working well in areas like education and health since we run schools and hospitals together.” It is very interesting to note that the respondent who gave the former statement indicated earlier on that he witnessed violence during elections after the year 2000. The latter response exonerates political violence as long as the church and the state are co-operating in
critical areas of education and health. The respondent also witnessed violence during the elections after the year 2000. An informant who also witnessed violence after the year 2000 argued that “in terms of church gatherings there is greater freedom of expression when undertaking our Christian endeavours.” In spite of the respondent’s views, political violence and religious freedom do not go hand in glove. Religious freedom freezes in an environment of political violence. It is instructive to note that this view is from a Christian affected by political violence.

Other respondents argued that since there were no complaints from either government or church it was fair to characterize the relationship as “very good.” One respondent said there had never been “any bad blood between the government and the UCCZ.” However, Mnangagwa’s allegations, referred to earlier in Chapter Four, that the Rev Ndabaningi Sithole was recruiting hundreds of students from Mount Selinda and Chikore High Schools, was a direct attack on the integrity of the church as a religious institution.398

In a typical misunderstanding of Calvinism, some respondents said religion and politics did not mix. In other words, the church was an apolitical institution: it was a separate entity. Often people think that religion must be kept separate from politics. The church is seen as concerned with things that are clean, holy and exalted. On the other hand, politics is dirty - dealing with ‘worldly’ things. The preacher should, therefore, leave

398 The Midlands Observer, Friday 5 December 1986.
politics and social life to politicians, particularly the government. This is a wrong interpretation of Calvin’s teachings because religion and politics are intricately interwoven.

5.2.7 Church Stance in Dealing with Political Violence

The respondents were asked to choose among the following three options as the way forward to ‘solve’ the problem of political violence: Only Pray, Ignore the Violence and Engage the Parties Concerned. President Robert Mugabe on several occasions in the media made statements that the church should only be praying and advising the government. He emphasized that the church should not be involved in politics. In his scheme, questioning the rationale of political violence is tantamount to dabbling into politics. The outcome of the responses on this sub-question of the research seems to be concurring with President Mugabe’s remarks. The view of 36% of the respondents is that the role of the church is only to pray and not to challenge the government in any way. Calvin’s theology rejects this stance with conviction; the church has a right to challenge the state if it goes beyond the mandate to govern righteously. What is of particular interest is that five of the victims of political violence share the view that prayer alone is the answer to political violence.

One affected member commented on the structured questionnaire:

The church is a praying organization which does not want to be associated with any political issues. The Holy Spirit answers all our prayers.

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399 E. Chitando, “Prayers, Politics and Peace: the Church’s Role in Zimbabwe’s Crisis,” in Zimbabwe at the Crossroads, Openspace, Issue 1, June 2011, p.44.
The third Person of the Trinity through whom God acts, reveals His will, empowers individuals, was the focus of respondents in the midst of political violence. The Spirit intercedes. In the time of a believer’s weakness, the Holy Spirit takes the believer’s groanings and intercedes on his behalf (Rom. 8:26). The Father understands the intercession of the Spirit and answers the prayer and works all things together for good in the believer’s life because the Spirit has interceded for the child of God (Rom. 8:28). The same word regarding intercession is used of Christ in His intercessory work (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25). Just as Christ intercedes on behalf of believers, so the Spirit also intercedes for them. One is again reminded: an inanimate entity could not intercede for others; a person intercedes.

Also in this category were three pastors. In their opinion, prayer is efficacious and is the only weapon at the disposal of Christians.

Twenty-four out fifty of the responses, amounting to 48% of the entire research sample, indicated that the church should engage the parties involved whenever there was political violence. Half of the respondents in this category were church pastors. Religious leaders, as the moral and spiritual compasses in their communities, have the moral and spiritual authority to warn those who commit violence and invite them back to the peaceful moral path. This gives church leaders a considerable degree of leverage and a significant impact on changing the violent behaviour of belligerents.
The same view is shared by eight ordinary members of the church, three victims of political violence and one employee of the UCCZ.

Table 6: Summary of ways in dealing with political violence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANCE ON POLITICAL VIOLENCE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only Pray</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignore the Violence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage the parties concerned</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-return and paper not filled</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows the stance of the UCCZ in dealing with political violence.

5.2.8 Effectiveness of UCCZ in Dealing with Political Violence on Scale of 1-10

Question Seven is closely related to Question Four above. Asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the UCCZ in dealing with political violence on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the strongest, the respondents provided the following information:
It is interesting that twenty-five participants rated the church below five out of ten in its effectiveness in tackling political violence in the country. Among the participants were ten pastors. This is a challenge for the church to be more actively involved in issues bedevilling its members. It is a wake-up call to duty and responsibility. In this regard, the UCCZ is seen as largely ineffective. Much needs to be done to address political violence and the confidence of members in the church. The church needs to give its members the tools to deal with its problems.

A total of twenty-three respondents rated the UCCZ between six and ten in terms of its effectiveness as an institution relevant to the interests of the community. Some respondents were contradictory because they indicated that violence was rampant and the country was sliding into political instability and chaos. Among the respondents in this category were two survivors of political violence.
Table 7: Summary of rating of the effectiveness of the UCCZ in dealing with political violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EFFECTIVENESS OF UCCZ IN DEALING WITH POLITICAL VIOLENCE ON A SCALE OF 1-10</th>
<th>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-return</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows that the sample population did not think that the UCCZ was effective in dealing with political violence.

5.2.9 Causes of Violence in Areas of Operation

Question Eight sought to find out what the participants thought were the causes of political violence in their areas of operation. Insights from the respondents were illuminating and pointed to political machinations.

The fingers of the majority pointed to the ruling party as the sponsor of political violence. One respondent put this in a succinct way:

The government forced all Zimbabweans to fall under one political entity called Zanu-PF. Registered political parties are portrayed as enemies of the state.

Other respondents went so far as to say Zanu-PF caused violence because it had lost the elections. The only elections Zanu-PF lost were the March 2008 presidential elections in which Mugabe lost to Tsvangirai. Other respondents said forcing people to attend political rallies was the major cause of violence. The most trying issue for Christians was attending the rallies against their will.

In the same vein, one respondent wrote:
At Chikore Mission people were forced to attend meetings and when some refused the war veterans moved from door to door beating up those who remained in their homes.

The violence of the elections after 2000 had an immense impact on many people in the country. Zanu-PF and opposition political parties were fighting for members and for this reason they resorted to violence.

While the majority of the respondents commented on the elections after 2000 one respondent said the “the invasion by Renamo was the major cause of violence in independent Zimbabwe.” Although the researcher could not verify who started the violence it appeared Zanu-PF would benefit most from the chaos. Violence fitted the philosophy of the ruling party, that wanted to remain in power at all costs and its claim to be the party of liberation. In some cases the opposition was behind the violence most of which was retaliatory violence.

Inter-party violence has been reproduced in conflict within both the ruling and opposition parties. L. Sachikonye argues that although intra-party violence did not reach the same level of virulence leading to fatal outcomes as inter-party violence, it could be serious and brutal.400

D. Kaulemu argues:

> In our system, political leaders are very powerful and influential. The political realm dominates everything: economics, health, education, culture, and religion. Any advancement in one area is automatically interpreted in narrow party-political terms.401

The CCJP 2009 pastoral letter *Graveyard Governance* reports that in Buhera:

One Sunday word came that nobody was supposed to go to Church but attend the Zanu-PF rally at the base. That Sunday youths armed with sjamboks ran riot in the village threatening everyone who would not attend the rally... The atmosphere was tense with speaker after speaker preaching violence against those who had voted for MDC in the March election. …then they asked for those who had voted for MDC in March and many confessed in public. Those who did so were asked why they decided to leave the party which liberated them. 402

The citations above show the lack of the rule of law and the dominance of the ruling party in all sectors of society.

5.2.10 The Church and the Violent Land Occupation

Question Nine intended to find out the position of the UCCZ on the violent land occupation in 21st century Zimbabwe. Respondents were given space to provide comments on the question.

22% of the respondents commented that the UCCZ did not establish a position. This means the church sanctioned the land occupations through silence – silence was tantamount to supporting what was happening at that time. Since the gospel is concerned with our lives, with love for God and our neighbours, the UCCZ should have an indispensable message for our political life. It is a delusion to believe that some churches are not involved in land politics. All churches have influence. By their silence

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402 The CCJP, *Graveyard Governance*, p.58.
churches support and promote the government’s actions. By saying nothing they are supporting what is happening and sanction it by silence. The UCCZ wanted to have a common understanding with the two sides – the violent side and the side of the victims. This church was sitting on the fence - it was vacillating with two different positions. The UCCZ never commented on what was happening. It should be noted that areas adjacent to Chikore Mission, Mt Selinda Mission, Gwenzi, Beacon Hill and Emerald Hill which were owned by white commercial farmers were invaded by war veterans and people largely from overpopulated mission areas. Some of the invaded areas were the Vheremu, Mahlasera, Smallden, Chiriga and Musirizwi areas.

In fact, some members of the UCCZ were involved in the land occupations and the attendant violence. Tenants in mission areas are largely members of the UCCZ. Only converts were apportioned areas to live in during the colonial era.

This violence in religion concurs with Lefebure’s observation that:

...the history of religions is steeped in blood, war, sacrifice, and scapegoating. While many interpreters of religion have focused on the constructive role of religion in human life, the brutal facts of the history of religions impose the stark realization of the intertwining of religion and violence: violence, clothed in religious garb, has repeatedly cast a spell over religion and culture, luring countless “decent” people - from unlettered peasants to learned priests, preachers, and professors - into its destructive dance.403

The UCCZ did not establish a position on this critical national resource. One respondent summarized this in a succinct way: “The UCCZ did not want to cause more fire. By taking a position you worsen the situation.”

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the church was guilty of possessing derelict land that they had received from their colonial colleagues.

13% of the 50 respondents said the church issued statements regarding the violent land occupations. Of the 13 respondents 8 were pastors, 2 were ordinary members, 1 was an employee of the church and 2 were members affected by violence. To support their response the 13 respondents said the following: the church issued statements through ZCC, but the statements did not produce any positive results. One pastor said the church uttered a statement under the facilitation of the ZCC, the EFZ, the Catholic Bishops Conference and Union for the Development of Apostolic Churches in Zimbabwe- Africa (UDACIZA).

Three respondents pointed out that the church backed the government during the land redistribution programme. “The church was caught in an embarrassing position of tacit approval of the land redistribution program and did not agree with the violence,” commented a member of the church. One pastor commented: “The church was afraid to confront perpetrators.” Indeed, to some extent the church supported the land occupation by its silence and timidity in the face of the immoral and illegal land occupation exercise. There was bound to be some unrest resulting from the glaring inequitable distribution of land. This situation was morally indefensible and certainly needed to be corrected.
The following table illustrates the responses of the respondents:

**Table 8: Summary of attitudes towards the violent land occupations:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position on violent land occupation</th>
<th>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Backed the government</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watched and did not establish a position</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issued statements</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not filled in</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-return</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The only meaningful documented response from the church came through the ZCC.

The ZCC, of which the UCCZ is member, in their 2006 document *The Zimbabwe We Want* showed support for land reform but not the manner it was done:

…the agrarian structure before independence was highly inequitable, largely along racial lines. This situation continued late into the 90s. …This situation was morally indefensible and certainly needed to be corrected. However, the process of correcting this situation has been fraught with controversy,
violence and was accompanied by a lot of pain, leaving our society highly polarized.\footnote{The Zimbabwe We Want, p.36.}

The citation above is an indictment and castigation of the method of land redistribution and the political violence that was attendant throughout the whole programme.

The fast-track land redistribution was initially aimed at de-congesting communal lands. In the later stages, it was extended to incorporate the creation of an indigenous commercial farming sector. During this land identification and acquisition phase, land was acquired by force in accordance with the Land Acquisition Act (chapter 20:10) as amended. The following categories of land were targeted for acquisition:-

- Derelict and under-utilized land.
- Land under multiple ownership.
- Foreign owned land.
- Land contiguous to communal areas.

Land excluded from acquisition fell into the following categories:-

- Plantation farms engaged in the large-scale production of tea, coffee, timber, citrus fruit, sugar cane etc.
- Agro-industrial properties involved in the integrated production, processing and/or marketing of poultry, beef and dairy products, and seed multiplication.
- Properties with Export Processing Zone (EPZ) permits and those with Zimbabwe Investment Centre (ZIC) certificates.
- Farms belonging to church or mission organisations.
- Farms subject to Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements.

Most of the farms around Mt Selinda and Chikore missions fell into the category of large-scale production of tea, coffee, timber, citrus fruit and beef and dairy products but they were not spared by the war veterans and landless invaders.

5.2.11 The Way Forward to Create Harmony in the Community

This research also focused on drawing out information on how political conflict and its effects could be 'solved' in the community. We should bear in mind that Girard's theory, which informs this study, stipulates that only biblical revelation takes the side of the victim and exposes the mechanisms of violence so that they may be overcome:

Violence is not to be denied, but it can be diverted into another object, something it can sink its teeth into. Such, perhaps, is one of the meanings of the story of Cain and Abel. God's judgement in favour of Abel (shows) that Cain is a murderer, whereas his brother is not.  

Respondents were required to provide views on how political victims, perpetrators of violence and the general populace should be helped. The cessation of violence has presented an opportunity for Zimbabweans to rehabilitate and reconstruct their communities. It has become apparent that cessation of conflict does not mean cessation of struggle for the people of Zimbabwe. The researcher found out that the conflict has had an adverse effect on the people in the communities of Mt Selinda Mission and Chikore Mission. The mechanism of reciprocal violence can be described as a vicious circle. Girard postulated that:

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To escape from the circle it is first necessary to remove from the scene all those forms of violence that tend to become self-propagating and to spawn new, imitative forms.\footnote{Ibid., p.86.}

There is need to find new peace-loving role models in society for others to imitate. The following information summarizes the response from the population sample.

5.2.12 Survivors of Political Violence

There is much that churches have to do in order to ensure justice, care and proper reintegration for political victims. Responses from informants varied as to how the UCCZ should help the victims of political violence. Some respondents suggested counselling, psycho-therapy and healthcare for the victims so that ‘they will have a normal life’. One respondent advised that the church should “source aid to facilitate the maimed or disabled to rebuild their lives and advocate compensation.” Compensation is usually the responsibility of the guilty party; the respondent had earlier said that violence was unleashed by the ruling party. The church is this case was not guilty of violence and should, therefore, not pay compensation. There was no problem with the church assisting the victims to live a normal life. Commenting on empowering ex-combatants of the war of liberation, EDICESA noted:

Some churches offered personnel and established training institutions that were aimed at empowering the former combatants. Some could be said to have merely sat back as spectators in the whole process.\footnote{EDICESA, Moving People from Conflict to Peace in Eastern and Southern Africa, Harare: EDICESA Publications, 1998, p.24.}
While the UCCZ should do more, many victims who needed medical help were assisted in mission hospitals. Counselling services are also available at Mt Selinda and Chikore Mission hospitals.

Other respondents suggested that the church should encourage political victims to ignore what happened in the past and move on with their lives. They called for income generating projects for long term sustainability. This would encourage political victims to acquire the basic skills of self-reliance. In addition, such initiatives would go a long way to assist them in the ongoing struggles to feed their families.

5.2.13 Perpetrators of Political Violence

Question Ten (B) sought to find out the position of the respondents on what the church should do to perpetrators of political violence. Opinions varied from pardoning the perpetrators to prosecuting them.

The majority of the respondents called for a Truth Commission reminiscent of the South African one formed soon after South African independence in 1994. Those who confessed should be pardoned but those who committed murder should be prosecuted. There should be a Truth Commission and prosecution to establish what really happened so that the victims have closure. We should be mindful of Joseph Allen’s argument, mentioned in Chapter Two, that both victim and wrongdoer are children of God and thereby have equal human worth. Once we view the conflict of wrongdoers and wronged from the perspective of God’s inclusive covenant, we do not have the option of

rejecting the wrongdoer. Dealing with both wrongdoer and victim should be guided by Jesus’ teaching of love.

Other informants pushed for the church to join the national healing campaigns by government. According to one respondent, introducing massive forgiveness campaigns to educate perpetrators on the repercussions of violence was essential:

They should be told that what they did was bad and is against the will of God our Creator. They need to be taught to read the Bible with special emphasis on verses that relate to what they did. They also need to be told the repercussions of violence.

Thus, the church has to preach the gospel of repentance to them that they might receive Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. The informants went on to suggest educating the perpetrators of violence concerning the biblical position on violence. God wants people to live in harmony and peace. Perpetrators of violence should be educated on the pros and cons of violence.

Other respondents went to the extreme of suggesting that the church should help agents of the law to identify the culprits and have them arrested and prosecuted. Punishment should be effected on them so that they would not cause havoc in the future. Vengeance was not helpful in the community, it tore the community apart. It demonstrated that there was animosity and anger in the community. It perpetuated the culture of hatred, anger, and revenge in the hearts and minds of far too many.

5.2.14 The General Populace
The majority of the responses encouraged the church to educate the general populace not to engage in political violence by preaching the gospel of tolerance, peace and forgiveness. Civic education, promoting awareness education, on the evil of violence would be healthy to the community. There should be an awareness campaign to educate the masses as to how evil these acts of violence are. Violence was self-defeating and counter-productive. It left in its wake a trail of wounds; physical, spiritual and emotional.

Some respondents thought that the UCCZ should be seen teaching the general populace through ZCC programmes so that people could know their own rights. The UCCZ had to be seen in public denouncing any political violence and had to push the ZCC body to be clear and sound on the church’s position on political violence. It should be noted that the ZCC has no elaborate programmes of such nature in place.

5.3 Interviews

J. Masuku pointed out that the interview is used where detailed information is required and when the informants are few. As indicated earlier, interviews facilitate methodological triangulation of data by checking whether what was written on questionnaires is supported or refuted. In order to achieve methodological triangulation, the researcher interviewed 25 five informants who comprised politicians, church leaders, church members, and political violence victims, to establish their views on

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political violence in independent Zimbabwe. An interview is, as defined in the Chapter One, a data collection method using personal contact between an interviewer and interviewee. My interviews were loosely chronologically structured, taking each individual’s life story as the starting point, and ranging over a variety of social and political questions. The ways in which people spoke about the violent past differed markedly. For those for whom the languages of politics and religion did not offer an overarching narrative able to integrate experience in an orderly and understandable fashion, stories of past violence were most difficult to articulate. There were events and episodes which did not make sense to someone who had not experienced them. Memories of political violence were not easily placed into seamless, useful narratives even by church leaders. Research of this nature also required following the networks which shaped the worlds to which people referred.

The material considered here is drawn from interviews conducted between 2009 and 2011 at Mt Selinda Mission, at Chikore Mission, at Beacon Hill Mission, in Chipinge, and in Harare among politicians, church leaders, ordinary members of the UCCZ, workers and victims of the political violence.

5.3.1 The Clergy must not be Involved in Politics?

Addressing the Annual General Meeting of the UCCZ at Mount Selinda Mission on the 26th of November 2011, the president of the UCCZ, E. Matuvhunye, commented:

Mazuva ano political temperature yakakwira, violence yatangazve. Vafundisi vese siyanayi nePolitics. Politics dzenyu itirai mumoyo, munoshai sha basa renyu neChurch yedu. Mune vatendi vemapato akasiyanasiyana muvatendi vedu. Asi imwimwi mwives vatendi itai henyu politics pachena kana muchida asi musachayana. Kuchayana hakushandi, kunouza kutambudzika (These
days political violence is on the increase; violence has started again. Pastors should not be openly involved in politics, otherwise they risk losing their jobs and dividing the church. There are members of different political parties in the church. Ordinary members of the church are free to be involved in politics but they should shun political violence and its vices).\textsuperscript{410}

President Matuvhunye’s understanding of Church-State relations is similar to that of Archbishop Robert C. Ndlovu of the Archdiocese of Harare who stated:

According to (Roman Catholic) Church Law, individual Christians may join a political party of their choice and campaign for it democratically. The leadership of the church, however, the bishops, priests and religious, may not join any political party or participate in partisan politics. The leadership of the church only contributes to national affairs and national politics but not partisan affairs and partisan politics. Thus, the church leadership cannot be partisan but works for the common good, works with everyone, in the same manner as God lets his rain fall on the good and bad people alike.\textsuperscript{411}

President Matuvhunye’s comprehension of politics and political violence is of critical importance. There is a conflict of interest if pastors openly engage in partisan politics; they will divide the church since the church has members of different political parties. President Matuvhunye rejected violence as a tool to gain political mileage. Violence never wins what it promises. Victim and victimizer, conqueror and vanquished, victims of legal and illegal violence both lose. The only solution is to break the chains of violence, to follow the way and words of Jesus: “Put away the sword.”(Mk 26:52). The truth is that when violence is employed no one really wins. Violence destroys the core of the perpetrator and the vanquished. It is inescapable that if one degrades others one also degrades oneself

\textsuperscript{410} President of UCCZ, E. Matuvhunye addressing the Annual General Meeting of the UCCZ at Mount Selinda Mission on 26 November 2011.

However, Calvin’s first exception to removing an evil ruler that God would raise public avengers to take an unjust government to task, or may use the anger of the common hero to bring about change, did not exclude the clergy. God could use the clergy as His public avengers to act in the name of God. Public avengers, such as clergy or ordinary Christians, acted in the name of God and were used by God for his redemptive purposes. Calvin opened the door to the possibility of the justified overthrow of a wicked ruler befitting the description provided by the president of the UCCZ above.

5.3.2 Political Parties Apportion Blame

The researcher interviewed some key politicians in the UCCZ’s areas of operation in order to solicit their views on the political violence that is ravaging the country. The politicians made denials, claims and counter claims as they mused on about how the problem of political violence could be dealt with. For Girard, human societies repeatedly established social bonds by targeting certain individuals and groups as scapegoats.412

In November 2009 the researcher carried out an interview with the District Administrator for Chipinge, Mr Noel Mundeta, a Zanu-PF official, who denied that his party was responsible for violence:

Zanu-PF is a liberation war party which brought peace to this land. We can’t fold our hands while the British-sponsored MDC is tearing our supporters apart; we are the party in power and have a right to restore order and stop violence for the benefit of our citizens.413

The administrator is right that violence causes a chain reaction and a cycle of violence. He apportioned blame to the MDC. Nevertheless, his insights were instructive. There is

413 N. Mundeta, District Administrator for Chipinge, Interview, Chipinge, 21/11/2009
no doubt that some form of violence is an inherent part of the political process. Ambrose’s, cited in Chapter Two, argued that violence could sometimes condoned as the lesser of two evils. Even the most avid pacifist social reformers are likely to have their non-violent action programmes provoke a violent situation. The non-violent campaigns by Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther are enough to make this point. The restraint of some is no guarantee that all will exercise equal restraint.

The administrator’s views were shared by the Zanu-PF councillor for the Chikore Mission area (Ward 16), Mr Simon Mlambo. He pointed out that violence would not come to an end as long as the MDC provoked his party. The councillor said there was no political violence before the formation of the MDC: “There was no violence before the coming of MDC; this party brought violence in this area.”

However, his views were contradicted by the Zanu (Ndonga) President.

The President of Zanu Ndonga, Mr Gondai Vutuza, had this to say about political violence:

The coming of the MDC in the year 2000 has helped us a lot. Zanu-PF has found its match in this new party. Both parties use violence as a tool to get into power. We carried the burden of Zanu-PF brutality alone in the 1980s and people in the country thought the people of Chipinge were crazy for voting for Zanu Ndonga. We are now sharing Zanu-PF militias throughout the country. Zanu Ndonga supporters are not violent like Zanu-PF and MDC supporters.

Asked to explain what his party was doing to stop political violence, he replied:

President Mugabe and Prime Minister Tsvangirai are to blame for spilling blood in this country. They give instructions to their supporters to terrorize innocent people for the sake of votes and power. Zanu-PF should stop using

414 S. Mlambo, Zanu PF Councillor for Chikore Mission Area (ward 16), Interview, Chikore, 12/08/2010.
national security agencies for its party purposes. Our party has written to the
Southern African Development Commission inviting them to come to monitor
the forthcoming elections, especially the period leading to election days.416

Vutuza’s assertions show that the question of violence as an issue for the church in
Zimbabwe cannot be addressed without reference to the social context which occasions
the debate. Politicians should be part of the equation in the effort to solve political
violence in this country. Indeed, political violence in Zimbabwe has many dimensions.

The MDC Councillor for Ward 18 in the Chipinge district, Mrs Patience Madheiwa (nee
Mlambo), did not have kind words for Zanu-PF:

Zanu-PF is not a democratic party. This violent party does not want to accept
defeat. They use their militias and the country’s security apparatus to butcher
our supporters. They resort to violence because without it they cannot win
against MDC. Our party will win any fair election.417

Asked whether MDC supporters have not attacked any Zanu-PF members, she
retorted: “Retaliating is a natural human reaction; MDC is not a weak political party.”418

For the MDC, the present violence is understood as an act of self-defence against a
system and a people that practises oppression and exploitation. It is hoped that through
violence justice will eventually be established. Of interest is the fact that the Councillor
is a member of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe. Her sentiments that retaliation
is a natural human reaction are anti-pacifist; she does not believe in Jesus’ teaching
that “whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also” (Matthew 5:38-
39). The researcher thinks this is not fair. However, she was interviewed in her capacity
as a Councillor for the area and not as a member of the Apostolic Faith Mission, though

417 P. Madheiwa, MDC Councillor for ward 18 in Chipinge District, Interview, Musirizwi, 12/08/ 2010.
418 P. Madheiwa, MDC Councillor for ward 18 in Chipinge District, Interview, Musirizwi, 12/08/ 2010.
the researcher would not expect different responses. It appears this teaching is not applicable to the Zimbabwean political arena.

The failure by political parties to accept responsibility for political violence has left ordinary members of the community vulnerable, with no recourse to political leadership. This also demonstrates that violence has further polarized an already deeply polarized society.

5.3.3 Interviews on RENAMO Political Violence

In August 15, 1996, The Herald reported:

Zimbabwe faced a serious security threat along its eastern border with Mozambique. Guerrillas of the Mozambique National Resistance - RENAMO or MNR have been responsible for many brutal attacks, ostensibly in reaction to the deployment of the Zimbabwean army in support of the Government of Mozambique.\(^{419}\)

The following eye-witness account gives a taste of the brutal nature of RENAMO atrocities of the same magnitude as The Herald above. The account was given by Mr. Peter Nkomo, a survivor of RENAMO violence, at Jersey Tea Estate near Mt Selinda Mission:

A group of RENAMO bandits visited the estate at midnight and forced the people to wake up and lie on their stomachs. They asked us why (President) Mugabe was using his soldiers to kill innocent children in Mozambique. Using gun blades several people had their lips cut. They did not allow us to cry or make any noise for fear of a Zimbabwean army base about a kilometre away at Mundanda shopping centre. Three people were killed during that night.\(^{420}\)

\(^{419}\) The Herald, August 15, 1996

\(^{420}\) P. Nkomo, a survivor of Renamo violence, Interview, Jersey Tea Estate, 13/08/2010.
Even the interviewee could not remember the actual date the atrocities occurred he said it was in May 1986. The researcher checked and discovered it occurred in 11 April 1986. The logic behind Renamo was South Africa’s desire to prolong its own stay in power. The South African Defence Forces armed and funded the opposition Renamo in Mozambique, which made various incursions to destabilize the Zimbabwean government. Banditry activities increased and destabilized the Frontline States.

5.3.4 Interviews on Gukurahundi Political Violence

Prime Minister Mugabe and Zanu-PF had no interest in participatory governance in the 1980s. Zimbabwe was virtually a one party state; Zanu PF was the domineering party. According to M. Tsvangirai, Mugabe could not tolerate criticism, and wanted to wipe out any opposition to his rule:

...he was particularly ruthless with his black opponents, especially Nkomo, Bishop Muzorewa, and the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole. Nkomo in particular, in Mugabe’s view, asked too many questions. He was ambitious as well, with the potential to challenge Mugabe’s credentials as a national leader. Nkomo was generally referred as Father Zimbabwe, in recognition of his early role in the struggle - something Mugabe seemed to find profoundly irritating.421

In pursuit of his ambitions, Mugabe reacted in a dictatorial manner and unleashed Gukurahundi on ‘dissidents’ he perceived were operating under the leadership of Nkomo. Mugabe saw an opportunity to create a one party state in Zimbabwe.

There was a media black-out on the war in Matabeleland. This was testified to by Mrs Sarah Maposa of Dimire village in Mt Selinda:

This was a reference to the Entumbane skirmishes of the 9th November 1980 referred to in Chapter Four. These skirmishes were promptly extinguished by the government.

### 5.3.5 Prominent Members of the Church Experienced Political Violence

The researcher asked Reverend Murombedzi Kuchera, the long serving Secretary General of ZCC (1981-1997) and President of the UCCZ from 1997 to 2004, why he did not condemn the harassment of Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole and the torture of Lovemore Madhuku, the moderator of the UCCZ. He answered:

> Firstly, it is not true that we have not condemned political violence in the country. The ZCC has been in the forefront of promoting peace in Zimbabwe. Secondly, Reverend Sithole and Professor Madhuku were not on church business when they experienced repression; I was not the spokesperson for Zanu Ndonga, Sithole’s opposition political party, and the National Constitutional Assembly under Lovemore Madhuku. The UCCZ is a member church of ZCC. It is not easy to comment about inter-party clashes.\(^{423}\)

In the light of our modern anthropology there is need to situate the Saviour-figure in terms of an understanding of the world in which the human being is called to authentic existence. The striving for world peace and human community are indications of the power of Christ operating within the created order. Failing to act is tantamount to rejecting God. God acts through people. The church dithered on the critical harassment and torture of its members, preferring to hide under umbrella religious bodies.

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\(^{422}\) S. Maposa, member of UCCZ, Interview, Dimire village, 29/08/2009.

\(^{423}\) M. Kuchera, the long serving Secretary General of ZCC (1981-1997) and President of UCCZ from 1997 to 2004, Interview, Hatfield, 14/06/2010.
Commenting on making hard decisions, Desmond Tutu said:

Sometimes the church is required to make a choice between what it acknowledges to be two evils. Is it better to suffer the barbarisms and horrors of Hitler’s Nazism or should one go to war to put an end to the nightmare? The allies argued it was justifiable, indeed obligatory to go to war to stop Hitler’s madness, and the church concurred with that decision.\textsuperscript{424}

The church should make decisions in order to alleviate the suffering of the people. There is no doubt that while Christians believe that there exists no authority except from God (Romans 13:1), hence their submissiveness, it is the people who concretely have the right to authority. Thus, when the existing authority is against the wishes of the people, it is illegitimate and tyrannical, and Christians must fight against tyranny. Thus, the obedience of the church to the government is proper only if the government does not violate fundamental Christian principles. This is not to say that the Church is below the state. Christians have a right to say ‘no’ when the government ‘grows tall’ and overrides its scripturally mandated authority.

\textbf{5.3.6 Newspapers Report Violence at UCCZ Mission Stations}

The violent nature of the presidential run-off elections of the 27\textsuperscript{th} of June 2008 in relation to the UCCZ was the subject matter of many newspaper articles. For example, the story of Reverend Samuel Mhlanga was graphically captured by \textit{The Manica Post} paper on June 8, 2008, in an article with the caption “Anti-Mugabe Sermon Lands Clergyman in Serious Trouble”:

Reverend Mhlanga, the outspoken and well-known Mt Selinda mission chaplain, was abducted on Monday night following his powerful sermon on

the injustice, corruption, misgovernance and illegitimacy of the Mugabe regime from 1980 to date. This sermon was received well by the teachers and students who were in heavy attendance. Nonetheless, a war veteran who also works at the mission reported the matter to a Zanu-PF base located about 3km away from the school leading to the invasion of the mission and the subsequent abduction of Rev Mhlanga by the Zanu-PF militia.

This drew the wrath of students, culminating in a counter raid the following day at 7pm, students whose majority constituted the Upper Sixth visited the base armed with stones. Smelling death, the militia temporarily abandoned the base. Not to be outdone, they regrouped, organized themselves and raided the mission again armed with machetes, spears, knobkerries and rifles. This brutal attack saw 20 students being injured and by the time of going to print 17 of them were hospitalized at the mission hospital. The number of those who fled from the school has not yet been verified. Three teachers were also brutalized in the scuffle, on allegations that they incited students. In a separate incident soldiers in military regalia today force marched students into a lecture theatre and addressed them to the effect that if they do not vote Zanu-PF in the presidential runoff this country will be rocked by a war. With the blessings of the governor and resident minister an unidentified uniformed general who spoke just after Chiwewe, promised blood and thunder in the event of an MDC victory. He described MDC as a conduit for regime change agenda and unequivocally stated that it is only Cde Mugabe who has the capacity to defend this nation from being put under the impending British domination.426

It is interesting to note that the war veterans were camped inside the mission land and are tenants of the UCCZ. The war veterans and their supporters are part of the makorwa (converts). They were encamped in the Chizhanje area within Mt Selinda mission. The leader of the camp was Kumbirai Musabani, a popular war veteran and prophet of the Zionist Independent Church. The researcher introduced the issue of politics. Asked whether he authorized the capture of the pastor and the invasion of the mission, he retorted: “Mufundisi vakazvigokera moto muziso, havana hunhu” (The Minister invited trouble for himself, he has no ‘humanity’).426 The researcher interpreted
this as an admission that he authorized the capture and invasion. In the view of the war veteran, challenging the ruling government is equal to lack of ‘humanity’.

The researcher went on further to ask whether he was not afraid to be removed from the mission land where he was a tenant. The war veteran frothed with anger and showing the scars he sustained during the war of liberation, he replied:

This is the land of our ancestors; the missionaries got it from the colonizers. This Matuvhunye (UCCZ President) received it from the white people. Let them start the war; I am not afraid to carry the gun again, I fought for this freedom. The church should not employ an MDC activist as their minister. You wanted me to keep quiet while he was scolding Comrade Mugabe our leader. Are you not a mutengesi (sell-out) yourself? I am prepared to die here on this land.427

Appealing to aspects of African Traditional Religion is typical of many African Independent churches such as Musabani’s church. Having calmed him down and won his confidence that the researcher was proud of his liberation war credentials, he continued:

You see, this church is full of MDC activists. Even students are politicized by the British MDC teachers. How can they break the leg of my friend a war veteran? They do not respect us. Tsvangirai will not rule this country. They should not do politics. They are the ones who started war on us and we responded. We did not torture the pastor; we were asking him to explain his preaching against comrade Mugabe.428

He called the MDC ‘British’ because of the perceived backing of the MDC by Britain. Asked whether his own church, the Zion Independent Church, was not involved in politics, he retorted: “We support Comrade Robert Mugabe.”429 The war veteran sees nothing wrong with President Mugabe’s rule and everything wrong with backing the opposition and the change of government. The war veteran views everything through

the lenses of his rigid support of President Mugabe’s rule. Mugabe’s rule is a yardstick against which he judges everything.

Musabani, who said he was prepared to die for his cause, escaped into the nearby bush when the angry students attacked the camp. The war veteran who sustained a broken leg during the scuffle is Moses Chitota. He threatened to beat this researcher to death when he visited him at his homestead in Mupfudze village in Mt Selinda. Pointing at the researcher with one of his crutches he bellowed: “Get out of my home muroyi (wizard)! I will kill you.”430 The response demonstrates the anger, suspicion, and fear that still characterized the mission area. It also demonstrate how volatile and sensitive the environment of researching on political issues is in Zimbabwe. Some researchers have experienced harassment, detention and torture at the hands of the militia.

Reverend Mhlanga, the Minister at the centre of this story, confirmed the capture by war veterans and the ‘rescue’ by the students but claimed to be innocent of inciting public violence and undermining a sitting State President:

The sermon was about the Israelites’ liberation from the land of oppression in Egypt to the Promised Land of Canaan - a biblical story - the Exodus theme. My exegesis did not name any political leaders. I exhorted my sheep (congregation) to shun corruption and oppression like the Israelites experienced in Egypt. The war veterans who dragged me to Chizhanje camp misinterpreted this sermon to be an attack on President Mugabe and Zanu-PF. I was being persecuted like Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole experienced but I am not a political activist like him. I was liberated together with 23 ‘inmates’ by about 100 students who came singing Hymn 115 in our hymn book. Armed with stones and logs, they flogged our captors.431

430 M. Chitota, War Veteran and Member of UCCZ, Interview, Mupfudze Village, 30/08/2009.
When the researcher asked him whether Reverend Sithole was persecuted, he answered: “The state did not allow his party to operate freely.” He did not want to be interviewed any further than this.

It would be illuminating to analyse Hymn 115, the ‘war’ song the students chose during their violent operation. The lyrics are:

**NdiMwari Uri Bako**

1. *NdiMwari uri bako,*
   *Ugaro hwokuhwara;*  
   *Chinyini chingauya,*  
   *Ugaro hwokuhwara.*

**Khorasi**

*NdiJesu uri buwe redu,*  
*Ngeredu, ngeredu.*  
*NdiJesu uri buwe redu*  
*Ugaro hwokuhwara.*

2. *Ngezuva tine bvute,*  
   *Ugaro hwokuhwara*  
   *Usiku atizotyi,*  
   *Ugaro hwokuhwara.*

3. *Akuna chinotyisa,*  
   *Ugaro hwokuhwara;*  
   *Magaa atizotyi,*  
   *Ugaro hwokuhwara.*

4. *Mubvumo wechiuya,*  
   *Ugaro hwokuhwara,*  
   *Atizosiyi Mwari,*  
   *Ugaro hwokuhwara.*

5. *Zviedzo zvechiuya,*  
   *Ugaro hwokuhwara;*  
   *Norufu rwechiuya,*  
   *Ugaro hwokuhwara.*

**The Lord is My Refuge**

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1. The Lord is my refuge,
   A place of refuge;
   Whatever happens.
   A place of refuge.

   **Chorus**
   Jesus is our rock,
   Our rock, our rock.
   Jesus is our rock,
   A place of refuge.

2. He provides shade,
   A place of refuge;
   We fear no darkness,
   A place of refuge.

3. There is nothing to fear,
   A place of refuge;
   We fear no allegations,
   A place of refuge.

4. When problems come,
   A place of refuge;
   We will remain faithful to our Lord,
   A place of refuge.

5. When temptations come,
   A place of refuge;
   When we face death;
   A place of refuge.\(^{433}\)

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Students developed Christology in the light of the crisis of political violence. Hymn 115 is Christological. The song provides us with a more direct account of a Christology based on contemporary views of the human person and human experience. The human being's thrust towards the future, the infinite, the divine mystery, is expressed in both general and specific terms. Generally, the human person lives in hope and acts with courage despite the evident fact that despair, selfishness and all kinds of human guilt

\(^{433}\) UCCZ Hymn Book, hymn 115, p19.
threaten to engulf our human lives. Hymn 115 encouraged and motivated the students in the midst of violence. It was a powerful reminder that the Lord is seen as a place of refuge. The song embodies an approach to justice based on self-transcendence and profound trust in the Lord. The hymn demands that one put into practice the sentiments it expresses. It should be noted that after the violence Mt Selinda became the epicentre of scuffles between students and the security agencies. The war veterans alone feared tampering with angry students. Singing and living the song can help people to grow along the path of conversion and transform the efforts Christians make towards securing democracy for Zimbabwe.

The church paid the medical expenses for the war veteran who sustained a broken leg, a move that was condemned by the Synod Executive Committee of November 2008 as capitulation to state violence. The president justified the payment on the grounds of thawing relations between the church and state. In addition, a team comprising the President, the Eastern Conference Superintendent and the Church Administrator visited the war veteran on his bed at Chipinge district hospital and prayed for his recovery. The war veteran’s leg was eventually amputated.

Pastor Mhlanga chose a good theme to preach about at the wrong time. The police accused him of violating the Public Order and Security Act (POSA). POSA was occasionally applied selectively in what many observers would regard as a strategic offensive against the opposition. The ultimate aim was to ensure the security and

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434 Minutes of Synod Executive Committee of 17 November 2008, p3.
longevity of the ruling party. The researcher is of the view that Mhlanga was right because one has the moral responsibility to disobey an unjust law. Mhlanga was innocently teaching about a story in the Bible. We are responsible to disobey laws commanding us to commit injustice, but if a law inflicts injustice without making us sin we can obey it. This researcher would agree with St Augustine that “an unjust law is no law at all.” Mhlanga was arrested and charged with inciting public violence at Chipinge magistrate court. His case, together with that of three teachers and five students, dragged on until he was acquitted of all crime in June 2010. The church transferred him to a parish in Bulawayo for his own security. The teachers and students also transferred from the volatile Mt Selinda High School. The researcher could not locate the teachers and students. In essence, the church was under siege.

Commenting on the attack on Pastor Mhlanga by the war veterans, Reverend Maxwell Sigauke, the church administrator, deplored the use of mission land for political activities. He said other churches were not permitted to use mission land for their services without authorization. However, he admitted that the UCCZ was not strict with mushrooming independent Churches such as Musabani’s Zion Independent Church. He refuted Musabani’s allegations that the UCCZ was the hub of MDC activities:

People who live in mission land are tenants and, in a sense, owners of the church. The land was subdivided and parceled to makorwa. However, the people who were initially allocated the pieces of land are long gone. Some of their children are no longer members of the UCCZ and have the temerity to abduct our pastor. All mission institutions are not for political activities, we do not support any political party. Violence is evil.  

436 M. Sigauke, Pastor and witness to violence, Interview, UCCZ Head Office Waterfalls, 20/11/2011.
The administrator did not want to be drawn into discussions on steps the church would take to redress the anomaly. However, not all violence is evil. Buti Tlhagale, in his article “Christian Soldiers” cited Pope John Paul II who, in his 1982 Day of Peace message, argued that: ‘Christians have a right and even a duty to protect their existence and freedom by proportionate means against an unjust aggressor.’

The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Manicaland documented the approximate number of bases set up as torture camps in 2008 in two districts of Manicaland province:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Number of Bases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chipinge</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyanga</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makoni</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutasa</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of these bases was the Chizhanje base used by Musabani and his associates.

5.3.7 Researcher’s Eye-Witness Account of Violence

In addition to collecting data, this researcher witnessed firsthand political conflict at an advanced stage. This researcher saw a homestead and houses smouldering, the

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aftermath of political violence on the 30th of September 2009, the previous day, at Pfidza village near Chikore Mission. The homestead belonged to the Bandama family, a well known Zanu-PF-supporting family. James Dhliwayo, a neighbour and retired teacher, claimed that the violence was the work of MDC supporters who were retaliating for the beatings and displacement of MDC supporters in the area:

We don't want elections. Every time there are elections we see violence between these political parties. MDC supporters are not like Zanu Ndonga supporters, if you attack them they retaliate. We are living in fear, I have sent my children to my brother in Mutare town. They are safer there.\(^\text{439}\)

Asked whether they were not Christians fighting against Christians, he answered:

Violence knows no religion; it is brother fighting against brother in the name of politics. Political affiliations are stronger than faith for some Christians. Even the pastor has gone into hiding. He comes briefly on Sundays for services. After these acts they (perpetrators of violence) sneak into Mozambique, the border is so porous. They reappear and target troublesome Zanu-PF ringleaders.\(^\text{440}\)

The chaplain of Chikore High School, Reverend Peter Khosa, admitted that there was violence in Chikore mission but denied that he went into hiding as claimed by Dhliwayo. Asked what he did to stop the violence, he replied: “Political violence is a big issue that requires political leaders to solve. As pastors we exhorted our members in various sermons to shun violence.”\(^\text{441}\)

When a state fails to secure the consent and respect of the governed and loses its moral legitimacy, its legalization of violence degenerates into a license to enforce tyranny. The will to liberate is part of what it means to be a human being. Sustained oppression and repression breed violence. Oppressed people resort to violence.

\(^{\text{439}}\) J. Dhliwayo, Witness of Political Violence and Retired Teacher, Interview, Pfidza, 30/08/2009.
\(^{\text{440}}\) J. Dhliwayo, Witness of Political Violence and Retired Teacher, Interview, Pfidza, 30/08/2009.
\(^{\text{441}}\) P. Khosa, Pastor, Interview, Chikore, 30/08/2009.
Consequently, violence becomes an outlet to purge the deeply embedded excesses of frustration, anger, repression and hatred.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed and interpreted findings following the sequence of the research questionnaires and interviews of the study. The chapter demonstrated, using data collected through questionnaires and interviews, that the post-independent period was violent and characterized by gross human rights violations. It can be seen that the UCCZ believes that God wills His people should live under political institutions such as establish and preserve order; but, more than that, He wills that this order should be of the kind that is favourable to both social justice and spiritual freedom.

A convergence of ideas from respondents, informants and literature has shown that where oppression endures, violence is inevitable. A nation that wages war against its own inhabitants compels citizens to use violence, along with other means, to end oppression. According to West, it is possible to live in the midst of a pervasive and profound crisis whose symptoms include extensive class inequality, brutal state repression, subtle bureaucratic surveillance and rampant racism.442 This citation largely explains the situation in Zimbabwe.

The complexity of the Zimbabwean situation defies the neatly worked out moral principles of classical Augustinian just war theory. The assumption is that violent

struggles are waged by one state against another. In Zimbabwe it is brother fighting against brother, sisters tearing each other apart and, worse still, Christians brutalizing each other in the name of partisan politics. The classical tradition did not envisage an unjust aggressive political party emerging from the boundaries of a single state authorizing violence as a strategy to get or retain power. Zimbabweans are violently acting against fellow Zimbabweans.

The discussion now turns to the last chapter which specifically focuses on the conclusion and findings of the research.
6.0 CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to articulate the critical issues that emerged in this research and to chart the way forward for a new theology to counter violence and nurture a culture of peace in Zimbabwe. This thesis has interrogated Christian perspectives on political violence and how the power dynamics as influenced by the state and politicians have been determining the course of political violence in Zimbabwe to the detriment of the Church. Ever since the Christian Church became an accepted part of the civilization of the Roman Empire (4th century A.D.), Christians have had to wrestle with the problems of Christian citizenry. The rise of violence in the past three decades has forced upon the UCCZ the realization that they have been far too slow in facing the problems of political justice. Christian thinking from the attitudes of the great churches in the past is the conviction that Christian responsibility for society includes a responsibility for radical criticism of the existing order.

The research found out that the UCCZ had to give form to life in the midst of political violence. The consequence of this state of affairs is a society traumatized by fear, withdrawal, and collective depression based on past memories of violence, intimidation and harassment. The recurrence of political violence is largely due to failure in the past to adequately address it. The study has demonstrated how the state has created and cultivated an anarchical environment in order to maintain its grip on power. While Lefebure’s chaos theory applies to religions, in Zimbabwe the ruling party has interwoven violence into its ideology and its authority is largely based on physical
violence. The state in Zimbabwe can be characterized as totalitarian. According to Z.A. Pelczynsk, state totalitarianism best applies to a political system in which one party or a group of politicians is permanently in power and uses governmental and extra-governmental means to suppress all potential rivals.\textsuperscript{443} It is clear that moving from a culture of violence to a culture of peace, based on justice, remains an immense challenge for society in Zimbabwe. In a totalitarian society violence is concerned with “the continuation of politics of the state by other means.”\textsuperscript{444} It is the struggle for power.

Even though the opposition political parties cannot be absolved of acts of political violence, most of this political violence was orchestrated by the Zimbabwe government and the campaign by supporters of Zanu-PF against the opposition political parties. Violence in Zimbabwe is intentional, it has a logic.

Zanu-PF threatened citizens, “If we lose elections we will go back to war.”\textsuperscript{445} In the process of governance the politicians outwitted the church; the church played second fiddle and succumbed to government machinations. D. Harold-Barry writes:

> Events around the turn of the new century have shown how naïve we were. …In the present crisis people ask, ‘how is it possible that we have reached where we are now?’ No one can claim to have foreseen the extent of the catastrophe we now experience.\textsuperscript{6}

The churches failed to go down to the task of organizing and polishing up their theology in order to constrain and restrain the political excesses of the state.

6.2 The UCCZ’s Normative and Pragmatic Position on Political Violence

What stands out clearly in this study is that political violence is a painful phenomenon in the history of the church in post-colonial Zimbabwe. It is an observation of this research that the UCCZ, from the president to the ordinary member, has established both a normative and a pragmatic position on political violence. The running theme that came out of the questionnaires and interviews is the rejection of violence both as a means of preserving the status quo and as a means to bring about change in society. The UCCZ acted in agreement with Girard’s mimetic theory that biblical revelation takes the side of the victim and exposes the mechanisms of violence so that they may be overcome. Violence is not a Christian virtue. It is the result of wrong relations in the country and it often creates a cycle of retaliatory acts that worsen those relations. Consequently, the UCCZ normatively rejects violent solutions to the Zimbabwean crisis. Pacifism is viewed as the Christian ideal. Like the theologians of Latin American Liberation Theology, the UCCZ believes that “violence, in itself, is always destructive and does not generate situations restorative of justice and human dignity.” Christians should resist the temptation to violence. Pragmatically, the UCCZ accepts that it exists amid the reality of violence in the country and has a mission to restore peace through non-violent means. It is the church’s duty to struggle for justice in the midst of political violence. Indeed, violence constitutes one of the major problems in Zimbabwe.

S. Duncan asserts that:

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None of the arguments about ‘just war’ or ‘just revolution’ or the ‘justified use of violence’, however persuasive and rational, can shake a deeply-held belief that the sacrificial death of Jesus is the way we are commanded to go. We are commanded to love even unto death.\textsuperscript{447}

This injunction is true of the UCCZ. For the UCCZ, Christian pacifism does not mean inactivity; it means committed and sacrificial action to create a just and righteous society. It means a Christian way to build society. The church subscribes to the use of concerted action to change situations by means which do not involve physical abuse.

The complexity of the Zimbabwean situation defies the neatly worked out moral principles of classical Christian tradition. The findings in this research refute the reviewed literature which is largely centred on Augustine’s Just War Theory. The assumption was that violent struggles were waged by one state against another. In Zimbabwe there is internal violence within a state and, worse still, Christians attacking each other in the name of partisan politics. Political affiliations are overriding Christian sentiments. The classical tradition does not envisage an unjust aggressive political party emerging from the boundaries of a single state authorizing violence as a strategy to get or retain power. Zimbabweans are violently acting against fellow Zimbabweans.

The churches’ failure to arrest political violence is particularly disappointing when one considers that the church is the largest constituency in the country. M. Mhloyi pointed out that about 73% of the Zimbabwean population is Christian, including many in political leadership.\textsuperscript{448} The role of passive obedience natural to Christians in the first two


\textsuperscript{448} M. Mhloyi, \textit{The Role of the Church in HIV and AIDS Intervention and Strategies in Zimbabwe}. Harare: Future
centuries was that they were a helpless minority, with no political power and no opportunity to influence opinion among ruling groups in the empire. In the areas where this research was conducted the Christian population exceeds Mhloyi’s percentage. The church is national in character and provides moral integration for the state. The churches are closest to the people and have a credible voice. In my view, this failure is a judgement on Zimbabwean Christianity in particular and Christianity in general. Churches have given little attention to the problems of political violence in post-colonial Zimbabwe. There is little talk about political violence and the oppressive policies of the government.

6.3 The Christian Perspective on a Good Society

The Christian mission is not only to save souls but also to save minds. In the words of Harry Blamires, “There is no room in Christendom for a culture of the spirit which neglects the mind.” Politicians have been winning in the battle of minds against the UCCZ in Zimbabwe. The church should be involved in advocacy work. E. Makue, the General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches, says that advocacy:

    is the skill of using information at our disposal to persuade public officials and thereby influence government’s policy decision

The church should take part in the public life of its community and society to the extent of creating political consciousness in the country. It is important to emphasize this concept of democratic participation as it brings about ownership of the process. By

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participating, the church benefits itself, the community and the nation as a whole. The church would be indirectly or directly involved in the decisions that are made in the country. Through participation the church takes part in solving problems in the communities. Sometimes churches do not participate because they lack knowledge. Being informed allows the church to perform in ways that benefit the community.

Many respondents cited in Chapter Five referred to the need to educate perpetrators of political violence about the dangers of their activities. The church should move towards helping the people become aware of their situation and of the root causes of this situation, as well as helping them realize the possibility incumbent upon them of bringing about change. Education would help communities to discern that political violence was evil in the light of God’s word.

People should be empowered mentally to challenge the idol of political violence. St Paul expressed this mission clearly in the Letter to the Romans saying that Christians must not “be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of (our) mind.”(Rom 12:1-2). Sadly, many Christians have been misled into believing that political parties’ worldviews are stronger than their own worldviews. In fact, there is no longer a strong Christian mind. There is no doubt that developing a Christian mind is a rewarding and enriching act of discipleship - it brings Christian principles into the area of life and creates a new culture. It is particularly important to cultivate the mind in order to avoid the snares of evil and expose the political violence of both the ruling party and opposition parties. The culture of political violence, as shown in Chapter Four, deforms
and rots the religious core of Christians. When the belief in avoiding political violence is enfeebled in Christian minds, the culture will decay swiftly. The battle can never be won by acquiescing with Zanu PF and MDC machineries in the country.

6.4 Failure to See Christianity as a Worldview

This thesis has demonstrated that the church’s singular failure since independence in 1980 has been the failure to see Christianity as a life system, or worldview, that governs every area of existence. C. Colson and N. Pearcey pointed out that a worldview is simply “the sum total of our beliefs about the world, the “big picture” that directs our daily decisions and actions.” Christianity is a way of seeing and comprehending all reality. It is a worldview. Christians must live, decide, and act in a world which they believe to be God’s world. They understand that God transcends every culture, every power, every social group and every ideal: “Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales.” (Isa. 40:15).

This failure to see Christianity as a worldview has been crippling in many ways. For example, Christians have allowed politicians to construct and manage an effective political organizational structure that ensured hegemony in society and politics. When the government enacted the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), laws expected in a state of emergency, the church did not raise any alarm. The church was not pro-active. AIPPA was enacted in order to control the media. It requires local journalists to be accredited by a government-appointed panel (the Media Commission) whose members are

supposed to be loyal to the incumbent party. It officially bars foreign correspondents from working full-time in Zimbabwe. In addition, it allows the government to suppress any publication of what the Media Commission may perceive as subversive or as falsehood capable of causing public alarm or despondency. POSA effectively eliminates the democratic political space for any legitimate peaceful political opposition in Zimbabwe. Both AIPPA and POSA reduce citizen participation in governance, and the enjoyment of the fundamental liberties and rights of the individual that are enshrined in the constitution of Zimbabwe. The UCCZ only raised the alarm when Pastor Mhlanga, mentioned in Chapter Four, was arrested and charged under POSA. The Christian perspective should be one of understanding Christianity as a worldview not only for fulfilling the Great Commission to save souls, but also for fulfilling the cultural commission - the call to create a society under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Thus, the Christian’s duty is not only to build up the Church but also to build a society for the glory of God:

Though we live in a pluralistic society, we serve a God who is sovereign over all, and all aspects of personal and social life are at their best when they reflect His character. All citizens live better in a world that more closely conforms to reality, to the order God created. Making such prudential arguments is a much more effective way to reform or rebuild a culture than mounting political campaigns.\(^{452}\)

The same idea is succinctly expressed by J. Taylor:

Instead of penetrating with a unique Christian insight and the redeeming Word of God into all the ‘secular’ spheres of interest, it (the church) will be fighting a losing battle to keep its ‘Mission hospitals’ and ‘Church schools’ until nothing is

\(^{452}\)Ibid., p.33.
left to it but its responsibility for the ‘inner life’ of its members and the souls that it seeks to save.\textsuperscript{453}

The church should call on her members to take the Christian witness of service into their daily life. While political violence is rife, there is need for a church is which both supernatural and responsible. This is a call for the UCCZ to respond in a vigorous way to the circumstances of the Zimbabwean context.

This research was largely carried out in Christian areas of jurisdiction. There is no doubt that how people live is determined more by their shared values than individual decisions. The community oriented ethos can be achieved through patient persuasion and the conduct of Christians. The Mt Selinda and Chikore mission areas are largely populated by Christians who meet regularly on Thursdays and Sundays for services. It is incumbent upon these Christians to advance the biblical perspective in the public arena and preach a gospel that appeal to the common good. As long as the church does not go out to address political violence, their perspectives will remain privatized and marginalized. Christianity is more than a private belief, more than personal salvation. In the face of rampant political violence, they must carry this life-giving message to the country.

During the past three decades of Zimbabwe’s independence, the UCCZ, through the ZCC, has increasingly taken a more adversarial stance towards the state. However, the focus of its adversarial stance has not been political violence. In 1985, \textit{The Moto

magazine accused Zimbabwean churches of being nothing more than “sub-contractors for the government.”\textsuperscript{454} Fearing to take the bull by its horns, the UCCZ withdrew into its cocoon, the ZCC. As stated in Chapter Three, the churches wanted strength in numbers and to speak with one voice. However, the purported advantage of executing common tasks ultimately proved to be one of the reasons behind the failure of individual denominations:

The disadvantages of individual churches waiting for the Council to act are obvious and innumerable. This is partly because on occasions when the Council is afraid to take a prophetic stand, and during those times when the council lacks strong leadership or when it is in chaos itself, then there is a vacuum in the public square with no theological voice raised on critical issues that touch the lives of citizens.\textsuperscript{455}

There was no one church accountable in the ZCC since leadership of the Council rotated among various denominational leaders. As a result, this body has often chosen a middle ground position in order to maintain the coalition of the denominations that form it.

While the state was not always the critical reference point for the UCCZ, the Catholic Church fulfilled better its prophetic function especially during the \textit{Gukurahundi} era. The UCCZ could have done the same during the period of \textit{Chimwenje} and the harassment and arrests of Ndabaningi Sithole. There is no doubt that both incidents reflected Zanu PF’s attempts to consolidate power by recasting challenges to its political legitimacy as threats to state security.\textsuperscript{456}

\textsuperscript{454} Moto, 34, 1985, p.3.  
\textsuperscript{455} J. Dube, \textit{Op.Cit.}, p.45.  
6.5 The UCCZ’s Guiding Theological Foundations

The fatal malady of the UCCZ was its tendency to neglect the guiding theological foundations it was based on. As shown in Chapter Three, Calvin provided for more than passive resistance to the most tyrannical political authorities; he approved active political resistance on the part of lower political authorities against higher authorities. J.C. Bennett observed that:

This loophole for active resistance, even for violent revolution, became a major factor in the history of Calvinism; and as a result, Calvinism helped to inspire revolutions in many countries, including Scotland, England, Holland, and the United States.457

It is worthwhile to point out here that perhaps Zimbabweans have not been pushed towards violence as the last resort to remove an authoritarian system. People have not completely lost hope in the possibility of bringing about change through non-violent means. Revolution can only occur when Christians feel that Mugabe’s rule qualifies as manifest and long-standing tyranny, and that all other means having failed, armed struggle can and should now be resorted to as the last resort which carries with it the seeds of final victory.

Christians should realize that:

…the mission for Christians is nothing less than becoming men and women of “another type.” We must be men and women who will dare to wrest Christianity free from its fortress mentality, its sanctuary stronghold, and establish it once again as the great life system and cultural force that acknowledges the Creator as sovereign over all. We must be men and women who understand that the task is much more than launching spasmodic crusades to fight one battle or another…. We must be men and women who see…that the struggle is one of first principles.458

The UCCZ must understand opposing views as total life systems and then “take our (Christian) stand in a life system of equally comprehensive and far-reaching power.”\textsuperscript{459} Christianity is a full worldview covering all of life, giving a framework for every human endeavour. It is a worldview meant to be lived out in the crucible of a fallen world, and it should become most alive in the relationships in which Christians grapple to apply it in an environment of political violence. There should be a great battle of principle against principle.

The UCCZ follows Calvinist traditions. As was discussed in Chapter Three (3.5), Calvin insists that absolute obedience is due not only to the benevolent ruler, but also to the tyrant. Calvin, however, opened up a loophole to remove a tyrannical ruler. Sometimes God anointed avengers from among his servants, and armed them with his command to punish the wicked. For Calvin, the only lawful political resistance to a tyrannous king could come from lower magistrates acting in concert with one another. It was, in fact, the sacred duty of such magistrates to resist tyranny.

6.6 Divisions and Ambivalent Positions

The present political violence has highlighted the divisions in the church. O. Wermter avows:

A deplorable lack of unity between Christian churches is exploited by the government and its media: the latter never seem to have a problem finding some pastor presented as ‘speaking for the church’, who will support government positions and denounce truly Christian voices as being ‘spiritually misguided’.\textsuperscript{460}

Divisions within the church based on differences of political affiliation and/or sympathies have hindered the church from providing a more coherent and unified voice of leadership to the nation. According to N. Mkaronda, the co-option of church members by the government should be seen as a means of to stifling the prophetic voice of the church. Kamaara, cited in Chapter Two, warned against religious leadership in Kenya that displayed some partisan tendencies and has not exercised a prophetic role of being a voice of the voiceless. Zimbabweans have something to learn from the Kenyan situation. Anglican bishop, Nolbert Kunonga, supports government actions that are controversial and oppressive in society such as the land redistribution programme. He is on record as organizing a prayer day for the ruling party and declaring that the state president is a ‘saint’. Therefore, Kunonga has failed to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, who identified with the poor, and, consequently, Kunonga is suffocating the prophetic voice of the church. The bishop subscribes to the trajectory of royal consolidation. For W. Brueggermann, there are two major trajectories in the Hebrew Bible: the Mosaic trajectory and the “trajectory of royal consolidation.” The former identifies with the poor and the marginalized, while the latter legitimizes Israel’s ruling class. Church leaders who are sympathetic to the government have been rewarded with posts and invitations to ceremonies like those for Independence Day and Heroes Day, to officiate.

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462 Ibid.
As a matter of principle, the church must have an ‘open door’ policy towards everyone and maintain dialogue with all important forces and movements in society. The early Christians refused to prostrate themselves before Emperors and this deprived the state of its divinity. They chose to die rather than worship the Emperor.

The UCCZ holds incomplete and ambivalent positions. On the one hand, it condemns violence as a result of sin and regards it as evil. On the other hand, it says violence is an option on the table for Christians in the face of government intransigence. The presence of violence is understood as an act of self-defence against a system and a people that practices oppression and exploitation. It is hoped that through violence justice will eventually be established. Most churches connived with the evils of ZANU PF and failed to bring any measure of meaningful pressure to bear on the government. Pastor Obadiah Musindo’s constructive engagement policy highlighted in this study is a classic example of connivance.

A. Musarurwa observes that although general elections took place in Zimbabwe, they were accompanied by arrests, the banning of public meetings or gatherings and extremely hostile and negative press coverage as weapons the ruling party unleash on to opposition parties in order to politically castrate them. The conduct of elections was to a greater extent an empty ritual meant to legitimize the ruling party.\textsuperscript{465}

6.7 A Church of Political Victims

J. Rousseau’s most influential work, *The Social Contract*, opens with the famous line, “Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains.” This adage can easily apply to the Zimbabwean situation. Rousseau called on reformers to set people free from the chains of institutions, rules, customs, and traditions. Rousseau did not define freedom as the assertion of rights against the state; freedom meant liberation from the forms and institutions of society such as the church. If people think God cares nothing for the things which seriously affect their daily lives and stir their deepest emotions, such as political violence, they will not easily be convinced that such a God loves them in any real sense at all. The God of the Bible is the God of politics as well. Roland Bainton, cited in Chapter One, argued that should the state act contrary to the fundamental principles of Christian ethics, there was no way Christians could provide it with legitimation.

The UCCZ’s failure to challenge the state can largely be blamed on the church’s leadership. While the church is made up of many people, it is true that:

> The clergy are the natural spokesmen of the church’s faith, and it is they who mainly guide and administer her life and action; so if the ministry is weak or bewildered, the church’s witness can be neither clear nor strong.  

Of course, the UCCZ could be in a far stronger position if it were willing to muster all its resources. Its resources are not limited to the clergy. There are many of its members in all sectors of society. The UCCZ cannot see the bigger picture beyond its own organizational existence. As long as the UCCZ thinks of itself as an institution, and of its

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work as limited only to things that are under its own control, it will find itself being pushed further and further by the state in the political arena.

This study is a great challenge to the churches, for they should be the churches of political victims and the displaced. Ministry to political victims at their door steps, to the dispossessed and the uprooted, is not a sideline task for Christians. The cessation of political violence has presented an opportunity for churches to rehabilitate and reconstruct their societies. It has become apparent that the cessation of violence does not mean the cessation of struggle for people in affected areas. Further, O. Wermter said that Christianity will disappear as irrelevant if it only serves the selfish interest of individuals and does not give society as a whole a new vision, enabling people to act in solidarity and create a new society.\textsuperscript{468} Churches are ideally placed to help people to be fully integrated into the community.

D. M. Ackerman avowed that theology that is rooted in people’s experiences has the “potential to change people, to deepen faith and understanding, and to heal our wounds.”\textsuperscript{469} The theology that has been thriving in Zimbabwe is divorced from people’s experiences. In the words of J. Dube:

\begin{quotation}
The immediate task of the African theologian is no longer one of harmonizing the gospel and culture as it has been rather in the past, but in developing a theology or theologies capable of helping simple village Christians to participate constructively and effectively in the struggle for justice, community transformation, and the abundant life for which God created them.\textsuperscript{470}
\end{quotation}

\textsuperscript{470} J. Dube, \textit{Op.cit.}, p.76.
The above citation is in agreement with the thrust of Liberation Theology. Theology is not universal language about God. It is human speech informed by historical and theological traditions, and written for particular times and places. Theology is contextual language - that is shaped by the human situation that gives birth to it. In a society wracked by political violence Christian theology must reflect this phenomenon otherwise the theology will be irrelevant to Christians. Theology must be rooted in peoples’ lived experiences by taking seriously their political and social contexts.

For the churches, whose major role is, undoubtedly, in relation to the spiritual healing necessary for the long term reintegration of whole communities, the process of sharing traumatic experiences with others and allowing a period of mourning over the losses is essential to healing. During the annual meeting of the Volunteers Council (Mens’ Wing) on Saturday the 23rd of May 2009 at Chibuwe Primary School a victim of the 2008 political violence, James Makuyana, poured out his anger and complaints:

> How can I forgive someone who burnt my houses and property? I have just returned from Mozambique but the person who destroyed my houses has not apologized. He is here with us and is a member of this council. God will deal with him and he will perish in hell forever. ⁴⁷¹

Renewing interpersonal relationships begins with restoring honour to the adversary, which was destroyed by dehumanizing the enemy during the act(s) of violence.

Sharing such traumatic experiences at forgiveness sessions is crucial; the individual and communities can begin rebuilding trust and the capacity to trust:

⁴⁷¹ J. Makuyana, Interview, Chibuwe Primary School, a victim of the 2008 political violence, 23/05/2009.
Victims of violence can do much to support each other. While unexpressed trauma may cause ongoing inner pain, sharing this pain with fellow victims can help surface common feelings of hurt, anger, fear and helplessness. In this process a sense of relief can be experienced, as one no longer suffers alone and in silence but shares with others their common pain. Groups of victims can go through different stages of recovery as their members slowly enable each other to name their pain, recognize the wrong done to them, progress towards restoring broken relationships and strive for financial self-reliance. Going through this process can help growth in self-esteem and facilitate individual and group healing. Those who have suffered can be enabled to move from a passive state of being victims, dependent on aid or handouts, to an experience of empowerment, conscious of one’s human dignity and in control again of one’s life.\footnote{CiM, The Truth Will Make You Free: Compendium of Social Teaching, pp.124-125.}

The Christian tradition offers a process of confession, restitution and forgiveness that is extremely valuable for broken communities that may bear guilt for actions or that may be confused because those values and codes of conduct by which they have lived for many years are no longer acceptable or viable. This Christian tradition can contribute to the recovery of community harmony, as the displaced return.

### 6.8 A Culture of Impunity

Despite Zimbabwe being a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, discussed in Chapter Two, a culture of impunity has been allowed to thrive in Zimbabwe. For example, the country has been flouting, inter alia, article 5 which states that:

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\text{No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.} \footnote{United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 5.}
\]

Other articles, highlighted in Chapter Two, were also ignored in the name of political hegemony. The Amnesty Report 2008 reports that:
The perpetrators of the violence have faced no investigation, prosecution or censure. On the contrary they appear to have been encouraged to commit further human rights violations... This culture of impunity has been allowed to thrive in Zimbabwe, particularly since 2000.  

Without the critical threat of punishment, perpetrators of violence receive a message that it is acceptable to intimidate and violate, and that such practice can continue. The state authorities and police have sided with Zanu PF perpetrators of political violence for political reasons. They are agents of Zanu PF’s stay in power. For example, Musabani, the war veteran mentioned in Chapter Five, was not arrested and prosecuted despite the abduction of Pastor Mhlanga and torture of perceived MDC supporters. Instead, the victim of political violence, Pastor Mhlanga, was arraigned before the courts.

According to Paul Themba Nyathi, the government and Robert Mugabe in particular have sent a strong message to war veterans:

…that violent coercion pays and is in fact the only law of the land at this time. War veterans have been given impunity for tens of thousands of acts of violence and destruction over the last thirty years, including murder, torture, assault, theft, and the burning of property.  

The importance of bringing human rights violators to justice is that this is a declaration that no one is above the law, not even party functionaries.

6.9 Past Approaches to Political Violence

The experience of the past three decades provides a few clues concerning how the church should conduct its key business with government as regards political violence.

Past approaches to church-state dialogue - “workshops”, “pastoral letters”, and

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“condemnations” - have fallen short of meeting the challenges posed by political violence in Zimbabwe. E. Chitando asks, “How much of pastoral statements trickle through to the common people in the work place, families, and even the local Christian communities?” These approaches do not reach ordinary citizens and this poses serious challenges to the church in responding to social ills of any nature. In my view, the above approaches are so revered in ecclesial structures that to speak against them as ineffective is considered heresy.

The above methods that the church is utilizing are alienated and alienating for ordinary Zimbabweans. For example, the ZCC Heads of Denominations held a conference in Kadoma from the 15th to the 17th of March 2000. The theme of the Conference was *Democracy and Good Governance: The Church and the Forthcoming Elections*. Previously, the church met at a workshop at Nyanga in the Eastern province of Zimbabwe. In between the workshops, the church had failed to make the Constitutional Commission defer the referendum in 1999, the Moral Charter was not ratified, and constitutional reform was stalled, with the church choosing religious issues at the expense of political issues. Participants at the Kadoma workshop wondered whether the churches had not delayed in announcing their position on farm invasions and threats from war veterans. The church failed to act, and mobilize their energy and political will to be part of the solution to the Zimbabwean problem of conducting free

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478 Ibid.
479 Ibid., p.38.
and fair elections. Divisions among churches resulting from loyalties either to the ruling party or to the opposition party made them unable to respond to issues of politically-motivated violence. The approaches the churches made use of yielded few tangible benefits. They only ensured the church’s subordination to the state. These approaches had in effect a complementary function to the state. In my view, while politicians are busy impoverishing the masses, the church is busy, however unconsciously, undermining the will of the people to resist by keeping quiet on critical issues that affect the people. The church will find it difficult to change politicians’ attitudes by workshops, pastoral letters, praying, and singing gospel hymns. It should be noted that politicians will never feel ashamed of their conduct. They are only interested in defending their interests at whatever cost.

There have been no changes to these responses despite the ever-changing situations in Zimbabwe. On the 16th of June 2005, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe wrote a press statement that averred, “The church calls upon our government to take heed of the plight of the poor as commanded by God in the Holy Scriptures.” These motions have been tabled with monotonous regularity. The UCCZ has turned its back away from creativity. It is high time the UCCZ realizes that things are rarely black or white - there are always shades of grey. Through the use of these motions, the UCCZ became part of the problem and dismally failed to influence the renewal of the existing social institutions and political policies.

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While pastoral letters, workshops and condemnations reflected the church’s concern, the government has generally rebuffed the church. On many occasions the church is told to dwell on its only key result area: spiritual development. The church has its own activities such as Sunday services, communion services, praying for the sick, Sunday school, etc. The critical point here is the suggestion that religion and politics do not mix. This suggestion is a denial of democracy.

6.10 The Way Forward: A New Theology to Deal with Political Violence

This section seeks to propose a new theology called Anti-Violence Theology. Thus the section will outline the key ingredients of this new theology on political violence and illustrate its relevance to the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. This theology emerged out of the findings of this research and is an integral component of this work. It is important to provide a systematic reconciliation of Christian faith and the phenomenon of political violence in Zimbabwe. Given the amount of violence contained in previous chapters, we now turn to explore the connections between violence and systematic theology. It is the researcher’s thesis that churches in Zimbabwe should adopt the new anti-violence theology in the midst of political violence in the country. P. Hessert, in his book *New Direction in Theology Today*, cited John Wesley who opined that theology must provide answers to societal ills:

> John Wesley wrote that Christianity as a system of doctrine describes the character of a Christian, promises its realization, and tells how it is to be attained.

Christians must find what bothers them from their faith.

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Theologians create systems or ways wherein each category must be congruent with others. One cannot say something in one category that contradicts another. According to C.A. Kirk-Duggan, these categories include:

Theology (study of God); Christology (study of Jesus Christ); soteriology (study of salvation); ecclesiology (study of the Church); pneumatology (study of the Holy Spirit); hamartiology (study of sin); and anthropology (study of humanity).\(^\text{483}\)

Theology begins with the community of faith searching for a deeper understanding of God. J. Macquarrie defines theology as:

The study which through participation in and reflection upon a religious faith seeks to express the content of this faith in the clearest and most coherent language available.\(^\text{484}\)

This definition implies that theology, in this case anti-violence theology, is based on faith and it seeks to participate in faith while it speaks from the standpoint of faith. Every theology is faith as mediated by some cultural element in the matrix of faith. Anti-violence theology is mediated by political violence. Put differently, theology is contextual language of faith. The contextual language is essentially about political violence. Different types of theology are mediated by different kinds of cultural elements. Theologians examine the dogmas of our Christian faith in a systematic way; the goal is to present the major themes that are doctrines of the Christian faith in an organized and ordered overview that remains faithful to the Biblical witness.

The Zimbabwean people are getting more and more dissatisfied with political violence. They need direction. Among the persons they turn to for direction are church people.


Christians must discern the Word of God spoken through the Zimbabwean situation, speaking the Gospel to people in their situations of political violence.

According to A. Kambudzi, by preaching and promoting peace, welfare and salvation, the church stands above national political issues and can easily be seen by any citizens or political parties, and even by political authorities to be non-partisan, neutral and human-centred in outlook.\(^{485}\) Despite the glaring shortcomings in the prevailing conservative theology, the churches have not yet found a new theology. Anti-violence theology attempts to offer a “new start” for Zimbabwe. It offers the greatest opportunity to the church in Zimbabwe to transform society. According to the Letter of Paul VI to Cardinal Roy, there is need for a new theology that will appeal to “the changing situations of this world, under the inspiration of the gospel as a source of renewal.”\(^{486}\) This theology draws on the redemptive tradition of the Gospel and it is an all-inclusive theology. The churches in Zimbabwe, in my view, should take their cue from the political and social passion of the Old Testament prophets and the social significance of Jesus’ teaching about the Kingdom of God.

### 6.10.1 Mapping Out the Contours of Anti-Violence Theology

The church has many opportunities of providing its witness in Zimbabwe. The current situation demands that the church in Zimbabwe be pro-active and produce a theology to grapple with political violence. Such a theology would be a refusal by the church to be part and parcel of the government’s oppressive machinery. This theology would be

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\(^{486}\) Letter of Paul VI to Cardinal Roy, 1971, No. 42
future-sensitive as opposed to past-sensitive. It would be a post-exilic theology, which called for all people living in Zimbabwe to shun violence. C. Villa-Vicencio appeals for a post-Cold War theology to engage in serious dialogue with democracy, human rights, law making, nation-building, and economics in order to ensure that these do indeed improve the quality of human life. Anti-violence theology satisfies these human rights requirements.

6.10.2 Anti-Violence Theology Draws on the Reconstructive Motif

The first ingredient of Anti-Violence Theology is reconstruction. Reconstruction is a new form of theological hermeneutic developed by African theologians to bring full humanity to the people of this continent. According to J. M. Gathogo, in 1990 at the All Africa Church Conference (AACC):

Jesse Mugambi suggested that African theological articulation must shift its theological emphasis in post-Cold War Africa, from the Exodus motif to a reconstructive motif.

Reconstructing social institutions in the face of multiple political crises is a more than vexing task for many Christians in Zimbabwe. In this critical period in the history of this country, the researcher finds hope in reconstruction theology. Anti-violence theology fits into the current framework of reconstruction theology which has been the latest theological project coming out of Africa since the 1990s.

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C. Villa-Vicencio points out that Reconstruction Theology leads to “the birth of a different kind of liberatory theology.”⁴⁸⁹ It is the rebuilding of the existing society rather than a liberation struggle against the existing society. It is a shift of focus towards nation building. In the words of J. Mugambi, reconstruction “involves reorganization of some aspects of society in order to make it more responsive to changed circumstances.”⁴⁹⁰

This theology should be:

- reconstructive rather than destructive;
- inclusive rather than exclusive;
- proactive rather than reactive;
- complementary rather than competitive;
- integrative rather than disintegrative;
- programme-driven rather than project-driven;
- people centred rather than institution-centred;
- deed-centred rather than word-oriented;
- participatory rather than autocratic;
- regenerative rather than degenerative;
- future-sensitive rather than past-sensitive;
- cooperative rather than confrontational;
- consultative rather than impositional.⁴⁹¹

Put differently, it is a dialoguing theology. It sets out on the premise that if we dialogue, we can have solutions from within. In anti-violence theology everyone is invited to renewal, remaking, rebuilding and improving.

Anti-violence theology boldly clamours for the church to address social and economic injustice, but using a reconstructive motif as opposed to Liberation Theology’s addressing of societal concerns using the Exodus motif. It is done with the inner drive of wanting to rebuild our walls. Consequently, it will call for the re-establishment of sound social relations, affirming the dignity of all members of the society. It encourages people to be creative and devise solutions to their local problems. It is my considered opinion

that neglecting local creativity in any development process is tantamount to mismanagement of resources and a threat against the integrity of God’s creation. The church must help its members to reconsider their priorities and begin to value their own creativity. Citizens must be free to express themselves and participate more actively in the management of their resources.

6.10.3 Ubuntu/Hunhuism a Remedy for Political Violence?

Ubuntu is an integral ingredient of Anti-Violence Theology. A great deal of what is required in Zimbabwe is reconstruction, the recapturing of what is African and consistent with the gospel which has served as a vehicle for the survival of Zimbabweans.\textsuperscript{492} V. Dedji, in his book \textit{Reconstruction and Renewal in African Christian Theology}, points out that:

Unless African people are reconciled with their true selves, there will not be any genuine reconstruction of their brokenness.\textsuperscript{493}

Churches should embrace Ubuntu. The concept of Hunhuism has become for me the remedy for political violence. A. Shuttle defines Ubuntu thus:

The concept UBUNTU means “humanity.” The concept of UBUNTU embodies an understanding of what it is to be human and what is necessary for human beings to grow and find fulfilment. It is an ethical concept and expresses a vision of what is valuable and worthwhile in life.\textsuperscript{494}

There is no doubt that Hunhuism is rooted in the history of Zimbabwe. For example, when the Ndua greet each other they say “\textit{Mwamuka here?”}(Lit. Good morning). They answer “\textit{Ndamuka kana mwamukawo}” (lit. I am ok only if you are ok as well). Concern


for the other person is the heart of Hunhuism. If Zimbabweans embrace this ethical concept of humanity, political violence will be a thing of the past.

The vision of Hunhuism is that life is communal rather than individualistic:

The goal of morality according to this ethical vision is fullness of humanity; the moral life is seen as a process of personal growth. And just as participation in community with others is the essential means to personal growth, so participation in community with others is the motive and fulfilment of the process. Everything that promotes personal growth and participation in community is good, everything that prevents it is bad.495

In the same vein, M.F. Murove pointed out that:

The conviction is that one cannot be a human being without being related to other people. The individual’s relatedness to the community finds its expression in the African concept of Ubuntu, a concept that literally means humanness. What it means to be human is something that the individual derives from the community; there is simply no dichotomy between the individual and the community because the individual and the community exist in a symbiotic relationship.496

The morality of Hunhuism is intimately related to human happiness and fulfilment. It corresponds to Jesus’ teaching: “I came so that you may live life in its fullness.” (John 10:10). The church’s religious mission is to bring salvation to humankind by delivering people from all that holds them back from living life in its fullness. The church has the responsibility of delivering people not only from spiritual bondage but also from the political, economic social, cultural and ideological bondages that prevent them from living full lives.

495 Ibid., p.30.
The impulsion toward Christian action in the political field, derived from the Gospel, does not mean that Christians have ready answers for the multitude of problems in human society. Christians must use with gratitude the insights of secular groups and cooperate with them wherever circumstances permit. At the same time they should be aware that there exist in our days several highly dynamic world systems which can be fused with the Gospel in an attempt to find answers to political violence. UBUNTU, as I see it, serves to place the context of the day into perspective and appreciates that understanding of problems is a sure way of being later able to accurately chart a way forward. The current situation demands that the church in Zimbabwe be pro-active and fuse Hunhuism with its theologizing.

6.10.4 Anti-Violence Theology is Biblical

Another ingredient of Anti-Violence Theology is that it is biblical. For Girard, divine revelation unmasks violence and presents God on the side of the victims. The church is further called to an actively prophetic ministry based upon biblical teachings from the Old Testament. Reconstruction theology will therefore urge Zimbabweans to “be our brother’s and sister’s keepers” (Genesis 4:9). The verses refer to the story of Cain and Abel. When Cain killed Abel he could not get away from God. The question that Cain wanted to evade was “Where is...thy brother?” (Gen 4:9). According to the Interpreter’s Bible, people “must recognize that any human being, yes, any careless or flippant unkindness, brings them face to face with the judgement of God.” Anti-violence theology will thus be a theology of good neighbourliness. Here the call is for the church to be the conscience of the people, to declare the unity of mankind, to repudiate

practices and attitudes which create friction. The church must not lack courage in the exercise of its pastoral function.

R. Gunda in his article “African Theology of Reconstruction: The Painful Realities and Practical Options!” points out that:

The prophetic book of Amos over and above Jesus is the real model upon which an effective ‘liberative reconstruction theology’ in Africa today can be build upon.498

The prophet Amos propagates the prophetic tradition that insists on not only words but also action. Amos’ exhortation against the iniquitous wealthy gives justification for a prophetic ministry designed to halt oppressive policies and practices. This explains why the prophet Amos condemned the social imbalances of his time thus:

Take away from me the noise of your songs. To the melody of your harps I will not listen. But let justice roll down like waters, And righteousness like an overflowing stream. (Amos 5: 23-24).

The above injunction clearly seals off all channels the church may have had recourse to when feigning indifference to social, political and economic injustices that go unchecked by the day. Christians in Zimbabwe, like Amos, should have the courage of their convictions and for the sake of posterity excoriate the institutionalization of poverty.

Reconstruction theology is future-sensitive as opposed to past-sensitive. It is a post-exilic theology, which calls on all people living in Africa to “come now and let us build the wall of our Jerusalem” (Nehemiah 2:18). Hence let us both state and church, rich

and poor, former oppressor and the former oppressed, slave owner and the former slave, together find the solution to poverty, corruption, patriarchy, racism, tribalism, political violence, and all vices that are affecting Africa. That is why C. Villa-Vicencio appeals for a post-Cold war African Theology to engage in serious dialogue with democracy, human rights, law making, nation-building, and economics in order to ensure that these do indeed improve the quality of human life.  

This new theology, in my view, requires Christians to stand up with their Bibles and chart a course of action for the coming years. It is important that Christians not only take stock of commitments made by government, but also attempt to give a vision for the future.

### 6.10.5 Anti-Violence Theology Draws on the Praxis Model

The other formative factor of Anti-Violence theology is that it is action-oriented. Anti-violence theology draws from the praxis model of theology. According to B.S. Bevans, the praxis model is essentially about “discerning the meaning and contributing to the course of social change, and so takes its inspiration neither from classic texts nor classic behaviour but from present realities and future possibilities.” The UCCZ is challenged to strengthen a new theology and articulate a new socio-political ethic as the basis for a relevant prophetic ministry. This theology will acknowledge that churches, like associations, are only interested in politics in so far as the interests of their members are concerned. Associations defend the interests of their members. It is never

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the aim of churches to assume government and, unlike political parties, they do not put forward candidates and manifestos at elections. It is the responsibility of churches to see to it that the interests of believers are catered for. The reality is that if society continues to disintegrate and decay, the church will go down with it.

6.10.6 The Church’s Role as Teacher and Moral Guide

Anti-Violence Theology is educative and authoritative. Jesus said to the church:

All authority in heaven and on earth is mine. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you (Mt 28:19-20).

The aspect of the church that concerns us here is her role as a teacher and moral guide. The church should demand obedience to a code of social ethics in the manner of the eighth century prophets. The code of social ethics is a dimension of religion that touches upon life and welfare in this world. It is religious jurisprudence and is characterized by "must dos" and "must not dos" regarding social and individual life. The church proclaims the moral order for the human universe, i.e. it passes moral judgements on any matters of concern. The clearest articulation of this is found in Pius XI’s social encyclical, Quadragesimo anno, promulgated in 1931, when the world was in the throes of a depression. The moral order is based upon the dignity of all every human person. Whenever any component of society, e.g. the political system, economic system, etc., debases human dignity by violating basic human rights, the church becomes involved by upholding the moral order. The church has the divine right to guide and direct God’s people by criticizing and condemning unjust and oppressive

social structures. This is the role of Catholic social teaching. Whenever political violence touches and affects the moral order then the church speaks out of her competency.

Reconstruction theology serves to counter injustices and abuse of power and provides checks and balances in the governing process. It is a refusal by the church to be part and parcel of the government’s oppressive machinery. C.S. Banana argues that the church must continue to be the watchdog of democracy and ensure that no impediments are placed in the path of those wishing to exercise their constitutional right to vote. Commitment to the promotion of justice and peace is a constitutive element of evangelization. The church should not be part of the problem but part of the solution in Zimbabwe.

6.10.7 Global Church and Political Violence

The other component of Anti-Violence Theology is that it has universal normativity. The churches in Zimbabwe have tended to look inward rather than outward to our Christian brothers and sisters outside Zimbabwe. This is so because the church has become a central agency of democratization in the Southern African region. For example, the church played a pivotal role in the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa. The *Kairos Document*, produced by theologians in South Africa, challenged a socio-political system that politics alone could not conquer. Christian men and women played an important part in challenging the status quo and changing the face of the rainbow nation. Through the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, headed by a theologian, reconciliation and healing in South Africa was made possible. The Commission’s task was to “provide a

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historic bridge between the past deeply divided society characterized by strife, conflict, untold suffering and injustice, and a future founded on the recognition of human rights, democracy and peaceful co-existence for all South Africans.\textsuperscript{504} Theology has a major role to play in Zimbabwe in the same manner as it did in helping to heal the scars in South Africa.

6.11 What Then Shall We Do?

This section discusses how best we can market anti-violence theology. As indicated in Chapter Three theological education is at the heart of Christian life. In order to popularize this anti-violence theology, the church must embark on the following programmes:

6.11.1 Need for Education for Life

The purpose of education in relation to society, and the content of that education, has to be thought out again in terms of the new needs of society.

The researcher truly believes that theology is the backbone of church life. Theological institutions have been established – to give “bones” to our churches. Theological education has a huge impact on the proper functioning of our churches in particular and the country in general. We train our pastors and other full time ministers in those theological colleges and seminaries. Therefore, in addition to the Spirit of God leading and moulding church members, our churches are the reflections of how our leaders

\textsuperscript{504} A. H. Robertson, \textit{Op.Cit.}, p.46.
acquired and developed their theological insights from their theological ministerial training in those theological institutions.

It is a truism that theological institutions are on one side, the laity and the church on the other. This is a time for introspection, time for a reality check. The researcher is proposing elements of curriculum design that are more in tune with the contemporary world church. It is time we discerned the “signs of the times.” Theology in Zimbabwe should be concerned with the need to study the current issues of Zimbabwe. These issues include political violence.

6.12 Relevant and Contextual Theological Education In Zimbabwe

To produce a relevant and contextual theological education in Zimbabwe, Christian educators and theologians in Zimbabwe have to take seriously the realities of the whole Zimbabwe context in which political violence plays a key part. As G. Gutierrez said, "a theology which is not up-to-date, which does not link itself to historical praxis but rests content itself with worship and the formulation of right beliefs (doctrines), is false theology." In order for a theology to be living and updated, it needs to face the hard realities and challenges of the context. Theology needs daring courage in a context like Zimbabwe where the fears and ambiguities of life prevail.

Let us start much further back. The fundamental problem of theological education in Zimbabwe is the fact that missionaries had trained Christians to think of doing theology

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and theological education only as a task of university and seminary teachers and students. Such a wrong perception of the nature of theological education has created an intellectual gap between seminarians and lay people, and hence theology remains merely as a game of Christian intellectuals at the educational level. One step removed from this stage of understanding is the idea that theology has to do only with theologically trained people and not with ordinary Christians. The question is: What would theological education mean for communities outside churches and theological institutions infected and affected by political violence? Is not the whole process of theological education community-oriented rather than church/seminary-oriented?

It is my considered view that universities and seminaries have entrusted theological and ministerial education to mere scholars, those who know more about books than humanity, and more about theological lecture halls than society. We need to teach theological education in a way that enables universities and seminarians to benefit from advances in scholarship while at the same time becoming respectful of the needs of the community.

6.13 Prospects of Avoiding Political Violence: Curriculum Review

Patterns of theological education in Zimbabwe should be critically reconstructed in the form and terms appropriate for Christian communities. Imported Western forms of theological education need to be remodelled to fit the Zimbabwean context. Theology should not be something that is done in the past and discontinued in the present. For doing theology is an ongoing process – a struggling spiritual journey into the rapidly
moving time and changing realities of the context. Doing theology is actually the task of every believing Christian. It should not be thought of as the work of ministers, pastors and theological educators alone. All Christians at whatever level (academic, church, etc.) should be enabled to do theology.

Theology developed in Zimbabwe must seriously take into consideration Zimbabwe’s religio-cultural thought-forms so that ‘theology’ will make sense to the Zimbabwean people. Therefore theological education in the country must take seriously into account the significance of ‘dialogue’ with peoples of different faith-traditions, especially African traditions of the Hunhuism concept discussed above.

Any theological education developed in Zimbabwe must be liberating and not oppressive in terms of its academic impact. The central focus should be to aim at liberating the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized, to heal the broken society, and to be in solidarity with the powerless and the poor in their struggles for justice, peace and freedom.

To reach the above goals, there are three crucial steps to be taken:

- Teaching methodologies in seminaries and Bible schools in Zimbabwe need not be reproductive or imitative of the West. They need to be remodelled or reconstructed in forms and using ideas relevant to the Zimbabwean context.
- Subjects in universities, theological seminaries and Bible schools should be academic as well as issues-oriented. Subjects studied in classes should reflect relevant experiences in life beyond the class and vice versa.
• Aspects of theological themes and concepts studied in universities and seminaries must be holistic, inclusive, ecumenical and violence sensitive. Usage of ideas, terminology and modes of expressions should be always reasonably non-offensive and tension-free. The ecumenical spirit and religious dialogue should prevail.

6.14 Providing an Information Service
There is a great need for information on new trends in peace-building and conflict resolution. The church can fill this need by adapting existing information so that it is interpreted and recast in language and format suited to the varying levels of understanding and reading ability in society. In addition the church can distribute available materials to those who can use them effectively. This includes use by churches of existing centres of information. The church can also make use of audio-visual aids of all kinds.

6.15 Ecumenical Bodies
Church leaders from ecumenical bodies must be constantly alert to what is happening in the country, equipped with accurate knowledge of the problems confronting the humanity living in it, and versed in the proper skills to enable them to deal with those problems intelligently. The church must also train both clergy and laity along new lines, if they are to fulfill their responsibilities as Christians in their society. Christians who are experts in various specialized fields such as law and political science have a
responsibility to make their knowledge and skill available to the church as it ministers to humanity in society. P. Hessert argued that:

When the reality of the church is no longer understood to centre in the clergy and its supernatural function, then the role of each member becomes crucial. The laity is no longer merely the passive recipient of supernatural benefits but constitutes the active life of the church.506

The church has not been making full use of the skills available in its membership. It must harness the power of its membership and counter political violence. In this regard the church will neither succumb to deadening apathy nor to the temptation to violence.

6.16 Conclusion

In conclusion, the UCCZ’s reading of political violence is influenced by a number of factors. The church was influenced in its reading by the Bible, the early church theologians, by the reformed tradition of John Calvin, by theological movements and by a pragmatic reading of the situation on the ground floor. All these were blended to produce the UCCZ perspective on political violence. The compulsion toward Christian action in the political and social fields does not mean that Christians have ready answers for the multitude of problems in human society. The UCCZ has many opportunities of making its witness in Zimbabwe. Above all, it must point to the need for change, and help its members to see the meaning of responsible action in the search for new methods and patterns of living. The church has a responsibility to bring a wider perspective into the outlook of people living in the midst of political violence.

The principle of non-violence is the underlying theory for the UCCZ in the political order. The church has moved with the times by joining other churches in the fight to create a democratic Zimbabwe. Churches will become irrelevant if they do not develop a new theology and do more than work merely for their self-preservation, and if they refuse to be servants of the wider society. Indeed, the churches can still do more than issue statements and documents; they must embrace anti-violence theology. The future of theology and its credibility in Zimbabwe depends on the willingness of Christians to grapple with existential issues affecting the lives of people such as political violence.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire on the UCCZ and Political Violence in Independent Zimbabwe.

SECTION A. (Please tick in the appropriate box or item)

1. Gender: Male    Female

2. Which category best describes you?
   (a) Reverend of UCCZ.
   (b) Member of UCCZ.
   (c) UCCZ employee
   (d) Affected Member.

3. Level of education:
   (a) Certificate
   (b) Diploma
   (c) Degree
   (d) Masters
   (e) Doctorate
   (f) Other____________________________

4. For how long have you been involved in your field?
   (a) Less than 5 years
   (b) 6-10 years
   (c) 11-15 years
   (d) 16-20 years
   (e) 21-30 years

SECTION B (Tick where appropriate or fill in the blank space provided).

1. Have you witnessed political violence in you area of operation? Yes    No

2. Indicate the political violence you witnessed from those listed below:
   □ □
3. What form of political violence did you witness?
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

4. How do you rate the relationship between the government and the UCCZ?
(a) Very Good  (b) Good  (c) Not good  (d) Suspicious

5. Why do you think the relationship is as you described in 4 above?
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

6. What stance should the church take when faced with political violence?
(a) Only pray  (b) Ignore the violence  (c) Engage the parties concerned

7. On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the strongest evaluate the effectiveness of the UCCZ in dealing with political violence.

8. What were the causes of political violence in your area of operation?
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
9. What was the position of your church in the violent land occupation in 21st Zimbabwe? (a) Backed the Government □ (b) Watched and did not establish a position □ (c) Issued statements □ (d) ____________________________

10. What do you suggest UCCZ should do to help the following who were affected by the political violence:
   a) The victims of political violence:
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

   b) Those who caused the violence:
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

   c) The general populace
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
Appendix 2

Churches and shops forced to close for Zanu PF rally

Posted by Tererai Karimakwenda on Wednesday, February 22, 2012 in Church, Zimbabwe politics | 4 comments

By Tererai Karimakwenda.
22 February 2012

Senior officials within ZANU PF forced several churches and all businesses in Biriri district of Chimanimani West, Manicaland to shut down last Sunday, and forced everyone in the area to attend a political rally they had organized.
Local activist Peter Chogura told SW Radio Africa that ZANU PF’s secretary for administration, Didymus Mutasa (pictured above), Mutare Senator Monica Mutsvangwa, and Central Committee member Munacho Mutezo, addressed an estimated 400 people at the rally, telling them to victimize anyone who supports the MDC and to deny them state funded benefits.

“All the churches such as the Methodists, United Baptists and even the African Apostolic Church were closed for the rally. And all the shops at Biriri Business Centre and nearby were also shut down,” Chogura explained.

Forcing people to attend rallies has been part of ZANU PF’s strategy around the country for years. Unfortunately, the creation of a coalition government over three years ago has not stopped the victimization of the MDC-T and its supporters.

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