Empowering Hope?
Jürgen Moltmann's Eschatological Challenge to Ecclesiological Responses in the Zimbabwean Context of Poverty

by

Collium Banda

Dissertation Presented for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Systematic Theology and Ecclesiology), in the Faculty of Theology, at Stellenbosch University

Promoter:
Dr I J van der Merwe

March 2016

Declaration

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Date: March 2016

Abstract

This study wrestles with Jürgen Moltmann's eschatological concept of the 'church of hope for the poor' within the Zimbabwean context of poverty, in search for an empowering and liberating ecclesiological ethical framework of responding to poverty. The first section of the study analyses how the notion of the church of hope for the poor is conceptualised in Moltmann. The section argues that in Moltmann's eschatological vision the church of hope for the poor emerges from at least three notions: the historicity of the trinitarian God of hope, the kingdom of God that promotes the restoration of life and the communality of the church of hope. The central argument is that, for Moltmann, eschatological hope stirs and empowers the church that believes in the triune God of the exodus and is waiting for God's life-loving and life-promoting kingdom to use its communal nature to defend the poor.

Using Moltmann's categories of the church of hope, the second section assesses the dominant church responses to poverty in Zimbabwe. The section highlights that in the colonial period, the church combined the preaching of the future hope with addressing the poverty of the local people, but also aided their oppression and segregation by the colonial administration. The slow rise of critical theological education among the indigenous ministers heightened the irreconcilability of the Christian hope for the future and present poverty, which resulted in the challenge of socio-economic marginalisation in the colonial era. However, in present liberated Zimbabwe, the church that challenged the impoverishing nature of oppressive colonial structures has either aided similar oppressive structures by the present ruling elite or seems too powerless and disinterested to oppose those structures that perpetrate poverty.

The last section formulates an eschatologically informed ecclesiological ethical framework of liberating and empowering the poor to respond to poverty meaningfully. It establishes an eschatological basis for the church's prioritisation of responding to poverty. Using the metaphor of the church as an African kraal, Moltmann's notions of the historicity of the God of hope, the kingdom of God and the communality of the church of hope are unpacked as resources for empowering the church to engage with the Zimbabwean context of poverty. Imaged as the African kraal, the church is affirmed as a place where communality functions as a resource of empowering the poor, where the historicity of God is a place for human capacitation of the poor, and where the kingdom calls for a public theology model that rejects the church's co-option by the ruling elite who oppress the poor and powerless. Thus, eschatological hope calls the church to play a critical and empowering role in a context of poverty.

Opsomming

Hierdie studie stoei met Jürgen Moltmann se eskatologiese konsep van die 'kerk van hoop vir die armes' binne die Zimbabwiese konteks van armoede en soek na 'n bemagtigende en bevrydende ekklesiologies-etiese raamwerk wat reageer op armoede.

Die eerste afdeling van die studie analiseer hoe die idee van 'n kerk van hoop vir die armes deur Moltmann gekonseptualiseer word. Dié deel betoog dat Moltmann se eskatologiese visie van die kerk van hoop vir die armes uit minstens drie begrippe vloei: die historisiteit van die drie-enige God van hoop, die koninkryk van God wat die herstel van lewe bevorder, en die kommunaliteit van die kerk van hoop. Moltmann se sentrale argument is dat eskatologiese hoop die kerk wat glo in die drie-enige God van die eksodus beweeg, bemagtig en laat wag op God se lewegewende en lewe-bevorderende koninkryk deur haar kommunale aard te benut om die armes te verdedig.

Die tweede afdeling assesseer die dominante kerk-reaksies tot armoede in Zimbabwe volgens Moltmann se kategorieë van die kerk van hoop. Dit beklemtoon dat die kerk in die koloniale tydperk die armoede van plaaslike mense aangespreek het deur die prediking van toekomstige hoop, maar ook hul onderdrukking en segregasie deur die koloniale administrasie ondersteun het. Die geleidelike opkoms van kritiese teologiese opleiding onder die inheemse leraars het die onversoenbaarheid van die Christelike hoop met huidige en toekomstige armoede beklemtoon, wat gelei het tot hul uitdaging van sosio-ekonomiese marginalisasie in die koloniale era. In die huidige, bevryde Zimbabwe het die kerk wat die verarmende aard van onderdrukkende koloniale strukture uitgedaag het egter soortgelyke onderdrukkende strukture van die huidige regerende elite ondersteun deur magteloos of belangloos voor te kom om strukture wat armoede bewerkstellig teen te staan.

Die laaste afdeling formuleer 'n eskatologies-geïnformeerde ekklesiologies-etiese raamwerk vir die bevryding en bemagtiging van armes as 'n sinvolle respons tot armoede. Dit vestig 'n eskatologiese basis vir die kerk se prioritisering van 'n reaksie tot armoede. Deur die metafoor van die kerk as 'n Afrika-kraal te gebruik, word Moltmann se idees van die historisiteit van goddelike hoop, die koninkryk van God en die kommunaliteit van die kerk van hoop ingespan as hulpbronne om die kerk te bemagtig in die aanspreek van die Zimbabwiese konteks van armoede. Met die beeld van 'n Afrika-kraal, word bevestig dat die kerk 'n plek is waar kommunaliteit funksioneer as 'n hulpbron wat armes bemagtig, waar die historisiteit van God 'n plek is vir sorgsame bemagtiging van die armes en waar die koninkryk 'n oproep maak tot 'n

publiek-teologiese model wat die regerende elite se koöptering van die kerk om die armes net verder te onderdruk en te ontmagtig, verwerp. Eskatologiese hoop doen dus 'n beroep op die kerk om 'n kritiese en bemagtigende rol te speel in 'n konteks van armoede.

Dedication

To the memory of two precious elusive hopes experienced towards the end of this study. On the afternoon of 20 January 2015, just when our hands were stretched out to joyfully receive and the baby court mounted in great expectation, *Sinomqhele* (Ndebele: we have the crown), *Atinatsa* (Shona: God has perfected us) suddenly glided away. On 21 July 2015 when we were celebrating *hoping* that God had replaced our first lost hope, the second hope also slipped away still in its formative stages before we could settle on a name.

And to my beautiful and dearly loved wife, *Vhaidha*, whose body bears the scars of all these elusive hopes and yet continues to be full of hope and joyful expectation. Although the God of hope does not make sense now, may he be glorified in your life.

Acknowledgements

We say in IsiNdebele, *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* to emphasise that other people contribute towards the achievements that make us dignified people. Without the gracious and generous support and solidarity of many different people, I would not have reached the end of this journey.

I am eternally indebted to my promoter, Dr I Johan van der Merwe, who graciously took over the supervision of this study after the untimely death of the late Dr Gerrit Brand. I am exceedingly grateful to Dr van der Merwe for his constructive guidance, valuable comments on my drafts and his compassionate understanding even when the project slowed down when my family suffered two tragic misfortunes.

I gratefully acknowledge the gracious financial support from Langham Partners (formerly John Stott Ministries), Theological College of Zimbabwe, George Whitefield College, Stellenbosch University bursary office and the Dutch Reformed Church student support fund. A special word of thanks goes to Mrs Yolanda Johnson at the International Student Finance Office who always kindly and timely attended to my financial inquiries.

I had many memorable conversations with the late Dr Gerrit Brand in the initial stages of this study and I am forever indebted to him. He graciously facilitated my participation in the student exchange programme at the Humboldt University in Berlin where Prof Wilhelm Gräb kindly hosted me. While at Humboldt, Prof Gräb went beyond the call of duty to make my stay in Berlin memorable. Huba Boshoff kindly coordinated the trip. Dr David Seccombe generously contributed towards the trip. Prof Rolf Schieder facilitated a meeting with Prof Jürgen Moltmann and also a travel bursary. Through the gracious efforts of Prof Cilliers Breytenbach and Dr Volker Faigle the Evangelischer Kirchenrat Deutschland (EKD) granted me scholarship for an intensive German language course at the Goethe Institute in Berlin. To all these people, I am exceedingly and abundantly grateful.

I sincerely thank Dr Mike Burgess, Dr Robert Doyle, Dr Victor Nakah and Mr Victor Emma-Adamah for kindly reading portions of this study and providing very constructive suggestions. I had many fruitful discussions with Mr Mawethu Ncaca about the African kraal; I appreciate his useful insights. I am grateful to a brief encounter with Prof Ernst Conradie that challenged me to think ecclesiologically. I am gratefully indebted to Prof Robert Vosloo for generously availing to me many learning opportunities from which I gained many useful insights for this study. I am extremely grateful to Mr Patrick Dunn for his insightful and critical editing.

I will forever be indebted to Elria Kwant for tirelessly sourcing much needed archival missionary letters and reports on the early stages of the church in Zimbabwe at her costs. I am also grateful to Lucy McCann, archivist at The Bodleian Library of Commonwealth & African Studies at Rhodes House, Oxford University, for graciously providing the archival letters on the early stages of the church in Zimbabwe. Many grateful thanks to Dennis Mutadzakupa for the pastoral letters by the Zimbabwe's Catholic bishops.

I thank the librarians at Stellenbosch University and George Whitefield College for their gracious assistance. I am grateful for the valuable lessons learnt at the Stellenbosch University Writing Laboratory and the many wonderful people I met there particularly my mentors Dr Rose Richards and Sharifa Daniels. I am also grateful for the valuable lessons learnt at New Voices in Science particularly from Ronel Steyn and Corina Du Toit. A special thanks to Marieke Brand and Lindsay De Freitas for the Afrikaans translation of the abstract.

I am also grateful to Riverview Church of Christ and brother Noel van der Burg for providing a place to worship and serve. During my family's darkest moment, the Celebration Church Johannesburg and their ministers, Pastors Givemore and Precious Mushayi, went beyond their call of duty to comfort us and refresh us.

I reserve my greatest appreciation to my wife, Vhaidha, who on account of this study has had to endure many lone nights, at times while suffering great heartache and physical pain. Nothing I say, or give or do will ever thank her enough for all she has had to endure on my behalf.

Most of all, I thank God who provided these wonderful people and many others I have not been able to mention but are sincerely remembered and deeply appreciated. I thank Him for his lavish gracious provisions without which I would not have made it to this end.

Contents

List of Abbreviations

This list of abbreviations of the works of Jürgen Moltmann and the general abbreviations is only for recurring works and references.

The Works of Jürgen Moltmann

CG: Moltmann, J. 1974. *The crucified God: The cross of Christ as the foundation and criticism of Christian theology.* R.A. Wilson and J. Bowden (trs.). New York: Harper & Row.

CoG: Moltmann, J. 1996. *The coming of God: Christian eschatology*. M. Kohl (tr.). London: SCM.

CPS: Moltmann, J. 1977. *The church in the power of the Spirit: a contribution to Messianic ecclesiology.* Translated by Margaret Kohl. New York: Harper & Row.

EoG: Moltmann, J. 1980. *Experiences of God.* M. Kohl (tr.). London: SCM.

EiT: Moltmann, J 2000. *Experiences in theology: ways and forms of Christian theology*. M. Kohl (tr.). Minneapolis: Fortress.

EoT: Moltmann, J. 2012. *Ethics of hope.* M. Kohl (tr.). Minneapolis: Fortress

GiC: Moltmann, J. 1985. *God in creation: a new theology in creation and the Spirit of God.* M Kohl (tr.). London: SCM.

GSS: Moltmann, J. 1999. *God for a secular society: the public relevance of theology*. M. Kohl (tr.). London: SCM.

HH: Moltmann, J. 1968. Hope and history. In *Theology Today*. Vol. 25/3 (1968): pp369-386.

HP: Moltmann, J. 1971. *Hope and planning*. M. Clarkson (tr.). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

HTG: Moltmann, J. 1991. *History and the triune God.* J. Bowden (tr.). London: SCM

EH: Moltmann, J. 1975. *The experiment hope*. M. D. Meeks (ed. & tr.). Philadelphia: Fortress.

OC: Moltmann, J. 1978. *The open church: invitation to a messianic lifestyle.* M.D. Meeks (ed. & tr.). London: SCM.

OHD: Moltmann, J 1984. *On human dignity: political theology and ethics.* M.D. Meeks (tr.). Philadelphia: Fortress.

TKG: Moltmann, J. 1981. *The trinity and the kingdom of God.* M. Kohl (tr.). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

TH: Moltmann, J. (1967) 1991. *Theology of hope: on the ground and the implications of a Christian eschatology.* (New Preface). J. W. Leitch (tr.). Minneapolis: Fortress

SoL: Moltmann, J. 1993. *The Spirit of life: a universal affirmation*. M. Kohl (tr.). Minneapolis: Fortress.

SRA: Moltmann, J. 2010. *Sun of righteous arise: God's future for humanity and the earth*. M. Kohl (tr.). Minneapolis: Fortress

WJC: Moltmann, J. 1990. *The way of Jesus Christ: Christology in messianic dimensions.* M. Kohl (tr.). Philadelphia: Fortress.

General Abbreviations

AIC:	African Indigenous Churches
BSAC:	British South Africa Company
CCJP:	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
CCR:	Christian Council of Rhodesia
EFZ:	Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe
LMS:	London Missionary Society
NGO:	Non-governmental Organisations
PF-ZAPU:	Patriotic Front-Zimbabwe African People's Union
RCBC:	Rhodesia Catholic Bishops' Conference
UANC:	United African National Council
UDI:	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UTC:	United Theological College
WCC/PCR:	World Council of Churches' Programme to Combat Racism
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
ZAOGA:	Zimbabwe Assemblies of God, Africa
ZCBC:	Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop's Council
ZCC:	Zimbabwe Council of Churches
ZWWD:	The Zimbabwe We Want: Towards a National Vision for Zimbabwe.

Key Words

Chapter 1: Introductory Remarks

This ecclesiological ethical investigation into the concept of the 'church of hope for the poor' in the eschatological vision of the German theologian, Jürgen Moltmann, is conducted from the perspective of a Zimbabwean context of poverty. The study is conducted in search of an empowering and liberating ecclesiological ethical framework in a context of poverty in Zimbabwe. This introductory chapter (1.1) describes the aim of this study. The chapter introduces (1.2) Jürgen Moltmann. It also introduces (1.3) the significance of the church in Moltmann's eschatological vision. The chapter (1.4) introduces the ecclesiological nature of the Christian quest for poverty eradication in Zimbabwe. The chapter concludes (1.5) with the method by means of which the study is conducted.

1.1. The Aim of the Study

The central question of this study is: *How might Moltmann's eschatological concept of the 'church for the poor' assist in the search for an empowering and liberating ecclesiological ethical framework of responding to poverty in Zimbabwe?* The research aims to investigate Moltmann's concept of the 'church of hope for the poor', which develops from his concept of eschatological hope. This conceptual investigation is conducted in search of a liberating and empowering ecclesiological ethical framework for a meaningful response to poverty. This study of Moltmann's eschatological ecclesiology of the poor was prompted by two major ecclesiological phenomena related to poverty in Zimbabwe. First, prosperity Pentecostalism is on the rise as a framework of liberating and empowering the poor to break free from their socioeconomic poverty. Secondly, the Christian foundations for addressing poverty that were laid by the historical mainline missionary churches, which introduced Africans to the modern monetised, industrialised and time-oriented economy, seem to be losing their value in the current Zimbabwean context of poverty. This raises the question about what the church in Zimbabwe, in the light of eschatological hope, ought to be and ought to do in order to develop a framework for addressing poverty that will empower and liberate poor Christians to respond to their poverty in a meaningful manner.

1.2. Jürgen Moltmann and Human Suffering

This study is based on the eschatological ecclesiology of the German theologian Jürgen Moltmann (born 1926, Hamburg), who served from 1976 until his retirement in 1994 as professor of systematic theology at Tübingen University in Germany. There is ample testimony to Moltmann's seminal contribution to theology in the post-Second World War era (Bauckham 1995:1; Meeks

1996:253; Ruether 1996:241; Volf 1996:xi; Müller-Fahrenholz 2000:15). Moltmann has emerged as one of the world's foremost public theologians and eminent voices for what may be viewed as an ecclesiological ethics in a context of poverty and human oppression. Moltmann is a prolific author, having written so extensively that it is a difficult task to get an overall view of all his work. From 1964 to 1975 he produced his three great programmatic works that established his indelible mark in the theological era after the Second World War. The three books were *Theology of Hope* (1967), the German version was published in 1964, *The Crucified God* (1974a), the German version was published in 1972 and *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (1977), the German version was published in 1975. Between 1980 and 1999, he published six volumes as "Contributions to Systematic Theology". Moreover, throughout his career Moltmann has written a large volume of essays, reviews, forewords and sermons.

Moltmann's eschatological theology criticises the marginalisation of eschatological hope to the fringes of traditional Christian theology, making hope something that lies in the distant future, unconcerned with the present historical situation of humankind (TH 15-16[1]; HH 369-370).[2] He further criticises mainline churches for failing to challenge the modern industrial system (TH 305-307) and for being co-opted by the ruling elite, resulting in complicity in the marginalisation and exploitation of the poor and powerless and the general failure to promote life (OC 19[3]; EH 15).[4] Moltmann's eschatological theology further criticises evangelical and pietistic groups for their privatisation of Christian faith resulting in their withdrawing from the socioeconomic and political challenges in this world (TH 310). Moltmann's concern for the poor, the marginalised, the exploited and human suffering in general is rooted in his individual biography. He describes his biography as "shaped, interrupted and radically changed, in a very painful way, by the collective biography of the German people in the last years of the Second World War and by the lengthy imprisonment after it" (HTG 166).[5] In this statement he refers to the painful impact of the Second World War in his life. [6]

Moltmann's personal experiences of the Second World War played a critical role towards both his conversion and his subsequent theological career. He was conscripted into military service at the tender of age of seventeen years when his school class was drafted into the German army and

---

[1] TH refers to Moltmann's *Theology of Hope* (1967)
[2] HH refers to Moltmann's *Hope and History* (1968)
[3] OC refers to Moltmann's *The Open Church* (1978)
[4] EH refers to Moltmann's *The Experiment Hope* (1975)
[5] HTG refers to Moltmann's *History and the Triune God* (1991)
[6] However, Van Prooijen (2004:16) warns against "trac[ing] every line of Moltmann's theology back to our psychological interpretation of his war experiences".

deployed to the anti-aircraft batteries in his home town of Hamburg. On two occasions, in July 1943 and September 1944, he was the sole survivor of heavy British bombardment. He recounts that the 1943 attack, which obliterated a colleague standing close to him but left him unscathed, left him crying: "Why have I survived this?" (Moltmann 1987:*viii*). This event triggered for the first time in his life the 'question of God' (Moltmann 1987:*viii*). The night of heavy showering with bombs prompted him to reach out to God with desperate cries, wondering where God was as his city and its inhabitants were being annihilated. He never could come to terms with his survival, considering the severity of the destruction visited upon his city.

Moltmann was later drafted into the regular German army. His service ended in capture by the British army resulting in a three-year stint as a prisoner of war in camps in Belgium and Britain. The period of incarceration served as both the planting and germination of the seed of hope in Moltmann. When the writings of the great German secular writers, Lessing, Goethe and Nietzsche could not give him the respite he needed, he reluctantly turned to the Bible given to him in the prison of war in Belgium by an American chaplain (CoG *xiii*). This act ought to be credited for the first steps towards his embrace of God. Coming from an 'enlightened' Hamburg family religion was naturally repulsive to him. Much to his surprise, he found that "the words of Scripture fed his imagination and emotional need" (Dorrien 1990:78). It awakened him not just to the reality of God; more than this, it awakened his heart to "the God who is with those 'that are of a broken heart'" (EoG 8).[7] This God "was present even behind the barbed wire – no, most of all being the barbed wire" (EoG 8). Thus, he was saved from near death at the hands of depression and hopelessness; this encounter with God was a breath giving moment for Moltmann in a moment of utter hopelessness.

The phenomenon of hope in Moltmann thus emerged in real life crises before it became a philosophical issue. As Dorrien (1990:79) aptly puts in, in Moltmann the quest for hope is "rooted in his personal experience". McDougall (2005:16) fittingly describes Moltmann as one "schooled…by his personal biography". Moltmann explicitly states, "The individual experiences of my faith and my theology are embedded in my generation's collective experiences of guilt and suffering" (Moltmann 1987: viii). He was delivered from the jaws of the anguish of despair. Moltmann's description of these experiences is that they are "deeply rooted experiences … which mould existence and sustain it at the same time" (EoG 16). He describes himself as belonging "to the generation that experienced for itself the end the World War 2, the destruction of a state with

---

[7] EoG refers to Moltmann's *Experiences of God* (1980)

all its institutions, the tyranny and shame of one's own country, and a long captivity" (in Dorrien 1990:77). However, it must not be assumed that his conversion was an easy one. It was as if God was elusive. He talks of moments when "[a]ll that was left was an inward drive, a longing which provided the impetus to hope. How often I walked round and round in circles at night in front of the barbed wire fence" (EoG 7). He would often be seized by the imagination of freedom prevailing outside the prison of war walls from which he was cut off. However, he always ended up "thinking about a centre to the circle in the middle of the camp – a little hill, with a hut on it which served as a chapel" (EoG 7). It was a significant moment as it "seemed to me like a circle surrounding the mystery of God, which was drawing me towards it" (EoG 8). Eventually he was drawn to this mystery of God and converted to Christianity.

In stating that his faith, thought and theology "are embedded in my generation's collective experiences of guilt and suffering" (HTG 166), Moltmann acknowledges the burdensome feeling of being a citizen of a nation that perpetrated such gross hopelessness. Bauckham (1995:1) points out that Moltmann's sense of involvement, during and after the war, in the collective suffering and guilt of the German nation spurred him to tackle public and political issues theologically.

Moltmann eventually became interested in theology and the pastorate, a deviation from the maths and physics career dreamt of in his youth. In his final year in prison he was permitted to study in an English educational camp under the YMCA. Moltmann came out of prison a theologian, much to the chagrin of his family. In this sense, the prison experiences served as an occasion to experience God as "the power of hope and of God's presence in suffering" (Bauckham 1995:1). In Viviano's (2008:82) analysis, Moltmann's experience as a prisoner of war had already "deepened his character". Upon his release from prison and subsequent return to Germany in 1948, Moltmann had found "the power of a hope which wants something new, instead of seeking a return to the old" (EoG 6).

He received his doctorate in theology in 1959 from the University of Göttingen. The catalogue of his professors included renowned theologians such as Karl Barth, Otto Weber, Ernst Wolf, Hans Joachim Iwand, Gerhard von Rad and Ernst Käsemann. Karl Barth's christocentric theology had such a grip on Moltmann that it was some time before "he saw any need to move beyond it" (Bauckham 1995:1). Its christocentricity, which had motivated the Confessing Church during the War, revived Moltmann from the gloom of his imprisonment. However, the Barthian grip on him would loosen by 1957, when he was introduced by Weber to the theology of Arnold von Ruler. Here he was convinced that he had found more than Barth had said (Bauckham 1987a:5). Moltmann highlights that von Ruler introduced him to the theology of the apostolate that led him

to the "fallow ground of eschatology, and the courage to deal imaginatively with dogmatics" (EoG 11). Of particular significance was the discovery that the Church is "constituted by its mission to the world in the service of the coming universal Kingdom of God" (Bauckham 1987a:5). This awareness was crucial in determining the purpose of theology. He determined that theology is "a servant to the Church's mission to the world with a view to God's universal lordship" (Bauckham 1987a:6). In this, Moltmann gained a decisive understanding of the church as a vehicle of hope. He indeed remained indebted to Barth, but his theological thinking shifted on encountering the likes of Otto Weber, Ernst Wolf, Hans Joachim Iwand, Gerhard von Rad and Ernst Käsemann.

Müller-Fahrenholz notes that Moltmann has become "the treasured and revered conversation-partner of people who have to work in radically different conditions" (2000:15–16). Moltmann (2005:*xiii*) highlights that his theology has attracted thesis writers from as far as Africa, Indonesia, and Korea. His theological influence is reflected by the fact that his theology has attracted studies from many theological disciplines such as systematic theology (Morse 1979; Ela 1994a; McDougall 2005; George 2009; Beck 2010), theological ethics, political and public theology (Cosden 2004; Conradie 2008; Paeth 2008; Harvie 2009), missiology (Chester 2006), ecclesiology (Rasmusson 1995; Kim 2004), practical theology (Meeks 1979) and philosophy (Van Prooijen 2004). According to Van Prooijen (2004:1), Moltmann's way of doing theology "has a very good ear for the problems of his time as well as a passionate and compassionate way of confronting these problems with the fundamental insights he derives from Bible and traditions". Similarly, Keller (1996:142) depicts Moltmann's eschatological hope as a "struggle for a future that blesses the present". As Gibb (2006:64) points out, "a distinct characteristic throughout Moltmann's theological works is his desire to relate Christian faith to political goals in the contemporary world". In this he has sought to bring about "the intersection of eschatology and Christian moral thought" (Tanner 2005:41).

1.3. The Eschatological Significance of the Church for the Poor in Moltmann

It is impossible to imagine the church in Moltmann's theological thought in isolation from the poor and eschatological hope. To Moltmann, the marks of the church, namely, unity, holiness, catholicity and the apostolicity, are statements of faith, hope and action that attain their authenticity in a context of poverty and oppression (CPS 337-341).[8] Moltmann avers:

> The one holy, catholic and apostolic church is the church of Jesus Christ. Fellowship with Christ is its secret.
> The church of Jesus Christ is the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. Unity in freedom, holiness in

---

[8] CPS refers to Moltmann's *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (1977)

poverty, catholicity in partisan support for the weak, and apostolate in suffering are the marks by which it is known in the world (CPS 361).

Thus it is Moltmann's conviction that the church ought to be a 'church of hope for the poor', a church that is alert to their oppression and their exploitation, a church that views itself as mandated to practice the preferential option for the poor. The factor of 'God's option for the poor' is at the heart of Moltmann's ecclesiology.

However, distinguished South African Reformed theologian Dirkie Smit cautions that "one should not overestimate the importance of the church or rather, the importance of ecclesiology and of theological reflection on the church in Moltmann's own project" (2006:74). In Smit's (2006:74–75) appraisal, Moltmann seems less interested in the traditional technical doctrine of the church and ends up using church in a vague way. Similarly, Müller-Fahrenholz (2000:100) observes that Moltmann has not made as much enthusiastic follow-ups on *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* as he did on his two earlier major works that formed his trilogy, *Theology of Hope* and *The Crucified God*.[9] Moltmann acknowledges the minimal attention attracted by *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* by saying the reaction to the book "was not focussed enough to indicate the need for a further discussion volume" (HTG 175). Müller-Fahrenholz (2000:100) takes this to mean that the book did not create the level of controversy created by the other two books, which he attributes to the book's vagueness about the church. Smit (2006:74–75) shares Müller-Fahrenholz's view by highlighting the absence of detailed expositions and discussions on the church in Moltmann's six major works, 'Contributions to Systematic Theology', published between 1980 and 1999, which in many ways represent his lifework. In fact, as Müller-Fahrenholz notes with great disappointment, in *The Way of Jesus Christ: Christology in Messianic Dimensions* (1990), Moltmann does not bother to elaborate on the relationship between Christ and the church but presumptuously refers his readers to *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (1975), yet there the information is "[b]ut … missing" (2000:171). What is indicated by Müller-Fahrenholz and Smit is that Moltmann's ecclesiology is un(der)developed.

However, careful scrutiny of Moltmann's theological vision suggests that Moltmann's un(der)developed ecclesiology must not be interpreted as a lack of concern for the church, as Smit seems to suggests. In fact, it is more accurate to conclude that Moltmann's ecclesiological model is a radical one in tandem with his radical hope and his overall concern to transform theology.

---

[9] Unlike *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, *Theology of Hope* was followed by the discussion volume, *Diskussion über die 'Theologie der Hoffnung' von Jürgen Moltmann* (1967) while *The Crucified God* was followed by *Diskussion über Jürgen Moltmanns Buch 'Der gekreuzigte Gott'* (1979).

While there can be consensus in the analysis that Moltmann has not been interested in ecclesiological technicalities, his deep concern for the church cannot be doubted. In the estimation of Naude (2006:946), "Moltmann's implicit concern [in his entire theological scope] has been the church". Naude (2006:946) further argues that Moltmann did not "turn to ecclesiology as an 'afterthought' as though a focus on resurrection and cross did not also spell out a new vision of and for the church". In concert with Naude, Müller-Fahrenholz (2000:80) says it is inaccurate to assume that *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* was written subsequent to the completion of the first two major works because as early as 1966 Moltmann had been conducting lectures on the church. [10] In fact, Naude finds that both *Theology of Hope* (2006:946) and *The Crucified God* (2006:947) are thoroughly ecclesiologically focused. Moreover, *Theology of Hope* concludes with a challenge to the church to play a revolutionary public role. Affirming the significance of the church to Moltmann's thought, Bauckham (1995:120) says ecclesiology "has always been integral to Moltmann's theological project". Müller-Fahrenholz (2000:80) further notes that "the themes 'Spirit of God' and 'Church' formed a significant focal point alongside the fields around the motifs of 'Hope' and 'Cross'". The significance of the church to Moltmann's theological thinking is affirmed by his call for theology to be empowering to the church reflected in his concern over the abandoning of studying theology by many students in preference to sociology, psychology because they felt these disciplines, and not theology, better equipped them to resolve modern problems (EH 2).

Although Moltmann's doctrinal thoughts on the church can be gleaned from most of his works, an extensive treatment of the doctrine occurs in his *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: a contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology*. According to Tripole (1981:645) the book completes Moltmann's earlier works by proving a "systematic treatment of the effect of eschatology upon the life of the Church". The book has the background of Moltmann's five-year experience in the pastorate in a county parish, as well as the lecture tours and ecumenical conferences dating from about 1966, which exposed him to a variety of churches in other countries and outside his Lutheran and Reformed tradition (CPS *xiv*). There is a desire in Moltmann to learn from the churches in other countries.

It needs to be borne in mind that despite being a Lutheran, Moltmann's ecclesiological agenda is ecumenical while acknowledging the significant influence of his primary German context and the established Protestant church to which he belongs. Yet, despite this background, his agenda in *The*

---

[10] Interestingly, he declares that the contents of The Church in the Power of the Spirit "do not derive from the study, or from the lecture rooms of Tubingen University" (CPS xv).

Church in the Power of the Spirit is "the faith and authenticity of the *one* church of Christ" (CPS *xv,* italics added). Moltmann affirms the Christian community emphasising the church as the ambit in which theology should be done.

Thus the doctrine of the church is an integral part of Moltmann's eschatological hope. The church is the community of hope in Moltmann's eschatological thought. The church as the community of faith eagerly anticipates the future coming of God.

1.4. The Church and Poverty in Zimbabwe

The investigation of Moltmann's ecclesiological ethics is conducted in and in light of a context of poverty in Zimbabwe. Despite theologising from the European context of affluence, Jürgen Moltmann's placing of human flourishing in eschatological hope calls on the church in Africa to consider ways of responding to the context of poverty in which it exists. Moltmann offers a framework of formulating an ecclesiological ethical framework for empowering the poor to engage meaningfully with their experience of a lack of human flourishing.

Chitando captures the enigma of the pitiful context of poverty in Zimbabwe as follows: "The seed of poverty thrives on the rich soils of Africa" (2010:199). Chitando's statement fittingly describes the scandal of Zimbabwe, a country now famous for its poverty and yet so well-endowed with human and diverse natural resources. The history of colonial Zimbabwe and independent Zimbabwe is a history of two paradoxical countries. Colonial Zimbabwe, despite its official policies of racial segregation and the severe international sanctions imposed on Ian Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Britain in 1964, still managed to establish sound economy. Chung (2006:296) bemoans the severe economic decline in modern Zimbabwe by pointing out that in the country's history even in colonial era the economy never declined to the extent that the country was unable to feed its people, even in severe droughts. [11] Even the costly and bloody war for the liberation did not prevent Smith from passing a healthy national economy to the new black led independent state.

However, independent Zimbabwe has dismally failed to navigate the similar obstacles encountered by the erstwhile colonial state resulting in unprecedented levels of national food insecurity, unemployment, deindustrialisation and international migration (Raftopoulos 2009:219–227). Unemployment has become so high that some news media houses have recently

---

[11]This is a significant observation by Chung, a Zimbabwean woman with Chinese roots, because she is a veteran of the armed struggle of liberation having been a cadre in the ZANU-PF's ZANLA force and served in various government portfolios in the black led government from 1980 to 1995.

taken to mocking university graduation ceremonies with such news headlines as *Graduating to Become a Vendor, Taxi Pirate* (NewsDay Zimbabwe 2015a) and *Celebrating Sending Graduates to Streets* (DailyNews Live 2015). The economic system has collapsed to the point that in 2008 when the country's inflationary rate reached a world record 231 million percent (Zimbabwe Independent 2008) the government abandoned the national currency and adopted the United States dollar and other stable currencies. Chung (2006:269-273) observes that the failure in independent Zimbabwe to navigate the combination of unfavourable factors such as droughts and the international financial trends is largely due to the combination of poor leadership, cronyism, patronage, nepotism, tribalism and profiteering. In the absence of good governance at all levels, all the steps taken by the government to democratise the nation's economy and spread development and democracy to the marginalised came to nought (Kaulemu 2010:47; Muzondidya 2011:8,11). The 2006 Kairos document, *The Zimbabwe We Want* document (ZWWD) attributed the country's socioeconomic and political crises to failed leadership characterised by the lack of a shared national vision, political intolerance, oppressive laws, failure to produce a home grown democratic constitution, economy mismanagement, national corruption, the poorly resolved land issue, resulting in the country's loss of friends and international isolation.

Interestingly, in this state of national brokenness, Christianity is also on the rise, meaning that poverty and Christianity are growing side-by-side in Zimbabwe. In addition to reports that over 80% of the population in Zimbabwe claim some association with Christianity (ZWWD 12; Biri & Togarasei 2013:79), scholars do affirm that Christianity is increasingly occupying the public space in Zimbabwe (Muzondidya 2009:195–196; Raftopoulos 2009:227; Biri & Togarasei 2013:78–79).[12] The question that arises is whether this growth of Christianity can be harnessed in the search for an effective solution to the problem of growing poverty. The churches' self-criticism is expressed in the ZWWD Kairos document compiled by three main church bodies in the country, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Council (ZCBC), representing the Roman Catholics, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), representing mostly Protestant mainline missionary churches and some African Initiated Churches, and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) representing mostly Evangelical and Pentecostal churches. The churches noted the socioeconomic and political brokenness obtaining in the country and asked soul-searchingly:

> How could the situation degenerate to this extent as described above when more than 80% of the population is Christian, including many of those in political leadership positions? What happened to our Christian values

---

[12] Biri and Togarasei (2013:79) observe that public discourses in Zimbabwe are punctuated with numerous biblical symbols and the Bible continually plays an influential role even in public spheres such as politics and economics.

of love, peace, justice, forgiveness, honesty, truthfulness? Where was the voice of the Church which is called upon to be the conscience of the nation? (ZWWD 12).

With remorse, the churches responded: "Clearly we did not do enough as Churches to defend these values and to raise an alarm at the appropriate time" (ZWWD 12-13). The churches added:

> As Churches we confess we have failed the nation because we have not been able to speak with one voice. We have often not been the salt and the light that the Gospel calls us to be. We therefore confess our failure and ask for God's forgiveness (ZWWD 13).

The extensive quotations from the ZWWD Kairos document highlight the Zimbabwean churches' awareness that the socioeconomic and political problems obtaining in the country are not entirely secular but also ecclesiological. In essence, that 80% of the population could claim to be Christian, including some political leaders and yet the national decadence prevail to the point of threatening national food security, ultimately reflected on the churches' failure to empower their members to be the salt and light (Biri & Togarasei 2013:86).

The reality of poverty has emerged as an enduring problem that has perennially confronted the church from the onset of its establishment in Zimbabwe in 1859. One of the earliest missionaries in precolonial Zimbabwe from the London Missionary Society (LMS), David Carnegie, complained that the Matebele king, Lobengula, "won't allow his people to buy wagons, ploughs, spades, or agricultural implements of any kind, though guns, ammunition and horses with a view to foster war spirit are allowed" (1894:104). In this statement Carnegie indicated the state of undevelopment the missionaries found in precolonial Zimbabwe and the king's unwillingness to embrace the development brought by the missionaries. Gaul (1905) believed that Christianity could transform and empower Africans to be responsible citizens with political and social equality. According to Bourdillon (1983:37), missionaries did not just preach about future life in heaven, they also took "an active interest in the material welfare of the people among whom they work[ed]". Bourdillon's essay *Christianity and Wealth in Rural Communities in Zimbabwe* (1983) highlights that the missionaries introduced efficient agricultural methods in Zimbabwe. Bourdillon (1983:37) further highlights that studies conducted in Zimbabwe have demonstrated a "correlation between the adoption of Christianity and increased wealth in rural communities". Furthermore, Hallencreutz (1998:458) highlights that the mainstream mainline churches were recognised by the colonial state as "valid partners" of development. The missionaries encountered Zimbabwe as a primitively undeveloped terrain without schools, hospitals and industries. Missionaries built schools, hospitals, and established training centres for agricultural and other vocational skills as a means of responding to the problem of poverty in Africa.

Despite the work of the missionary churches to address poverty, and despite the foundation of skills development and the ethic of orderly and hard work which they laid, as things stand in the early twenty-first century this foundation has been eclipsed by a consumerist spirituality that undermines the virtues of hard work. Many Christians have embraced the prosperity gospel of health and wealth that is growing rapidly in Zimbabwe. While church ministers who call themselves Prophet or Apostle abound, promising their congregants abundant material prosperity, the country's poverty ratings continue to slide.

1.5. Research Methodology

This study is an ecclesiological ethical inquiry evaluating the usefulness of Moltmann's eschatologically-based notion of the church of hope for the poor in the Zimbabwean context of poverty. The research will be conducted by means of studying Moltmann's written work and the works of theologians who have critically evaluated, critiqued and appropriated Moltmann's insights. Furthermore, a historical analysis of the church's attitude and engagement with poverty in Zimbabwe will be undertaken from an ecclesiological ethical perspective.

The option for Jürgen Moltmann's notion of the church of hope for the poor as the main theoretical framework of this study is mainly motivated by the nature of his eschatological vision for the church of hope that challenges churches to rise up and confront evil systems and structures that hinder the human flourishing of poor and powerless people. Furthermore, it is currently difficult to find a large body of critical scholarly studies by Zimbabwean theologians that extensively engage Moltmann's eschatological ecclesiology from the context of poverty. Although Burgess' *The Vindication of Christ: a Critique of Gustavo Gutiérrez, James Cone and Jürgen Moltmann* (1996) was conducted in Zimbabwe, the work does not grapple with Moltmann's ecclesiology of hope and the Zimbabwean socioeconomic and political context. Magezi's *HIV/AIDS, Poverty and Pastoral Care and Counselling* (2007) acknowledges the significance of Moltmann's notion of the church as 'grassroots' communities in promoting an African church that acts in solidarity with the poor and suffering (2007:74-77). However, Magezi's interest is an African practical ecclesiology for pastoral care and counselling and does not attempt to formulate an eschatological-ecclesiological public theology in a context of poverty. Chikanya's *The Relevance of Moltmann's Concept of Hope for the Discourse on Hope in Zimbabwe* (2012) is more centred on the *substance* of authentic hope that can enable Christians within the current context of suffering in Zimbabwe to remain hopeful and not be engulfed with hopelessness. Chikanya's Moltmannian study acknowledges the prevailing socioeconomic and political distress in Zimbabwe but the study ends with the scope of true hope and does not attend to ecclesiological ethical questions prompted by

the Zimbabwean context of poverty. This ecclesiological ethical study of Moltmann's eschatologically-based notion of the church of hope for the poor is an attempt to attend to this noted research gap in the few Moltmannian studies in the Zimbabwean context of poverty.

However, reliance on the theological framework of Jürgen Moltmann presents its own peculiar limitations. Chief among them is the problematic nature of Moltmann's theology. Harvie (2009:5-6) has identified two problems associated with Moltmann's work. Firstly, there is the complex and nebulous nature of his methodology which make it difficult to determine the interrelationship between his systematic theology and his ethical commitments. Secondly, there is the question of the practicality of Moltmann's understanding of how theological statements influence moral praxis. To worsen the circumstances, Moltmann's complex framework draws from sources which are considered "unconventional in modern theology" (Harvie 2009:5). Furthermore, the very fact that Moltmann theologises from a European context of affluence also raises serious challenges about using Moltmann in the African context of poverty. However, his theology has contributed significantly to modern Christian thought. The difficulties associated with his work are not sufficient to disqualify a critical consideration of Moltmann's thought. He has made worthy theological and ethical contributions that must not be ignored, especially from an African context of poverty.

The thesis is divided into three major parts. Part I is an exposition of Moltmann's ecclesiological ethics emanating from his eschatological vision for the church. The section has three chapters; the first chapter (Chapter 2) discusses the historicity of God as the basis of Moltmann's church of hope for the poor. The second chapter (Chapter 3) discusses the kingdom of God as the essence of Moltmann's eschatological hope and examines the ecclesiological implications of the kingdom of God in a context of poverty. The third chapter (Chapter 4) exposits Moltmann's view of the church as a communality showing how this is useful towards his eschatological vision for a church of hope for the poor.

Part II uses Moltmann's eschatological ecclesiological perspectives to study the responses of the churches in Zimbabwe to poverty. The first chapter of Part II (Chapter 5), which concentrates on the church in the colonial period in Zimbabwe, focuses on the missionary-founded churches, which, as we have seen from Hallencreutz (1998:458), attempted to operate as partners with the government. The second chapter of Part II (Chapter 6) shows that the influence held by the missionary mainline churches in the colonial period has been eclipsed by the Pentecostal prosperity churches in independent Zimbabwe.

Part III attempts a critical systematic application of the insights gleaned from Moltmann in Part I to address the ecclesiological ethical concerns addressed in Part II. Part III first reflects on the nature of the church that emerges from Moltmann's eschatological vision, namely, the communality of the church (Chapter 7). The section progresses by reflecting on the significance of the historicity of God as a resource for human capacitation of the poor (Chapter 8). The section closes (Chapter 9) by reflecting on the significance of the kingdom of God in nurturing a public theological engagement with poverty among churches in Zimbabwe.

In its ultimate aim, this study is an investigation of how eschatological hope, as espoused by Jürgen Moltmann, can inform a meaningfully Christian engagement with poverty. The study thus uses doctrine to study a socioeconomic and political phenomenon. In this regard, the thesis asks theological ethical questions that deal with socioeconomic and political questions that normally fall under the area of political theology and public theology.

Part I: The Eschatological Conceptualisation of the Church for the Poor in Moltmann

The Main Question of this Section: How does Moltmann conceptualise the notion and the role of the church of hope of the poor? The main question of this section (Part I) will be answered through the following three sub-questions: Firstly, what is the basis of Moltmann's eschatological concept of the church for the poor? Secondly, how does the kingdom of God as the horizon of hope function in Moltmann's concept of the church of poor? Thirdly, how does Moltmann finally articulate his eschatological concept of the church of the poor?

Chapter 2: The Historicity of the God of Hope and the Church of Hope in Moltmann

2.1. Introduction

This chapter begins the investigation of Moltmann's ecclesiology of the church of hope by showing that its foundation is the historicity of the God of hope. In assessing the foundation of Moltmann's concept of the church of hope for the poor, this chapter asks the question: what is the basis of Moltmann's eschatological concept of the church of poor? A careful consideration of Moltmann's work shows that the historicity of the God of hope forms an essential background to his understanding of the church as a church of hope for the poor. This chapter examines the historicity of the God of hope as it forms a basis for Moltmann's idea of the church of hope for the poor. Firstly, Moltmann's notion of the historicity of the God of hope will be unpacked (2.2). Furthermore, since in Moltmann the historicity of the God of hope is related to his doctrine of social trinity, an exposition of Moltmann's understanding of God's perichoretic union will be conducted (2.3). The chapter will examine the notion of the political church that emerges out of the historicity of God (2.4). The chapter closes with a critical evaluation of Moltmann's historicity of the God of hope (2.5). At the end of this investigation the significance of the historicity of the God of hope to church of hope for the poor will be demonstrated.

2.2. The Historicity of the God of Hope

In Moltmann, the historicity of the God of hope provides a basis for the notion of the church of hope concerned about the poor. This section investigates the nature of the involvement of the God of hope in human history in Moltmann's theological thought.

2.2.1. Christian Theology Speaks About God with Future

It is Moltmann's conviction that the Bible shows God to be the God of hope who has future as his essential being. With reference to texts such as Romans 15:13, Moltmann says the Bible speaks of God as one who is "no intra-worldly or extra-worldly God, but the 'God of hope', a God with 'future as his essential nature" (TH 16). Moltmann derived the concept of future as the essential being of God from Ernst Bloch's philosophy of hope [13] that postulated the

---

[13] Wayne Hudson's *The Marxist Philosophy of Ernst Bloch* (1982) and Bosco Puthur's *From the Principle of Hope to the Theology of Hope* (1987) provide useful English analyses of Bloch and his philosophy, and I am indebted to them for much of my presentation on Bloch (See also Bauckham (1987a:3–22).

"ontology of not-yet-being" (EH 30-43). He affirms that a Bible informed doctrine of God must realise that God is "the God whom we … cannot really have *in* us or *over* us but always *only before* us, who encounters us in his promises for the future, and whom we therefore cannot 'have' either, but can only await in active hope" (TH 16, italics added). In this statement, the God of the Bible reveals himself as being in the future; his 'being' is absent but present in his promises, thus, we cannot have his being in the present but can have him by hoping for his coming. Moltmann seems to be suggesting that God is absent in his being from the present but is only present by his promises that point us to the future. For Moltmann, God, as described in the Bible, is neither intra-worldly nor extra-worldly but is future in his essential nature. Saying this leaves Moltmann susceptible to the idea that God "reveals himself as one who is absent, always pointing to the future" (Alves 1975:56). While in his early theology he seemed to proffer a seemingly absent God, in his latter works he states: "Human beings already experience the indwellings of God in the Spirit here in history, even if as yet only partially and provisionally" (GiC 5).[14] He proceeds to explain that this was the basis for hoping that "in the kingdom of glory God will dwell entirely and wholly and for ever in his creation, and will allow all the beings he has created to participate in the fullness of his eternal life" (GiC 5). In the below section (2.2.2.) it will be highlighted that Moltmann's problematic futuristic notions about God's being must be interpreted in the light of his affirmation of the historicity of God.

When Moltmann embraces the idea that God has 'future as his being' it is implied that 'the end' in his eschatology is not a dreaded end described by the Latin word '*finis*', but a goal or an aim, designated by the Greek word '*telos*' (CoG 134; see 3.2.1). For Moltmann, the goal of history is not a dreaded cosmic chaos but a glorious state in God's future. Moltmann derives this idea from the anticipation of a time when "God will be all in all", most prominent in 1 Corinthians 15:28 but also alluded to in other biblical texts (1999a:40). Looked at from the Corinthian declaration, it can be seen that Moltmann's eschatology does indeed include the *finis,* since present history must experience a form of death and resurrection into God's future, but its chief focus is the *telos* (TH 229). In Chapter 3 will be highlighted that Moltmann's notion of the kingdom of God expresses his view of the end as *telos*.

Moltmann constructs the concept of future as the essence of God's being mainly from God's promises to the people of Israel beginning with Abraham, the Exodus event, God's promise to the people of Israel in the Exile and the death and resurrection of Christ. He is unapologetic

---

[14] GiC refers to Moltmann's *God in Creation* (1993a)

16

about the significance of the Bible in Christian theology: "Without biblical theology ... theology cannot be Christian theology" (EH 7). Moltmann mourns that modern established churches have neglected the Bible and replaced it with philosophical theology, sociology of religion, and anthropology (EH 6-7). Therefore, he urges that everything possible be done "to stimulate theologians and Christians to study the Bible" (EH 7). However, he says a meaningful reading of the scriptures will only be meaningful "if we read the Bible with new perception, with new eyes" (EH 7). In this statement Moltmann affirms the relevance of the Bible to all times but calls for its contextualization to the specific place and epoch.

Moltmann's biblical interpretation has various influences from secular philosophy, including the philosophy of hope of the Jewish-Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch[15] and the dialectic philosophy of Georg W. F. Hegel. Moltmann's theological methodology in the doctrine of God is averse to the influence of Greek philosophical models in Christian doctrines. He finds that the Greek philosophical concepts of God that have dominated traditional Christian theology have emphasised God's absolute transcendence, presenting God as the timeless eternal one which has hindered the awareness to God's future nature as the essential mode of his being. To Moltmann theologians such as Karl Barth (TH 50-58) and Rudolf Bultmann (TH 58-69) did not realise that biblical narratives such as in the exodus event and the resurrection of Christ present God as one with future as his essential being. This has led these theologians to conceptualise God as timelessly eternal. Hence, Moltmann laments, "In the past two centuries, a Christian faith in *God without hope for the future of the world* has called forth a *secular hope for the future of the world without faith in God*" (HH 370, italics added). That is, the dominant notion of God in Christianity is of an eternal being who exists in his eternal immutability and impassibility with nothing new to offer to the present world (TH 15). And yet, Moltmann notes, secularism as captured by the notion of 'God is dead' is filled with hope and, therefore, "hope [has] emigrated …from the Church and turned in one distorted from or another against the Church" (TH 16). That is, Christian theology has postulated a God without hope for the world, which has led for hope for the world to be found in secular systems.

Yet, "The peculiarity of Christian theology can be defined as follows: Christian theology speaks of God *historically* and of history *eschatologically*" (HH 372). Moltmann affirms that Christian theology does not talk about God in his absolute eternal transcendence, as if he exists

---

[15] A useful English compendium on Bloch's philosophy is presented in Hudson's *The Marxist philosophy of Ernst Bloch* (1982). For a detailed analysis of the influence of Ernst Bloch on Moltmann (and other theologians of hope) see O'Collins (1968) and Puthur (1987).

in himself in his absoluteness. Thus he rejects the categorisation of God's future in the "eschato-*logy*", because the traditional Greek rendition of *logos* in eschato-*logy* understands eternity from the perspective of "a reality which is there, now and always, and is given true expression in the word appropriate to it" (TH 16, 17) that is, a transcendently timeless being. Therefore, to Moltmann, logos can be about the future only if "the future is the continuation or regular recurrence of the present" (TH 17). This future is neither new, nor does it bring anything new to the present, because it simply carries the old presence into the future. For Moltmann, this future is the stagnant unchanging present reality; a reality that is "simultaneous to all times, and is equally indifferent towards them" (CoG 6).[16.]This means that the past, the present and the future all remain stagnantly the same, which means that we are able to speak of the future only in terms of our present experiences and not in terms of that which is *new*. Moltmann rejects the idea of God as the eternally present one because he finds that it distorts God's new future.

The exodus and the resurrection reign supremely in Moltmann's notion of the promissory God who has future as his essential being. Moltmann says: "The God of the exodus and of the resurrection 'is' not eternal presence, but he promises his presence and nearness to him who follows the path on which he is seen into future" (TH 30). His claim that the God of the Exodus does not promise eternal presence to his people but the future, is based on the alternative interpretation of God's declared name to Moses in the wilderness, "I am who I am" as 'I will be who I will be' (EH 48). For Moltmann, YHWH, is "the name of the God who first of all promises his presence and his kingdom and makes them prospects for the future" (TH 30). This means YHWH "is a God *'with future as his essential nature'*, a God of promise and of leaving the present to face the future, a God whose freedom is the source of new things that are to come" (TH 30, italics added). Thus the whole notion of the Exodus is underpinned with the future of God. Therefore, for Moltmann, the biblical basis for hope is not the events of this world, or Greek epiphanies, but the promises of God as revealed in the Scriptures that call for God's people to trust him in faith as he leads them towards the fulfilment of his covenant (EH 45).

According to Moltmann, it is eschatologically significant that when Israel arrived in the Promised Land, they did not adopt the cyclical religious worldview of the surrounding nations,

---

[16] It is important to note the interlink of this position with his rejection of revelation as the epiphany of the eternal. In the same way that the *logos* of God's revelation is not the epiphany of the eternal presence, the *logos* of eschatology is not timeless eternity but a new future that is marked with the advent of the resurrected Christ.

but continually held to a linear worldview leading toward the fulfilment of God's promises (TH 95-96). Israel's religion was continually linear, with each fulfilment of the promises adding more promises so that Israel was a nation of future expectations (TH 105, 107-8). The Bible reveals God as the God of "covenant and promise" (HP 103),[17] calling his people to live in anticipation of the fulfilment of his covenant promises (HP 105).

The resurrection of Christ is the supreme metaphor of God's future, affirming God as one with power over death and therefore as God with future. As he points out, "Christianity stands or falls with the reality of the raising of Jesus from the dead by God" (TH 165). Moltmann emphasises that the death and resurrection of Christ essentially constitute a single event that dialectically means both the death of God and the future of God. Using Hegelian philosophy to interpret the resurrection of Christ, Moltmann says:

> The risen Christ is and remains the crucified Christ. The God who in the event of the cross and resurrection reveals himself as 'the same' is the God who reveals himself in his contradiction. Out of the night of the 'death of God' on the cross, out of the pain of the negation of himself, he is experienced in the resurrection of the crucified one, in the negation of the negation, as the God of promise, as the coming God (TH 171).

This text presents the contradiction of the cross, which both informs Moltmann's notion of the God of hope and his theodicy (see 2.2.2.2). The resurrection proclaims God's future in that God who raised Jesus from the dead was the same God of Israel that revealed himself with promises of the future. As Moltmann expresses it, "On the basis of the Christ-event Christian theology raises the question of God as the question of the future of God in which God will be God universally" (HH 375). He further declares, "The Christian hope for the future comes of observing a specific, unique event – that of the resurrection and appearing of Jesus Christ" (TH 194). In Moltmann, resurrection is fundamental to the affirmation of God's future at it guarantees God's power over death which effectively affirms God's ability to fulfil his future promises. In other words, the resurrection of Christ points to a future resurrection, which means that "to recognise the resurrection of Christ means to recognize in this event the future of God for the world and the future which man (*sic*) finds in this God and his acts"(TH 194).

Furthermore, according to Moltmann, the resurrection bore testimony to "the creative power of the *creator ex nihilo*" (EH 35). God's resurrection of Christ from death showed the creative power of God who is able to bring reality into life out of nothingness and in absolute

---

[17] HP refers to Moltmann's *Hope and Planning* (1971)

hopelessness. This means, "What is in the beginning *creatio ex nihilo* is in the end *novum ex nihilo*, "life from the dead" (Rom 11:15) (EH 35). Furthermore, based on Romans 4:17's proclamation of "the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were," Moltmann understands the resurrection as affirming God as the God of future open possibilities. The same Jesus who on his death suffered godlessness, godforsakenness, and temporality was the same Jesus who was raised, "and therefore his resurrection is God's promise of new creation for the whole of the reality which the crucified Jesus represents" (Bauckham 1987b:90).

However, unlike Ernst Bloch, who based his notion of the world with possibilities on the 'ontology of not-yet-being', [18] and Hegel, who based his hope on dialectic philosophy, Moltmann bases his theology of hope on the God of resurrection who "is the power of a future which proves itself creative over against total nothingness" (EH 35). The horizon of the Christian future is marked by the advent of judgement and new creation which will bring an end to this present time and institute a new one. Therefore, the Christian future is a christological future anchored not on human progress or human achievements but on the work of the resurrected Christ. We can speak of the future of God because of the fact of the resurrected Christ. Moltmann points out that grounding the future of God on the person and history of Jesus Christ sets Christian eschatological hope apart from utopianism. Principally, "Christian hope is resurrection hope" (TH 18), it announces God's future transformation and hence is encased in "the symbols of the last judgement and new creation" (HH 375). Thus Moltmann can declare:

> Christian eschatology does not speak of the future as such. It sets out from a definite reality in history
> and announces the future of that reality, its future possibilities and its power over the future, Christian
> eschatology speaks of Jesus Christ and *his* future. It recognizes the reality of the raising of Jesus and
> proclaims the future of the risen Lord (TH 17).

Although Moltmann highlights the significance of the resurrection of Jesus to the hope for the future, it is interesting that he does not link God's eschatological future with salvation from the wrath of God, which raises soteriological questions about his eschatological hope.

---

[18] In the Preface 1990 *Theology of Hope* paperback edition, Moltmann rejected Karl Barth's criticism of his use of Bloch by saying he neither "imitated" nor "baptized" Bloch's philosophy of hope but only built a theology of hope on the foundation of what he saw as "the presupposition of the theology of Christianity and Judaism" (TH 9).

2.2.2. Christian Theology Speaks of the God of Hope Historically

Christian theology, declared Moltmann, talks *historically* about the God of hope who in his promises of the future and in the resurrection of Jesus Christ demonstrated himself to have future as his being (HH 372; EH 46, 48). The way to interpret Moltmann's understanding of history, as Otto (1992:379) shows, is not the objective, factual history depicted by the German Historie, but the subjective historic moment depicted in the German word Geschichte. For Moltmann, Christian theology talks historically (geschichtlich) about God by being concerned about the significance and the historic meaning of God's engagement with his people, which Moltmann gives a promissory significance that transforms the historical situation of the people who experienced this engagement.

In Moltmann's eschatogical vision, at least three aspects affirm the historicity of the God of hope. These are: the space between the announcement of the promise and its fulfilment as highlighted in his *Theology of Hope*, the question of theodicy and the suffering of God as spotlighted in *The Crucified God*, hereafter CG, and the perichoretic understanding of the Trinity. This section will limit itself to the historicity of the God of hope as affirmed in Moltmann's understanding of the promissory revelation and the suffering of God in the Christ-event. However, although trinitarian perspectives undergird these two aspects, specific concentration on the trinity will be reserved for the discussion of Moltmann's doctrine of the perichoresis in section 2.3.

2.2.2.1. The Historicity of God in the *Zwischenraum*

In Moltmann, the space between the announcement of the promise and its fulfilment, the *Zwischenraum,* highlights the historicity of the God of hope. Moltmann affirms that God's promise creates "an *interval* [*Zwischenraum*] of tension between the uttering and the redeeming of the promise" (TH 104, italics added). In the space between the giving of the promise and its fulfilment is the participation of God in the historical situation of his people.[19] Harvie (2009:195) analyses that the *Zwischenraum* in Moltmann is "unique and has not received due attention in the secondary literature".[20] To Moltmann, as Harvie (2009:14) highlights, Christian theology "speaks of God with respect to the concrete, specific and contingent history,

---

[19] In *The Spirit of life: a universal affirmation* (1992), hereafter SoL, Moltmann makes a distinction between God's unique work within the community of faith and the general work with the world at large (e.g. SoL 31-51). Therefore God's historicity can be spoken of with specific reference to the community of faith.

[20] Harvie (2009:195) gives *Zwischenraum* a prominent place in *Jürgen Moltmann's Ethics of Hope: Eschatological Possibilities for Moral Action* (2009). Incidentally, Moltmann acknowledges that this work by Harvie prompted him to finally write his *Ethics of Hope* (EoH *xi*) after a lengthy postponement.

21

which is told and witnessed to in the biblical writings". That is, theology talks about God as he is historically engaged in the history of his people and as he leads them to the fulfilment of his promises. This interval between the announcement of the promise and its fulfilment is profoundly significant in Moltmann, as it functions as the space of God's historical participation in present human history before the final fulfilment of God's promises at the eschaton.

If Moltmann's promissory notion seems to suggests a God who is absent in the present, then his idea of the historicity of the God of hope allays this concern. Although this does not entirely solve much of Moltmann's problematic futuristic language about God, it nonetheless affirms that the God of hope is engaged in present history. Moltmann's emphasis on the *Zwischenraum* has two important aspects that denote God's historical participation in the history of his people. The *first* aspect is the liberating and empowering action in the motif of the exodus. For Moltmann, the exodus points to God's future but also to God's liberating and empowering action in the present history of the nation of Israel, beginning with the initial call of Abraham towards the land of promise (EH 46; HP 105; HH 372).[21] On subsequent occasions God reinforces the Abrahamic promise to Abraham's sons, Isaac, Jacob and the nation of Israel. It is ultimately embodied in Jesus Christ and proclaimed to the Christian church. Moltmann emphasises that Abraham is described as the "father of faith" (Rom 4:11; Heb 11:8-19) because he obediently accepted God's promise and abandoned everything dear to him to pursue the call of God towards the future promise (EH 47-48).[22] Moltmann's thought does not just place significance on the fact that Abraham abandoned the land of his ancestry and its religion and embarked towards the unknown future land of promise. Rather, he further places significance on the fact that the journey towards the Promised Land was filled with the reality of God's guiding and empowering presence. Thus, Abraham "*heard* his (God's) promise and *followed* it" (EH 47, emphasis added) not only by focusing on the fulfilment of the promise at the end, but also by entering into a relationship with the God of the promise. Thus, in reference to Joshua 24:2-4's reminder to the Israelites of God's call of Abraham, Moltmann affirms, "'*history'* means *exodus*" (EH 47). History is the exodus by capturing the historical interaction between God and his people. Thus, motivated by the Old Testament scholar Gerhard von Rad,

---

[21] For Moltmann: "The universal horizon of eschatology reveals the reality of the *world as history*, manifests faith in Christ as *practical hope* for the coming God, and thus qualifies herein the past and the present a history of the future of God" (HH 371, italics added).

[22] In this, Christian theology seeks to understand "how God's 'history' occurs in human history, how God's salvation can come to bear in the 'project of history'" (Müller-Fahrenholz 2000:60).

Moltmann highlights that "Israel's history existed only in so far as God *accompanied* her, and it is only this time-span which can properly be described here as history" (TH 107, emphasis added). Moltmann further points out (even with specific reference to the Holy Spirit) that "Israel always linked its experiences of God with historical persons and historical happenings" (SoL 38). In this statement, he emphasises that the exodus was not a lonesome journey but an interactive journey between God and his people marked by obedient reliance on the accompanying empowering and liberating active presence of God. Thus, the *Zwischenraum*, "provide[d] man (*sic*, throughout) with a *peculiar area* of freedom to obey or disobey, to be hopeful or resigned" (TH 104, emphasis added).

Experiencing the reality of God through *hearing* his promise and *following* (EH 47) it shows that the space-in-between promise and fulfilment is marked by the act of *faithfully* and *obediently* following God's empowering and liberating guidance into the future. The space created by the promise is not just an ordinary area; it is a peculiar space marked with either obedience or disobedience, embracing God or rejecting him, being filled with life-giving expectation of the future or wallowing in the abyss of hopelessness. In *The Way of Jesus Christ* (1990), Moltmann highlights that in the New Testament the notion of the *Zwischenraum* is demonstrated by Jesus' liberating and empowering participation in the present predicaments of the people he encountered while he still proclaimed the message of the future. In the *Zwischenraum,* the gospel, like the promise, "is the light which salvation throws ahead of itself (WJC 95). [23] In other words, the gospel like the promise, "is nothing less than the arrival of the coming God in the word" (WJC 95). Therefore, talk about the God of hope is not abstract but anchored in the "remembrance of *historical persons…historical events* and *root experiences*" (EH 46).

The *second* aspect out of Moltmann's emphasis on the *Zwischenraum* is the emphasis he gives to the active role of the Holy Spirit in the sufferings of the nation of Israel (SoL 47-51). Indeed, Moltmann's understanding of the Holy Spirit accounts for both the universal creative role by

---

[23] Whereas in the Old Testament the promise essentially toward the coming Christ-event, in the New Testament the promise is expressed as the gospel announces and describes the Christ event, that is, the birth, the life and death of Christ that results in the establishment of the church. The gospel has "sacramental character: salvation runs ahead of itself and appears in the gospel; and the gospel is the beginning in word of the epiphany of the coming God. In the very act of its announcement, the messianic era is already put into force. This means that the gospel is not a utopian description of some far-off future" (WJC 95). "It is the daybreak of this future in the pardoning, promising word that sets people free. This gives the word of comfort and claim the seal of the coming God and the authority of his future. It becomes the creative word which effects what it utters" (Isaiah 61:1ff., Psalm 96) (WJC 96).

which the Spirit created and sustains the universe and the soteriologically unique role of the Spirit in the community of the faith. He highlights the universal role of the Holy Spirit by referring to Job 33:4, Job 13f. and Psalm 104:29f. that point to the Holy Spirit as creator and sustaining power of the universe. Moltmann emphasises the Holy Spirit as God's power of creation and of sustaining all his creation, thus denoting God's immanent transcendence in the world (SoL 35). He says, "Every experience of a creation of the Spirit is hence also an experience of the Spirit itself" (SoL 35). In this statement, Moltmann shows the universal essence of the Holy Spirit.

However, the specific interest of this study is the unique role of the Holy Spirit among God's chosen people, a special role that falls within the *Zwischenraum* of the promise and its fulfilment (SoL 39-57). For Moltmann the essence of the Hebrew word translated as 'spirit' (*ruach*) is the idea of a *space* marked with God's active presence (Job 36:16 and Psalm 31:8) in which his people live and operate (SoL 42-43). [24] According to Moltmann, the Shekinah glory that accompanied Israel throughout the exodus journey in the *Zwischenraum* represented the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit (SoL 47). According to Moltmann, the concept of the Shekinah developed from cultic language and originally referred to the tabernacle or the tent of God and his dwelling among his people starting with the transportable ark and later shifted refer to the temple on Zion (SoL:47). Thus the Shekinah signalled the coming indwelling of God and accompanying presence in the nation of Israel throughout its entire history in the Exodus, in the promised land of Israel, in the Babylonian exile and in their return from exile. To highlight the historicity of God in the Shekinah, Moltmann says:

> The Shekinah is not a divine attribute. It is the presence of God himself. But is not God in his essential omnipresence. It is his special, willed and promised presence in the world. The Shekinah is God himself, present at particular place and at a particular time… The descent and habitation of God at a particular place and a particular people must therefore be distinguished from the very God himself whom even the heavens are unable to contain (SoL 48).

---

[24] Moltmann argues that to understand adequately the Old Testament word *ruach*, "we must forget the word 'spirit', which belongs to Western culture" (SoL 40). He finds that 'spirit' has the idea of "antithesis to matter and body", and therefore "something immaterial" (SoL 40). And yet Yahweh's *ruach* in Hebrew refers to God's action. It mean "God is tempest, a storm, a force in body and soul, humanity and nature" (SoL 40). Moltmann points to the testimonies of being drawn to 'a broad place' in Psalm 31:8: "You … have set my feet in a *spacious place*" and in Job 36:16, "He is wooing you from the jaws of distress to a *spacious place* free from restriction". To Moltmann when these texts are considered in the light of the Kabbalistic Jewish tradition that one of God's secret names is MAKOM, the wide space, they lead to an understanding of God's Spirit "as this broad, open space for living conferred on created beings…[wherein]…people live 'in' God's Spirit, and experience God spatially as 'breadth'" (SoL 43).

In this statement, Moltmann makes a distinction between God's immanent transcendence and his economic presence: "The Shekinah is certainly the present God, but this presence is distinguished from his eternity" (SoL 48). Thus this is "God's self-distinction" which leads to his "self-surrendering" to the history of his people (SoL 48). That is, through the Shekinah, the eternal God whose full presence cannot be contained even by the heavens dwelt among his people and participated in their historical situation to the extent that "Israel's God is 'the Lord', and yet he is simultaneously experienced as 'Israel's servant'" (SoL 48). Moltmann notes the announcement in Isaiah 63:9 that God lifted up and carried the nation of Israel throughout the exodus. The point he draws from this is that 'the Lord' made himself the servant of Israel and offered himself up for her by carrying the torch ahead of Israel in the wilderness, by providing for Israel's needs like a slave, by bearing up with all her sins (SoL 48). Taking seriously the words of Isaiah 63:9 that in all Israel's distress God too was distressed and yet commits to his follower, "I will be with him in trouble" (Psalm 91:15), Moltmann highlights that God became interwoven in the history of Israel to the extent that: "Israel's shame is God's shame too. Israel's exile is God's exile, Israel's sufferings are God's sufferings; for everyone who attacks Israel attacks God's honour and the name which God allows to be sanctified in his people" (SoL 49). In this statement is affirmed God's intimate participation in the historical experiences of Israel; what Israel suffered God suffered with them.

Moltmann's perspective also derives from Psalm 23:4 the idea of God's consoling companionship in the "valley of the shadow of death". Moreover, Moltmann's understanding of the God who suffers with his people also draws from the Midrash. He announces from the Midrash: 'And the Holy One, blessed be He, said to the children of Israel: When I saw that you left my dwelling place, I left it also, so that I might return home with you" (SoL 49). On a higher level, in this appeal to the Midrash about the Holy Spirit, Moltmann questions the doctrines of the impassibility and immutability of God. As he affirms, the idea of the Shekinah implies "*the kenosis of the Spirit.* In his Shekinah, God renounces his impassibility and becomes able to suffer because he is willing to love" (SoL 51). In this thought, Moltmann is expounding pneumatologically the suffering of God he articulated christologically in *The Crucified God,* which is discussed in the next section.

This section has highlighted how the notion of the historicity of God emerges from Moltmann's understanding of the exodus. Otto (1991:66) describes the significance of the exodus in Moltmann as the "once-for-all, unique, and radical event which epitomizes history in Moltmann". Likewise, Rasmusson (1995:63) shows that the exodus functions as a paradigm of

25

how God's promises transcend their historical fulfilments and point to further fulfilments as it is reapplied in the time of the exile. According to McDougall (2005:33), Moltmann's treatment of the exodus experience as paradigmatic for divine revelation in the history of Israel is derived from Walter Zimmerli and Gerhard von Rad. Moltmann has a broad view of the exodus. The exodus represents God's commitment to the pain of the oppressed that liberates the poor out of contexts of oppression.

2.2.2.2. The Historicity of God in the Suffering of God

Moltmann further shows the historicity of the God of hope by a theology of the cross that affirms the suffering of God, described by Bauckham as "boldly theopaschite" (1977:308). Moltmann's theology of the suffering of God which asserts that at the cross God himself suffered and died in Jesus is essentially a theodicy prompted by the problem of human suffering. It grapples with the question of the dilemma of expressing faith in a loving and sovereign God within a context of gratuitous suffering. As Moltmann expressed it, "The problem is how one can speak of God 'after Auschwitz'" (HTG 166). Auschwitz, originally a historical place of the atrocities of the Holocaust, functions in Moltmannian thought to capture the problem of the justification of God as a benevolent and sovereign ruler in the midst of the problem of suffering (Bauckham 1987b:83). Moltmann finds that perhaps one may choose to be silent about God because of the horror of the Auschwitz, which would trigger another question, "What can one talk about after the Auschwitz if not about God?" (HTG 166).

Moreover, Moltmann's theology of the suffering of God is at the same time an "anthropodicy" (Moltmann 1983:565) grappling with the irreconcilable reality of enormous atheistic human self-confidence of the modern age punctuated with the "unspeakable crime and horror of the holocaust of Auschwitz and Hiroshima (Moltmann 1983:565).[25] The ensuing question is: "How can one even speak of humankind after Auschwitz?" (Moltmann 1983:565). In Moltmann's anthropodicy, the shameful catastrophes of the modern age, punctuated by centres of heinous crimes against humanity such as Verdun and Stalingrad, Auschwitz and the Gulag Archipelago, Hiroshima and Chernobyl, all make a mockery of optimisms in modern human progress and its boisterous claim that 'God is dead'(Moltmann 2000a:302).[26]

---

[25] Bauckham (1987b:83) explains, "The question of the justification of God in the face of the problem of suffering – which in the modern age can be named Auschwitz – is one of the central threads in the complex argument of Jürgen Moltmann's *The Crucified God*.

[26] Bauckham (1987b:87) shows the question of anthropodicy emerging in Wiesel, a major influence to Moltmann (CG 273-274). As narrated by Bauckham (1987b:87), Wiesel and his father arrive in Auschwitz to see for the first

It is Moltmann's conviction that in the light of the catastrophic godforsakenness of Auschwitz, Christian theology can no longer talk about divine impassability (*apatheia*) as pronounced and defended in traditional Christian theology (CG 200-201). He asserts his aversion to the notions of a transcendent God of divine impassability by stating,

> There cannot be a theology *after* Auschwitz which does not take up the theology in Auschwitz: the prayers of the victims. God himself was present in their prayers; as their companion in suffering he gives up hope where no more can be hoped for (Moltmann 1983:565).

At the centre of this statement, is that human suffering demands Christian theology to talk about God not in abstract terms but in relation to the experience of suffering. In other words, true Christian theology must account for how God relates to the problem of human suffering rather than merely the perfections of God. Moltmann complains that traditional Christian theology "has always considered the cross and the resurrection of Jesus within the horizon of soteriology" (CG 201). Moltmann accepts that it is indeed true that Jesus saves sinners. However, to just leave his work at the redemptive level undermines the full significance of the death of Jesus on the cross, namely, God's suffering. To only consider the cross and the resurrection of Jesus soteriologically fails to realise that Christ's death "takes place in the innermost nature of God himself: the fatherless Son and the sonless Father" (EiT 305).[27] Moltmann proceeds, "Christ's death on the cross is an inner-trinitarian event before it assumes significance for the redemption of the world" (EiT 305).

Motivated by the *kenosis* of Philippians 2:7, Moltmann emphasises that the incarnation of the Son of God was "his course towards the humiliation on the cross" to underline that Christ came to the world "to face his passion" and therefore his death on the cross consummated his incarnation (CG 204-205). To Moltmann, Christ's abandonment on the cross completed his mission making it "impossible to speak of an incarnation of God without keeping this conclusion in view" (CG 204). He affirms the primacy of the cross by declaring that in "Christianity the cross alone, and nothing else is the test … of everything which deserves to be called Christian" (CG 7).[28] This means that Moltmann regards the cross as not one distinct

---

time a lorry-load consignment of babies for incineration, upon which Wiesel expresses to his father his unbelief and disgust that people of his modern age could be so callous because "humanity would never tolerate it". Bauckham (1987b:87) highlights that Wiesel's father responded by saying: "Humanity? Humanity is not concerned with us. Today anything is allowed. Anything is possible, even these crematories". In addition to provoking questions about God's power to control his world, it also raises questions about human progress that lacks justice and human dignity.

[27] EiT refers to Moltmann's *Experiences in Theology* (2000b)

[28] To buttress his view, Moltmann further adds, "The death of Jesus on the cross is the centre of all Christian theology" (CG 204).

theme in Christian theology, but "the *basis* and the *criterion* of Christian theology" (Bauckham 1987a:53). Since Christ's death on the cross concluded his mission to the world, "[t]here can be no theology of the incarnation which does not become a theology of the cross" (CG 204-205). The crucial point of the emphasis on Christ's suffering of the humiliation of abandonment in his death on the cross in which he wailed a cry of godforsakenness, *"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani"*(Matt 27:46), is that he experienced it as the "image of the invisible God" (CG 205). Understanding the 'image of the invisible God' to mean, *"this* is God, and God is like *this,"* for Moltmann this means,

> The nucleus of everything that Christian theology says about 'God' is to be found in this Christ event. The Christ event on the cross is a God event. And conversely, the God event takes place on the cross of the risen Christ. Here God has not just acted externally, in his unattainable glory and eternity. Here he has acted in himself and has gone on to suffer in himself. Here he himself is love with all his being (CG 205).

In this passage, Moltmann categorically affirms that Christ experienced the godforsakenness of the cross in his complete being as 'the visible image of the invisible God,' thus the pain and suffering endured by Christ, occurred completely in God. However, as Bauckham (1987b:91) observes, Moltmann is here not justifying suffering but justifying God. "The central concept of *The Crucified God* is love which suffers in solidarity with those who suffer: identifying love or solidarity in suffering" (Bauckham 1987b:92). Torrance (1996:247), affirms *The Crucified God's* insistence on the involvement of the whole Trinity in the death of Christ, but finds the insight damaged by the book's "somewhat tritheistic" understanding of the unity, rather than the oneness of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

For Moltmann a biblically informed doctrine of kenosis, the self-empting of God, forbids any view of the two natures by Jesus Christ that leaves them unaffected by the suffering on the cross. He insists that the event of the cross be understood "in God's being in both trinitarian and personal terms" (CG 205). Thus Moltmann subscribes to a trinitarian Christology in which the "cross stands at the heart of the trinitarian being of God" which means that Jesus' death is not the "death of God" but "death *in* God" (CG 207).[29] He expounds on this by stating that "the origin of Christian theology is only the death on the cross in God and God in Jesus' death" (CG 207). At the centre of Moltmann's trinitarian perspective of the cross is that Christ's experience

---

[29] Moltmann asserts, "What happens on the cross manifests the relationships of Jesus, the Son, to the Father, and vice versa. The cross and its liberating effect makes possible the movement of the Spirit from the Father to us. The cross stands at the heart of the trinitarian being of God; it divides and conjoins the persons in their relationships to each other and portrays them in a specific way" (CG 206-207).

of godforsakenness occurred within divine being of God. Therefore the suffering of Christ was suffering of the Godhead (CG 207). Moltmann denounces the doctrine of the impassibility and immutability of God (CG 201, 214). He avers, "God suffered in the suffering of Jesus, God died on the cross … so that we might live and rise again in his future" (CG 216). In other words, to Moltmann the cross is not just concerned with the "expiatory death for sin"; much more than this, it is "*a statement about God*" (CG 201) that declares God's vulnerability to the history of his people. Moltmann emphasises that Christ died on the cross as "the protesting God" (CG 226). This means that Moltmann "divests the cross neither of deity nor of protest against suffering" (Bauckham 1987b:93). This position leaves Moltmann susceptible to patripassianism. However, it is important to note that for Moltmann the suffering of God occurs in the whole of Trinity and not just in the Father as conceptualised in modalism. Furthermore, unlike in modalism, for Moltmann the suffering of the Father is distinct from the suffering of the Son, and vice versa. Moltmann's view on the suffering of the Father is different from the classical patripassian position that viewed the suffering of the Father and the Son as identical.

By disputing the impassability and immutability of God as affirmed in traditional Christian theology, Moltmann provides a framework of the historicity of the God of hope that in turn provides theological resources of responding to the godforsakenness in Auschwitz. Relying on E. Wiesel's theodical account of the terror of Auschwitz, Moltmann narrates:

> The SS hanged two Jewish men and a youth in front of the whole camp. The men died quickly, but the death throes of the youth lasted for half an hour. 'Where is God? Where is he? Some asked behind me. As the youth still hung in torment in the noose after a long time, I heard the man call again, 'Where is God now?' And I heard a voice in myself answer: 'Where is he? He is here, He is hanging there on the gallows" (CG 273-274).

We are not interested in the differences between Wiesel's *Night* original account and Moltmann's later narration,[30] but in how Moltmann uses the details of the story to articulate the passibility and mutability of God.[31] Bauckham advises that while at some later stage Wiesel's story can be justifiably interpreted christologically, we must however guard against the temptation by Christian readers to immediately find in the story "some kind of echo of the crucified God" (1987b:87). Moltmann however upholds Wiesel's emphasis of a God who is

---

[30] Although Moltmann, says he is quoting the story, he is actually summarising the story in his own words. Weinandy (2000:3–4) briefly discusses the controversies surrounded with Moltmann's use of Wiesel's account.
[31] In Bauckham's view, Wiesel's story, within the book, "marks the final, crucial step Wiesel's loss of faith in God. God hangs on the gallows because the possibility of faith in him is dying with every moment the dying child suffers and the God of Israel fails to deliver him. God is dead because the holocaust makes theodicy impossible" (1987b:87).

present in the suffering of the victims, the God for whom the suffering of the oppressed and powerless is also his suffering. Embracing the voice heard by Wiesel that God suffered with the executed Jews in Auschwitz, Moltmann says:

> Any other answer would be blasphemy. There cannot be any other Christian answer to the question of this torment. To speak here of a God who could not suffer would make God a demon. To speak here of an absolute God would make God an annihilating nothingess. To speak here of an indifferent God would condemn men to indifference (CG 274).

Plainly stated, Moltmann is saying that when his people suffered, God entered their pain and suffered it too. This can be seen in his statement that after the Auschwitz legitimate Christian theology must take into cognisance the prayers, the cries and the experiences of the victims because "God was present where the Shema of Israel and the Lord's Prayer were prayed" (HTG 29). Moltmann added, "As a companion in suffering God gave comfort where humanly there was nothing to hope for in that hell. *The inexpressible sufferings in Auschwitz were also the sufferings of God himself"* (HTG 29, italic added). Therefore, in Moltmann's view, the idea of an impassable, immutable and absolute God must be rejected for the "suffering of a single innocent child is an irrefutable rebuttal of the notion of the almighty and kindly God in heaven" (TKG 47). He underlines his rejection of the impassibility of God with the declaration that "a God who lets the innocent suffer and who permits senseless death is not worthy to be called God at all" (TKG 47, 48-49). Moreover, for Moltmann a transcendent God "incapable of suffering in any respect … [is]… incapable of love" (CG 230, also TKG 38, 21-60; HTG 29, 123). In other words, as Weinandy (2000:4) comments, it is only the God who suffers in solidarity with the innocent who is worthy of the name God.

In history, God rules through the word of promise, the Spirit of freedom and the requisite obedience (CPS 190, 191; WJC 97). Therefore, theology speaks about God historically because it is the narrative about God's impingement upon history "of men and women *who are on the way and, being still travellers, have not yet arrived home*" (Moltmann 2000b:xvi) italics added.[32] McIlroy (2009:48) perceptively says, "Moltmann's theology is not conceived in static or ontological categories, but in the light of history and the Last Day which is coming to meet us". Pronounces Moltmann, "The hermeneutical starting point of Christian theology is therefore the concrete history witnessed to in both the Old and the New Testaments" (HH 372).

---

[32] Moltmann made this remark in response to the criticism of lack of cohesion and coherence in his theological thinking and added: "That is why the mediaeval cathedrals and minsters also had to remain unfinished, so that they might point beyond themselves" (Moltmann 2000:*xvi*)

The eschatological between-space is "enacted through the creative work of God in such a way that in Christ and empowered by the Spirit, humanity may now participate in this space" (Harvie 2009:196).

2.2.3. The Political Significance of the Historicity of the God of Hope

In its basic form the notion of the historicity of the God of hope is a political theology that engages a sociopolitical context. Moltmann finds the horror of Auschwitz a theological scandal that challenges both the talk about God and the silence about God (HTG 166). In other words, the unspeakable horrific scenes of human suffering pose a challenge to both the belief in the existence of a good God and the denial of the existence of a good God. For Moltmann the horrific enigma is "the root of the theological concerns, for reflection about God constantly brings me back to that aporia (HTG 166). To Moltmann, such real life scandalous tragedies that ultimately question both the existence and the integrity of God, or the absence thereof, cannot be answered by cosmological proofs but by a God of hope who has historicity. He finds that the Thomist question, *An Deus sit*? (Whether God is?) is prompted by "grounds of history and its crimes and must struggle with the question of God in historical knowledge and political action" (HH 373). In the light of this, a political theology of God of hope is necessary.

To Moltmann a political hermeneutic "apprehends politics, in the Aristotelian sense of the word, as the inclusive horizon of the life of [hu]mankind" (1969:98). This shows that 'political' for Moltmann concerns all the entire breadth of human life, including the socioeconomic issues (Paeth 2008:12). Thus, what emerges is that the God of hope is a political God for by his promises he ultimately challenges the present political establishments that oppress his people.

An important political implication in the historicity of the God of hope is its de-sacralisation of political authorities. Moltmann is concerned about the notions of a transcendent God who is "cold, dumb force of destiny, who determines everything and is touched by nothing" (SRA 151).[33] According to Moltmann, "Christianity did not arise as a national or a class religion" (CG 329). He adds, "The crucified God is in fact a stateless and classless God. He is the God of the poor, the oppressed and the humiliated" (CG 329). For Moltmann, this means that the "rule of the Christ who was crucified for political reasons can be extended through liberation from forms of rule which make men servile and apathetic and the political religions which give them stability" (CG 329). In this statement Moltmann expresses a political significance of the

---

[33] SRA refers to Moltmann's *Sun of Righteous Arise: God's Future for Humanity and the Earth.*

God of hope by calling on those who worship this God to desist from sacralising political structures, particularly the oppressive and exploitative structures. However, it remains to be seen how a stateless and classless God can be authentically politically relevant to the poor people who are oppressed, exploited and marginalised by evil ruling elites. Liberation theologians, who, according to Witvliet (1987:51), "owe a great deal to Moltmann" find Moltmann's hope to be too vague to be useful to in contexts of class based oppression. Alves (1975:59) criticises Moltmann for offering a "one transcendent hope" for all people as if all share the same common element of oppression. Liberation theologians also find Moltmann's theology of hope to lack a serious "coherent and all-embracing method of sociopolitical analysis" (Bonino 1975:147). In this they point out Moltmann's failure to give a concrete content to God's historicity and option of the poor. To the liberationist, a God without a country and without class but who still claims to be the God of the poor, of the oppressed and of the humiliated is indeed a-political and is of no value to the poor because the "the poor, the oppressed, the humiliated *are a class* and *live in countries*" (Bonino 1975:148). The poor are particularly marginalised, oppressed and exploited on the bases of their class.

However, to James Cone, the American black liberation theologian, to speak of history eschatologically "is to speak of the promise of God's Word of liberation, disclosed in God's future, breaking into our present, and overthrowing the powers of evil that hold people in captivity" (1997:128). He adds, "Black people can fight for freedom and justice, because the One who is their future is also the ground of their struggle for liberation" (Cone 1997:129). In this sense, the notion of the historicity of the God of hope expresses the solidarity of God with the poor and suffering in a manner that leads to optimism about the power of human beings to transform their situations (Bauckham 1995:104). Moltmann calls for it to be acknowledged that "like the cross of Christ, even Auschwitz is in God himself" (CG 278). He asserts, "Even Auschwitz is taken up into the grief of the Father, the surrender of the Son and the power of the Spirit. That never means that Auschwitz and other grisly places can be justified, for it is the cross that is the beginning of the trinitarian history of God" (CG 278). The God of hope is not detached from the suffering of his people; he is neither detachedly above them nor detachedly ahead of them uninvolved in their historical struggles. Rather, he remains the one who is their future is the present ground of struggle for liberation and abundant life.

2.3. The Perichoretic Life of the Trinitarian Persons in Moltmann[34]

As indicated in the above section Moltmann understands the historicity of God as basically trinitarian in nature. This section explores the nature of the relationship of the trinitarian persons in the light of history in Moltmann. The section will highlight that, in Moltmann's perspective, speaking about the historicity of God expresses the doctrine of the social trinity.

2.3.1. The Significance of the Doctrine of Perichoresis in Moltmann

The doctrine of the perichoresis is significant in Moltmann's articulation of the communal relationship within the Trinity. According to Smith (2001:907) perichoresis, and its equivalent, *circumencessio, circuminsessio*, mean "mutual indwelling" or "mutual interpenetration" and describe relations in the Trinity and the nature of Jesus Christ. John of Damascus used *perichoresis* in Greek theology to explain the inner relation between the persons of the Godhead in the Trinity. Smith (2001:907) highlights that trinitarian perichoresis "begins with the unity of the natures or a strict consubstantiality and affirms a reciprocal interrelation". In other words, perichoresis describes the nature of the relational distinctions within the Godhead. John of Damascus used perichoresis to affirm that the divine persons have being in each other without losing their individuality. In Moltmann's understanding, perichoresis captures "the circulatory character of the eternal divine life" (TKG 174). It affirms that an "eternal life process takes place in the triune God through the exchange of energies" (TKG 174). By this he means the mutual interdependence of the divine persons in the Godhead. It is a relationship of eternal mutual interpenetration.

By holding to perichoretic view of the trinity, Moltmann disputes the view of God as a transcendental absolute being that is uninvolved in the suffering of this world. To Peters' (1993:14) question, "How can our eternal God relate to our temporal world?" Moltmann would point to the perichoretic communal nature in the Trinity. As Grenz (2004:75) points out, "for Moltmann, God's triunity is integrally connected to the divine engagement with the world, which forms a history centring on Jesus Christ". In Moltmann's doctrine of perichoresis is expressed not only how God interrelates within his trinitarian ontology, but also how he relates to his creation.

Drawing attention to the significance of perichoresis to Moltmann, McCall (2010:158) says there is no overstating of the importance of the perichoresis for Moltmann's theology as it

---

[34] This wording of this heading is adapted from Grenz (2004:79)

33

functions "as the overarching and underpinning motif that holds his theology together". In Meeks' (2006:13) observation, "It is precisely Moltmann's revision of divine power and freedom that opens up the possibility of the church's contribution to the enormous array of global quandaries centring on property, such as poverty, hunger unemployment, enormous discrepancy in wealth and distribution of the ecosphere". It can be said that Moltmann's outstanding contribution to the renewed interest in the doctrine of the trinity in modern theology is his dynamic perichoretic view of the trinity that informs his social trinity (Meeks 2006:13).[35] Arguing perichoretically Moltmann combines the immanent trinity and economic trinity into his social trinity making it "the central doctrine, not just serving the integration of the other loci but also constituting the cutting edge that opened up Christian engagement with the modern world" (Meeks 2006:13).

2.3.2. The Perichoretic Trinitarian God of Hope

How does Moltmann imagine the state of the perichoretic relationship in the Trinity? Furthermore, what is the basis of Moltmann's perichoretic view of the Trinity? For Moltmann, the God who engages and participates in his creation cannot be thought of in transcendent monotheistic and monarchical terms. The crucial starting point in Moltmann's perichoretic understanding of God is his questioning of the distinction between the Immanent Trinity and Economic Trinity and the strict monotheism that characterises the traditional understanding of the Trinity. To Moltmann, Tertullian's origination of the Trinitarian formula of *una substantia – tres personae* promotes the idea of *one subject – three modes of being*" (TKG 17) and compromise the unity of God. Furthermore, to Moltmann this trinitarian formula deviates from the tradition of the church in antiquity's reliance on biblically formulated defences of the doctrines to reliance on secular Greek philosophical systems. Moltmann says, "The one, indivisible, homogenous, divine substance is constituted as three individual, divine persons" (TK 16). He continues, "Consequently the converse also applies: the three persons are certainly different from one another, but they are one in their common divine substance" (TK 16). Moltmann's qualms with the *una substantia – tres personae* is that it begins by affirming God's singularity rather than his unity. In this formula, God's unity is not affirmed from the first thought but in the second thought. As far as Moltmann is concerned this framework of arriving at God's unity breaks the unity of the Trinity into abstract monotheism by giving the impression

---

[35] McCall (2010:156) acknowledges Moltmann as "a towering figure in contemporary Trinitarian theology". Similarly, Kärkkäinen (2007:100) affirms Moltmann as "one of the major architects of the renewed doctrine of the Trinity".

that the divine nature is only the '*uno*', and not the '*trino*'. For Moltmann, the problem lies in that, "First of all comes the proof and the assurance that there is a God and that God is one. Only after that is the doctrine of the triune God developed" (TK 17). He rejects Rahner's fear of 'vulgar tritheism' by turning it against him and says, "But Sabellian modalism – or, to be more precise, Idealistic modalism – is what Rahner himself is in danger of, like Schleiermacher and Barth" (TKG 144).

Moltmann contends that the bible be prioritised over philosophical logic in the formulation of the trinity which would start with the "salvation history attested in the Bible: the history of the Father, the Son and the Spirit" (HTD 82). This would make the unity of the three persons the problem rather than the singularity of the one God (TKG 149). By starting with how the one God is three persons, instead of how the three persons are one God the unity of the divine persons would *not* be based on shared common ontology but "reciprocal indwelling of the like-natured divine persons Father, Son and Spirit" (SRA 153). Therefore he disapproves of the idea of *homoousios* in the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian *Creed's 'unus* Deus' for visioning the unity of the divine persons in unity of substance and one divine subject, respectively (TKG 149).

For Moltmann the "triune God is a God in sociality, rich in inner and outward relationships" (SRA 151). Instead of absolute ontology, Moltmann anchors his thought on relational ontology. The divine persons are mutually interdependent on each other. Expressing Moltmann's position, Bauckham (1987:25) says the Trinity is "three divine subjects in mutual loving relationship". He alludes to John of Damascus' use of perichoresis to capture Jesus' unity with the Father – 'I am in the Father; the Father is in me' (John 14:11), 'he who sees me sees the Father' (John 14:9) (SRA 153). In these statements, in Moltmann's understanding, Jesus is not saying that he and the Father are one and the same; rather, "they are one in their reciprocal indwelling" (SRA 153). Moltmann explains the nature of this reciprocal indwelling in the following words:

> The Father exists in the Son, the Son in the Father, and both of them in the Spirit, just as the Spirit exists in both the Father and the Son. By virtue of their eternal love they live in one another to such an extent, and dwell in one another to such an extent, that they are one. It is a process of most perfect and intense empathy. Precisely through the personal characteristics that distinguish them from each other, the Father, the Son and the Spirit dwell in one another and communicate eternal life to one another. In the *perichoresis*, the very thing that divides them becomes that which binds them together (TKG 174-175, italics added).

Furthermore, "The unity of the trinitarian Persons lies in the circulation of the divine life which they fulfil in their relations to one another" (TKG 175). Furthermore, "If 'the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit' are bound together through eternal love, then their unity consists in their oneness with each other" (SRA 151). That is, in "their overflowing love they go beyond themselves and open themselves in creation, reconciliation and redemption for the other, different nature of finite, contradictory and mortal created beings, in order to concede them space in their eternal life to let them participate in their own joy" (SRA 151-152). In other words, the perichoretic relations within the Godhead also depict how he relates to his creation.

To buttress his stance on prioritising the biblical narrative over philosophical notions, Moltmann insists, "If we search for a concept of unity corresponding to the biblical testimony of the triune God, the God who unites others with himself, then we must dispense with both the concept of the one substance and the concept of the identical subject" (TKG 150). The unity of the Trinity, for Moltmann, must be perceived in terms of "unitedness, the at-oneness of the three Persons with one another, or the unitedness, the at-oneness of the triune God" (TKG 150). The reason for this is that, "only the concept of unitedness is the concept of a unity that can be communicated and is open" (TKG 150). What he means is that the concept of unitedness does not turn God into a transcendent monarchical deity who stands aloof from his creation, but it affirms the quality that God enters into relationships with his world. In Moltmann's view, the concept of unitedness is in tandem with "the personal self-differentiation of God, and not merely a modal differentiation, for only persons can be at one with one another, not modes of being or modes of subjectivity" (TKG 150). In this regard, Moltmann opposes the concepts of *homousios, ousia and substantia* because in these terms the assumption is that the unity of God is established by their sharing of a single substance, as sameness of divine identity. Rather, the "unitedness, the at-oneness, of the triunity is already given with the fellowship of the Father, the Son and the Spirit" (TKG 150). Moltmann further adds, "It is only of the living God that it is possible to say that 'God is love', for love is not solitary, but presupposes those who are different, joins those who are different, and differentiates between those who are joined" (SRA 151). For Moltmann, the unity of the divine persons lies in their quality of being persons: "they are just as much united with one another and in one another, since personal character and social character are only two aspects of the same thing" (TKG 150). It is the aspect of personality that calls for a perichoretic view of the understanding of the unity of God's triunity. As Moltmann, sees it, "If the unity of God is not perceived in the at-oneness of the triune God, and therefore

as a perichoretic unity, then Arianism and Sabellianism remain inescapable threats to Christian theology" (TKG 150).

In bridging the gap between the economic Trinity and immanent Trinity, Moltmann appeals to the salvation mission of Jesus Christ. In Moltmann's understanding, it is in Christ's "historical and eschatological history that we can perceive the differences, the relationships and the unity of the Father, the Son and the Spirit" (TKG 65). In the life, ministry, death, resurrection and church of Jesus Christ is demonstrated the perichoretical relationship between the Father, the Son and Spirit. Moltmann turns to these three Christological events to demonstrate that, "In the sending, delivering up and resurrection of Christ we find this sequence: Father – Spirit – Son" (TKG 94). However, "In the lordship of Christ and the sending of the Spirit the sequence is: Father – Son – Spirit" (TKG 94). In addition, in "the eschatological consummation and glorification, the sequence has to be: Spirit – Son – Father" (TKG 94). Moltmann's intention is to highlight that the three divine persons relate perichoretically but are different from each other. At the heart of this perichoretic argument is Moltmann's desire to dispute the monarchy of the Father and plead for the equality of the Son and the Spirit.

Harvie (2009:114) perceptively notes that although Moltmann's theological agenda is to articulate a social doctrine of the Trinity and hence dwell less on the divine *ousia*, he nonetheless clearly affirms the unity of the divine essence. [36] In Bauckham's (1995:25) analysis, the charge that it is difficult to distinguish Moltmann's social trinitarianism from tritheism cannot withstand a closer scrutiny of Moltmann's later works. Bauckham (1995:25) adds that Moltmann's fundamental emphasis that the trinitarian persons relate to each other as personal subjects "has, in fact, much more claim to represent the mainstream Christian theological tradition than has the modern tendency to conceive God as the supreme individual." Bauckham appreciates Moltmann's social trinitarianism while also criticising him for the tendency towards "undisciplined speculation" and a biblical interpretation that "often ignores historical-critical interpretation" and for "leav[ing] his hermeneutical principles dangerously unclear" (1995:25-26). However, Moltmann remains committed to the unity of divine essence within the Trinity but maintains that imagining the Trinity "can neither begin with substance nor understand the totality of the inter-relationships in terms of substance" (Harvie 2009:114). The divine essence of God is essentially a relational being.

---

[36] For instance he says: "The Spirit of the universe is the Spirit who proceeds from the Father and shines forth in the Son" (GiC 16). In this Moltmann affirms the monarchy of the Father.

2.3.3. The Sociopolitical Significance of Moltmann's Perichoresis

In this section, 'sociopolitical' refers to issues and systems pertaining to the sociopolitical and economic reality of this earthly life. In Moltmann, the doctrine of the perichoresis of God has socioeconomic significance by highlighting God's openness to his world, which reflects God's historicity. For Moltmann, the trinitarian God who relates to himself perichoretically also relates to his people and his creation perichoretically. McCall suggests that Moltmann uses the perichoretic relationship in the life of God as the "basis and 'archetype' of the God-world relation" (2010:160). This is affirmed by Grenz (2004:75) who says that, for Moltmann, "God's triunity is integrally connected to the divine engagement with the world".

The doctrine of perichoresis in Moltmann has a political significance as it models how human beings ought to relate to each other in order for justice and peace to prevail. Moltmann's position is, "Monotheism is monarchism" (TKG 191). He finds that monotheistic trinity promotes autocratic human hierarchies and distances God from the history of the world. Thus Moltmann's criticism of Christian monotheism cascades down to human sociopolitical conditions. Moltmann finds that the God of Christian monotheism is a "solitary lord of heaven who subjects everything to himself, as earthly despots have always done in his name" (SRA 151). As already pointed out above, to Moltmann monotheism leads to monarchism by functioning as a monotheistic basis of promoting patriarchal authoritarianism and political autocracy. He says, "the notion of a divine monarchy in heaven and on earth….generally provides the justification for earthly domination – religious, moral, patriarchal or political domination – and makes it a hierarchy, a 'holy rule' (TKG 191-192). The notion of one God in heaven translates into one central government on earth. The "idea of the almighty ruler of the universe legitimates a corresponding hierarchical power structure that oppresses human society" (Peters 1993:39). Thus, a perichoretic understanding of the Trinity for Moltmann, can translate to egalitarian sociopolitical structures that enhance human flourishing.

The doctrine of the perichoresis also functions in Moltmann to affirm God's loving relationship with his people and his created world. This affirms the historicity of God. Moltmann states, "Creation is a part of the eternal love affair between the Father and the Son. It springs from the Father's love for the Son and is redeemed by the answering love of the Son for the Father" (TKG 69). The triune Christian God is essentially united with his creation and shares in its suffering. It must be noted that Moltmann is aware that the relationship between God and human beings "is not a reciprocal relationship between equals" (TKG 3). For Moltmann, "The relationship of the triune God to himself and the relationship of the triune God to his world is

not to be understood as a one-way relationship – the relation of image to reflection, idea to appearance, essence to manifestation – but as a mutual one" (TKG 158-159). Therefore he criticises Tertullian's distinction of immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity because it not only differentiate between 'God in himself' and 'God for us', it also attempts to distinguish God and the world from one another (TKG 158). The problem with this distinction is that it ends up with a God who in his monotheistic monarchy is unconcerned and uninvolved in the affairs of the world. Such a God is too transcendent to be participating in human history.

Moltmann affirms the perichoretic union between God and his creation in *God in Creation,* where he reinforces his denial of the monotheistic monarchy by stating,

> As long as God was thought of as the absolute subject, the world had to be viewed as the object of his creation, preservation and redemption. The more transcendent the conception of God became, the more immanent were the terms in which the world was interpreted. Through the monotheism of the absolute subject, God was increasingly stripped of his connection with the world, and the world was increasingly secularised (GC 1).

In this text, Moltmann finds that the emphasis on the absolute transcendence of God resulted in the dichotomous view of the relationship between God and his creation that has stripped God of relationship with the world resulting in the secularisation of material reality. In other words, God is now understood as unconcerned with material and temporal issues and only concerned with spiritual issues deemed holy and eternal. In Moltmann's analysis, the end result of monarchical monotheism is that

> … the human being – since he was God's image on earth – had to see himself as the subject of cognition and will. And was bound to confront his world as its ruler. For it was only through his rule over the earth that he could correspond to his God, the Lord of the world. God is the Creator, Lord and owner of the world; and in the same way the human being had to endeavour to become the lord and owner of the earth. This was the idea behind the centralistic theologies, and the foundation of the hierarchical doctrines of sovereignty (GC 1).

In other words, monarchical monotheism has been used to defraud God of his role over his creation. Rather than see the world in relation to God, humanity now sees the world in relation to themselves, hence the prevalent selfish domination and violation of the earth. The remedy for this, according to Moltmann, is the shift from strict monotheism to the perichoretic understanding of Trinity that sees God lovingly related to his creation, which humanity must use as God's provision.

Moltmann's doctrine of the perichoresis affirms the validity of the material reality and this stands against any Platonic Christian spirituality that attempts to minimise the legitimacy of

material reality. To Moltmann, by creating, God makes space for the world in his being, which means that the act of creation is the beginning of God's "*self-humiliation …* the self-limitation of the One who is omnipresent, and the suffering of the eternal love" (TKG 59). The act of "creation of a world is therefore not merely 'an act of God outwardly' – an act in an outward direction; it is at the same time 'an act of God inwardly', which means that it is something that God suffers and endures" (TKG 59). However, Moltmann is cautious of pantheism, opting for panentheism pointing out that the one-sided stress on God's transcendence in relation to the world led to deism, while one-sided stress on God's immanence in the world led to pantheism (GiC 98; CG 277).[37] In this sense, Moltmann can be regarded as a panentheist. Just as there is a perichoretic differentiation in the unitedness of the divine Persons, Moltmann emphasises that in a similar manner God is perichoretically united to his creation. He explains: "In the panentheistic view, God, having created the world, also dwells in it, and conversely the world which he has created exists in him. This is a concept which can really be thought and described in trinitarian terms" (GiC 98). While affirming that God and creation indwell each other, he nonetheless affirms that there is a distinction between God and his creation, thus God is not creation and creation is not divine. Moltmann explains that God created a "world which is not God, but which none the less corresponds to him" (TKG 59). There is an eschatological framework in this perichoretic panentheism as it is undergirded by the "panentheistic understanding of the world as the sheltering and nurturing divine environment for everything living: 'In him we live and move and have our being'" (Acts 17.28) (CG 300). Furthermore, it takes into account that in the presence of God in the eschaton "everything ends with God's being 'all in all'" (1 Cor 15:28) (TKG 105). The essence of this is that, "God in the world and the world in God – that is what is meant by the glorifying of the world through the Spirit. That is the home of the Trinity" (TKG 105).

Regarding the question of whether or not God created and relates to the world out of necessity, Moltmannian thought finds this a false question. Creating is at the heart of God's being. God reveals himself as the creator; and we cannot think of God without creation. Moltmann says:

> *Christian panentheism* … started from the divine essence: Creation is a fruit of God's longing for 'his Other' and for that Other's free response to the divine love. That is why the idea of the world is inherent in the nature of God himself from eternity. For it is impossible to conceive of a God who is not a creative God. A non-creative God would be imperfect compared with the God who is eternally creative. And if

---

[37] In Moltmann's estimation, Newton represents the danger of deism while the danger of pantheism is represented in Spinoza.

> God's eternal being is love, then the divine love is also more blessed in giving than in receiving. God cannot find bliss in eternal self-love if selflessness if is part of love's very nature. God is in all eternity self-communicating love (TKG 106).

According to this passage, God does not create out of necessity but out of the essence of his being God. That is, to be God essentially includes being the creator (TKG 59). Moltmann (1999a:39) is aware of the distinction between God the divine eternal creator and the world as temporary non-divine created reality. He explains that "cosmic apocalypses" [e.g. Gen. 6:13; 9:11] show "*the world's contingency*: the world is there, but it does not have to be there – it can be not-there too. *Only God exists of himself and not from anything else*" (CoG 228, italics added). Thus Moltmann "does not dissolve God into the world history, but he does intend a real interaction between God and the world" (Bauckham 1995:25). However, in the final analysis for Moltmann, because God's freedom is inseparable linked to his love, the contrast between necessity and freedom of choice in God is false. For if God "is love, then in loving the world he is by no means 'his own prisoner'; on the contrary, in loving the world he is entirely free because he is entirely himself" (TKG 55). That is, "If he (God) is the highest good, then his liberty cannot consist of having to choose between good and evil. On the contrary, it lies in doing the good which he himself is, which means communicating himself" (TKG 55). Capturing the essence of Moltmann's thought, Bauckham (1995:25) says, "Because God's freedom is the freedom of his love, he cannot choose not to love and as love he is intrinsically related to the world".

If we see the Trinitarian unity perichoretically, then it is not an exclusive unity, closed within itself. It is an open, inviting and integrating unity, as we see from the way Jesus prays for the disciples to the Father: 'that they may alone also be in us' (John 17:21). This indwelling of human beings in the triune God corresponds entirely to the reverse indwelling of the triune God in human beings: 'If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him' (John 14:23) (SRA 159).

The emerging question is whether Moltmann's perichoretic understanding of the Trinity does justice to the unity in the Trinity, the relationship within the Trinity and the relationship between the Triune God and his creation. Or, does Moltmann succumb to tritheism or pantheism (disguised as panentheism)? Moltmann's perichoretic trinitarian thinking is not just an articulation of what God is in his being, but of how his perichoretic being reflects his relationship to humanity and creation. Moltmann's perichoretic trinitarian thought best captures his vision of God's involvement in the affairs of his people. On the charge of

pantheism, Moltmann is clear that there is a distinction between God and creation, just as he is clear that there the divine persons mutually interpenetrate but are distinct from each other.

Does Moltmann's perichoretic union between God and creation justly account for the eternity of God and the temporality of the world? Asked differently, does Moltmann's perichoretic union between God and creation account for God's divinity and the creatureliness of history? Peters (1993:19) calls for the awareness of the fact that in God there is eternity and temporality, the beyond and the intimate. Moltmann is aware of this and firmly emphasises that God and creation do not relate as equal divine partners; God is the creator and the universe is his creation. Moltmann helpfully highlights that it is not just the Father or the Son or the Holy Spirit who is involved in our lives and the world's situations. The whole of the Trinity is engaging the immediate socio-political and economic pains of the poor. The God who will redeem us at the end of time is also concerned about what happens in present temporality. As Peters (1993:20) explains, "It might be better to say that in one or more respects the divine eternity has felt the impact of human temporality and further, this impact has become internal to the trinitarian life of God". In other words, "Eternity is affected by temporary contingency" (Peters 1993:20).

2.4. The Emergence of Political Church in the Historicity of God

The outcome of the notion of the historicity of the God of hope in Moltmann is a political church concerned with the promotion of abundant life and the liberation of the poor and powerless. To behold the historicity of the God of hope and his glorious promises as well as his perichoretic relationship with his world, for Moltmann, must result in a church motivated by this anticipated hope to challenge all present occurrences of Auschwitzs. Moltmann concludes *Theology of Hope* by calling upon the church to be an exodus church, not by fleeing from the world, but by engaging the world in order to transform it. By exodus church he means the church that has embraced in faith God's promise of future rest in the Promised Land. Moltmann asserts:

> If Christianity, according to the will of him in whom it believes and in whom it hopes, is to be different and to serve a different purpose, then it must address itself to no less a task than that of breaking out of these its socially fixed roles. It must then display a kind of conduct which is not in accordance with these. That is the conflict which is imposed on every Christian and every Christian minister. If the God who called them to life should expect of them something other than what modern industrial society expects and requires of them, then Christians must venture an exodus and regard their social roles as a new Babylon exile. Only where they appear in society as a group which is not wholly adaptable and in the case of which the modern integration of everything with everything else fails to succeed, do they enter

into a conflict-laden, but fruitful partnership with this society. Only where their resistance shows them to be a group that is incapable of being assimilated or of 'making the grade', can they communicate their own hope to this society (TH 324).

In this text he highlights that seeing the church as an exodus community has socioeconomic and political implications. It calls the church to step out and engage the world. Moltmann's major qualm with traditional eschatology is that it has resulted in a church that has no relevance to the current socioeconomic and political context. We have already seen Moltmann lament that modern Christian faith has become a faith in a God who has no hope for the future of the world, and that this has resulted in placing faith for the future of the world in secular atheistic systems (HH 370). The church has turned to a Christian hope that has caused the church to disengage from the socioeconomic and political historical situation in this world. In other words, hope for a better world cannot be placed in the God of traditional Christianity because hope in him results in disengagement from the affairs of this world.

Moltmann calls for Christians "to remember the 'God of Hope,' as he is witnessed to in the promissory history of the Old and the New Testaments, and thus begin to assume responsibility for the personal, social and political problems of the present" (HH 370). In this statement Moltmann is calling for a political church. Moltmann is saying that the God of hope who is witnessed in the promissory history of the Bible inspires and empowers responsibility to address the socio-political and economic problems of present earthly existence. The resurrection of Christ, a victory over death the enemy of the future, establishes the future of Christ's life giving and life-sustaining reign in a world marked with death and oppression. Thus Moltmann says, "All predicates of Christ not only say who he was and is, but imply statements as to who he will be and what is to be expected from him" (TH 17). Contained in this statement is the fact Christ conquered the forces of death indicating that he is Lord of life in the present and in the future. Therefore, hoping in his life promised in the future calls the church to be agents of life in this present world. In other words, the church's engagement of the world now in order to change it, amounts to an anticipation of the future for in "the promises, the hidden future already announces itself and exerts its influence on the present through the hope it awakens" (TH 18).

Moltmann also opposes the understanding of church in the modern evangelical revivalist or pietistic movements. Moltmann criticises their response to the industrialised age by adopting a faith of "pious individualism, which for its own part was romanticist in form and withdrew itself from the material entanglements of society" (TH 301). Thus, Moltmann is concerned

about at least two aspects of the modern church. Firstly, there are the established churches that have been co-opted by the state and, secondly, the evangelical churches that have withdrawn into a private corner as a self-preservation mechanism. In both situations the church is left without a critical socioeconomic and political relevance. In one instance it ends up sacralising the despotism of the state (Banda & Senokoane 2009) and in the other it is so privatised it ends up allowing despotism to grow (Kretzschmar 1997). Moltmann emphasises that the modern church has "lost the character of the *cultus publicus*" (TH 310) which existed from the time of Emperor Constantine until the emergence of nineteenth century industrialisation and pietistic evangelical movements. In turn it has become "something which in its religious form it never was and which … from the theological standpoint of the New Testament it can never seek to be – namely, a *cultus privatus*" (TH 301). Thus Moltmann's eschatological affirmation of the historicity of God intends to rebuke the privatisation of the Christian faith and the church's withdrawal from socioeconomic and political issues that affect the poor and the powerless.

The interplay of hope and history in shaping an ecclesiology of hope in a context of poverty lies in the dialectical nature of the promise as exemplified in the exodus. The exodus, as far as it is a promissory act, announces both the absence and presence of freedom. For Moltmann, while the Israelites did not have the promised future, the power of that future was operational in them by empowering them to face and resist the Egyptian oppression that hindered their human flourishing. By resisting Pharaoh based on God's promised future freedom, Israel could be thought of as already in the future. The power of the promise of a future land of freedom transformed their immediate circumstances.

Harvie (2009:17) best expresses this dialectical tension that the eschatological promise "is God's pledge to humanity". McDougall (2005:33) explains: "Put differently, not only does the God of Exodus promise to act in human history, but God's being comes to be known through his faithfulness to these promises". The anticipation of the future instilled by the promise is already operational in the transformative power of the anticipated promise. In the Exodus, God empowers his people to face their present socio-economic and political dilemmas. The Messiah God has taken decisive action against agents who work against the human wellbeing of his people in this life. The Messiah God has taken note of the suffering of his people and has acted against it.

For Moltmann, the Exodus highlights God's participation in the historical situation of humanity. How does Moltmann balance human wellbeing in the present here-and-now and human wellbeing in the hoped for future? Moltmann says, the bible "reveals the future in the

past and makes God's hope present by means of the remembrance of his historical association with Israel, the covenant, and with Jesus Christ, the incarnation" (EH 45). By linking hope and remembrance, Moltmann intends to highlight that God takes all the situations of his people seriously.

2.5. A Critical Evaluation of Moltmann's Historicity of the God of Hope

This section is a critical evaluation of Moltmann's historicity of the God of hope.

2.5.1. The Human Dignity of the Victimised in the Historicity of God of Hope

In Moltmann's eschatological affirmation of God's historicity lies the idea that God with future as his being is the ground for the struggle for liberated life by the poor, the powerless and the marginalised. Moltmann's notion of the God of hope expresses God's preferential option for the poor and exploited. The unspeakable trauma of Auschwitz suggests either a dead God, a God who rallies the powerful and evil to crush the poor and powerless or, at the worst, a God who is appeased by the blood of the poor and powerless. For how else does God cope with the endless death throes of the victims of such gross injustice? Moltmann's theology of the historicity of the God of hope pleads the case for a loving and sovereign God in the light of the godless and godforsaken Auschwitz that naturally leads to nihilism. The dialectic of the cross and resurrection, in asserting God's historical participation in contexts of death, godlessness, and godforsakenness, means that the pain of Auschwitz is not a solitary experience; the suffering God acts in solidarity with the victims. At the same time, the dialectic of cross and resurrection in the future of God proclaims that God will finally overcome all suffering; therefore, no suffering should be justified. Moltmann says that Christian "hope finds in Christ not only a consolation in suffering, but also the protest of divine promise against suffering" (TH 21). The promise of hope is therefore not an opiate of the poor; rather, it urges them towards discontent with their status quo. That is, "God's solidarity with the suffering provides a ground for that longing for divine righteousness from that which the protest arises, keeps it from lapsing into nihilism, and empowers it with hope and love" (Bauckham 1987b:94). As the protest of the crucified God, it is the protest of his love which always prefers the victims of injustice (CG 52-53; CPS 97-98). Therefore, believers in the crucified God are called "into liberating praxis" (Bauckham 1987b:95) for the victims of injustice. The historicity of the God of hope affirms God's interest and commitment to liberated life. The historical God of hope is the God of life. As noted earlier, the Black Liberation theologian James Cone (1997:129) appreciates Moltmann's God of hope, because God who is the future of the oppressed is also

the ground of their struggle for liberation. This means that the oppressed can fight for freedom and justice.

2.5.2. God Liberated to Possess his Creation for the Poor in the Perichoresis

Marc Jean Ela (1994a:32) bemoans that "the rich and the powerful of this world have a tendency to confiscate God". This confiscation of God by the ruling elite is at the centre of Moltmann's aversion of the monotheism. Moltmann's doctrine of perichoresis addresses this confiscation of God by the rich and powerful who use it to justify their exclusive monopolisation of the earth's life-giving resources and their marginalisation of the poor and the powerless (GiC 1). As already noted, Moltmann objects to monotheism because he finds that earthly despots appeal to it to entrench their selfish monarchies (SRA 151; TKG 191). According to Moltmann, "If the creative God himself dwells in his creation, then he is making it his own home, 'on earth as it is in heaven'. All created beings then find in nearness to him the inexhaustible wellspring of their life, and for their part find home and rest in God" (GiC 5). This affirms that the earth belongs to God not only as his creation, but also as his dwelling place. This means that "[t]he purpose of creation is therefore not to serve as the dwelling place for all that is created, but to serve as the perfect venue where God and the created can feast in fellowship" (Bentley 2005:333). Thus a perichoretic view of the triune God's relation to the world yields the world to him who has created it and sustains it to give shelter to his all his people. This means that all God's people must have access to God's creation given to them to meet their material needs. It also means that, rather than pointing them to the next world, the needs of the poor in the present here-and-now must be addressed.

2.5.3. The Problem of Linking Monotheism and Monarchism

Is social trinity a meaningful way of avoiding despotism? It is wondered if Moltmann has not "confuse[d] immutability with immobility and impassibility with an inability to feel or respond to creaturely pain" (Horton 2011:245, footnote 53). Peters' analysis is that the distinction made by Moltmann not only creates confusion upon confusion, but it also "denies while affirming continuity between the Hebrew and Christian apprehensions of God" (1993:42). Peters disputes Moltmann's rejection of monotheistic theology on the basis that it enhances hierarchical human authorities by arguing that even polytheistic theology can be used to entrench human monarchies, as is amply demonstrated in ancient kingdoms like Egypt and Babylon (1993:41-42). It is further noted, as Bauckham (1998:79) points out, that it was on the basis of the one God as proclaimed in Jewish monotheism that the New Testament writers grappled with the

divinity of Christ in working out the doctrine of the Trinity.[38] In opposition to Moltmann, Bauckham sees a development from the one God to three divine persons and not vice versa. Against Moltmann's call to begin with plurality, there is need to realise that the doctrine of the Trinity emerged more concerned with articulating how the one God could be plural, than how the plural God could be one.

This negative aspect notwithstanding, Moltmann rightly highlights that God involves himself in the affairs of his people out of his very essence. Therefore, Moltmann can talk of the perichoresis. God has reserved a special place in his heart for the poor and marginalised. As much as Horton (2011:247) warns against "projecting a God who satisfies our existential interpretation of tragedy", an accusation he levels at Moltmann, care must also be taken to not seek to "protect an ontology that preserves traditional views of God's sovereignty and freedom" (Meeks 2006:13).

2.5.4. The Problem of Futuristic Language that Contradicts God's Historicity

A serious challenge in Moltmann's theology of hope is the tendency to use futuristic language to describe the God of hope. Indeed, the above sections noted that Moltmann's futuristic language must be interpreted in line with his affirmation of the history of God. Nevertheless, the notion of 'future as the essential nature of the being of God' derived from Ernst Bloch has the potential to contradict the personal God projected in his social Trinity, to "a regulative idea to spur the transformation of contemporary inhumanity into future community" (Otto 2001:303). Bauckham's (1995:25-26) criticism about Moltmann's undisciplined speculation and problematic biblical hermeneutics have already been noted above. Horton (2011:244) also observes that despite Moltmann's condemnation of a traditional doctrine of God as a product of Greek philosophy more than biblical teaching, his own interpretation is a series of deductions from a central thesis of God's essential nature as 'suffering' that he develops by appealing to unconventional theological sources and speculative thinkers. However, Randall Otto's (2001:302) harsh criticism that there is no God in Moltmann's theology is an unfairly selective reading of Moltmann's work. According to Otto (2001:302), Moltmann's God is "the Nothing, the ideal of human community projected for the non-historical end … [a]ny interpretation of Moltmann which sees ontological reality in God apart from the non-historical eschatological

---

[38] For instance Bauckham (1998:79) says, "Once we understand Jewish monotheism properly, we can see that the New Testament writers are already, in a deliberate and sophisticated way, expressing a full divine Christology by including Jesus in the unique identity of God as defined by Second Temple".

end is misguided". However, such harsh criticism, while indeed highlighting the serious problems of Moltmann's futuristic language, has not attended to Moltmann's texts that affirm God's active historical presence, particularly his doctrines of the social Trinity and the Holy Spirit.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter examined Moltmann's notion of the historicity of the God of hope. Moltmann affirms God as the God of promises who demonstrated to have future as his being by fulfilling his promises with announcement of more promises. Thus the religion of Israel was a religion of hope that was in constant expectation of the fulfilment of God's future promises. For Moltmann the resurrection of Christ supremely confirmed God's power of future by defeating death, the greatest enemy of the future. Thus the exodus that was initiated by God's future promise and the resurrection's conquering of death affirmed God as one with future as his being. At the same time for Moltmann, the God of hope does not wait in the future unconcerned about the present historical situation of his people. Rather, the God of hope has historicity as demonstrated by his participation in the affairs of his people on their exodus journey and Christ's loving solidarity with the people he encountered while he proclaimed the future. God's future did not cancel his historicity, and vice versa.

God's trinitarian nature affirms God's historical participation in the affairs of his people. Moltmann affirms that the God of hope is trinitarian and that the divine persons relate to each other perichoretically. He affirms that the divine persons of the Trinity are distinct from each other, but lovingly mutually indwell and interpenetrate each other. Thus Christ's death on the cross occurred in the Trinity, so that when the Son suffered the Father also suffered, but each suffered distinctly, the Son suffered Godforsakenness while the Father suffered sonlessness. Hence Moltmann's denial of the impassibility and immutability of God; the notion of a God who cannot suffer and cannot change contradicts the basic nature of the trinity, for Moltmann. In Moltmannian terms, God's ability to suffer affirms his historical engagement in the suffering of his people. Eschatologically this is significant because it means that God who promises future to those who are suffering also remains involved in their situation to empower them and liberate them from their oppression, just like he did in the exodus event. By drawing attention to the historicity of the triune God in thinking about the poor and powerless, Moltmann stimulates the awareness that a sustainable and viable framework of dealing with poverty must be informed by the historicity of God that demonstrates that eschatological hope does not cancel the value of the present earthly life.

Chapter 3: The Significance of Moltmann's Kingdom of God in a Context of Poverty

3.1. Introduction

According to Bauckham and Hart, the kingdom of God is a significant image of hope because "it raises the question of the relationship between the eschatological future and the present" (1999:159). This is particularly true in Moltmann's eschatological vision where the kingdom of God is the fulfilment of the historicity of God. As will be demonstrated in this chapter, in Moltmann the historicity of God explored in the previous chapter that is enacted by God's announcement of his promise ends with the coming of God in his kingdom. The kingdom of God is cardinal to Moltmann's eschatological thinking as it shapes his thinking about the church's role in this present world. It is unthinkable to discuss Moltmann's eschatological thought and his interest in human flourishing in the absence of the kingdom of God. When the prominence of the theme of the kingdom of God in the ministry of Jesus is considered (Mark 1:14-15), Moltmann's keen interest in the kingdom is understandable (Harvie 2009:39). According to McIlroy (2009:48), the kingdom of God is "Moltmann's basic eschatological symbol". Furthermore, encased in Moltmann's understanding of the kingdom of God is the theme of God's interest and promotion of abundant life. This chapter thus attempts to answer the question: In Moltmann, how does the restoration of life in the expected kingdom of God shape his view of material wellbeing in this present life? The chapter begins (3.2) by analysing the definition and nature of the kingdom of God in Moltmann. It proceeds (3.3) to analyse what is entailed in Moltmann's view of the kingdom of God as coming. Section 3.4 analyses how the kingdom of God in Moltmann challenges contexts of poverty. Section 3.5 closes the chapter with a critical evaluation of Moltmann's notion of the kingdom of God. These sections will highlight that for Moltmann the kingdom of God is a symbol of the restoration of broken life. By promising his kingdom, God promises to restore and recreate broken life to abundant and loved life.

3.2. The Definition and Nature of the Kingdom of God in Moltmann

This section will explore Moltmann's definition and understanding of the nature of the kingdom of God.

3.2.1. The Relationship between the Kingdom of God and Promise in Moltmann

In Moltmann's eschatology there is a direct relationship between the promise of God and the kingdom of God; the kingdom is the fulfilment of the promise. In *Coming of God*: *Christian*

Eschatology (1996) (hereafter CoG) Moltmann asks the question, "What do we really and truly hope for?" (CoG *xvi*). He answers this question by demonstrating the link between the promise and the kingdom of God. As already highlighted above (in 2.2.1), Moltmann understands the Kingdom of God as an expression of the nature of the future of God, demonstrated by his view of the eschatological end as a telos and not finis. This can be seen in his response to the above question concerning what we 'really and truly hope for'. He answers this question by referring to the first three petitions in the Lord's Prayer, to which he affirmatively responds: "We hope for the kingdom of God" (CoG xvi, italics original). For Moltmann, the centre of our hope should be neither the soul, as in pietism, nor the world, as in secularism. Rather, the "centre has to be God, God's kingdom and God's glory" (CoG *xvi*). The first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9-10) plead for the coming of the kingdom of God. Moltmann links the petition with Isaiah 6:3 in which the seraphs worship the glorious God in his temple calling: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty, *the whole earth is full of his glory*" (italics added). In Moltmann's thought, Isaiah's declaration of the filling of the whole earth by God's glory is buttressed by Paul's announcement that Christ will victoriously subdue everything and deliver it to God "so that God may be all in all" (1 Cor 15:28") (1999a:40). Moltmann's use of these biblical texts must be viewed against his emphasis that by revealing himself as "I AM WHO I AM (Ex 3:14), God meant, "I will be who I will be" (EH 48; CoG 23). In that regard, the kingdom of God will fulfil his promise by being a moment "when the eternal Trinity glorifies itself in the redemption of history and the consummation of the world" (Moltmann 1999a:41). By anticipating God's promise, we anticipate the arrival of his kingdom, namely that "God will arrive at his rights in his creation, at his peace in his Sabbath, and at his eternal joy in his image, human beings" (CoG *xvi*).

The relationship of the promise to the kingdom means that there is a relationship between the promise and the gospel. In the New Testament, the role once played by the promise among the Israelites is played by the gospel message about Jesus. As Moltmann explains, "the gospel of the kingdom heralds the coming kingdom of itself" (EiT 102). He adds, "Every promise thrusts towards the fulfilment of what is promised. Every covenant with God thrusts towards God's all fulfilling presence" (EiT 102). The coming of the future kingdom of God will mark the fulfilment of the promises of God. In Moltmann's view, when the promise is considered from the perspective of the fulfilment it literally means "a *pro-missio*, a sending-ahead of what is to come" (EiT 102). For Moltmann, God's revelation is communicated in his promise by which "he opens up history by the promise of something new and by hope aroused" (HP 17).

3.2.2. The Inseparable Link of the Kingdom to Jesus

According to Harvie, examining Moltmann's understanding of the kingdom of God is a difficult task mainly "due to Moltmann's own ambiguity on the subject" (2009:40). In fact, Moltmann believes that Jesus himself did not explicitly definite the kingdom, but "brought the Kingdom of God itself" (Moltmann 1993b:6) so that if we want to know what the kingdom is, we must look to Jesus. Moltmann asserts, "the *concern of* Jesus was and is the Kingdom of God" (1993b:5). Since Jesus did not offer any explicit definitions of the kingdom, it means that we can only know what the kingdom is by paying attention to the *concerns* exhibited by Christ in his mission (Moltmann 1979:22). In this assertion, Moltmann registers the inseparable link between the kingdom and Jesus. For Moltmann, the important principle here is that when Christ declared himself the promised Messiah (Isaiah 35:61, cf. Luke 4:18) and affirmed his messianic acts as authenticating his messianic anointing (Matt 11:5), he exhibited the kingdom of God.[39] In Moltmann's understanding, Christ's proclamation that 'the kingdom of God is at hand' or 'near' flows out of his messianic acts of miraculous healings, exorcisms, the embrace of the poor and the marginalised, praying to God as 'Abba', and the fulfilment of the scriptures in Christ (WJC 97). Therefore the kingdom of God "is tied to his person, and cannot be transferred to anyone else" (CG 121). The kingdom of God cannot be imagined in separation from Christ (CG 123). Conversely, Jesus cannot be known without the kingdom of God being inseparably connected. Moltmann (1993b:5) avers:

> Jesus brings the Kingdom of God to us in this unique way and leads us into the extent and beauty of the Kingdom. And the Kingdom of God makes Jesus the Christ, the Saviour and the liberator for us. If, therefore, one wants to learn what the mysterious 'Kingdom of God' actually is, then one must look to Jesus. And if one wants to understand who Jesus actually is, then one must experience the Kingdom of God.

That is, Jesus's actions announce the arrival of the kingdom, which is why one must look at Jesus to learn about the kingdom. Conversely, one must look at the kingdom of God to learn about Jesus Christ.

However, it must be noted that, for Moltmann, the messianic works of Christ do not announce the arrival of the kingdom, but its approach. Referring to the messianic activities of Christ, Moltmann says, "Whenever and wherever this happens we can know that his Kingdom is *coming*" (Moltmann 1979:22).[40] The gospel makes present the future kingdom of God and the

---

[39] In the words of Edwards (2002:47) "In Jesus of Nazareth the kingdom of God makes a personal appearance".
[40] This view is in tandem with his view that the God of hope is in the future and only present by his promises (TH 223),

gospel "is nothing less than the arrival of the coming God in word" (WJC 95). To Moltmann, Christ proclaimed the kingdom as near, signalling that the kingdom "is already present, but present *only* as the coming kingdom" (WJC 97, emphasis added). Therefore, the kingdom of God "is present here as promise and hope for the future horizon of all things" (TH 223). In these statements Moltmann asserts that kingdom of God is in the future, it is present only in the form of coming. The pronouncement of its nearness combined with the performance of miraculous messianic acts indicates that the kingdom of God "has come so close that the signs of the messianic era are already visible" (WJC 97).

How do Christ's messianic activities make the coming kingdom present in the here-and-now? The response to this question does not only show Moltmann's understanding of what the kingdom is and does; it also shows his understanding of where the kingdom is located. Moltmann announces that Jesus's messianic work among the poor, for which he received the testimony the 'friend of sinners and outcasts' (Matt 9:11),

> show all too clearly where the kingdom of God is to be discovered – not at the top where the leading members of the society are to be found, where the rich, the healthy, and the talented congratulate themselves – but at the bottom, in the darkness, where no one notices (Moltmann 1979:24).

Moltmann's view that the location of the kingdom of God is among the poor takes into account Jesus' pronouncement of the poor as blessed because the kingdom belongs to them (Matt 5:3). He states that the "gospel of the kingdom of God is proclaimed to the 'the poor' (WJC 99; WJC 99; GSS 253).[41] Moltmann is, however, concerned that the church may easily identify poverty as "an attitude of humility limited to the inner and spiritual life" (CPS 356). Therefore his view that the location of the kingdom of God is among the poor is underpinned by an emphasis, as we have noted above, on Christ's messianic acts of healing the sick, driving out demons, healing the lame and the deaf, and welcoming the poor (WJC 97).

3.2.3. The Kingdom of God Located among the Poor

But, who are the poor to whom already belongs the kingdom? Moltmann's definition of the poor, particularly as derived from the Beatitudes, does not only contradict the traditional understanding of poverty as spiritual, it further hints at his fundamental understanding of the kingdom as a political reality. Although the above noted passages from Moltmann show that he understands the poor as the sick and the victims of exclusion and exploitation, in his earlier work he tended

---

[41] GSS refers to Moltmann, *God for a secular society: the public relevance of theology* (1999b).

to define the poor broadly and abstractly (Rasmusson 1995:77; Harvie 2009:42). Although he was also concerned about socioeconomic poverty and exploitation, Moltmann's earlier works defined poverty in multi-dimensional terms that seemed to point more to social exclusion than economic status (CPS 79). He stated: "the poor are all who have to exist physically and spiritually on the fringe of death" (CPS 79). In this statement poverty is conceived in physically and spiritual terms. He continued, "We ought not confine poverty in religious terms to man's general dependence on God. Nor should it be interpreted in a merely economic or physical sense either" (CPS 79). However, in *The Way of Jesus Christ* (1990), poverty has a strong socioeconomic focus, unlike the multi-dimensional definition he gave in 1977 in *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*.[42] In his later definition, he presented poverty as the "collective term… [that]…covers the hungry, the unemployed, the sick, the discouraged, and the sad and suffering" (WJC 99). Drawing from biblical passages that refer to God's interaction with the poor such as Luke 14:21-23; Mark 11:2-5; Luke 6:21; Matthew 5:40; Matthew 18:23-35 and Luke 12:58, Moltmann shows that God is concerned about the poor whom he describes as the "non-persons, sub-human, dehumanised, human fodder" (WJC 99).

Moltmann places poverty within exploitative structures. To further reinforce his structural view of socioeconomic and political oppression, he adds:

> It is the rich who make the poor poor; it is the healthy who handicap the handicapped, it is the good people who impose the stigma of being 'sinners' on the weak. It is generally 'possessions' to which 'the Haves' cling, and from which they exclude 'the Have-nots' (SoL 125).

The statement emphasises his structural view of poverty and the poor. Thus from a Moltmannian perspective, the key to addressing poverty lies in the liberation of the poor from oppressive socioeconomic and political structures. Thus, the solution to poverty lies largely in the destruction of oppressive political and socioeconomic structures. This is further evidenced by his stance that:

> In a divided world destroyed by enmity, the one gospel has two faces, according to the group to which it turns. Jesus proclaims to the poor the kingdom of God without any conditions, and calls them blessed because the kingdom is already theirs. But the gospel of the kingdom meets the rich with *the call to conversion* (Mark 1:15 par.) (WJC 102, emphasis original).

---

[42] Interestingly, Moltmann dedicated *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* to the World Council of Churches, its General Secretary at the time, the Rev. Philip Potter and to the oppressed Christians throughout the world (CPS *xi*). This handsome gesture towards the Rev. Potter, a Caribbean and a grandson of a slave (Müller-Fahrenholz 2000:83), and the oppressed Christians highlight that the book's main agenda is to plead the case for the inclusion in the church of the poor, the marginalised and the despised peoples.

> The rich are called to repentance because they are 'accursors' of life and the destroyers of this earth (SoL 123).

This passage that presents poverty in structural terms arises from Moltmann's dissatisfaction with the Protestant doctrine of universal sin which he feels is controverted by Christ's depiction of sin in socioeconomic and political terms in the synoptic gospels. Moltmann says the synoptic gospels "talk about 'sinners' quite specifically and in a social context" (SoL 125). He finds the Protestant stance on the universal concept of sin "makes people blind to specific, practical guilt" (SoL 126). For Moltmann, the call for conversion is reserved for the rich because the restorative and justifying justice of God is concerned with the practical situation of people who have never experienced justice (SoL 128). In Moltmannian scope the liberation of the poor is essential to the kingdom of God, for he asserts, it "is only in community with the poor that the kingdom of God is thrown open to others" (WJC 102).

However, a fair analysis of Moltmann's view of poverty will realise that the poor are not *totally* powerless to the extent that they cannot do anything about their poverty. In their victimhood, they still possess a measure of power that they ought to use to resist their oppression and exclusion. Moltmann says, "Victims can also be latent perpetrators, and are not necessarily saints just because they are victims" (SoL 125). In other words, when the victims sheepishly acquiesce to oppressive socioeconomic and political structures that impoverish them they become inadvertently part of the oppressive and impoverishing machinery.

Adding to his criticism of the Protestant understanding of sin and, invariably salvation, Moltmann declares:

> The Protestant doctrine about the justification of sinners, and today's theology about liberation of the oppressed, do not have to be antitheses. They can correct and enrich one another mutually. The full and complete Protestant doctrine of justification is a liberation theology: it is about the liberation of people deprived of justice, and about the liberation of the unjust, so that they may all be freed for a just society (SoL 129).

In this statement, Moltmann is emphasising that justification of sin must not be treated as if it is just about spiritual salvation to the extent of being silent to the material life of the poor. Salvation must holistically deal with individual sins and "structural sin" (SoL 128). Essential to Moltmann is that the liberation of the oppressed is entailed in justification (SoL 129). Freedom from evil powers must also stir freedom from socioeconomic and political powers. Indeed, this is a reflection of biblical salvation exemplified in the calling on the rich to exercise generosity and fairness (Jas. 5:1-6).

The gospel gives the poor and oppressed "new dignity and a powerful stimulus" (Moltmann 1993b:10). Being restored to new dignity and conferred with a powerful stimulus means that the poor should no longer accept the status of being "suffering objects of oppression and humiliation. They are their own determining subjects, with the dignity of God's first children." (Moltmann 1993b:10). Moltmann's solution is that, empowered by the gospel, the poor should revolt against their oppressors. Moltmann's solution is premised on the strictly structural view of poverty and its causes. By taking their own initiative and confronting the structures that oppress and impoverish them, the poor also provide a way of liberating the oppressors from their oppressive tendencies, for

> [s]ince the option is called preferential, it must not be understood in a one-sided exclusive sense. It is meant in a one-sided inclusive sense. God has mercy on the poor so that through them he can save the rich too. The poor are saved through their liberation, the rich through God's judgment on their unjust wealth. So through the one-sided and 'preferential' option, all will finally be saved (EiT 233).

This is one of many confusing contrasts between the rich and the poor in Moltmann which ultimately result in a soteriological confusion. His view is that the opposite of the poor is "'the man of violence', who makes someone else poor and enriches himself at the other's expense" (WJC 99), referring to those who marginalise the poor and powerless and worship their wealth. Beck (2010:118) complains against Moltmann's failure "to distinguish between the poor and rich in terms of the need for conversion on a consistent basis, so it is best to attribute the[se] extreme comments … to rhetoric gone out of control". [43] A serious problem is that Moltmann's preferential option for the poor presents soteriological and christological problems as he seems to ultimately imply a salvation by helping the poor than a salvation of faith in Christ.

3.2.4. The Kingdom as God's Liberating Rule

In the light of Moltmann's view of the poor, and the poor being the ones to whom the kingdom of God belongs, what then is the kingdom? By locating the kingdom of God among the poor, Moltmann highlights that the kingdom of God is essentially his liberating activity. This captures the Old Testament concept of God's Shalom peace. According to Moltmann, the "eschatological fulfilment of the liberating lordship of God in history is termed the kingdom of God" (CPS 190). He notes that the Greek word *basileia* can mean both God's actual rule in the world and the

---

[43] Beck (2010:118-119) points out that the "use of extreme rhetoric is, in fact, one of Moltmann's weakest tendencies … Moltmann's writings are ambiguous and not entirely consistent. At times he appears to define salvation in political terms and speak one-sidedly in favour of the oppressed, while at times he speaks in more balanced and temperate tone".

universal goal of that divine rule (CPS 190; WJC 97). Each of these renditions of *basileia* convey a theological meaning: the lordship of God means the rule of God in the present and the kingdom of God stresses "the dimension and new order of all things according to God's precepts, and is talking about the future of this kingdom" (WJC 97). In Moltmann's understanding, the lordship of God is his rule expressed in this present history through the word of his promise and the Spirit of freedom. Since God's promise is announced in a time of despair and his freedom announced in times of captivity, it means that in present history dominated by "contradiction, resistance and antagonisms," God's rule is "disputed and hidden" (CPS 190). Based on the significance of 1 Corinthians 15:28 pointing the time in the future when God shall assume undisputed sovereign reign over the universe, a perspective of God's shalom-peace and his future Sabbath lurk as the backdrop of Moltmann's statement here (GiC 276-277).

However, God's rule in his kingdom is "undisputed and universal; no shadow falls upon it" (CPS 190). Therefore, in this present history when God's rule confronts contradictions, resistance and antagonisms "it points towards its own fulfilment in the coming kingdom" (CPS 190). That is, the rule of God points forward to a time when all contradictions, resistances and antagonism will be no more, when its rule will be in perfect form, that will be in the kingdom of God. As Moltmann points out:

> [F]aith, wherever it develops into hope, causes not rest but unrest, not patience but impatience. It does not calm the unquiet heart, but is itself this unquiet heart in man. Those who hope in Christ can no longer put up with reality as it is, but begin to suffer under it, to contradict it. Peace with God means conflict with the world, for the goad of the promised future stabs inexorably into the flesh of ever unfulfilled present (TH 21).[44]

In other words, the anticipation of Shalom-peace and the Sabbath rest agitates the church to be concerned about the abundant presence of hostility and restlessness in this present world. The promise of God is uttered in a context of death but by its promise of life in the coming future contradicts the present context of death. Therefore, contradiction, resistance and antagonism

---

[44] Elsewhere Moltmann affirms the present liberating power of the kingdom of God by announcing: "The promises call people out of the environment in which they have settled down and put them on the path to the fulfilment of the promises. They free people from earthly slavery and call them to take the road to freedom. The gospel calls men and women out of the bondage of sin, law and death and puts them on the road to righteousness and the freedom of eternal life. Because this road is not the goal, it leads to tribulation, resistance, suffering and struggle. The path's goal only sheds its light on the path: redemption in tribulation, the victory of life in the struggle against the power of death, ultimate freedom in the resistance against servitude. The kingdom of God is present in faith and new obedience, in new fellowship and the powers of the Spirit. The presence of the Holy Spirit is to be understood as the earnest and beginning of the new creation of all things in the kingdom of God. God rules through word and faith, promise and hope, commandment and obedience, power and Spirit" (CPS 191).

against God's rule are ultimately against the undisputed rule of God in his coming kingdom. Therefore, Jesus' messianic actions of liberating the oppressed, healing the sick, and of expelling the devils express the coming of God's future kingdom to be enacted when death is finally destroyed and eternal life realised (WJC 97). In Moltmann's reference to the poor in relation to the kingdom, he highlights the reality of enslaved life and the presence of oppressive powers that exert themselves over God's people in opposition to God's rule.

Thus, in the liberating rule of God in history is expressed the immanence of the eschatological kingdom, just as the coming kingdom of God is the transcendence of the present lordship of God (CPS 190; WJC 98). The immanent and transcendent nature of God's kingdom means that the lordship of God cannot be thought of as belonging to a future world totally unrelated to the present earthly world; neither can the kingdom of God be identified with the conditions of history in its present state or in a desired one (CPS 190).[45] Plainly stated, the kingdom of God is in the future, it disallows all Christian attempts to sacralise present historical orders. In unpacking Moltmann's thought, Bentley (2005:331) says, "Moltmann's model helps us not to fall into the trap of self-idolising. It reminds us that the Kingdom of God is not something that we can manufacture". There is only one sacred rule; the liberating rule that is present in the form of coming.

A key factor in the interplay between immanence and transcendence in Moltmann's understanding of the kingdom of God is his belief that the kingdom of God, in its form of coming from the future, imposes a principle of creative potentialities on present history. For Moltmann, God's promises emerge out of the possibilities inherent in him by the virtue of having future as his essential being, which means that God's announcement of his promise impart an openness towards the future of history (EiT 102-106).[46] As highlighted above (2.2) the principle of creative potentialities are affirmed by the resurrection of Christ which confirm God's power into the future. This means that in the liberating rule of God as demonstrated in Christ's messianic works is immanent God's transcendent future kingdom which transforms the present world in the light of its future glory (CPS 190; cf.GiC181-184). The gospel announces the coming of the kingdom

---

[45] Moltmann elaborates that the double definition of *basileia*, namely, the lordship of God and the kingdom of God, "forbids us … to identify the kingdom of God in a chiliastic way with any existing state of affairs – *imperium christianum*, for example – or with any utopian condition or 'golden age' (WJC 98).

[46] Moltmann is highlighting the significance of the promissory nature of the gospel in the present context prior to the parousia of the kingdom. The dynamic promises of the gospel of God make God's dynamic future present. "God's great promises do not correspond to reality as it can be experienced, but always reach out beyond that into the future" (EiT 105). That is, "They contain a surplus of what is promised over and above experienced reality, for they emanate from the economy of God's superabundance" (EiT 105).

of God, which makes its creative power present in the here-and-now. Therefore "the liberating activity of God is the immanence of the eschatological kingdom of God, and the coming kingdom [i]s the transcendence of present lordship of God" (WJC 98). This means that, in the present, Christ's messianic work is shaped and directed by the lordship of God and the future kingdom of God is the essence of eschatological eternity (WJC 98). Accordingly, "God's lordship is the presence of his kingdom, and God's kingdom is the future of his lordship" (WJC 98). Stated differently, "The kingdom of God becomes present in history through the rule of God" (CPS 192). This rule of God manifests itself "though the word and faith, obedience and fellowship, in potentialities grasped, and in free co-operation for the life of the world" (CPS 192). Although it remains debatable how Moltmann's definition of the kingdom of God and the poor can enable precisely decisive actions by the church to address poverty (Rasmusson 1995:77), the location of the kingdom among the poor affirms the liberative and restorative nature of the kingdom of God.

Moltmann has a trinitarian understanding of the kingdom of God. The emphasis on the gospel points to the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church (WJC 97). Pointing out that 'kingdom of God' encompasses the lordship or rule of God, Moltmann announces that whoever "stresses *the lordship* of God means the rule of God in the present" (WJC 97). At the same time, the one "who stresses *the kingdom of God* means the dimension and new order of all things according to God's precepts, and is talking about the future of this kingdom" (WJC 97). Therefore, when Jesus' gospel announces the nearness of the kingdom, it means that the kingdom "is already present, but *present* only as the *coming* kingdom" (WJC 97). Presently, the immediate lordship of God is experienced through its liberative power for the humiliated and the sick. However, Moltmann points out, "the conquest of death's power, and the experience of eternal life, are undoubtedly future" (WJC 97). In Moltmann's thought, as long as death still reigns on the earth and the experience of eternal life is still yet to come, the kingdom of God is only experienced as the 'coming'. In this regard, one can say that at the present the coming kingdom is experienced politically by its challenge to the structures that oppress the poor and the powerless.

3.3. *Novum Adventus* in the *Logos* of the Coming Kingdom of God

If Christian hope is hope for the kingdom of God, what do we expect to receive in hoping for the kingdom of God? Here we are attempting to grasp Moltmann's understanding of the absolute essence of the kingdom of God. In the above sections it was noted that Moltmann projects the kingdom of God as *coming*. However, a detailed analysis of this idea by Moltmann was not

sufficiently expounded upon. It is therefore necessary to ask: How is the kingdom of God in the future but present in the form of coming? The idea of the kingdom of God as in the future and present in the form of coming flows out of his notion that God has future as his essential being but is present through his promise (CoG 22). According to Moltmann, the gospel announces salvation that lies ahead of itself thus "[i]t is nothing less than the arrival of the coming God in the word" (WJC 95). Moltmann credits his Göttingen professors, who include Hans Joachim Iwand[47] and Otto Weber,[48] for the notion of the kingdom that is in the future and present. The idea that comes through is that the kingdom of God is a future reality that is operational in the present.

The coming kingdom of God is so radically new that its approach must not be imagined in the form of an interruption but in the form of a conversion. According to Moltmann, an interruption disrupts what is already there, but "afterwards everything goes on as before, and the general run of things remains completely unchanged" (CoG 22).The coming kingdom of God is radically new; instead of merely disturbing, it enacts a conversion and a rebirth (CoG 22). He points out that the Prophets and the Apostles proclaimed this radical conversion (Isa 6:1-3; Matt 4:17, Mk 1:15 and 1 Jn 3:2) (CoG 24). He explains: "Conversion and the rebirth to a new life change time and experience of time, for they make-present the ultimate in the penultimate, and the future of time in the midst of time" (CoG 22). In this statement is dispelled any notions of the coming kingdom as a chaotic moment that ought to be feared. Rather, the coming of the kingdom must be welcomed as bringing a renewal and recreation. He adds that the "future-made-present creates new conditions for possibilities in history" (CoG 22). In this he highlights that while mere interruption only disrupts, "conversion creates new life" (CoG 22). In simple terms, the coming of the kingdom of God must not be viewed as a spoiler, but a recreative renewal.

In Moltmann's view the newness of the future kingdom of God is expressed in the phrase *'novum adventus'* meaning the new that is coming (CoG 25). Moltmann makes a distinction between *futurum* and *adventus*. The *adventus* is a Greek rendering of *parousia* which means "coming persons, or the happening of events, and literally means presence" (CoG 25). While *futurum*

---

[47] From Iwand, Moltmann learnt that the "coming Christ is himself present in his promise, and through the awakened hope wins power over our lives." (EiT 88). This meant that the "reality of Christianity is determined in the light of what will come, not in the light of what has been" (EiT 88).

[48] Otto Weber's doctrine of the Lord's Supper created an anticipation of the kingdom by teaching that the "presence of the Christ in the feast is 'the presence of the Coming One'" (EiT 90). It was the encounter with Ernst Bloch's concept of the world moving towards its true being that enhanced Moltmann's dynamic view of the kingdom of God.

means that which will be in future, Moltmann finds it insufficient to capture the radical newness of the coming new kingdom of God (CoG 25). He understands *futurum* capturing a 'what will be' that "develops out of the past and present and is therefore devoid of anything new (CoG 25). Moltmann's rejection of *futurum* flows out of his rejection of the categorisation of God's future by the traditional Greek rendition of *logos* in eschato-*logy* which means "a reality which is there, now and always" (TH 16, 17). Thus, the future represented by *futurum* is not a new future, but an extension of the present into the future. According to Moltmann, "If the future is understood in the sense of *futurum*, it means what *will be* out of past and present" (GiC 133). Moltmann's contention about *futurum* representing Christian hope is that the future in *futurum* is the past *becoming* the future: "In this sense, the future offers nothing but future past" (GiC 133). This manner of thinking about the kingdom of God in Moltmann directly flows out of his doctrine of the God of hope, who has future as his being. For Moltmann, the future of Christian hope is not one that *becomes*, but one that is *coming*. Moltmann points out that to the declaration made in Revelation 1:4, "Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come", can be added "and from him who *will be*" (CoG 23). However, this cannot be the case, as the "future tense of the verb 'to be' is replaced by the future of the verb 'to come'" (GiC 133). Moltmann uses the choice of the verb 'to come' to support his view that the future of God is that of his coming towards the world. Hence, he says, "God's being is in his coming, not in his *be*coming" (GiC 133, italics original). It does not become out of what is already in existence, but comes in newness. Hence, Moltmann prefers *adventus*, (in Greek the *paraousia* and in German *Zukunft)*, because it conveys the category of the new, the *novum* (GiC 133). The *parousia* or the *adventus* is absolutely new and in its absolute newness it renders the old obsolete and effects recreation.

The promised future of God in *novum adventus* is "the establishment of his [God's] eternal kingdom, and his indwelling in the creation *renewed* for that indwelling" (CoG 23). Here, as already highlighted in several instances above, Moltmann's thought is dominated by 1 Corinthians 15:28's anticipation of the future in which God will "be all in all". That is, the anticipated *novum adventus* is that of God's indwelling of his creation and its subsequent recreation into a glorious new state of being. The expectation of the kingdom is thus a new recreated state of being. That is, in waiting for the kingdom of God we are waiting for a new creation not *creatio ex vetere* – creation out of the old, but *creatio ex nihilo* – creation out of nothing (CoG 27). That is, the future is not a mere extension of the past or a regular occurrence that just disturbs the present or brings history to a close. This choice of the category of *parousia*

or *adventus* significantly distinguishes Moltmann's future from Bloch's utopia that was only based on the ontology of the not-yet-being (CoG 194). Moltmann declares:

> For the element of otherness that encounters us in the hope of the Old and New Testament – the thing we cannot already think out and picture for ourselves on the basis of the given world and of the experiences we already have of that world –is one that confronts us with a promise of something new and with the hope of a future given by God (TH 16).

3.4. The Kingdom's Challenge to the Context of Poverty in Moltmann

In Moltmann's eschatological vision, the kingdom of God is predominantly met in contexts of human brokenness, hence the dominance of contradiction in his eschatological vision. The question that emerges out of the link of the promise and the kingdom in Moltmann concerns the meaning of the kingdom of God to the poor and powerless who wallow in poverty in present life. That is, how does the future recreative power of the kingdom of God relate to the present situation of the poor? Although Moltmann believes that the kingdom of God is in the future and only present in the form of 'coming,' he nonetheless does not see the kingdom as something that just lies in the future, unconcerned with the present, waiting for its time of manifestation. To Moltmann, the kingdom is active in the present by its promissory power, transforming the present in accordance to its glorious future. This section examines how the kingdom of God in Moltmann challenges present situations of poverty.

3.4.1. The Lordship of God as a Symbol of Life

In Moltmann, the kingdom of God promotes life. God's kingdom that is in the future operates in the present through the Holy Spirit and the gospel. It is life-giving, life-enhancing and life-protecting as it stands against all forms of oppression and the marginalisation of the poor and powerless. The kingdom's alignment towards the glorious future of God where his shalom and Sabbath rule will reign perfectly, without any opposition, "assures the poor of God's life-giving, newly creating activity" (WJC 99). This Moltmannian idea in its basic form is a trinitarian expression of the historicity of the God of hope expressed in the Spirit's power in the resurrection of Christ. That is, the lordship of God is the reign of the life-giving Spirit of God that raised Christ from the dead by defeating the power of death so that the future of God's people is a future of abundant life. Reflecting on Romans 8:11,[49] Moltmann says "The believer is given not the eternal Spirit of heaven, but the eschatological 'earnest of the Spirit' – of the Spirit, moreover,

---

[49] Romans 8:11: "And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you".

who *has* raised Christ from the dead *will* quicken our mortal bodies" (TH 162). The historicity of the God of hope is therefore an expression of the death-destroying reign of the Holy Spirit. The essence of the kingdom of God centres on the reign of Christ that prevails beyond death. As a symbol of life, the kingdom of God in Moltmann expresses God's commitment to address the political and socioeconomic structures that exploit and marginalise the poor. Bentley (2005:332) analyses that Moltmann seeks to dispel the idea that "'real life' will only be experienced after we have been liberated from this physical venue through means of death". The kingdom of God stands as the horizon of the assurance that life will prevail over death. As we saw in reference to the kingdom of God (3.3), Moltmann complains that Christ's coming is so overly associated with judgement and punishment in a manner that defrauds it of its life-restoring power. Moltmann explains, "Originally, hope for the Last Judgement was a hope cherished by the victims of world history, a hope that the divine justice would triumph over their oppressors and murderers" (CoG 235). However, Moltmann notes that, from the Constantinian era, eschatological judgement became "orientated solely towards the perpetrators – was interpreted as a divine criminal tribunal where evil-doers were tried, and was understood as the prototype of imperial judicial power" (CoG 235). Moltmann complains that, throughout church history, the Last Judgement has been used to whip tempted men and women into line instead of enabling the poor to engage life meaningfully. Moltmann notes, "The expectation of judgement was a threatening and intimidating message, not joyful and liberating one" (CoG 235).

Moltmann has a universalistic view of salvation that rejects the Christian idea of a Last Judgement that will impose a sentence of eternal death on sinners (CoG 250). For Moltmann, Christ descended into hell to destroy the power of hell so that in the final eschaton, God will restore all things (CoG 253-254). For Moltmann, what needs to be emphasised is that the judgement in the coming kingdom of God is blessedness and recreation. The coming kingdom of God is not a horizon of punishment and death but a horizon of restoration to life. For Moltmann, the last thing in the eschatological plan of the righteous God is not damnation but the "new creation of all things" (CoG 237). He adds,

> Just as the first thing was not sin but primal blessing given to creation, so judgment would then not be the last thing either. What would come last would be the final blessing of the new creation in which righteousness and justice dwells (CoG 237).

Moltmann continues to free the coming kingdom of God from being tied to harsh judgement by affirming that justification carries "*pro-missio* – the promise and sending-ahead of the kingdom of God and his righteousness and justice" (EiT 109). Therefore, the "eschatological horizon of

the present event of justification is not the 'Last Judgement' in itself, as Melanchthon thought. It is the new creation of all things which that judgement inaugurates" (EiT 109). Therefore, the logical anticipation in the kingdom of God is the restoration of life and the destruction of the forces that threaten life. By expecting the kingdom, God's people are expecting the fulfilment of the promise that restores abundant and loved life. "The event of justification, understood as new creation and new birth, is the actual hermeneutical category of Christ's resurrection" (EiT 108). Moltmann's theology of hope brings the eschatological future to bear on the immediate temporal future of society by renouncing a purely individual or other-worldly eschatology and insisting that the resurrection of Christ projects a universal eschatological horizon for this world (Bauckham 1987a:3).

3.4.2. The Future Restoration of Life that Challenges Present Resignation to Death

From a Moltmannian perspective, the promise of the future restoration of life challenges the present resignation to death. What Moltmann finds, however, is that the church has resigned itself to the power of the socioeconomic and political structures that bring death. Moltmann mourns, "Today, life itself is in mortal danger" (1998:54–55). He states: "Today human life itself is in acute danger. It is not in danger because it is threatened with death – that was always so. It is in acute danger because it is no longer loved" (EoH 45).[50] We have already noted Moltmann's anthropodicy (in 2.2.2.2), that the twentieth century is marked by the irony of being the most developed century and at the same time producing two deadly world wars (Moltmann 2004:12–16). However, for Moltmann it is not just the life-hating merchants of terror that put human life in acute danger, but also the merchants of economic progress who greedily monopolise and gobble all the earth's resources causing the extinction of species resulting in serious ecological crises that endanger human life (EoH 49-53). The tragedy is that humanity is well aware of the disastrous consequences of its greedy gobbling of the earth's resources, "but it is as if we were paralysed, changing neither our economic growth ideology nor our private and public way of life" (EoH 49). Rather, than change the destructive ways, humanity, according to Moltmann, has resigned to the forces of death. As he puts it, "Today life itself is in acute danger because in one way or the other it is no longer loved but is delivered over to the forces of destruction" (EoH 53).

---

[50] Moltmann is not confining his analysis of the culture of death to the church as he highlights the growing modern problem of the religious ideology of terrorism. He refers to the "religion of death" proclaimed by the Taliban leader Mullar Omar who announced, "Your young people love life; our young people love death" on March 11, 2004 following the Madrid bomb explosions on commuter trains (EoH 45). As Moltmann highlights, the problem with the emerging ideology of terror is that it decimates both the victims and the perpetrators (EoH 45). Thus, the entire scope of human life is acute danger.

For Moltmann, given such a world of pain and war, rather than surrender to the power of death concomitant with the belief that 'God is dead', the church must be an agent of peace and life. He highlights that the biblical tradition of the 'kingdom of God' is shalom, which means that humankind "is supposed to live, since God is a God of life. As we know, there are no other reasons for the survival of humankind" (Moltmann 1998:55).

For Moltmann, "*Where Jesus is, there is life. There is abundant life, vigorous life, loved life and eternal life*" (OC 19, italics added). The implications of Moltmann's statement, in the light of the lordship of the resurrected Christ, is that to expect the kingdom of God is to expect not just life, but abundant life. Those in a context of death expect the kingdom of God that brings judgement on the oppressors and restoration on the oppressed. Christ makes the promise of the kingdom to the ill, the powerless and the poor. Thus, the theme of the restoration of life in the kingdom of God challenges present resignation to death. Moltmann (1978) says:

> There is *life-before-death*. I find it deeply disturbing and unsettling whenever I think about how we have become accustomed to death: to the death of the soul, to death on the street, to death through violence – *to death-before-life* (OC 19, italics added).

The point he seeks to make is that unjust suffering, and even a form of premature death, has become so prevalent that the church has accepted it as normal so that death and hopelessness now freely reign. In the above quoted statement, Moltmann highlights the formidable challenge that the kingdom of God that restores life must address in a church accustomed to the context of poverty. Moltmann's contrast of 'life-before-death' and 'death-before-life' highlights the sad anomalies that riddle life on earth, especially for the poor and powerless whose access to life is impeded by death that already looms large over them through poverty, crime and bad governance. For these poor and powerless people embedded in a context of poverty, the possibility of *mere* life is unthinkable right from conception. Recalling the words of a friend who commented: "The worst thing is that one gradually becomes used to it (death)", Moltmann says, "Evil or suffering is not so bad in itself, but it is bad when we become 'used to it', when we accept it, we withdraw and become indifferent to it" (OC 19). In such a context, the kingdom that restores life challenges apathy. It reminds God's people that death belongs to the afterlife and not the before-life. That is, the church must refuse to be used to death-before-life by making sure that all the socioeconomic and political forces that bring death in the present life are dealt with so that the new generations are born in a context filled with abundant life and not the sting of death. This is the significance of Moltmann's rejection of both a stagnant *logos* of timeless eternity that has nothing new to offer in the future and an end of time that merely brings a violent

closure to human history. Instead, the future engages the present world in order to transform it in accordance the coming future. Moltmann holds that "what we do know in Christian faith is that the coming of God's kingdom and his new creation has already begun with the coming of Christ 'into this world' (as the Gospel of John says), and with the outpouring of the Spirit 'upon all flesh'" (2000c:129). Indeed while the kingdom of God reaches its perfection in the full coming of Christ, it also begins in this world. It "begins in this world with the poor; the justice of God comes justifying those who are suffering from injustice" (Moltmann, in McIlroy 2009;57). This means: "Signs of the kingdom's presence can therefore be expected in this life" (McIlroy 2009:57). In this manner, it is "the liberating rule of God over all things and in all things in the new creation" (McIlroy 2009:48).

This means that hoping and longing for the kingdom of God does not translate into escapism but it empowers the confronting of the strongholds of terror since Christ's resurrection calls for the "empowerment for new life" (EiT 109). The anticipation of God's life challenges all resignation to the power of death because in Jesus there is a longing for life that extends beyond "the yearning of the soul for a life free of pain in heaven, but for the kingdom of God in this world" (OC 25, also 128). Christ's commitment to life is affirmed by the fact that:

> [His] life is inspired not just by the wish for a life *after* death, but by the will for life *before* death, yes, even *against* death. Where the sick are healed, lepers are accepted, and sins are not punished but forgiven, there *life* is present. Freed life, redeemed life, divine life is there, in this world, in our times, in the midst of us….Where Jesus is, there is life (OC 24).

That Jesus did not just busy himself with the poor to prepare their souls for the future but also attended to their material needs is a clue that the kingdom of God is interested in the restoration of life in this world. Thus Moltmann rejects the Marxist notion of religion as the opiate of the masses by asserting that "[r]esurrection hope is not a sterile, impotent hope for a future beyond, but a hope which is 'revolutionising and transforming the present'" (Chester 2006:226). That is the Christian hope for the glorious future is relevant to the quest for life in this present earthly existence (Bauckham 1995:8-9).

3.4.3. The Inclusion of Creation in God's Future

Moltmann's idea of the kingdom is an integrated one that challenges the idea that physical life is less important than spiritual life. Moltmann is concerned that in Christian theology the content of Christian expectation is expressed in gnostic notions emphasising the salvation of the soul in a heaven beyond death. For Moltmann, God's eternal salvation is also concerned with the wellbeing of the physical body. Moltmann highlights that the future of God includes the future

of his material creation, albeit in recreated incorruptible form. This means that materiality cannot be neglected, as if God will discard it as something of no significance. Moltmann points out that,

> "The future of God which is symbolised by the term of 'kingdom of God' includes the future of the world: the future of the nations, the future of humanity, the future of all living things and the future of the earth, on which and from which everything that is here lives" (GSS 251-252).

That God's future includes the future of his creation suggests that God's relationship to his creation is more than what is sometimes thought in traditional Christian theology. The traditional Christian belief is that God is independent and does not need creation. Indeed, while God may not need creation for him to remain God, it perhaps needs to be reconsidered whether God does not need his creation at all. As Moltmann expresses it, "One may dispute whether Israel first recognised the God of its hope and of the people's exodus, and only afterwards perceived God as the Creator of heaven and earth" (EiT 109). A careful analysis of the Bible reveals that the God of history is acknowledged as God the Creator and that the one cannot exist without the other (EiT 109). This point is pertinent to the question of the reign of God and the aspect of existence and life in the world: the God who reigns is the God who sustains his creation. Whereas in *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology,* Moltmann asked "What do we really and truly hope for?" (CoG xvi), he later asked the same question in a different manner: *"What is the ultimate goal? Is it the world in God, or God in the world?"* (Moltmann 1999a:35). For Moltmann the God's future includes the future of his creation when God will be all in all.

3.5. A Critical Evaluation of the Notion of the Kingdom of God in Moltmann

This section is a critical evaluation of the notion of the kingdom of God in Moltmann in the light of its interest in promoting abundant life.

3.5.1. The Relational Kingdom of God

Moltmann's vision of the kingdom of God is relational; this relationality emanates from its trinitarian nature. In Moltmann, the God of the kingdom is the triune God, the relational God of the Trinity. Since God is relational, his kingdom is relational. Moltmann says, "the kingdom of glory must be understood as the consummation of the Father's creation, as the universal establishment of the Son's liberation, and as the fulfilment of the Spirit's indwelling" (TKG 212). Its relational nature is demonstrated by its embrace of the excluded and the poor: "The gospel does not merely *bring* the kingdom of God *to* the poor; it also *discovers* the kingdom of the poor, which is God's kingdom" (WJC 100). He adds that the gospel "does not merely call to conversion and faith" (WJC 100). In addition, it also "shows that the poor are God's fellow citizens, like the

children to whom the kingdom of God already 'belongs' (Mk 10:14; Matt 19:14) (WJC 100). This requires that we not only preach the gospel to the poor, but also belong in communal fellowship with them. The relational nature of the kingdom of God in Moltmann is demonstrated in his reading of Matthew 25, whereupon he concludes, on the basis of Christ's statement that what is done to the least of the suffering is done to him, that where the poor are, is where the church ought to be. For Moltmann, "To 'glorify God means to love God for his own sake, and to enjoy God as he is in himself" (CoG 323). It means that as those who belong to the kingdom of God we are required to be as relational as God is. The essential nature of Christian relationality is relating to the poor and the marginalised in a manner that liberates and empowers them.

3.5.2. The Affirmation of Material Life in the Kingdom

A positive element in Moltmann's vision of the kingdom of God is that we experience God's lordship and kingdom in our human earthly bodies. Thus material reality in this present life is the sphere in which God's reign is experienced. Moltmann's eschatological hope emphasises that the God of the coming kingdom is the creator, owner and the one who sustains the present universe. The creation that awaits recreation is at the same time God's creation that is dependent upon him for its sustenance. This means that the kingdom of God functions in the present context providentially. In Moltmann's understanding, Christ "exercises his lordship already by sustaining and ruling the world. If all things were created 'through him', their existence is sustained by him. They are for him, and they are waiting for him" (WJC 287). Hence Bentley (2003:1) says, "It is Moltmann's view that we do not need to think about the Kingdom in transcendental terms, but that God is actively involved in human history, creating in His creation a dwelling place that we would refer to as God's Kingdom". In concert with this observation, McIlroy (2009:52) notes that "Moltmann takes injustice seriously". By taking injustice seriously Moltmann affirms the commitment of God's kingdom to the liberation of the oppressed (GSS 253). Therefore relating to material reality is essential to humanity's submission to God. Submission to God's reign is expressed in how God's creation is used.

To say the reign of God is experienced in the material world is to affirm the universal nature of God's rule over his creation. This is his divine, kingly, sovereign authority. However, this raises very difficult questions such as: Do humanity's failings to be good stewards reflect badly on God? A related question is: To what extent do human beings constitute God's instrument of his lordship over his creation? Another related question that emerges is: Does emphasising spiritual issues over material things amount to disobedience to God's command that human beings should be good stewards of his creation? By his grace God has given humankind the power to rule over

his creation (Gen 1:26-28). These difficult questions can be answered by pointing out that for Moltmann, creation is God's gift to the human race to be sustained by it and to in turn manage it as good stewards. God has given his creation to human beings for their sustenance and identity. God's earth is home to God's people. Therefore, the kingdom of God demonstrate his commitment and love for his creation by functioning as an advocate for life in present existence before the final eschaton, and by being an instrument of justice and peace that calls for equitable access to God's natural resources by all God's people.

3.5.3. The Problem of Underplaying God's Future Justice for the Poor

Moltmann does well to redeem the kingdom of God from the crippling terror it has become associated with, and hence stir within the poor and powerless a longing for the coming of the kingdom of God because it will bring life and not death. However, his denial of the punishment and condemnation of the wicked in addition to lacking biblical support, underplays God's future justice for the poor who wallow in poverty in the present because of the evil oppressors. Moltmann argues,

> Does God, as their creator, go with all his created being into life, death and resurrection – or does God as judge stand over against those he has created, detached and uninvolved, to pardon or condemn? How can the God who loves what he has created condemn not just what is evil, destructive and godless in created beings but these beings themselves? (CoG 236).

If the evil oppressors who wantonly exploit the poor and powerless and expropriate even their basic rights to life will not be punished, what does this say about God's justice to the poor? Here the problem is not necessarily how the evil merchants of oppression will be punished or about the nature of the reality of hell. Rather, the issue is about God's justice to those who have been kept away from the resources God has given for their abundant life. Moltmann's denial of future punishment for the evil contradicts the justice he seeks to promote on behalf of the poor by suggesting that the perpetrators will be recreated then let to go with impunity.

Moltmann has not considered that a central tenet in God's command to the offended to not seek revenge is that God will avenge all wrongs by punishing the unrepentant offenders (Rom 12:17-21). It can also be pointed out that an important purpose in Christ's call for the people to be ready for his coming is to avoid the terror of his punishment upon evil men and women (Matt 24:36ff). Against Moltmann's argument that God does not meet his justice by punishing the offenders but by transforming them, Matthew 25 closes (verse 46) by pointing out that "eternal punishment" is the final destination of the evil and wicked people. Moltmann's use of Matthew 25 misses the

overarching warning to be careful to avoid being thrown "outside into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt 25:30).

However, despite these problematic points concerning the final judgement, there is validity in the point he makes that the Lordship of God is a symbol of life that judges against the socioeconomic and political powers that threaten the human flourishing of the poor. There is also merit in Moltmann's attempts to create a positive longing for the coming of the kingdom instead of an overly one-sided fiery notion of the kingdom of God that ends up undermining the new and glorious life that it will bring.

3.5.4. The Problem of Definitions of Poverty that Re-victimise the Poor

Moltmann's eschatological vision is deeply concerned with poverty. However, as already highlighted (3.2.3.), Moltmann defines poverty too broadly for a specific, effective programme of responding to poverty. While in recent times his definition of poverty has tended to become more socioeconomically oriented, his definition limits poverty to structural issues that ultimately leaves the problem of poverty in the hands of the oppressive rulers. Both Moltmann's assertions that the kingdom of God already belongs to the poor (Moltmann, 1979:25–25) and that Christ is present with the poor (CPS 97, 129) are articulated in a manner that leaves the poor inactive participants in addressing their poverty. The difficult question that confronts Moltmann's structuralisation of poverty is: is it the case that poverty and human suffering can only be addressed by the transformation of socioeconomic and political structures? This highlights the need for the church's view of poverty to look beyond structural issues into the socioeconomic capacity of the poor themselves. Moltmann places emphasis on the exclusive conversion of the rich in addressing poverty strongly links the reality of poverty with the selfish and exploitive tendencies of the rich in a way that absolves the poor from any responsibility other than calling for the repentance of the rich. The question that emerges is: 'what then is the role of the poor in the solution of their own poverty?'

Furthermore, what does it mean that the poor already possess the kingdom? Is it true, as Moltmann seems to suggests, that the poor already possess the kingdom of God simply because of their poverty? To complicate matters, Moltmann has not accounted for the fact that the blessed poverty in the Beatitudes is a form of poverty that must be aspired by all seekers of God's

69

kingdom.[51] Moltmann is thus susceptible to wrongly idealising material poverty and also idealising the poor in a manner that perpetuates their victimhood instead of empowering them out of their poverty. The Latin American Liberation theologian, Gustavo Gutiérrez (1998:117) warns against dealing with poverty and the poor in a manner that turns justice and the poor into some form of idols. According to Gutiérrez the poor are idolised when they are "idealize[d] …considering them always good, generous, profoundly religious, thinking that everything that comes from the poor is true and in a certain manner sacred" (1998:117). As Gutiérrez (1998:117) further points out, the poor must be dealt with in cognisance of "human complexity and ambiguity," because the "idealization of the poor …is not conducive to their liberation". The idealization of the poor in Moltmann is seen in the failure to place demands and conditions on the poor, which reflects a soteriological problem in Moltmann's eschatological vision. As Chester (2006:65) points out, Moltmann "is susceptible to the criticism that he has failed to work out an adequate soteriology". Just as spiritual salvation does not end in a changed spiritual state that places no demand on practical discipleship, human development and responsible human creativity must accompany the dismantlement of oppressive socioeconomic structures. Moltmann's exclusion of the poor and oppressed from conversion keeps them from taking personal responsibility for their poverty, as it consistently blames poverty on oppressive structures (Beck 2010:118; Rasmusson 1995:75-76). Indeed, while structural issues play a critical role (see Part II), to simply end here is not enough. There is need to define poverty as an integrated socioeconomic reality that includes structural, spiritual and human issues.

3.5.5. The Problem of Undermining Christ's Historical Victory over Satan

A principal operational point in Moltmann's notion of the kingdom of God is that of contradiction or the dialectic principle by which the future glory challenges Christians to reject present suffering. Embedded in Moltmann's view that the kingdom of God is "already *present*, but present only as the *coming* kingdom" (WJC 97) is the idea that the future kingdom operates in the present as a ferment to transform the world in the light of glory of the coming kingdom (Hoekema 1979:315; Purves 2004:144). While there is indeed some justification that the coming glorious state should stir Christians to reject the present context of suffering, Moltmann tends to rely on this dialectic principle in a manner that undermines Christ's historical victory over Satan,

---

[51] Jesus's contrast of the attitudes of the Pharisee and the tax-collector in Luke 18:9-14 sheds lights onto why the 'poor' are blessed, as the tax-collector is justified for the consciousness of his sinfulness and his plea for God's forgiveness.

as highlighted in such texts as Luke 13:16 and Acts 10:38.[52] Moltmann's hope driven concern for a better present world tends to overlook that Christians must seek to make this world better not just because of the coming glorious future, but also because Satan the murderer and deceiver (Jn 8:44) who steals, kills and destroys (Jn 10:11) already stands defeated through the cross.

Embedded in this problem is an overly one-sided interest in the history of salvation, namely, the reliance on the dialectic of the cross that only uses the future to challenge the present. Moltmann's emphasis on the coming kingdom does not pay adequate attention to the question: *theologically, what is fundamentally wrong with the present world that is addressed by the kingdom of God?* Moltmann bases the recreation on the *Novum Adventus* without sufficiently recognising the Fall of humanity as a fundamental problem in present earthly history (Rom 5:12); 1 Cor 15:22). Inseparably linked to the problem of the Fall is the consequent destructive reign of Satan in the world described in the Bible as "the prince of the power of the air' (Eph 2:2), 'the god of this world' who blinds humanity (2 Cor 4:4), and instigator of the rebellion of humanity against God (Gen 3:4; Matt 25:41, Rev 12:9). In its basic form, Moltmann's vision of the kingdom of God does not seem to recognise the Fall and the consequent captivity of the world by Satan as fundamental concerns in Christ's establishing of the kingdom of God. He indeed acknowledges the reality of sin as amply demonstrated in his affirmation that the cross is the solution to humanity's sin and misery (CG 327ff). However, he generally denies the fact that present humanity is fundamentally in a fallen state as evidenced in his concurring with Schleiermacher in rejecting the causal connection of sin against God and the physical death of the human being, taught by Paul in Romans 6:23 as "death is the wages of sin" (WJC 169, TKG 49-50). Moltmann dismisses the Genesis account of the Fall of humankind (Gen 3) as a myth[53] and views sin as beginning with Cain's fratricide (Gen 4) (SoL 125-126; WJC 169-170).[54] He

---

[52] Schwöbel (2000:237–241) observes that twentieth century eschatological perspectives, including Moltmann's, are fraught with five fallacies. These are the isolation of eschatology from other doctrines; a preoccupation with one dimension of human life; misplaced concentrations between continuity and discontinuity in Christian hope; the premature temporalisation of the eschaton that bases the actuality of the eschaton on categories of human consciousness of time; and the moralisation of eschatology which confuses what can only be done by God and that which can and should be done by human beings.

[53] However, "Christian theology stands or fall with a historical Adam and a historical fall …[otherwise]…there is no longer any historical basis for Christ's work as the Last Adam, undoing he curse and fulling the terms of the covenant of creation" (Horton 2011:424–425).

[54] Moltmann says: "The eating of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3) belongs to the world of myth, which offers a metaphysical interpretation of the physical history of the world. The myth about paradise and the Fall never played as fundamental a role in Judaism as it did in Christianity. Judaism neve deduced from it any doctrine of original sin. So it is important for Christians not merely to look at the mythical story, but to see the real history of injustice and violence as sin too, so as to find from God's Spirit the energy to act justly, and the strength for peace" (SoL 126).

rejects the doctrine of original sin (SoL 127) and asserts that "sin is not something evil about the human being who has been created good; it is an evil and godless power to which human beings have come to be subjected through their own fault" (GiC 232).[55] For Moltmann the fundamental objective of the death of Christ is not the restoration of the pre-Fall condition but dealing with the "tragedy in creation" (WJC 170). For Moltmann sin "is the perversion of the human being's relationship to God, *not its loss*" (GiC 232, italics added). In this, Moltmann limits sin to ethical conduct and not a state of being in rebellion against God.

However, when the significance of Christ's decisive victory over Satan for both the experience of the kingdom of God in history and for certainty about the future, it will be realised that, "[p]resent experience is not entirely contradictory to what is hoped for" (Doyle 1999:288). At the centre of the kingdom of God is Christ's decisive victory over Satan and the power of sin. Not only did Christ say the kingdom is "near" (Mk 1:15), he also announced that it has "come upon you" (Matt 12:28) and affirmed that the strong man is bound (Matt 12:29). Thus, what we hope for does not necessarily contradict the present. Christ's messianic works demonstrate "that before the eschatological conquest of God's Kingdom over evil and the destruction of Satan, the Kingdom of God has invaded the realm of Satan to deal him a preliminary but decisive defeat" (Ladd 1974:151). While mortality is still a universal burden of this age, eternal life through salvation is already being experienced. Thus, the life-changing Christian hope for the kingdom of God is not only fermented by the coming kingdom, but also the fact that Satan was decisively defeated at the cross. Although Satan continues to reign in present history, he does so as a defeated enemy. Christ has been enthroned at the right had of Father as not just Lord and Saviour (Acts 2:36), but also as the mediator and higher priest (Heb 2:17) in service of those already in the kingdom of God. Furthermore, on account of the decisive defeat of Satan, the Christian is already raised up and seated with Christ in the heavenly realms (Eph 2:6), with a life that is already hidden in Christ (Col 3:3), and already possesses the "first fruits of the Spirit" (Rom 8:23). Thus, while the believer is waiting for the full manifestation of the king, by the Holy Spirit, God already actively dwells in believers (Rom 8:9). The power that raised Christ from the dead is already reigning in Christians (Rom 8:11). Asks Hoekema (1979:316), "Is it true that we can only await God but cannot have him in us?" The liberative nature of the kingdom of God only makes sense in the tragedy of the fall in which Satan established his kingdom on earth. Thus, the future of the kingdom must be emphasised in the light of his already victorious reign over Satan's

---

[55] Moltmann's lack of interest in the doctrine of original sin must be understood in the light of his conviction that the future will be an absolutely new creation, not a restoration of the spoilt original creation (CoG 261,264).

kingdom, for in Christ's messianic works, Christ destroys the stronghold of Satan (Horton 2011:544)

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the significance of the kingdom of God in Moltmann's eschatological vision. In Moltmann, the object of Christian hope is the kingdom of God. God's promised hope will be fulfilled by the coming of the kingdom. For Moltmann, the kingdom is to be anticipated with great expectation because it will bring about the glorious recreation of the earth. In the kingdom of God there is restoration of life. The kingdom of God that restores abundant life is, in Moltmann, best captured in this statement: "Jesus' life is inspired not just by the wish for a life *after* death, but by the will for life *before* death, yes, even *against* death. Where the sick are healed, lepers area accepted, and sins are not punished but forgiven, there *life* is present. Freed life, redeemed life, divine life is there, in this world, in our times, in the midst of us" (OC 24, italics original). The kingdom of God that restores abundant life challenges against apathy about life in the present. The implications of waiting for the kingdom of life is that the church of hope ought to be an agent of life in a context of death. However, although Moltmann's notion of the kingdom of God is life-promoting and life-enhancing, it is poorly defined.

Problematic is Moltmann's belief that the kingdom lies in the future and is only present as coming. This raises the question: Is Moltmann's placing of the kingdom of God in the future and not in the present an appropriate understanding of the time of the fulfilment of the kingdom? It was highlighted above that Moltmann's futuristic view of the kingdom of God contradicts many theological interpretations. For Moltmann, the future kingdom is experienced in the present in the form of coming. This futuristic understanding of the kingdom fails to account for biblical texts and theological doctrinal interpretations that affirm that the kingdom of God is already present but will be fully enacted in the final eschaton. However, despite of these difficulties, Moltmann's theology of the kingdom of God spurs the church to reject oppressive and exploitative socioeconomic and political structures.

Chapter 4: The Communality of the Church of Hope for the Poor in Moltmann

4.1. Introduction

Thus far, this study has examined the trinitarian God from a historical perspective that expresses his solidarity with the poor and the life-giving and life-restoring power of the kingdom of God. The historicity of the God of hope for the poor forms the basis for the church of hope for the poor in Moltmann, while the kingdom of God provides the operational framework for the church. The aim of this chapter is to investigate how Moltmann conceptualises the notion of the church of hope for the poor. The chapter will investigate the ontology of Moltmann's church of hope for the poor. What is the nature of the church of hope? And how is it the church of the poor? As this chapter will highlight, in Moltmann, the church of hope flows out of his eschatological scope, which is inextricably embedded in his notion of the historicity of the triune God. For Moltmann, the church is simultaneously an eschatological and a trinitarian reality (therefore also christological and pneumatological in its nature). In seeking to uncover the communality of the church of hope for the poor in Moltmann, the chapter opens (4.2) by highlighting the link between Moltmann's radical hope and his radical ecclesiology. This is followed (4.3) by a description of the nature of the church of hope for the poor in Moltmann. Section 4.4 describes the liturgical nature of the church in Moltmann, while section 4.5 examines the socioeconomic scope of the church of hope for the poor. The chapter closes (4.6) with a critical evaluation of Moltmann's communality of the church of hope for the poor. It will be discovered at the end of the chapter that for Moltmann, communality is an important resource for promoting and protecting the human flourishing of the poor.

4.2. A Radical Hope for a Radical Church

Moltmann has a radical notion of the church that emerges out of his radicalised concepts of the trinitarian God (Chapter 2) and the kingdom of God (Chapter 3). Just as his concept of Christian hope runs counter to the traditional understanding of eschatology, he naturally arrives at an understanding of the church that runs counter to the traditional understanding of the church. Moltmann states that his quest is "to point away from the pastoral church, that looks after the people, to the people's own communal church among the people" (CPS *xvi*). This radical statement seeks to turn the traditional, hierarchically-oriented state churches into a congregational orientation (Beck 2010:94). Rather than a hierarchically-oriented ecclesiology with a congregation dependent entirely on the priesthood of the clergy, Moltmann propounds a

congregational church oriented around the priesthood of all believers. Moltmann calls for the church to transform from a pastoral church that perceives its task as just looking after the people who are born into the church through infant baptism, to a church that seeks after voluntary members that it empowers to be active members of the congregations.

So persuaded is Moltmann by the necessity of this congregational reformation of the church that he categorically states:

> I do not believe that there is any other way in which the church can proclaim the gospel responsibly, theologically speaking, or can celebrate the Lord's Supper, baptize with the sign of the new beginning, and live in the friendship of Jesus. There is no other way for the church to exercise its office, its charge and its ministry, *in the congregation, with the congregation and through the congregation* (CPS *xvi*, italics added).

In this passage, Moltmann effectively denounces hierarchically-oriented ecclesiology. In fact, by this statement, he shows his admiration for the free churches and calls for the established church to reform along similar lines. For Moltmann, a theologically authentic proclamation of the gospel, observance of the Lord's Supper, baptism of the new birth and fellowship with Jesus can only occur in a congregational church that affirms the priesthood of all believers as opposed to the emphasis on just the priesthood of the priests. In his interpretation of Moltmann's thought, Rasmusson (1995:78) says, "If the church is the messianic people of the coming kingdom then it must bear witness already through its way of life. The church's organization, its structures and life speak before proclamation and sacraments do".

Removing all doubt about his congregational persuasion, Moltmann (1979:21) asserts, "My thesis is a simple one: *The local congregation is the future of the church*". Moltmann bemoans that Luther allowed Melanchthon's idea of a state church to kill his (Luther's) congregational idea that spurred his spirit of the Reformation. Moltmann traces the loss of the communality of the church to the embracing of the hierarchical system of Constantine's era. He finds that the Reformation, instead of shucking this hierarchical Constantinian framework, entrenched the co-option of the church by the state and undermined the communal nature of the church (OC 117; HTG 174-175; Volf 1986:9). Hence, the church became identified with the ordained clergy instead of the believing community, in which the ministry of the church lay exclusively in the hands of the ordained members when it should actually be in the hands of the members of the church.

However, Moltmann finds that Luther's initial idea of the community of believers did not really die, but saw its life through the Anabaptists and the maligned 'enthusiasts' (*Schwärmer*). In an interview with Miroslav Volf (1986:10), Moltmann asserted that the "future of the Reformation

… lies in this left wing, in the visible, voluntary assembly of believers". He emphasises the radical discipleship of the Mennonites and the other Anabaptists that rejected "the union between throne and altar" (interview with Volf 1986:10). Furthermore, the state churches have become too large and he finds this hinders the participation of Christians in the ministry of the church that ultimately turns the churches into "church districts for the spiritual care of the people. Thus they are not voluntary fellowships" (interview with Volf 1986:7). Moltmann is not afraid to call for a radical transformation in the church so that it provides "a chance to build up the fellowship church and to realize the principle of the congregation, the community" (CPS xvi). Moltmann calls the Protestant church to transform from "'a church of the people' to a 'community church'" (HTG 175) so that the vitality of the church does not just depend on the few people in leadership, but on the active congregation. At the centre of the church as the grassroots communities is the "recovery of the ministries of the local congregation" (Moltmann 1979a:37). This radical transformation, in Moltmann's understanding, will restore to the church the biblical expectation of the church marked by fellowship and service, that is, *koinonia* and *diakonia* (Moltmann 1979:21). This leads to his conception of the church as grassroots Christian communities, a repudiation of ecclesiastical hierarchies in the state churches. Moltmann is not afraid to go against the doctrinal tide, as he boldly agitates for the revision of the doctrine of the church. In his estimation, "The conflict between contemporary ecclesiastical Christianity and its worn biblical sources can be resolved only if we are willing to exercise criticism of certain historical decisions and we necessarily free ourselves from them" (Moltmann 1979a:38).

As already pointed out (1.3), some theologians are not satisfied with Moltmann's ecclesiology, finding it to be either seriously undeveloped or underdeveloped (Müller-Fahrenholz 2000:100; Smit 2006:74–75). Smit (2006:74–77) finds that Moltmann is hindered by his own radical ideas from arriving at a clearly spelt-out doctrine of the church. In recognition of the link between a radical view of God and a radical understanding of the church in Moltmann, Smit says:

> For him (Moltmann), the revolutionary view of God unfolding in the history of the triune God calls for a form of human community that is also revolutionary, new, and constantly renewed; and for this new form of community, solidarity, fellowship, and life-in-community, the traditional expression church is not the best term to use since what is normally and traditionally understood under church may precisely be part of the structures of patriarchal monotheism that must be overcome (2006:75).

Smit is here acknowledging that Moltmann's radical eschatology arrives at a different language of speaking about the church. However, as the next section (4.3) will attempt to show, even what Smit regards as less technical and vague references to the church in Moltmann fit well in his (Moltmann's) concept of eschatology and his trinitarian framework. Therefore, Moltmann's

doctrine of the church must be considered in the light of his radical concept of eschatological hope.

4.3. The Church of Hope for the Poor

A significantly radical point in Moltmann's ecclesiology is the notion of the church as an eschatological community that is open to embrace the poor to the extent that the church ought to be regarded as the church for the poor. Moltmann argues that it is necessary to understand "*what* the church is… [and]… *where* it is" (CPS 121). This section investigates theological bases for Moltmann's radicalised ecclesiology of hope.

4.3.1. The Trinitarian Basis of the Openness of the Church to the Poor

The basis of Moltmann's vision of the church of hope that is open to the poor directly emerges from his view of the historicity of the trinitarian God. For Moltmann, the Trinitarian relations are the epitome of the communality that should obtain in the church. Firstly, for Moltmann, the church is the project of the triune God. Moltmann describes his doctrine of the church as "*relational ecclesiology*" (CPS 20).

Moltmann defines the church in a variety of ways that affirm its communal nature, but takes into cognisance the different persons of the Trinity. From the perspective of God the Father, Moltmann says, "The church is the people of God and will give an account of itself at all times to the God who has called it into being" (CPS 1). From the perspective of the Holy Spirit, the church is "the fellowship of believers who follow the one Lord and have been laid hold of by the one Spirit" (CPS 106). From a christological perspective, "Christ is his church's foundation, its power and its hope" (CPS 5). Therefore, "we must see the all-comprehending reference in the church's relationship to the trinitarian history of God's dealings with the world" (CPS 19). The Exodus image can be discerned in this statement. Moltmann's ecclesiological thought is at the same time eschatological. It is the community that has responded to God's promise of the future, the very community that is traversing the space in-between the giving of the promise and its fulfilment. The church is a community of hope because it is established by its embracing and obeying the call of the God of hope. An eschatological community is the community that has embraced God's promise and is awaiting the fulfilment of God's promise "as the messianic people destined for the coming kingdom" (CPS 289). This perspective is overarched by the image of the exodus in that the church is the community of God's people established by God's promises and moving towards their fulfilment in the coming kingdom of God.

In espousing the messianic or relational nature of the church, Moltmann attempts to place the church within the triune God's historical interaction with the world. This relational ecclesiology is affirmed in the statement: "Because of its foundation in Christ and its existence for the future of the kingdom of God, the church is what it truly is and what it can do, in the *presence and power of the Holy Spirit*" (CPS *xiv*). In this statement is highlighted the role of the divine persons of the Trinity in the origins, sustenance and the end of the church. The church is founded by God on Christ as its foundation and is empowered and sustained by the Holy Spirit. The significance of Christ to the existence of the church in Moltmann's thought is affirmed in the statement: *"Without Christ, no church"* (CPS 66, italics added). Therefore, for Moltmann, the "first word is not 'church' but Christ. The church's final word is not 'church' but the glory of the Father and the Son in the Spirit of liberty" (CPS 19).[56] In Moltmann, a christological ecclesiological statement such as this one is essentially trinitarian; the Christ of the foundation of the church is the crucified God, resurrected by the power of the Holy Spirit. By the above statement, Moltmann means that, "[t]here is only a church if and as long as Jesus of Nazareth is believed and acknowledged as the Christ of God" (CPS 66). At the same time, it is the Spirit who "renews the church in fellowship with Christ. The Spirit fills the church with the powers of the new creation, its liberty and its peace" (CPS *xiv*). For Moltmann, the church expresses the history of the Holy Spirit (CPS 28-37). He explains that the practical idea of *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* "was directly connected with the theological idea of a trinitarian pneumatology" (HTG 175). The connection with the Holy Spirit was in view of the fact that "without a new experience of the Spirit in the communities it is impossible to arrive at a renewal of the church" (HTG 175).

Although Moltmann feels that his relational ecclesiology lacks a ready-made definition of the church, he nonetheless thinks it "leads to an understanding of the living nature of the church" (CPS 20). At the same time, according to the subtitle of the book, Moltmann's ecclesiology is "messianic". 'Messianic' expresses the therapeutic nature of the church's relationality in that it is a relationality targeting the poor, the oppressed, the sick and marginalised to save them, serve them and empower them to live life in abundance.

The rendition of the church as 'messianic' expresses the christological, eschatological and missiological perspectives of the church by identifying the foundation, the destiny of the church and the purpose of the church. For Moltmann, the church is christological in that it is founded

---

[56] So insistent is Moltmann on the dependence of the doctrine of the church on the doctrine of Christ (CPS 66) that he says, "[e]very statement about the church will be a statement about Christ" (CPS 6).

upon Christ's death and resurrection. It is eschatological in that it is an expression of Christ's kingdom in the present world and at the same time anticipates the full manifestation of the coming kingdom of God. It is missiological in that it is God's instrument of reaching out to the dying and hopeless world. The missiological nature of the church has a pneumatological aspect being carried out by the power the Holy Spirit. Bauckham (1995:124) appropriately describes Moltmann's messianic ecclesiology as "a function of messianic pneumatology as well as of eschatological Christology".

In fact, one may safely say that Moltmann's doctrine of the church is an expression of his doctrine of the trinity, since it is foundational and central to Moltmann's eschatological view of the church. Furthermore he conceptualises the church in the midst of the trinitarian God's interaction with human history, thus resulting in a relational church. The church is a product of the history of the triune God. For Moltmann, the church, in order to attain an appropriate understanding of itself, must understand itself in the context of God's dealing with the world. Consistent with his rejection of hierarchy in the trinity and his argument for the perichoretic community of the divine persons, Moltmann affirms the communal essence of the church of hope. Tripole appropriately points out that, "The major contribution of Moltmann's ecclesiology may well be in its fundamental repositioning of the Church within God's Trinitarian salvific relationship toward mankind and the world" (Tripole 1981:645).

4.3.2. The Open Church

In addition to the trinitarian and historical nature of the God of hope, the communality of the church of hope is based on the inclusive nature of the church, which demands it to be 'open'. Moltmann draws this from the fact that at its very beginning the church in the book of Acts made a decision to be open to all the nations and tribes of the world. He points out: "The term *ekklèsia* was used for the first time in Antioch to describe the 'congregation of Jews and Gentiles'" (Moltmann 1979a:38). For Moltmann the first use of *ekklèsia* to describe the church in its inclusiveness affirmed that the "Gentiles did not have to become Jews in order to be Christians, nor did Jews have to become Gentiles" (Moltmann 1979a:38). For Moltmann it is significant that the first use of the word *ekklèsia* to describe Christians was in fact a description of a *tertium quid* that emerged when Jews and Gentiles left their respective religious communities and the distinctive and divisive identities to voluntarily embrace Christianity and form a new inclusive community of voluntary fellowship. Moltmann emphasises that Paul's description of the *tertium quid* was one not divided by religion, race, class, nation or gender but "all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). Thus the historical form of early Christianity was that of "a community open to the

world, one that offered an independent communal existence in contrast to the traditional lines of division and enmity" (Moltmann 1979a:39).

The church of hope is inclusive in accepting the excluded into its fellowship. In this way it is a life-giving agent of God. Moltmann's *Open Church: Invitation to a Messianic Lifestyle* (1978)[57] pleads for the church to be an inclusive and embracing community. Interestingly, when the book was first published it bore the title, *The Passion for Life: A Messianic Lifestyle,* a title that pleaded for the church to be passionate about life and desist from being "accustomed to death" (OC 19).[58] The two different titles interplay on each other and provide a useful perspective for understanding Moltmann's radical notion of the communality of the church. Therefore, the church of hope is passionate about life and stretches its arms wide to receive those to whom exclusion has served its bitter blows of death. At the same time, the church of hope is an agent of life, it responds to the socioeconomic and political structures that impoverish the poor and powerless.

The notion of the open church results in the reinterpretation of the theme of the exodus. Accepting the traditional understanding of exodus as *exiting* Egypt to go into the Promised Land of Canaan, Moltmann reinterprets exodus and suggests an aspect of openness to the world (CPS 83f.). Whereas the *exodus as exiting* carries the idea of the liberation of the people of God, in *exodus as openness* is the idea of reaching out to the oppressed and marginalised people of God. In other words, the church must be a kind of Promised Land that the poor and powerless must enter as they exit from their Egyptian oppression and exploitation. As Kim (2004:330) points out, the church

> … enters the world in order to accomplish its mission. The term 'exodus Church' is used here for the analytical purpose of describing one dimension of the Church's mission, i.e. its mission towards the world. In fact, it is hard to distinguish the two dimensions of the Church's mission: within the Church for Christians and outside the Church for the world, for both Christians and non-Christians live in the same world. Often the Church's mission has either explicit or implicit effects on the world. The Church is an exodus Church in the sense that it is fulfilling its mission of liberation. It is being liberated and is liberating the world.

Moltmann makes a case out of Paul's plea to the Romans for them to "accept one another as Christ accepted us" (Rom 15:7) to charge the churches to promote interpersonal communities.

---

[57] The book is a simplified as well as abridged version of *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology.* Despite its simplified form the book still maintains a high degree of profundity. In view of its simplicity, Moltmann says: "What cannot be said simply does not need to be written at all. Simplicity is the highest challenge to Christian theology. Theology stands under the demand to speak simply because, as Christian theology, it stands or falls with the church" (CO 9).

[58]Interestingly, the title *The Passion for Life* is the title of the book's first chapter.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul pleads to the Jews to accept the Gentiles by showing them that Jesus' acceptance of the Jews was God's demonstration of his compassion to the Gentiles because "the new hope that is overflowing in us is no Jewish privilege but grace for all, without presuppositions and conditions" (OC 27-28).

At the same time, however, discrimination and marginalisation are rampant even among Christians. Many in the church are condemned to languish in loneliness and marginalisation. Moltmann describes this lack of human relationships among church members as hurting the most, and decries the fact that many people in the church "experience it daily as 'church without community'" (OC 113). Accordingly, he relates the story of a disgruntled Christian man who narrated how he and his wife experienced isolation in their church by saying, "[We] *entered the church as isolated individuals, and we left it in the same way*" (OC 113, emphasis added). Moltmann mourns that weekly worship services "remain devoid of genuine human contact… [and]…genuine mutuality" (OC 29). Extremely regrettable is that church members "do not even consider it very valuable to create community with each other" (OC 29). This perpetuates loneliness and alienation among Christians. For Moltmann, "The future of the church is only described through the medium of a church of hope for other people and with other people" (CPS *xiv*). This criticism of the church is directly related to his criticism of hierarchicalism in the church that leaves church members unable to serve each other since they are entirely dependent on the pastoral care of the church.

4.3.3. The Open Church and the Poor

In the above sections (4.3.1. and 4.3.2), we have identified Moltmann's notion of the open church and attempted to show how it caters for the poor and the marginalised. However, to Moltmann it is also important to go beyond understanding what the church is and understand where the church is located. In an earlier section, Moltmann's declaration that without Christ there is no church was noted (4.3.1.). Moltmann takes this position further to declare that the church must be present wherever Christ promised to be present. Derived from Ignatius of Antioch (Smyrn. 8:2) Moltmann asserts: "[T]he true church is to be found where Christ is present" (CPS 122). The question that immediately pops up is: *where is Christ present?* Moltmann responds by saying: "Christ, as the crucified and risen one, is only there where he promised to be present – but there he truly is present" (CPS 122). According to Moltmann, the scriptures show Christ promising to be present in at least three places. Firstly, based on texts such as John 20:21-23, Matthew 28:18-20, 1 Corinthians 11:23-34, Christ promised to be with the Christian believers (CPS 121-125). Secondly, based on Matthew 25, Moltmann says Christ promised to be with the

81

poor, "the least of these brothers" (Matt 25:40, 45) (CPS 125-130). Thirdly, Moltmann says, Christ is present in his future, the Parousia (CPS 130-132). It is the second element of Christ's presence, that of being present with the poor, which makes Moltmann's ecclesiology very controversial by suggesting that Christ is present outside the believing community.

As Tripole (1981:646) points out, Moltmann's emphasis that Christ is present with the poor outside the believing community is the most problematic proposal. Drawing exclusively from the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matt 25:31-46), Moltmann conceptualises a community that protects the poor by affirming that Christ, the coming judge, is already *now*, present in communal solidarity with the poor and marginalised, which demands that the church be open to the poor (CPS 126). Therefore, he insists that a church that is true in its identity of being 'the church of Jesus Christ,' that has truly submitted to his Lordship, must recognise where Christ is present, and establish its presence there together with Christ (CPS 122). The church that truly belongs to Christ must understand that: *"ubi Christus*, *ibi ecclesia"* (CPS 129). Concentrating on the poor, Moltmann asserts that, since Christ is present among the poor, then the church should be with Christ among the poor and the marginalised *"wherever and whoever they are"* (CPS 126, italics added). The gist of *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* is that the church as a Holy Spirit initiated and empowered human network to the poor must provide fellowship *(koinonia)*, service *(diakonia)* and the outreaching mission of God *(missio dei)* (CPS 1, 11, 10, 17, 311ff.; 1979:21).

By his use of Matthew 25, Moltmann calls the church to be a political church that acts in solidarity with the excluded. His use of these texts underscores his conviction that eschatological hope "means the power of life, and life is lived in open relationships, the kingdom of God ought not to be described in abstract terms" (CPS *xiv*). In fact, both the kingdom of God and the historicity of God "must be seen concretely, in all the living relationships in which Christianity is involved" (CPS *xiv*). Hence, in his reflection on what prompted the writing of *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, Moltmann says, "It was important to me to develop the self-understanding of the church of Christ in constant connection with the 'people of Jesus', i.e. in connection with the poor and humiliated, the sick and the handicapped" (HTG 175). Thus the hope for the coming Lord is demonstrated in the communal nature of the church of hope that prompts it to be concerned even about socio-economic and political human brokenness in this present life.

4.3.4. Communality as a Resource of Humanising the Poor

The church's communality, demonstrated by its openness to the poor, highlights that communality is for Moltmann a resource of humanising the poor. The church is a community that is life-promoting and offers life-creating human relationships. It is a community that brings freedom and liberation:

> If the church were to ignore its social and political *Sitz im Leben* – its situation in the life of mankind – then it would be forsaking the cross of its Lord and would be turning into the illusionary church, occupied merely with itself (CPS 342).

Moltmann makes this statement in relation to the marks of the church highlighting that they are not just intended to project the nature of the *orthodox* church. Rather, the marks of the church are also the qualities of *orthopraxis*. Moltmann's ecclesiology is undergirded by his conviction of 'God's option for the poor'. Moltmann adds to the above quoted passage:

> We cannot therefore merely give the marks of the church bearings that tend in an inward direction, understanding them in the light of word and sacrament; we must to the same degree give them an outward direction and see them in reference to the world (CPS 342).

For Moltmann, the marks of the church should not just end with the ontological nature of the church but also its utilitarian nature, which calls it towards its mission to the world full of pain and suffering, the world of the poor and marginalised where Christ is already present. Therefore, it can be said that the communality of the church in Moltmann functions as a bulwark against the exploitation and dehumanisation of the poor. In an interview, Moltmann affirmed the significance of communality as a resource of protecting and empowering the poor in these words:

> The alternative to poverty is not property. The alternative to poverty and property is community. So if you want to fight against poverty you must build up communities, voluntary communities where there is mutual help between the people and also a welfare state (Moltmann, Interview 21 August 2012).

Here Moltmann affirms the life-giving power of communality, in which he highlights the serious mistake of a solution to poverty that preoccupies itself with property instead of strong communities with mutuality and sharing. Moltmann is not saying material issues are not important, but he emphasises that they should be pursued with a communal perspective.

To emphasise the life-giving, life-enhancing and life-protecting power of the communality of the church, Moltmann interprets messianically and relationally the four traditional marks of the church: oneness, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity (CPS337-361). Moltmann says the four characteristics of the church derive from the trinitarian history of God. In order to empower the mission of the church in the contemporary world filled with oppression and marginalisation of

the poor, he adds additional qualifications: "*unity* in freedom", "catholicity and *participation*", "holiness in *poverty*" and "the apostolate in *suffering*". A critical motivation for Moltmann's adding of these extra qualifications on the traditional marks of the church is to affirm the importance of the visibility, the presence, and the reality of the church (Smit 2006:91). In the added qualifications, Moltmann highlights that the church's unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity must not be abstract concepts that merely end with 'the visible church', 'the church of the future', or 'the church of pure demands' (CPS 340). Rather, the marks of the church as statements of faith depict Christ's action in, with and through the church. As statements of hope, they point to the coming kingdom of God. As statements of action, they call the church's unity, holiness and catholicity and apostolicity to be visible in the context of human dehumanisation. Declares Moltmann:

> The one holy, catholic and apostolic church is the church of Jesus Christ. Fellowship with Christ is its secret. The church of Jesus Christ is the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. Unity in freedom, holiness in poverty, catholicity in partisan support for the weak, and apostolate in suffering are the marks by which it is known in the world (CPS 361).

This passage highlights that Moltmann's eschatological ecclesiological vision is the promotion of life for the marginalised poor and powerless who have been denied life by the evil powers which subject them to exploitative and oppressive socioeconomic and political systems.

In the previous section (3.4.2), reference was made to Moltmann's avowed conclusion that: "Where Jesus is, there is life. There is abundant life, vigorous life, loved life and eternal life" (OC 19). This statement which resonates with Jesus' declaration: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (Jn 10:10) is an essential key towards understanding Moltmann's vision of the communality of the church in addressing the dehumanisation of the poor. With this understanding, Moltmann calls for the communality of the church, arguing that the "New Testament concept of diakonia is too important to be limited to those in the ordained ministry" (Moltmann 1979:21) which leads to his "practical thrust towards reforming the life and structure of the church" (Bauckham 1995:119). In order to extricate the poor from their dehumanising misery, the church "cannot be apolitical" (CPS 15). It will be a community that rejects "the civil religion which sanctions the present structures of bourgeois, [because] eschatological hope creates an exodus church committed to liberating and even revolutionary praxis in society" (Bauckham 1995:121). It is community that promotes and protects abundant life for the poor and marginalised.

Moltmann's communal ecclesiology can function as a theological ethical resource of humanising the poor by its commitment to establishing human relationships that bring a foretaste of God's future into the present. It is liberating, life-promoting and life-enhancing eschatological ecclesiology by its call to replace the present moment of oppression and exploitation with the future of God, full of liberation and justice and abundant life. His insistence on the church as grassroots communities emphasises that addressing poverty is the work of the entire church and not just the clergy; therefore, church members must be empowered to take responsibility for serving and saving the poor (CPS 344, 345).

4.4 The Liturgical Nature of the Communality of the Church of Hope

In Moltmann, the sacraments of the church prompt and thread into the communality of the church of hope for the poor. Because the communality of the church thrives on the sacraments of the church, in Moltmann, communality has liturgical value in the church of hope. In Moltmann's view the communality of the church, particularly when understood from his interpretation of Matthew 25, is liturgical in the sense that what is done, and not done, to the poor and the marginalised is ultimately done to Christ. In Moltmann, to grant fellowship and service to the poor is a form of "critical openness to the world" (Bauckham 1995:121) that effectively translates into the fellowship of the triune God with the poor and marginalised. Therefore, communality in Moltmann has doxological value. In Moltmann's messianic ecclesiology the church's act of humanising the poor is a doxological act and therefore is part and parcel of being the church of Christ as shown in Moltmann's exposition of the four marks of the church. In Moltmann's understanding, Matthew 25 is an ecclesiological text denoting the essence of where the church ought to be and what it ought to be doing:

> …the question is not how people or happenings outside the church respond to the church, but how the church responds to the presence of Christ in those who are 'outside', hungry, thirsty, sick, naked and imprisoned. It is not a question of the integration of Christians outside the church into Christianity in its ecclesiastical form; it is a matter of the church's integration in Christ's promised presence: *ubi Christus*, *ibi ecclesia* (CPS 129).

In other words, in failing to act in solidarity with poor, the church denies not only its very essence but also the lordship of Christ over it. In essence, "The church which finds its identity in identification with the crucified Christ can be involved in the world only by identification with those with whom Christ on the cross identified" (Bauckham 1998:121).

The doxological nature of the church's acts of humanising the poor is reflected in Moltmann's understanding of the sacraments and worship. Moltmann says that "in the doctrine of the

sacraments, of worship and of the ministries I attempted always to begin from the form of the church as community and to reformulate doctrine in the light of that" (HTG 175). Firstly, in Moltmann, the sacraments, in addition to being christological, are also historical, pneumatological and eschatological in their promotion of communality (CPS 198-288). In *The Church in the Power of the Spirit,* Moltmann's exposition of the sacraments of proclamation, baptism, the Lord's Supper, worship, prayer, acts of blessing and Christian living is headed, "The Church in the Presence of the Holy Spirit". This is because above everything else, these are mediations and powers of the Holy Spirit given to the church to "become comprehensible to itself as the messianic fellowship in the world and for the world" (CPS 198). In other words, it is by the sacraments that the visibility of the church in the world is made. Furthermore, the sacraments of the church constantly remind the church of its responsibility to those in the world.

Moltmann disagrees with the practice of infant baptism, saying that it takes away the element of voluntariness in placing membership in the church (Moltmann 1979a:47). His view is that infant baptism takes away the person's free will to church membership since the decision to be baptised is made by the parents and is the basis of the state churches of Europe and the development of Christendom as civil religion. For Moltmann, this violates the essence of the term *ekklèsia*, which originally referred to the political assembly of the free citizens of a city, and took into account the voluntariness of membership into the church (Moltmann 1979a:39). The emergence of the Constantinian era, while it protected the church from persecution, [59] yet undermined the voluntariness of church membership by turning the "fellowship of Christ … [into]… the religion of society" (Moltmann 1979a:39). Furthermore, the turning of the church into a public order bequeathed to the church a hierarchical system that destroyed the priesthood of all believers and confined the ministry of the church into the hands of a few people (Moltmann 1979a:39). For Moltmann, community in the church can only occur when infant baptism "is replaced by baptism as a free response to the call of discipleship" (Moltmann 1979a:47). This, however, does not mean that Moltmann prefers 'believer's baptism'. Rather, he prefers "baptism into Christian calling (*Berufungstaufe*)" (Moltmann 1979a:51).

Furthermore, the Lord's Supper is an important practise that enhances and safeguards the communality of the congregation. The communality of the church is also affirmed by the

---

[59] At the same time, Moltmann is not blind to the positives that resulted from the turning of the church into a public order by the Constantinian era: "As Constantine turned a persecuted faith into a 'permitted religion' and his successors made it the 'official religion,' the whole Roman empire was opened up to the mission and expansion of Christianity" (Moltmann 1979a:41-42).

eucharist, which "is in its very essence a fellowship meal" (Moltmann 1979:52). At the centre of the Lord's Supper is "the experience of fellowship with Christ and fellowship with one another" (Moltmann 1979:53). The Lord's Supper significantly points to the communality of the church in that at the Supper the "church becomes a genuine fellowship through eating and drinking together, and the fellowship meal demands that the church be a genuine community" (Moltmann 1979:55). He adds, "the future of the church lies with the renewal of the local church. The renewal of the local church waits upon the renewal of the forms and practices by which we express our common life together" (Moltmann 1979:55). By this statement, Moltmann means that a transformed view of the sacraments and practices of the church will transform the nature of church's communal life.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit equip the members of the congregation to be active members and contribute to the life of the community. Discontented with the marginalisation of the participation of the members in state churches, Moltmann calls for large churches to break up into smaller churches "in order for the charismatic gifts to play a move vital role" (interview with Volf 1986:7). Thus the communality of the church of hope in Moltmann can be discerned in his emphatic rebuttal of the monopolisation of active service in the church of God by the clergy. With great concern he says,

> Our state churches know only the charisma of the preacher; he is hired specifically as the one with the charisma, the one who has the Spirit. The others should listen to what he says and believe what he preaches. I find this attitude to be extremely narrow. The New Testament pictures the body of Christ as composed of many members, but in our state churches the body of Christ consists of one big mouth and many little ears (interview with Volf 1986:7).

Consequently, as Meeks (1979:72) analyses, Moltmann's theology of the church attempts to transform "the overclericalized, pastoral church toward the church of the whole people of God". According to this ecclesiology, sanctification must lead to "a messianic life-style of fellowship" (Meeks 1979:72). In fact, his emphasis on 'grass-roots level' of church is out of his recognition of the Holy Spirit's giving of gifts of service to the laity. Moltmann calls for a movement away from the state church towards "the church as community of faith" (interview with Volf 1986:8). Moltmann believes this movement toward the church as community of faith results in the discovery of the charismatic gifts present in the churches (interview with Volf 1986:8).

It can thus be said that the life of the congregation is a creation of the Holy Spirit. Since the functionality of the church is by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, it means that the church is a charismatic community. As he points out, the spiritual gifts "which in the New Testament are

always identified as signs of the coming kingdom of God, are given to the whole people of God for ministry, for *diakonia*" (Moltmann 1979:21). Moltmann makes a case out of Paul's deliberate choice of '*diakonia'* over words such as 'office', 'vocation,' or 'function' to describe the spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12. In Moltmann's view, since Paul is not intending to establish a hierarchy of the ordained over the laity, he presents the various gifts *diakonially* – as varieties of services (1 Cor 12:5). This means that the nature of the communality of the church of hope is that of service to one another and to the world. Moltmann's insistence is that since deacons serve the whole church and not just the clergy, it means that the "New Testament concept of *diakonia* is too important to be limited to those in the ordained ministry" (Moltmann 1979:21). This means that the *diakonia* is "rooted in the community of Christ" (Moltmann 1979:32).

Furthermore, the aspect of service, according to Moltmann, resonates with the Pauline portrayal of Jesus as a servant (Phil 2) and Christ's own declaration of himself as one who came not to be served but to serve (Matt 20:25-28). According to Moltmann (1979:32) this means that it is necessary for the Christian community to first care for one another before being diaconal towards outsiders. He supports his conclusion that the charismatic community is by definition a serving community, and vice versa, with Rudolf Weth's statement: "It is toward its own members already a diaconal community or it is not community" (in Moltmann 1979:32). Says Moltmann, "In Christ, all the walls that encourage us to consider ourselves better than others are broken down" (Moltmann 1979:33). Consequently, for Moltmann, "the pastor should discover the charismatic gifts in the congregation, and then retreat into the background once these gifts come to life (Volf 1986:8).

As Meeks (1979:57) points out, to Moltmann all the ministries in the church are important because they affirm the complementary nature of the spiritual gifts. Moltmann's conviction that all the spiritual gifts are important and ought to complement each other in the church is demonstrated by the fact that he does not allow his eschatological worldview to motivate him to emphasise the prophetic role of preaching over other ministries of the church (Meeks 1979:57). For Moltmann, each aspect of ministry is "necessary to the others for the wholeness of the church and its calling in the world" (Meeks 1979:57-58).[60] Accordingly, in Moltmann's perspective, the charismatic gifts have a perichoretic end by creating the equality of believers and connecting them to each other. Moltmann's view of the necessity and equality of all the gifts in the church

---

[60] "Thus Moltmann offers a corrective to our habitual tendency, visible throughout the history of the church, to think of ministry in terms of the functions of the professional clergy rather than the ministries by the whole people of God" (Meeks 1979:58).

is informed by his doctrine of social trinity. Thus just as the divine persons in the trinity cherish their communality by loving each other and not competing against each other, the competitive attitude created by the false belief that some ministries are more important than others should be shunned. This means that the members of the charismatic community, when functioning as they ought to, complement each other instead of competing against each other. Thus, the Holy Spirit recreates and transforms the church from a community broken apart by hate and individual self-aggrandisement into a new community knit together by love and unity. Thus, the spiritual gifts function as the mediation and power of the Holy Spirit, leading the church beyond itself, out into the suffering of the world and into the future. It is precisely in its character as a fellowship in word and sacrament, and as a charismatic fellowship, that the church will understand itself as a messianic fellowship of service for the kingdom of God. For the mediations and powers of the Holy Spirit are open for the things they seek to mediate and bring about, and they open people for the future of the new creation through newly awakened faith and fresh hope (CPS 198).

In Moltmann, there is interplay between doxology and socioeconomic and political ethics. In a way, liturgy and the festival celebration of the Lord's Supper are a celebration of the historicity of God. The messianic interruption of our everyday life to help the poor communicates our identity in the history of God. As McDougall (2005:16) has pointed out, Moltmann "interprets trinitarian praxis at once in sociopolitical and doxological terms". The sacraments have both vertical and horizontal dimension; they point the participant to God and to the suffering world. Looked at from Moltmann's understanding of Matthew 25, the sacraments lead the participant to embrace the oppressed. This is because the "principle of [the church's] life cannot be the love of like for like, but openness to those who are different, the vulnerability of love which identifies with others, and solidarity especially with the victims of society, the most wretched and the most hopeless" (Bauckham 1995:121). Thus, according to McDougall (1998:16), Moltmann's trinitarian doctrine "offers the interpretative key to the various forms of human agency and social relations that constitute our everyday lives and collective existence" (1998:16). This is true of his doctrine of the sacraments. Indeed, at the same time Moltmann's doctrine of the sacraments "invites humankind not only toward action in the world but also toward contemplation and worship of the glory of God" (McDougall 1998:16). Thus just as in classical terminology, it can be said that the doctrine of sacraments in Moltmann "joins the Christian life of action, a *vita active*, with that of contemplation, a *vita contemplativa*" (McDougall 1998:16). As Moltmann has himself put it: "The church is about proximity to the kingdom of God, and about the experience and praxis of the justice and righteousness of that kingdom" (EiT 15). The

sacraments, for Moltmann, do not only point to what will be in the future, but also call the church to demonstrate that future of Jesus in the present.

4.5. The Socioeconomic Scope of the Church of Hope for the Poor

In this subdivision, attention is drawn to the socioeconomic and political scope of Moltmann's church of hope. Moltmann's church of hope has a scope that demands it be concerned about socio-economic and political issues that threaten human wellbeing in this life.

4.5.1. The Church with a Passion for Life

Moltmann's notion of the church of hope for the poor has a socioeconomic scope by being a church with a passion for loved-life. As already noted above, the centrality of Matthew 25:31-46 to his idea of the church of hope for the poor highlights that responding to poverty is a primary priority for the church (CPS 97, 129). In Moltmann, the church has a socioeconomic scope because it must act in practical solidary with the poor. Furthermore, far from being a secondary role for the church, for Moltmann the historicity of God and the messianic acts of Christ show that addressing poverty is primary role since neglecting the poor is ultimately a neglecting of Christ himself. From a Moltmannian perspective, the question that ought to preoccupy the church is not whether it can successfully overcome poverty and change the world. Rather, as long as the church exists between the promise and its fulfilment, it should be engaged in the struggles of the poor. Moltmann (1979:26) appeals to the Old Testament words for salvation *yasha* and *yeshuah*, and the New Testament the words *sozo* and *soteria* (to save, to heal, and to liberate) to assert that the church should be equally concerned about spiritual salvation and material salvation. Moltmann further declares:

> Salvation is actually healing, and healing is the concrete result of saving. Therefore an event (saving) and its results (salvation), an action (healing), and its effects (health), belong inseparably together. The Saviour brings salvation precisely through his healing action that takes disturbed and fragmented lives and makes them whole again. In his messianic mission, announcing the good news (i.e., diakonia) belong together as the one comprehensive work of the God who comes near to us in Christ in order to deal with the entirety of human suffering and death (1979:26).

This extended quote highlights Moltmann's firm belief that addressing poverty is a primary role of the church. He removes all doubt about his conviction on this matter by categorically stating: "[O]ne ought not to make the old metaphysical distinction between time and eternity, salvation and human welfare, work and deed, church and state, faith and reason, in such a way as to spiritualise salvation in a platonic manner by reducing it to the salvation of the soul alone" (Moltmann 1979:26). A crucial point in Moltmann's persuasion that addressing poverty is a

primary concern of the church is that it is based on his conviction that salvation ought to be holistic and not just spiritual. To affirm the holistic nature of biblical salvation, Moltmann highlights: "Salvation means to become whole; it means to unite that which is divided and split, disturbed and distorted, and make it 'right' again" (1979:26).[61] The gospel is the good news about God's full salvation of his people, including liberation from present human oppression and socio-political and economic marginalisation that defraud them of their dignified human existence. The comprehensive nature of the Gospel lies in its message about "the future of Christ, who has called the church to life: the kingdom of God" (CPS *xiv*). To Moltmann, where Jesus reigns, there is abundant life.

4.5.2. The Church's Passion for Life that Stirs Political Engagement

In Moltmannian perspective, a passion for life stirs political engagement. This perspective is motivated by the fact that Jesus' salvation mission did not just end with the confrontation of spiritual evil forces, but also what enslaved the poor socioeconomically and politically. Similarly, according to Moltmann, the church of Jesus Christ is "a missionary church [and therefore] cannot be apolitical" (CPS 15), highlighting that the church must side with the poor and oppressed.

An earlier section (3.4.2) highlighted Moltmann's concern that the kingdom of God is often used to subdue the poor to surrender under evil oppression. That section also noted Moltmann's concern that the world has become so accustomed to a culture of death-before-life. Form a Moltmannian perspective, the great concern is that the church, just like the world, has not just become accustomed to the vicious circle of poverty, crime, and imprisonment; much more, the church is afraid to confront these destructive forces to the point of indifference to the sufferings of the poor, the powerless and the marginalised (OC 20). In Moltmann's estimation, the poor and powerless succumb to agents of death such as starvation and crime "not because of *their* inability but because of *our* indifference" (OC 20, emphasis original). According to Moltmann, when the church becomes insensitive to the pain and hurt of the poor, the marginalised and the powerless it ultimately neglects its own life. Declares Moltmann, "We isolate ourselves, we insulate our lives, we imprison ourselves in our own 'good fortune'" (OC 20). And yet, this very insensitivity

---

[61] Describing the effect of God's promise on the church in Moltmann's thought, Meeks (1979:74) says, "Proclamation of the promise and the freedom of the gospel leads to the creation of the new humanity in communion with Jesus and to service in the world – or the good news has not yet happened".

and apathy allows the thriving and flourishing of evil forces that end up threatening even the very life of the church. Moltmann warns:

> Because when the passionate devotion to life is missing, the powers to resist are paralyzed. Therefore if we want to live life today, we must consciously will life. We must learn to love life with such a passion that we no longer become accustomed to the powers of destruction. We must overcome our own apathy and be seized by the passion for life (OC 22).

The world is in crisis and the church must take a leading role in the provision of the needed solace. Moltmann emphasises that the modern world is in crisis.

For Moltmann, unnerving as it may be, the threats to life usefully provide the church an opportunity to review itself and find its life-loving and life-promoting messianic bearings. Hope empowers the church with resources for prevailing over the insecurities it encounters in this world. In Moltmann's appraisal, if the church was to merely share in the world's insecurity, or even intensify its longing for the end of the world, it would become a hopeless and an escapist church (CPS *xiii*). The bearing that empowers the church to respond meaningfully to the crises that barrage it is one that takes into account Jesus' history, presence and future (CPS *xiv*). At the core of being a community of hope is a passion for life that involves being passionate about socioeconomic and political structures that promote death. The historical exodus was a journey out of the state of death to a state of life. For Moltmann, this means that the church must not just be concerned about its own life but also the very conditions that serve death to God's people. This requires that the church as a community of hope be passionate about life. The communal concern for life fits in with the notion of Christian ethics as discipleship ethics, as ethics for the community that follows Jesus "makes universal claims, is proclaimed for everyone, and is aimed at the salvation of all, but it cannot be separated from Christ, from the eschatological horizon, and from the community of the disciples" (Rasmusson 1995:70).

Therefore, in Moltmannian terms, eschatological hope is not escapist but an engagement of the world in order to transform it. Moltmann declares: "The resurrection hope of Christ encourages us to commit ourselves to a love for life everywhere and at all times, because it allows us to look for the universal victory of life beyond death" (EoH 60). To this he adds, "The love for life against death *here* is a wonderful resonance of the future of eternal life *there*" (EoH 60). In other words, the hope for eternal life must translate into a culture of loving life in the here and now life, protecting it from all destructive forces and doing everything to ensure that the poor are liberated and empowered to experience abundant life. As Moltmann asserts, "To believe means to cross in hope and anticipation the bounds that have been penetrated by the raising of the

crucified" (TH 20-21). Christ has crossed the bounds death into life. Therefore, "If we bear this in mind, then this faith can have nothing to do with *fleeing the world, with resignation and with escapism*" (TH 21, italics added). That is, eschatological hope forbids the church from succumbing to the imposing fearsome threats of life. Summoning the church of hope towards to a passion for life, Moltmann says:

> The gospel of life is God's yes to loved and loving life, to a personal life and to a life of fellowship, to human and natural life on God's beloved earth. At the same time, it is God's No to terror and death, to injustice and violence against life, to resignation, apathy and the death wish (EoH 60).

Thus eschatological hope as hope for abundant life challenges the church to confront the evil forces hindering abundant life in God's world. Moltmann adds that eschatological hope "makes the Christian Church a constant disturbance in human society …the source of continual new impulses towards the realisation of righteousness, freedom and humanity here in the light of the promised future that is to come" (TH 22). This means that the church that hopes for God's promised future must never rest content with the status quo but must take up within itself all "movement of historic change" (TH 34). Expressing the same charge differently, Moltmann says, a real interest to live life must stir the church to "fight against the forces of death in this very mist of life" (EoH 60). This means the church "must not surrender to lethargy of heart … [nor]…withdraw into private or churchly life" (EoH 60).[62]

4.5.3. Community as Security for the Poor

As understood and used by Moltmann, Christ's presence with the poor, reflected in his statement in Matthew 25:31-46, that what is done to "the least of the brethren" is done to him, is an element of security for the poor. Moltmann's understanding challenges the church to be concerned about the vulnerability of the poor and protect them. In the light of his understanding of Mathew's passage, central to communality is the protection of the poor against threats to dignified human living. As Meeks (1979:67) has pointed out in his interpretation of Moltmann's thought,

> The simple fact is that church is not here to serve itself. It is here to serve God's eschatological Word which is his ultimate redemption of all things. Thus every facet of church practice is meant to call the church and the world into full participation in the mission of God himself as he moves toward the ultimate defeat of sin, death, and evil.

---

[62] He reinforces his call for the church to desist being accustomed to death by starting forcefully: "If we take our bearings from the passion of God and the passion history of Christ we are led out of death-before-life and into life-before-death, and our world is preserved against collapse into apathy" (OC 26).

For Moltmann, the ultimate defeat of sin, death and evil comprises the breakdown of oppressive socioeconomic and political structures. Moltmann censures the Pentecostal movement for its lack of zeal towards confronting social and political problems despite its exuberant community of faith[63] He affirms the communality of the Latin American Pentecostals he came in contact with, although he urges them that they "should not only awaken the heart but also change the structures, if those structures are unjust, if they throw human beings into the mire of life" (interview with Volf 1986:8). Moltmann's recommendation is underpinned by the notion that "Christ is Lord not only of renewed hearts but of the whole world" (interview with Volf 1986:9).

According to Moltmann (1998:53), "[t]he separation of the church and state does not mean that religion must become a private matter and that church must become something restricted to private associations". Quite the contrary, religious freedom calls the church to do everything to reach out the world to save it. It calls the church to be a community that is open to the public for its communal nature has a securing power in contexts of brokenness. As Nürnberger (1990:8) has pointed out,

> Fellowship with God implies fellowship among people – at least among those people who are part of this fellowship. Fellowship means interaction. Interaction means reciprocal giving, One can only give what one has. Self-giving, redemptive love implies making an active contribution in a physical or material form. Those who cannot contribute feel that they do not belong.

Moltmann's emphasis on the church as grassroots community enlightens the church to the power of its communality in challenging socio-economic poverty both within itself and without. This calls the church to guard against evil forces that create competition in the church resulting in a loss of care for another thus undermining the protecting power of the church's communality. Therefore, the communality of the church positions it to confront the aspects that defraud the people of God of a dignified human existence.

This communality of the church of hope should not be "any sort of '*ecclesialization*' of the world… [nor a]…church that has 'something to say' about every single problem, and not the pope, either" (Moltmann 1998:56). In Moltmann's perspective, for the communality of the church of hope:

> At issue is rather an orientation of all the spheres of life toward the coming kingdom of God and toward an alteration of those spheres commensurate with that kingdom. Here, 'laypersons' have something to say as Christian specialists. All the spheres of life contain conditions that contradict the kingdom of God and his

---

[63] However, Moltmann says this is "only a recommendation…and not a judgment" (interview with Volf 1986:8).

righteousness, and conditions that correspond to it. It is these correspondences under the conditions of history that are at issue. A determined Christian minority representing universal concerns can attain this more effectively than can an immobile Christian majority" (Moltmann 1998:56)

4.6. Problems in Moltmann's Communality of the Church of Hope

Despite its potential to be a resource for humanising the poor, there are points of considerable difficulty in Moltmann's view of the church and the communality of believers.

4.6.1. The Problem of Vagueness in the Definition of the Church

A serious problem with Moltmann's conceptualisation of the church lies in its lack of specifics concerning the church. Underlying Moltmann's negligence of the authority and power in the church is that he has "not use[d] *church* in a technical sense, but rather vaguely" (Smit 2006:75). Rather than the *church* per se, Moltmann may actually be talking about Christian life in the congregation, hence his tendency to speak of the church in terms of congregation, community, life in community, and discipleship, among other things. According to Smit's (2006:75) analysis, the vague use of the word *church* in Moltmann arises from his radical view of God, which also creates radical, new and changing human communities. The traditional expression *church* is not the best rendering of Moltmann's conception of this new radical form of community, solidarity, fellowship and life-in-community "since what is normally and traditionally understood under church may precisely be part of the structures of patriarchal monotheism that must be overcome (Smit 2006:75). Furthermore, in Moltmann's ecclesiological vision, the radical forms of human communities created by the history of the triune God generally exist outside the traditional church and congregation, which leaves these communities less suited to being described by the term *church* (Smit 2006:75).

4.6.2. The Problem of Confusing Power and Domination

In previous sections, reference was made to the structural nature of Moltmann's view of poverty. A significant problem in Moltmann's communality as a framework for responding to poverty is the irreconcilable nature of his structural view of poverty and his conceptualisation of the communality of the church. If poverty is perpetuated by evil oppressive socioeconomic and political structures, it remains to be seen how effective a response to poverty will emerge from a priesthood of all believers that has no hierarchy to mobilise and consolidate its efforts against poverty. This thesis subscribes to Moltmann's aversion to authoritarianism and clericalism and his conviction that every believer is a responsible member of the messianic fellowship and therefore must be a committed disciple who is actively engaged in the messianic vocation of the

church (CPS 225; Bauckham 1995:139). This thesis, however, finds that Moltmann's opposition to authoritarianism and clericalism confuses power and authority with domination (Bauckham 1995:144). Indeed, Moltmann does make some brief positive references to the importance of leadership in the church (CPS 302-306; 309-310). However, he seems to overlook the fact that human society needs some kind of power and authority to function orderly and hence "misses the opportunity to explore the ways in which power and authority can be based on consent, exercised in love and directed to fostering, rather than suppressing, freedom and responsibility" (Bauckham 1995:145). Overall, Moltmann's negative attitude towards authority does not sufficiently consider other theological perspectives on authority as taught and practiced in the early church.

4.6.3. The Problem of Communality as Charity instead of Empowerment

Furthermore, to what extent does Moltmann's conceptualisation of the communality of the church provide a meaningful strategy for the eradication of poverty? Firstly, a major problem with Moltmann's conceptualisation of the church is that it is so heavily shaped by the problem of poverty to the point of excluding the rich, as if the church would not be needed if there was no poverty. For instance, Moltmann says: "The hope about which [the Bible] speaks is valid for the hopeless and not optimists. It is valid for the poor and not for the rich. It is valid for the downtrodden and the insulted…it is valid for the oppressed" (EH 46). This apparent exclusion of the rich from God's hope does not provide a constructive means of empowering the rich to in turn empower the poor. It shames the rich into doing charity instead of empowering them to use their riches to empower the poor. In a previous chapter it was pointed out that Moltmann's soteriology places no conditions upon the poor. The problem that emerges is that the nature of discipleship placed on the poor does not equip them with responsibility for overcoming their own poverty. Furthermore, Moltmann's view of poverty does not pay attention to the contradiction of the materially rich but spiritually poor and the materially poor but spiritually rich. His strategy for overcoming poverty leads to charity and not the empowerment of the poor to be economically independent.

4.7. Conclusion

The human-dignifying communality of the church of hope is, in Moltmann's view of eschatological hope, an essential basis for the concern for material wellbeing in this present life. Moltmann is opposed to the idea of a state church or a hierarchical church that takes away the activity of the congregation. Moltmann calls for the church to reform from below into 'grass-

roots' communities that, *inter alia*, are useful in enhancing the material wellbeing of God's people. In a context of poverty, what is needed is an ecclesiology that accounts for God's historicity, the kingdom and communality of the church. Drawing from his understanding of the historicity of the triune God and the kingdom of God, Moltmann argues that the true church of Jesus Christ is a church for the poor, which means that the church challenges the socioeconomic and political structures that marginalise and impoverish the powerless. Of great significance to Moltmann's eschatological vision of the church is that the hope for God's future eternal kingdom invigorates a passion for justice for the human dignity of the poor in this present world. This places pressure on the church to confront on behalf of the poor structures that hinder their material wellbeing.

For Moltmann, the kingdom of God is life-giving. Its work of giving life opposes all oppressive structures that stand in the way of the poor to experience life. In other words, the anticipation of God's promise to his people of a future kingdom where all human beings will experience the glory of God in equality with other human beings must motivate the church in the here-and-now to seek to transform the socio-political and economic structures that deny humans their wellbeing and dignity. In so doing, the church will be an agent of life in the midst of death. The significance of the community is a major tenet in Moltmann's eschatological thought that emphasises the equality of believers. Highlighting the significance of the communality of the church to overcoming poverty, Chirongoma (2006:184) says: "Most Christians rely on their congregations as a support system. If their congregations fail to assist them at their time of greatest need, they often have nowhere else to turn. If the church is a united institution, oneness in Christ should be exercised by sharing one another's burdens and by seeking to correct injustices that deny access to health care or food security for the poor".

PART II: The Church of Hope for the Poor and Poverty in Zimbabwe

This section uses the eschatological ecclesiological ethical paradigm gleaned from Jürgen Moltmann to analyse the church's engagement with the context of poverty in Zimbabwe. Part I studied Moltmann's eschatological conceptualisation of the church that is concerned with poverty, the powerless and the oppressed. This section asks the question: *In light of Moltmann's eschatological concept of 'the church for the poor,' how may we assess the church's engagement with the context of poverty in Zimbabwe?* The section is an ecclesiological ethical study attempting to discern how eschatological hope has shaped, directly and indirectly, the nature of engagement with poverty among churches in Zimbabwe. The methodology of this chapter combines historical analysis and an eschatological ecclesiological ethical interpretation of the predominant responses to poverty by the churches in Zimbabwe.

This study will focus on the church's engagement with poverty in Zimbabwe that started in 1859, the period when Christianity made a second entrance that has lasted to this day. The first arrival of Christianity in Zimbabwe was in mid-1500 and disappeared in mid-1600s (Verstraelen 1998:3). Furthermore, this study has opted not to concentrate on individual churches but on the broad spectrum of the recognised mainstream mainline churches that, as already noted from Hallencreutz (1998:458), were recognised by the colonial state as "valid partners" for development. For a considerable period of time in colonial Zimbabwe, the missionary churches were at the forefront in engaging the sociopolitical and economic reality in Zimbabwe. In the colonial period and in the early stages of independent Zimbabwe, the Christian engagement with poverty was dominated by mainline missionary churches, including the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist and Dutch Reformed Churches. However, as black majority rule entrenched its power in an independent Zimbabwe, Christian engagement with the context of poverty began to be dominated by the Pentecostal prosperity prophets. Therefore, this section is divided into two chapters; the first chapter (Chapter 5) will concentrate on the church's engagement with the context of poverty in Zimbabwe from the 1859 to 1979, a period dominated by the mainline missionary churches. The second chapter (Chapter 6) will concentrate on the church's engagement with the context of poverty Zimbabwe from 1980 till the present, a period dominated by the Pentecostal prosperity prophets.

Chapter 5: Eschatological Challenges in Church Responses to Poverty in Colonial Zimbabwe

5.1. Introduction

It is Moltmann's conviction that eschatological hope must lead to a church of hope that is alert and responsive to contexts of poverty. For Moltmann, eschatology "is forbidden to ramble, and must formulate its statements to hope, in contradiction to our present experiences of suffering, evil and death" (TH 18-19). In other words, the hope for abundant life in future heaven must invigorate the church to respond to experiences of suffering, evil and death in this present life. Within a context of poverty, eschatological hope must prompt the church to protect and promote the human dignity of the poor (WJC 101-2). As amply demonstrated in the preceding section, for Moltmann eschatological hope must enthuse the church to refuse to be accustomed to death-before-life and cause it to refuse to be cowered by the forces of death in this world. In the light of this compelling call by Moltmann, this chapter examines how the church in colonial Zimbabwe grappled with the problem of poverty. The period of concentration in this chapter is between 1859 and 1979, when colonial rule in Zimbabwe ended.

When the church re-entered Zimbabwe in 1859, after its disappearance two centuries earlier with the expulsion of the Roman Catholic missionaries from the Mutapa kingdom, it arrived proclaiming a message of eternal hope and progressive civilisation. Between 1890, when colonial rule was established, and 1979, when it ended, the missionary mainline church enjoyed recognition from the state as a development partner. Therefore, by focusing on the period between 1859 and 1979, this chapter will concentrate on the responses of the mainline churches to poverty. The chapter opens with the arrival of the missionaries in precolonial Zimbabwe (5.2.). This is followed by an examination of the responses of the church after the establishment of colonial rule in 1890 (5.3), a period in which the missionary church operated as a segregated church. The chapter closes (5.4) with an evaluation of the effect of theological education in enabling African church ministers to reject the eschatological model of the missionaries that acquiesced to colonial segregation.

5.2. The Arrival of the Church of Hope in Undeveloped Zimbabwe

The ecclesiological ethical challenge that confronted the early church in precolonial Zimbabwe was related to the lack of industrial and technological undevelopment which greatly affected both the quality of life and the occupational worldview of the Africans. This section focuses

on the arrival of the missionaries preaching a message of eternal hope in the Zimbabwean context that was extremely poor from a western European perspective.

5.2.1. The Emergence of the Missionaries with the Gospel of Eternal Hope

The missionaries who arrived in Zimbabwe before the arrival of the colonialists originally broke into the territory proclaiming a message of eternal hope. Moreover, throughout its existence up to the modern day, the church planted by the nineteenth-century missionaries has continued its proclamation of eternal hope. The pioneer London Missionary Society (LMS) missionary into the precolonial Zimbabwean terrain, Robert Moffat, is reported to have preached the gospel of future hope to King Mzilikazi pressing him that the moment after death permanently determines the eternal destiny of all people, but the king rejected the missionary's message (Weller & Linden 1984:15). Furthermore, Bishop George Knight-Bruce, the pioneer Anglican Bishop of Mashonaland, recorded in the journal of his missionary journey to Mashonaland that he preached to the chiefs and their subjects "about God and a future life", but the Shona people rejected his message (1892:59). The bishop records his great disappointment that the Shona dismissed his message about God and future life as ludicrous (Knight-Bruce 1892:59). At another time the bishop preached to a sick Shona chief about death and proclaimed to him that when Christians die God takes them to heaven (Knight-Bruce 1892:69). To the bishop's dismay, the chief rejected the message because he was afraid of going to heaven, never to return to the earth (Knight-Bruce 1892:69).

The significance of hope for future eternity was amply reflected by the commitment of the Jesuit father, Francis Richartz, in rendering final consolations to the Ndebele and Shona leaders who were condemned to death by the colonialists for their role in the great rebellion of 1896/7 (Zvobgo 1996:50–53). While leaders like Nehanda rejected the message and were executed without Christian conversion, others such as Kaguvi accepted the gospel and were baptised just before their executions by the colonialists. Furthermore, Sister Josephine Bullen of the Sisters of Notre Dame (SND), in her journal *Empandeni Interlude:1899-1903* (2008), concerning her stay in Empandeni Mission near Bulawayo, documents the commitment of priests in preparing the Africans for their heavenly afterlife, as catechisms were conducted to the local people who were taught about heaven. She highlights the amusement of the Africans upon hearing about the happiness in heaven (Bullen 2008:106). Sister Bullen highlights the desperate measures taken by the missionaries to ensure that Africans did not meet their death without baptism; there was joy over 'natives' who died baptised (2008:27, 30, 79) and grief over those who died without baptism (2008:29, 55). Bullen (2008:29) expresses extreme dismay over a man who

"kept Fr Hartmann by force outside a hut door, while a boy died un-baptised within", and triumphant joy over a dying woman who was baptised secretly because her husband had threatened to hang himself in front of her if she was ever baptised (2008:103). This highlights the commitment of the missionaries in proclaiming to the Africans the message of hope for the afterlife.

The hope for a heavenly future also played a significant role in the missionaries' lives, motivating them to leave their homelands to proclaim the message of hope for heaven in strange 'dark lands' where some of them suffered terrible deaths and were buried far away from home. Thomas Morgan Thomas (1873:371), a pioneer LMS missionary, narrates how the hope for heaven comforted him in 1862 when he lost his wife and daughter just days apart. Mrs Thomas is recorded as facing her death full of confidence and assurance that she was going to heaven (Thomas 1873:322). Although Thomas was saddened by losing his wife, he took comfort that she had entered a state of blissfulness and "bade an eternal farewell to a world so full of woe – [and] has been presented a crown among the saints, while I and my dear boys are still in the wilderness" (Thomas 1873:323). He comforted his grieving sons by assuring them their mother was in heaven to praise God and be happy. A point of interest in Thomas' account is his view of this world as so full of woe that it one must escape from it.

These are a few examples to substantiate that hope for a heavenly future dominated the ministry of the missionaries in Zimbabwe. The message of eternal hope has continued to dominate the mainline Christian church up to the modern time. The theme of future life is acknowledged in hymns that affirm a longing for the blessed future.

5.2.2. The Emerging Church of Hope for the Poor

There is a sense in which the church that emerged out of the missionaries' proclamation was also a church for the poor, as the missionaries proclaimed a gospel of the future hope that spurred socioeconomic development among their poor African hosts. The above section noted that Thomas lost his wife and child to fever due to limited medical care, which highlights that, with Africa's then undeveloped infrastructure and lack of modern technology, the missionaries suffered a "physical struggle for existence" (Gann 1965:44; Ransford 1968:137). This lack of development required missionaries who were able to integrate evangelistic skills with a host of other skills to address socioeconomic, industrial, medical and educational needs (Gann 1965:44; Hastings 1994:258). Whether Protestant or Catholic, the normative missionary had to be an "all-rounder endeavouring to cope with bodies and souls, laying bricks, translating texts,

and administering sacraments" (Hastings 1994:260). In this context of poverty, in their preaching of heavenly hope, the missionaries operated as "mediators of change" (Porter 2004:279) introducing Africans to literacy, new improved farming methods and a life-based technology. Thus the task faced by the missionaries was "to offer the good news of the gospel to the untaught, to convert individuals to Christianity and to reform society closer to the principles of Christian civilisation and personal conduct" (Dachs & Rea 1979:2).

However, at other times, sources show the nineteenth-century missionaries acting ambivalently towards the local material needs and being seemingly more interested in preparing them for the afterlife. For instance, the LMS regulations forbade the missionaries from trading with the locals or using material gifts to attract converts (Bhebe 1979:37, 41). This placed missionaries in a dilemma in times of crises like droughts. An example of such a dilemma was the drought of 1861. Thomas (1873:316-317) justifies his breach of the LMS regulations prohibiting economic relations with the locals in order to hunt game to feed them during the famine. According to Ransford (1968:150,153), Thomas' benevolent actions towards the starving locals were sharply condemned by fellow missionaries, the younger Moffat and Sykes, who refused to assist the local people. Thomas says the people challenged him to follow the example of Christ who preached, fed the hungry, healed the sick, and raised the dead (Thomas 1873:315–316). Furthermore, Thomas says the Ndebele people challenged him to show concern for their physical bodies that endured pain and hunger, instead of being concerned about spiritual bodies they had never heard of nor seen (Thomas 1873:316). Moreover, he believed that missionaries had a responsibility on the earth to care for both body and soul as they "are the property and care of the Lord" (Thomas 1873:316). Thomas believed that if the people rejected the gospel, the missionary should take consolation in the fact that he had attended to their physical bodies (Thomas 1873:337). This discussion highlights that while some missionaries attended to physical needs, others opted to prioritise just the spiritual needs of souls to prepare them for heaven.

Even the LMS missionaries who objected to Thomas' acts of providing for starving locals also reflected a serious contradiction towards the material life of the locals. In one situation, the LMS missionaries would not give material provisions to the locals, considering it an act of bribing the Africans into Christianity. However, on the other hand, they provided the locals with formal education and skills training in aspects like sewing and agricultural, which ultimately would lead to improved material life for the locals. Furthermore, the LMS missionaries kept their mission purely spiritual by avoiding economic trade with the locals

(Bhebe 1979:35). However, the same missionaries actively participated in politics by preaching the equality of all people before God, which deeply angered the Ndebele king because it challenged both his authority and the hierarchical structure of his kingdom (Moffat, Moffat & Wallis 1945:256–6; Wallis, Moffat, Moffat & Livingstone 1945:93,101–2). Weller and Linden (1984:15) report that Robert Moffat challenged King Mzilikazi to exercise justice towards his people. These events highlight the nature of the conflict in the missionaries between meeting the spiritual needs and the material needs of the people to whom they ministered. While, for a missionary like Thomas, there does not seem to have been a conflict between preaching the message of the future and addressing the material needs of the locals, for missionaries like John Moffat and Sykes it seemed that spiritual salvation ought to be prioritised and the gospel "be accepted on its own merits without bribery" (Bhebe 1979:35).

5.2.3. The Proclamation of a Kingdom that Brings Sociocultural Transformation

The actions of the missionaries of addressing the lack of development among the local people while preaching to them about eternal hope can be explored from the perspective of the kingdom of God. Directly linked to the hope for the eternal future is the kingdom of God. Christianity initially broke into Africa prompted by the quest to extend the kingdom of God (Shaw 1996:207; Stanley 2000:102–103). The notion of the kingdom of God to the missionaries in the 1800s was a future reality and a transforming power in this present life (Bosch 1980:135) that invigorated missionaries to be mediators of cultural and economic development. The optimistic view of the kingdom of God captured by David Livingstone in the themes of Christianisation, civilisation and commerce believed that mass Christianisation would result in massive civilisation and commerce (Weller and Linden 1984:14). [64] Ross (2000:49) explains that the basis of the three C's, 'Christianize, civilization and commerce', was the belief that "legitimate commerce and Christianity …[would]…save Africa's peoples from their degraded and degrading cultures and from even more destructive power of the slave trade". The vision of the kingdom of God was mixed with Victorian cultural norms and industrial progress as "the power of Britain was appealed to as demonstration of the truth of the Bible" (Hastings 1994:274). Thus, in imagining of the essence of submission to God, "Britain's own culture and institutions provided the yardstick" (Porter 1985:597). For Victorian Christians, spreading British influence was growing the government of God (Stanley

---

[64] According to Weller and Linden (1984:14), David Livingstone entreated British business people and the educated to invest in Africa, telling them he was coming "to Africa to make an open path for Commerce and Christianity: Do you carry the work I have begun? I leave it with you."

1983:78)[65]. To the missionaries "Britain was the high heaven of human achievement and that … explanation lay in her Protestant faith" (Hastings 1994:274). Hastings' assessment does not deny belief in the afterlife, but highlights that the missionaries conceptualised the kingdom of God on earth as an extension of Western sociocultural and economic development. For the missionaries, the "eschatological tended to be the destruction of African culture" (Hastings 1994:298). The belief in the correlation between adherence to the kingdom of God and civilisation, the relationship between Christianity and commerce, ultimately meant that the dense populations of African must be opened to them both (Ross 2000:49).

The socioeconomic vision of the missionary proclamation of the kingdom of God can be seen exemplified in Bishop Knight-Bruce's admiration of the Christian Tswana Chief Khama. On one level, Knight-Bruce believed that Christian conversion should not result in the loss of "those qualities that commend themselves to us in an untamed savage" (1895:184). Yet, on the other, he highly regarded the westernised Khama and held him as an ideal for the kind of African Christian convert that ought to be produced in Africa. Knight-Bruce greatly admired in Khama "doing his best, as every good missionary does, to make the lazy men of a tribe work" (Knight-Bruce 1895:198–199). He highly regarded Chief Khama, saying, "very few Colonists are Khama's equal" (Fripp & Hiller 1949:114). Interestingly, Knight-Bruce did not similarly laud his five black Christian workers he brought along from South Africa as missionaries whom he regarded as transformed by Christianity and education (Knight-Bruce 1892:23, 47). It could be that his praise was aimed at royalty and not the ordinary people. The bishop admired the Christian chief's achievement in breaking what seemed to the missionaries the most difficult tradition in Africa to break, namely, the "traditions that women are made to work, and men are made to fight and talk" (Knight-Bruce 1895:199). Because of this positive transformation by Chief Khama, the bishop concludes that he should be allowed to maintain his sovereignty over his country while it will be *"be better for wild, heathen natives, under a heathen chief, to come under European control"* (Knight-Bruce 1895:199, italics added). As already shown, Knight-Bruce was critical of the effects on the locals of civilisation brought by secular settlers, as he believed that only the missionaries represented a civilisation that was beneficial to the locals (Welch 2008:9). At the same time, paradoxically, he was willing to support secular settlers to break the resistance of the unbelieving tribespeople.

---

[65]According to Stanley, Samuel Wilberforce told a missionary meeting in I846 that it was tantamount to denying the government of God to suggest that Britain had been led by providence into war with China merely in order to achieve a minimal reduction in the price of tea

Knight-Bruce's noted belief that it is "better for wild, heathen natives, under a heathen chief, to come under European control" (1895:199) was a common belief of missionaries directed at the Ndebele kings' resistance to the work of the missionaries. Weller and Linden (1984:22) report that even the pioneer missionary to Matebeleland, Robert Moffat, believed that until the Ndebele rule was broken the gospel would not prosper in the territory. Carnegie (1894:103) believed the same about King Lobengula. Missionaries wanted this Ndebele power broken because it stood against the kingdom of God (Gelfand 1968:442–443; Bhebe 1979:65; Isichei 1995:115; Zvobgo 1996:367; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003:177; Welch 2008:33). Thomas prayed for the "open[ing] up these dark regions, and Europeans to be allowed to traverse them through" (1873:342). Thus, the roles of John Smith Moffat in the Moffat Treaty, Revd Charles Helm[66] in the Rudd Concession,[67] and the roles played by Knight-Bruce,[68] Canon Balfour and Father Hartmann in the events that eventually culminated in the 13 September 1890 declaration of Zimbabwe as a British colony were tantamount to resistance against 'the wild, heathen natives, under heathen chiefs'. Ironically, when the members of the Pioneer Column that declared Zimbabwe as a British colony dispersed to look for their own farmlands and entrench British rule in the territory, Canon Balfour of the Anglican Church and Father Hartman of the Roman Catholic Church also dispersed to look for African converts, thus highlighting the close relationship between the church and colonisers. The missionaries heartily approved and participated in the toppling of King Lobengula in 1893 and the crushing of the Ndebele/Shona Rising of 1896/7, which entrenched the colonial rule in the territory because they considered this to be an "open[ing of] new vistas for Christianity in Matebeleland and Mashonaland" (Zvobgo 1996:367)". That this was seen as the kingdom of God's breaking of all resistance to it is expressed in Du Plessis' explanation that missionaries regarded the arrival of Rhodes' Pioneer Column in Mashonaland as "a favourable opportunity for renewing the hitherto frustrated missionary enterprise" (1911:289). However, Shaw (1996:213, 233-238) views the missionary collaboration with colonialists as "the happy accident" of God's providence in

---

[66] According to Goodall (1954:267), Lockhart and Woodhouse (1963:144) and Samkange (1973:63), the Revd Helm was a trusted friend of Cecil John Rhodes, who rewarded him well for his role in getting the King Lobengula to sign the Concession.

[67] For a detailed analysis of the Rudd Concession, see Mary Stocker's *The Rudd Concession: A Reappraisal of an Intricate Controversy* (1979).

[68] In a letter he wrote to King Lobengula, Knight-Bruce said, "I never said that I should advise you to allow anyone to go through your country to look for gold. However, Mr. Rhodes, Mr Rudd, and Mr Muguire, are friends of mine, and if you allow anyone to look for gold in Mashonaland, I think that no other people would be better friends to your country than those would be" (Fripp and Hiller1949:139-140).

which the missionaries acted as custodians "of God's standards of justice and righteousness" (1996:234).

When King Lobengula was dethroned in 1893, the Rev. Carnegie of the LMS, who had ministered to the Ndebele people without success, celebrated the new season ushered in by the fall of the king as follows:

> One great obstacle of fear and dread in the way of our past progress – the club of Lobengula – has been broken …. One man will be as good as another, and justice will raise her head, and witchcraft and bone-throwing will bow their heads and die. A new value will be put upon human life, and now will not be foully and innocently murdered by savage men. A new era will begin in the history of the country, and the people will be free. The current of their thought and feelings will be directed into another channel – that of progress, education, civilization, and Christianity. Therefore the future is full of hope and bright prospects. A chance is held out now such as never was before in their history, and many there be who will embrace and, rejoice in it, accept it and through it become useful neighbours and honourable citizens in that far and, lovely country (Carnegie 1894:106–107).

Carnegie celebrates that impediments to the kingdom of God have been broken. The fall of King Lobengula, in the missionary's perspective, meant that an era of progress, education, civilization and Christianity would usher in without any formidable impediment. The point of this long quote is neither to excuse the projected tyranny of Ndebele rule nor to deny its fact in a manner wished by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2003:22; 2008; 2009:104,89–108). Rather, the point is to highlight the irony of the hearty cooperation of the missionaries in the subjugation of the Africans under colonial rule while preaching to them about God and eternal hope. Already by their attitudes towards the local people the idea of one person being as good as another and justice raising its head, as noted in the above quote from Carnegie, had clearly highlighted that even among the missionaries existed a different standard of equality and justice between local people and the between local and settler whites. For while the local people were expected to be equal and just to each other the same standard was not applied between black locals and the white settlers.

This section's investigation into the activities of the early missionaries demonstrates that the missionaries initially arrived with a proclamation of eternal hope and the kingdom of God that brings socioeconomic and cultural transformation. From a Moltmannian perspective, as discussed in Part 1, it is noted that although the missionaries broke into precolonial Zimbabwe proclaiming eternal hope, yet they did not operate from a framework of God's coming future but from a Victorian perspective. Because the missionaries were more informed with the already worked out Victorian categories, than with God's coming future, the relationship

106

between the missionaries and the Africans was tainted with categories of the civilised and the primitive, in which the civilised wielded enormous power even to vanquish, exploit and expropriate the one regarded as primitive.

While the message of eternal hope would prepare Africans souls for a future life in heaven, submission to the kingdom of God encased in Victorian civilisation would transform the context of poverty marked by illiteracy, constant intertribal warfare and the absence of technological development, to mention but a few things. When the missionaries faced resistance to both the message of eternal hope and their developmental agenda, they prayed for the destruction of the local kingdoms. Furthermore, when the colonisers came, the missionaries heartily collaborated with the colonisers in the hope that the 'wild, heathen natives, under a heathen chief,' would be brought under the kingdom of God, resulting in many souls for heaven and civilised progress. This would put to an end the context of poverty.

5.3. The Segregated Church of Hope for the Poor

This section looks at the proclamation of eternal hope and the kingdom of God that brought development in the colonial period in Zimbabwe. The preceding section concentrated on the precolonial stage up to the fall of the local kingdoms when the colonialists began to entrench their rule in the conquered land. This section will highlight that the church that emerged after the subduing of the local kingdoms under the British power continued its proclamation of eternal hope and the kingdom of God but became racially segregated between the white settlers and the black locals.

5.3.1. From a Church of Hope to a Segregated Church in a Context of Poverty

When missionary Christianity initially arrived in Zimbabwe, its primary target was the African people. Furthermore, until the arrival of the white settlers and the establishment of settler colonial rule, the church was one, as the indigenous people and white missionaries worshiped together (Dachs & Rea 1979:115). However, the establishment of settler rule resulted in a church that continued its proclamation of eternal hope but officially divided itself into white and black. The extent of the segregation within the church during the colonial era is depicted in the following harsh correspondence to the *Rhodesia Herald* newspaper in May 1893 as highlighted by Weller and Linden (1984:68):

> We Victorians had hoped that something substantial in the shape of money would have been given to the
> Church by the Bishop to pay off its debt and leave something to carry on with, but alas it remains as it

> was. The natural question is 'what can have become of all the money collected at home?', or 'was it all intended to be used on the INFERIOR MASHONA?'

> If so, what a sinful waste of money. I have often thought that if the people at home only knew what sort of a creature they are persuaded into subscribing for to convert…they would wisely keep their money in their pockets

The harsh correspondence sent by a white Christian in Fort Victoria (now Masvingo) expressed displeasure that a visit by Bishop Knight-Bruce to the area left the financial needs in the town's church unattended. The correspondent's concern, which indicates not just the thickness of the dividing wall, but also the basis of the division, is that the Bishop may have neglected the white settlers' church and allocated the money to the Africans whom the correspondent coded as the "Inferior Mashona". From this correspondent, the church in the colonial period was segregated racially, with the white settlers regarding the indigenous people as inferior. The church that originally arrived in precolonial Zimbabwe as a church of hope keenly interested in the socioeconomic and cultural transformation of the indigenous people began to racially segregate against them. This highlights, as pointed above (5.2.3) that Carnegie's celebration that the crushing of indigenous monarchies would usher in a new era of human equality, justice and respect for life, did not necessarily include racial equality between the locals and the settlers.

From a Moltmannian perspective, the eschatological scandal is that the hope for the future could not wade off the segregation of the secular white settler community from creeping into the church. With reference to Harare (then Salisbury), Hallencreutz (1998:27) highlights that the keenness of Bishop Knight-Bruce and Canon Balfour for multi-racial worship attracted severe criticism from "parishioners who were more inclined to let urban segregation affect church life in the City". Categorically, Moyo announces that the colonial church's "attitudes and practices began to reflect those of the settlers", so that at the end, "Roman Catholic and Protestant alike, shared the racial and cultural attitudes prevalent among the settler community" (2010:66). Furthermore, Welch (2008:62) highlights that Bishop Gaul, Knight-Bruce's immediate successor, also promoted multi-racial worship. However, as colonial rule took root, the ministry of the church increasingly divided between "'European' and 'Native work'" (Hallencreutz 1998:42). By 1958, Rea (1958:88) observed that the missionary church in colonial Zimbabwe was divided into three strands: the purely or predominantly African churches, the exclusively white churches and churches that had a mixture of black and white members. In the churches with multi-racial membership, the different groups rarely met together.

According to the above quoted correspondent to the *Rhodesia Herald*, the segregated church was a church without human equality as the white settlers claimed superiority over the locals they regarded as inferior. An earlier section highlighted that missionaries such as Knight-Bruce related to the Africans in a paternalistic manner that presented them as an inferior people. Dachs and Rea (1979:115) show that when the reality of racial segregation set into the church, the white urbanised minority who possessed political power, economic leadership, skills and privilege dominated the black tribalised and ruralised African majority. From a Moltmannian perspective, eschatological hope of the missionary mainline church at the beginning of colonial rule in Zimbabwe lacked the historicity of God that opts for the poor, and the shalom peace of the kingdom of God that makes all races equal and the communality of the church that openly embraces those who different.

5.3.2. The Poor and Powerless Africans in the Segregated Colonial Economy

This section concentrates on the economic challenges faced by the Africans within the emerging but segregated colonial economy. Prior to the arrival of Christianity and colonialism, the economic life of the Africans was generally nomadic and relied on subsistence agriculture and a barter economy. The colonial settlers introduced new economy based on money, industry and time. The daunting nature of the new economic reality to the Africans is illustrated well by an entry from the 7th of May, 1900, in the journal of Sister Bullen, a Catholic missionary to the Ndebele people in Empandeni:

> Some natives were heard talking about God the other day: He was stingy when He made them for he gave them no clothes and did not teach them how to make them. He gave them not money and did not tell them how to earn it. But He was generous when He made the white people for they have everything and can do everything (2008:56).

The quote from Sister Bullen's journal highlights the new determining factors in the emerging economy, the elements of money, manufacturing of goods like clothes and the use of time. The quote from Bullen highlights that the Africans were not endowed in these economic determinants until the arrival of the white settlers. According to the expression of the Africans overheard by Sister Bullen, they did not have the skills and the knowledge to make clothes and earn money. This means that the Africans did not have the skills to participate in the emerging monetised, industrialised and time-oriented economy introduced by the colonialists. They therefore needed to learn the technological expertise of the emerging economic dispensation.

Furthermore, the lack of skill to participate in the emerging economy created not just economic disparity between the technologically advanced white settlers and the primitive nomads. It

created social inequality as the settlers who had developed technological expertise to exploit the land and were militarily powerful began to expropriate the lands of locals who were both militarily and technologically weak. Hence "[t]he unsteady development of white commercial agriculture was a tale of destruction of African peasant agriculture, a tale of the monetisation of the economy, a tale of dispossession and forced proletarianisation" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009:65). In the final analysis the "development of both white agricultural and mining sectors in Rhodesia took the form of undermining the African's means of livelihood" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009:65).

The reference to the 'Inferior Mashona' by the correspondent to the *Rhodesia Herald*, noted above, also had an economic angle to it. To some extent, this idea is traceable to the leading pioneer missionaries at the time. For instance, Knight-Bruce (1892:46), although he treated his workers gracefully, expressed a low view of the indigenous people as people who "require constant supervision, not because they wish to cheat one, but it is *impossible* for them to understand the value of time" (Knight-Bruce 1892:43-44, emphasis added). Furthermore, as already noted, the missionaries regarded the Ndebele as bloodthirstily preoccupied with war at the expense of fruitful and orderly industrial labour. However, missionaries do not seem to have taken into cognisance the differences between their economic and religious worldviews and that of the Africans. Knight-Bruce's emphasis on the value of time does not take into account that the time-oriented and industrialised economic model he operated under and was introducing to the Africans was a foreign and new model to the agrarian nomadic Africans.

Bishop William Gaul, Knight-Bruce's immediate successor, did attempt to understand the African worldview in his *The Possibilities of the an African Kraal* (1905), but concluded that African traditional religions and knowledge systems were absolutely vacant of any potential for human and socioeconomic development because the "mental powers of the Native … lack initiative" (Gaul 1905:126-127). For Gaul, the African lack of initiative stemmed from "the absence of wants" (Evans 1945:31), that is, the lack of ambition. To Gaul (1905:123), the Africans systems suppress the people's "individuality" robbing them of the "power of initiative", promoting imitation of tribal customs. In this, he condemned African communalism.

In 1902 Bishop Gaul led a gathering of some white Mashonaland clergy to tackle the 'Native Question', which centred on question of the equality between African natives and the white settlers. Evans (1945:30–31) provides a record of the eight resolutions of the 1902 conference,

which according to Welch (2008:60) were adopted by Gaul's Synod in 1906 and favourably accepted even in Britain. The first resolution stated, thus:

> Speaking for ourselves, we believe that the Christian faith, while accepting loyally the consequences of Christ's identification of himself with universal humanity, recognises the inequalities existing in individuals and races, arising from the fact that neither individuals nor races are born with equal faculties or opportunities (in Evans 1954:31).

This resolution denies human equality between the local Africans and the settler Europeans based on entrepreneurial capacity. Interestingly, Gaul (1905:128) dismissed the immediate equality between local Africans and the settler Europeans by saying the Europeans are 2000 years ahead of the Africans. Assuming that by 2000 years he underscores the huge chasm between the Africans and the white settler, he essentially comes short of ruling out the possibility of human equality between the two groups. According to the resolutions, African locals could not "claim political and social equality" because they are were not able to exercise "some degree, of personal and corporate responsibility" (Evans 1945:31). Gaul condemned polygamy and belief in witchcraft, believing these to foster loafing (Gaul 1900; Evans 1945:31) and promoted the avoidance of new ideas by encouraging people to live "in the midst of facts not of ideas" (Gaul 1905:123).

This resolution based political and social equality on a form of attained civilisation and not on a theological basis of the equality of humans as God's creation. As the resolution was made directly to answer the question about the equality between black local people and white settlers, it thus clearly denied the locals all claims to human equality until they adopted western European civilisation. Furthermore, the missionaries provided and justified a basis of determining human dignity based not on a theological foundation but on economic utility. Therefore, the basis of human dignity was not located in the Creator God but in the satisfaction of a standard of economic utility. This reflects an eschatological hope that had serious shortfalls among the missionaries. Firstly, their eschatological attitude towards the technologically undeveloped Africans does not seem motivated by that which all humanity will become in God in the future as the missionaries related to the locals according to past historical developments. Past civilisation and not the awaited future functioned as the determining factor hence racial relations marked with higher citizens and lower citizens in which the Africans become their lower citizens. Hence the segregated colonial church seems governed more by idea of civilisation than eschatological hope, the justice of the kingdom of God and the communality of the church.

5.3.3. The Missionary Empowerment of Africans within the Segregated Context

It cannot be disputed that missionaries paid serious attention to the emerging monetised and industrialised economy and adopted measures to equip Africans to participate in it. The preceding section highlighted that the missionaries linked African poverty to the imitative Africans traditional systems that lacked any socioeconomic potential. For the missionaries, the solution lay in bringing the Africans under the civilising power of the gospel that "involves the training of the native in a sense of responsibility to himself, to his neighbour, and to the State" (Evans 1945:31). For Gaul, this sense of responsibility involved socioeconomic viability and self-sufficiency which could only be attained through education with an industrial basis. The mission station emerged as a crucial point of equipping the African for the emerging monetised and industrial economy (Vambe 1972:143; Dachs & Rea 1979:4,27–28; Bourdillon 1983:39; Ndlovu 2011:195). According to Bourdillon (1983:39): "There is evidence that early improvements in agriculture in Zimbabwe were influenced by missionary activity". [69] A significant contribution by the missionaries in the overcoming of the poverty of African people was in the teaching of a culture of diligence in orderly daily hard work. Although many missionaries lived pietistic and ascetic lifestyles, which often meant that their economic state did not compare favourably with that of most settler Europeans, they nonetheless upheld a high view of the virtue of daily hard work (Beidelman 1982:60–62) [70]. Thus the missionary church in Zimbabwe did not just preach about the hope for the future, but it also became the church of hope for the poor by empowering them with means to engage their poverty.

While Gaul set up mission stations for industrial skills training, other mission stations trained schoolteachers, nurses, agricultural extension officers and a variety of other occupations which made mission stations "centres of religious power and bases for social transformation of traditional society" (Hallencreutz 1988a:8). They functioned as centres of Christianisation, civilisation and economic empowerment. Motivating his appeal for funding for the St Augustine Industrial Mission, Gaul argued, "The Native Races must be taught to be self-sufficient, if they are to take their place as citizens and not drift into mere helotism under the necessary pressure of the white races" (Gaul 1901). In this desire, the bishop demonstrated a

---

[69] For example, the American Board missionary E.D. Alvord's agricultural extension program that promoted sustainable agricultural knowledge for Africans ended up being adopted by the government, who appointed him as the 'Agriculturalist for the Instruction of Natives' in 1926 to enhance the agricultural intervention strategies he had been using to improve rural agricultural standards (Bourdillon 1983:37; Scoones 1997:623).

[70] The missionaries may have been poor when compared to other Europeans, but by African standards they were very wealthy, which to many Africans presented a serious contradiction between their teachings and their lifestyles (Oliver 1952:242).

hope that the local people would not remain a mere perpetual labour force for white settlers but would become economically self-sufficient and self-determining. He wanted the Africans to undergo an industrial socialisation to "gain *initiating power* – think for themselves and learn to work out their social and political as well as spiritual 'salvation'" (Gaul 1905:128, italics added). Gaul believed that these industrial skills that would stir ambition and initiative in Africans that would cause them to turn away from "the false dignity of loafing to the true dignity of labour" (Gaul 1900:7). By empowering the Africans with industrial skills, he hoped to usher them to a position where they would attain self-sufficiency and cease to be mere sources of labour to white settlers. Approached from Gaul's desire to bequeath to Africans 'initiating power', it can be concluded that through academic education and industrial training, the churches fulfilled the important role of bringing the African to terms with the emerging westernised, monetised and industrialised economy.

> Our church, in spite of what the local critics say, does not believe in a system of education in which the emphasis is all on the academic. We believe strongly in industrial and agricultural instruction; and we have our regular courses on these lines. We believe, moreover, that every child in every school should learn to use his hands, should learn the fundamentals of gardening and agriculture, and should not be ashamed of manual work. But our first emphasis is on the inward life, and that emphasis must be, maintained at all costs (Thorpe 1951:116).

Furthermore, Gaul was also interested in empowering African women. Like Knight-Bruce (1895:199), Gaul (1905:125) complained that polygamy oppressed African women and robbed them of their dignity. Hence, in the establishment of the industrial farm school for the girls at St Monica, Gaul aimed at empowering them and liberating them to live dignified lives (Gaul 1905:128). Bhebe (1979:142) shows that the motivation for the missionary provision of education for women included training school teachers, nurses, liberating the girls from restrictive societies, saving them from child-marriages and even preparing educated wives for the ministers. Van Der Merwe (1981:67,97) also demonstrates that the Dutch Reformed Church took seriously the education of women and girls. Furthermore, as exemplified in the Dutch Reformed Church's setting up of the schools for the blind and the deaf at its Morgenster Mission station (Van Der Merwe 1981:98–99) not only gave human dignity to people living with disability, but also gave them economic and social power in a context where disabilities of such nature resulted in social marginalisation.[71] By equipping the deaf and the blind with

---

[71] According to Van Der Merwe (1982:98) the school for the blind, which commenced in 1927, began with one boy who had been abandoned by this mother after the father had ordered her to drown him in the river. This not

skills that enhanced their independent mobility and socioeconomic activity meant that they would live in dignity and not be viewed as social burdens.

The ambivalent nature of the mission stations was that they "corroded African village life" (Fields 1982:96) but they also imposed western middle class cultural values on African converts (Moyo 2010:68), giving them a new worldview that resulted in increased upward socioeconomic mobility. Horton (1971:101) has highlighted that missionary Christianity enabled Africans to migrate from *microcosm* into *macrocosm,* enabling them to transcend from a worldview *limited* by one's clan community and clan ancestors to a worldview *opened* by the supreme God and the universal church. Thus, Christian conversion moved the African held under the hegemony of the *microcosm* of African Traditional Religions (ATR) to the *macrocosm* of the eternal God who defeated death and has promised his people life beyond death. This new domain and God-governed worldview enabled mission stations to be places of Christian conversion and material improvement, to be sanctuaries and resources that prepared and empowered Africans for the emerging new reality of the Western economy (Dachs & Rea 1979:45).

Furthermore, the education and industrial skills development by the missionaries were undergirded by a quest for converts, which in this case meant Christian who would emerge as empowered and skilled Christian workers. Underscoring the evangelistic motivation in missionary education, Bhebe says, the missionaries were not only interested in civilising the Africans, thus "bridging the cultural gap between white and black; they were above all preoccupied with the spiritual advancement of the local people" (1979:145). Gondongwe (2011:83) highlights that at the Methodists' Nenguo Training Institute the theological interests informed the training of nurses, industrialists, teachers and evangelists.

However, the efforts by the missionaries to unlock what Gaul called the 'initiating power' of the Africans was greatly affected by the segregated context. As noted in the above section, missionaries such as Gaul promoted multi-racial worship and vigorously wanted to empower the Africans, while at the same time viewing them as a lower human race with a very remote possibility of exercising responsible human citizenship. Ironically, when the white settlers objected to Gaul's programme of industrially empowering the locals on grounds that missionaries were equipping the natives to compete with the European, he dismissed the outcry

---

only highlights the vulnerability of people living with such serious disabilities but also the desperate helplessness of parents with children with such disabilities.

as selfish (Gaul 1905:128). But, in the next sentence of his response, Gaul challenged the white Europeans to improve themselves and maintain their 2000-year advancement gap between them and the local people. He ended the same sentence by warning the white settlers about "Nature itself – a very impartial master" (Gaul 1905:128), implying that if they slackened in keeping their status the Africans would overtake them. It is interesting that Gaul would defend the church's right to empower the Africans, but simultaneously uphold the superiority of the white settlers over the native people and challenge them to maintain it. From Moltmann's perspective, Gaul should have challenged the white settlers to realise God's preference and presence with the poor that demands that the church embrace the poor as equal human beings.

Furthermore, Gaul, in keeping with popular practice at the time, generally sought to turn Africans into the labour class which undermined his quest to empower them to achieve self-sufficiency, particularly when viewed from his challenge to the white settlers to maintain their 2000-year gap. The problem with this form of proletarianisation is that it upheld a belief in the superiority of the paternal power of the settlers over the local people. Furthermore, proletarianisation could only turn Africans into utilisable beings by socialising them into the colonial economy. However, the turning of the Africans into workers would only serve to reinforce the very problem Gaul had sought to solve, that of the lack of initiative and the disposition to imitate traditional customs. Because the system did not bequeath to the Africans the power to be critical thinkers and independent decision-makers, but only skilful implementers of colonial policies. Thus the problematic African culture of imitation that Gaul had seen as problem to be vigorously uprooted took a different form – instead of imitating African systems they were now being trained to imitate Western systems. This meant that the initiation of traditional customs was merely replaced by the imitation of colonial customs. The colonial system only sought to make the Africans useable and dependent by not "incorporating … Zimbabweans into its state structures" (Maundeni 2004:199). As Maundeni further highlights that the "settler state's racism prevented Africans from qualifying as cadres skilled in the management of a modern capitalist economy" (2004:202), thus hindering the development of "an indigenous capitalist class and the emergence of a colonially trained indigenous state elite" (2004:202-203).

A serious problem of the colonial system, even the missionary church was that it limited the level of risks, accountability and responsibility placed on the Africans. Smith (1928:131) mentions European trade unionists who opposed efforts for Africans to be fully skilled because they would pose a serious competition to whites in industries. However, Smith (1928:131) also

argues that the training of the African man's hands was particular essential "as part of his training in Christian manhood". West (2002:14) highlights the settlers' fear of the "Dangerous Native… [a colonial figurative reference to] … a miseducated, urbanized male agitator, his lips dripping with wild and imperfectly understood rhetoric about rights" (West 2002:14). Instead of the critical and analytically trained Dangerous Native, the colonialists preferred the "Good Native …[who was]…trained and respectful of authority, deferring to white Native Affairs bureaucrats and their African underlings (chiefs) as he moved about the countryside, tools in hand, making himself useful to his neighbours" (West 2002:14). Furthermore, West (2002:28) shows that whatever level of skill enablement was accrued to the Africans, they enjoyed these under the segregated context of human inequality that dehumanised, depersonalised and de-individualised them as 'boy', 'girl', 'kaffir', or 'native'. As West (2002:27) further shows, the crippling power of these depersonalised and de-individualised designations is reflected in the many additional terms that emerged from them: 'house-girl' (nanny or maid), 'police boy', 'house boy', 'garden boy', 'boys kia' (a shack for houseboys), 'boss-boy' (an African foreman), and boys' meat (the left-over scraps). These demeaning classifications denoted that no matter how well the Africans humanly developed themselves, they remained lower human beings, were non-people with labels that "denoted a profound [human] otherness" that concretised the "unbridgeable chasm" (West 2002:28) between objectivised and dehumanised blacks and the humanised white. Without discounting the many wonderful benefits brought by whites in Africa, Tutu (1997:37) finds that the worst act of harm by whites against African humanity was not economic, social and political exploitation, despite the despicability of these actions. Rather, the "worst crime" by white colonialists on blacks was their policies that eroded African human confidence, filling them with "self-disgust and self-hatred" (Tutu 1997:37). In this, Tutu mourns the pain of depersonalisation, de-individualisation and domination of African humanity (Ela 1994:25-26; West 2002:27).[72] Theologically, "when we were first evangelized often we came through the process having learned to despise things black and African because these were usually condemned by others" (Tutu 1997:37) to capture how not only Christianity but the whole spectrum of western civilisation left the African with a disabling dual identity.

---

[72] According to Ela (2005:24), Césaire has depicted colonial Africa as a land riddled with such polemic couplets as: master/slave; colonizer/colonized; oppressor/oppressed; reason/folly; dominant race/race that wailed in torture; good nigger/bad nigger.

5.3.4. Missionary Voices against the Segregated Church's Attitude towards African Poverty

This section surveys the selection of some prominent voices against the economic segregation of the Africans. This is not an exhaustive list but of few prominent individuals to illustrate the nature of the missionary advocacy for the liberation of the Africans in the segregated church. Given the strong pressure to support the colonial policies of segregated society, the "fear of the settlers and their own conservatism urged them [the missionaries] to turn their backs on politics, whenever possible, and concentrate on the task of evangelisation" (Weller & Linden 1984:59). The tide was often so severe that most missionaries succumbed to "a human wish to be identified with their own community, the whites, among whom they lived and worked" (Weller & Linden 1984:202). As Banana (1996:20) points out, "The missionary at the time adopted the strategy of separate co-existence,…and one wonders whether the missionary sought to avoid possible resistance to forced integration or whether he/she believed in the doctrine of the two communities engaging in separate development". The option, for most missionaries, was to keep out of politics, just keep in line, and concentrate on the more 'most' important thing of spiritual preparation for the life to come. Furthermore, a privatisation of faith based on a pessimistic, otherworldly eschatology emerged. We earlier noted Moltmann's concern about the church's tendency to resign to the terror of evil of powers (3.4.2). In the racially segregated colonial period in Zimbabwe some missionaries gave a lethargic resistance to marginalisation of the black indigenous people.

However, the Jesuit Father Francis Richartz and the Methodist minister John White who witnessed the eruption of the great war of 1896/7 when the Ndebele and Shona resisted the colonial power chose to speak out against the colonial system. The two churchmen each scarcely survived attempts on their lives by the angry Africans who killed African missionary evangelists including Modumedi Moleli and Benard Mizeki. White also survived numerous attempts on his life by white settlers because of his solidarity with Africans (Ranger 1995:13). As already pointed out (in 5.3.1.) Richartz ministered to the African leaders condemned to death for leading the rising. Richartz and White attributed the flaring of the great war to the provocative policies of the colonialist, including the imposition of the hut tax by the BSAC (Andrews 1935:48–49). They objected to the hut tax and the harsh colonial rules on the Africans.

Andrews (1935) highlights that White rejected the Rhodesian government's criticism that missionaries should stay away from politics, preach the Gospel and limit their involvement in

African affairs to spiritual issues. White opted not to stay out of politics and just concentrate on the spiritual issues while injustices against the poor and powerless black people prevailed (Andrews 1935:194-195). Thorpe (1961:58) described John White as "a courageous leader, a fearless prophet, a wise and far-seeing administrator". In White's conviction, it was insufficient to preach deliverance from personal sin without showing that Christ's life and teaching "have to do with the *whole* of life's affairs" (in Andrews 1935:208). White believed that the church should be political and not be afraid of criticising the state authorities for contravening Christ's principles for humanity (Andrews 1935:208). For White, Christians who were afraid of defending the victimised powerless Africans were unworthy to be called Christ's disciples (Andrews 1935:208). For White, what made the situation dire was his awareness of the fact that the Africans could neither sufficiently defend themselves against, nor extricate themselves from their socioeconomic and political marginalisation (Zvobgo 1991:151). Persuaded that a concern for spiritual salvation should also be socioeconomically empowering in this present life, John White committed himself to be the voice of the "voiceless, voteless, and defenceless … [whose]… soil which was all [they] had in the world was at stake" (Andrews 1935:195). White was dismayed that, save for himself and Cripps, Christian missionaries had betrayed their prophetic and political relevance by their fear to boldly confront the settler authorities and challenge the oppression and exclusion of Africans (Ranger 1995:13). He was further dismayed at Europeans who dispossessed and marginalised Africans and continued claiming to be Christians. This, to White, ignored Christ's promised judgement: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matt 25:40; Andrews 1935:197). For White, in the midst of the dispossession of African land, the duty of the missionary was to intervene on behalf of the African by securing an "adequate amount of good agricultural land, not only for their own families and tribes, but also for their descendants" (Andrew 1935:200).

The Anglican missionary, the Rev Arthur Shirley Cripps, was a devoted admirer of St Francis of Assisi. He diligently emulated Assisi's example of identifying with the poor. Like John White, Cripps' took a political stand and opposed racist state policies against blacks. Firstly, together with Fr Richartz and Rev White, he opposed BSAC's proposal to increase the hut tax in 1903, which was a year of famine, from 10 shillings to £2. Cripps was systematic in his resistance while observing some protocol. He first took his opposition to the hut tax increase to the Anglican Synod and proposed that the tax be levied in kind, not cash, to prevent the exodus of African men from their families to find employment to raise the needed cash to pay the taxes if it could only be paid by a coin. The difficulty with this proposal was that BSAC's

motivation for imposing the tax and stipulating payment in coin was to force the black people to work in the white farms and mines. The Anglican Synod rejected Cripps' proposal, as missionaries believed organised labour would be useful in training Africans for orderly and productive life. Disappointed with the decision of the Synod, Cripps took to his poetic skills, and penned a poem entitled *"Ode Celebrating the Proposed Quadrupling of the Hut Tax"* with the following last stanza:

> Go glean in the fields of the harvest bare,
> From famine meat a four-fold share!
> Apply a text as best you may
> From him that both hath not, take away! (in Sheers 2004:85)

The poem stirred controversy in the church. The Bishop ordered him to withdraw the poem from circulation. Cripps obliged indignantly, horrified at the church's siding with the oppressor instead of the oppressed. He was deeply disappointed that the church had justified the unjust and burdensome tax on the poor, on the basis that it would teach the Africans the value of orderly work. Undeterred, Cripps joined Fr Richartz, who also opposed the tax's excessiveness, in taking a political step. They registered their objection to Lord Milner, the British High Commissioner in Cape Town. Cripps and Richartz appealed to the British government because the colony's Legislative Council needed the consent of its colonial masters before the tax became law. The British government rejected the tax, leading to a compromise that reduced the tax to one pound. Although the one pound remained a heavy toll on the Africans, the decrease was achieved through the lobbying of the two clergymen. In this action, Cripps and Richartz provide a valuable ecclesiological ethical lesson that the church should be an active moral conscience for the state about issues concerning the poor and powerless.

Furthermore, together with White, Cripps engaged with the land question in a way that provides insight about how to proclaim future hope while actively addressing the present context of poverty and exploitation of the poor. Zvobgo (1991:139-148) has provided a useful summary of the critical engagement of White and Cripps on the land question from 1921-30. The two missionaries challenged the Southern Rhodesia Missionary Council's support of the Land Apportion Act of 1931. To buttress their opposition, they solicited the support of British philanthropic organisations such as the Aborigines Protection Society (White 1923; White & Cripps 1923). Through these organisations, Cripps and White succeeded in enlightening the British government about the extent of the problem faced by the Africans. In their argument, Cripps and White distinguished between the *theoretical* provision in Article 43 of the

constitution of Southern Rhodesia[73] to grant Africans rights to purchase land anywhere in the country and the *practical* possibility for Africans to compete favourably with whites on the land market. Demonstrating that equality is not necessarily equity, White and Cripps concluded that the *theoretic* provision that blacks had the right to buy land anyway in Zimbabwe was *practically* impossible since blacks had no financially capacity to compete with the white land seekers. White and Cripps argued: "The right of the native to purchase land anywhere means that they purchase nowhere" (White & Cripps 1923; Zvobgo 1991:145). Therefore, they argued for separate development in order to safeguard the Africans who had limited capacity to compete on the open land market. Thus, White and Cripps campaigned for the practically implementable solution of annexing land exclusively for purchase by Africans (White & Cripps 1923; Cripps 1927). The two clergymen agitated for urgent action since the Southern Rhodesian authorities were stalling on the issue while the whites were busy hewing out land for themselves. By the time the bureaucratic process ended, the acreage available to blacks had drastically shrunk in size.

What emerges in missionaries such as Cripps and White is that the Christian hope for the future translated into engaging public and private ethics (Ranger 1995:16). In other words, adherence to spiritual disciplines enabled the believer "to enter into the earthly kingdom promised by white preachers of 'Christian civilization' as well as into the heavenly kingdom promised by God" (Ranger 1995:9). Cripps also applied his poetic skills to spread his prophetic voice against an unjust state. Furthermore, Cripps and White made sure that the Southern Rhodesia Christian Conference did not become "nothing more than a booster club, an action to strengthen the position of the colonial government" (Mungazi 1991:29) by constantly breaking ranks with its negative attitudes towards African issues.

Bishop Kenneth Skelton of the Anglican Bishopric of Matebeleland was a staunch critic of Ian Smith, rejecting his Unilateral Declaration of Independence from Britain. Hallencreutz (1988b:52–54) shows that the emergence of the political voice of Skelton coincided with the emergence of a much more vocal African Christian political voice. Skelton (1985:131) argued that when the main Christian doctrines are examined, "to put religion and politics into separate compartments is impossible". Skelton, and several missionaries before him, worked to sensitise privileged white people about the predicament of the poor and powerless black people. They

---

[73] This article featured in the Draft Constitution of the new Southern Rhodesia state that came into effect in 1923, replacing the British South Africa Company.

challenged racism in their churches and called for the inclusion of blacks and for the right of African suffrage.

Bishop Skelton responded to the belief, widely held by white people, that Africans were poor on account of their laziness. In this response, Skelton (1985:19) highlights a predominant lack of sensitivity towards the plight of the blacks in the segregated church. The eschatological scandal of the segregated church is that of the insensitivity of the powerful and privileged whites to the predicament of the poor and disenfranchised black Africans. Skelton (1985:19) highlights the "fundamental difficulty which confronted Rhodesian whites – their inability to understand Africans – or as some would put it, their unwillingness to meet them as human beings". A faithful member of his Cathedral congregation had referred to the blacks as "our black animals" (Skelton 1985:19). Skelton recalls witnessing a well-dressed white woman hiss to a poor black young beggar, 'Go and get work' (Skelton 1985:20). What saddened Skelton in that incident was that the lady "probably sincerely thought he could go and get work, and was quite unaware that most African boys of his age were condemned to perpetual unemployment – whereas however dume and unqualified a white by might be, he could always find work" (Skelton 1985:19). He argued that a feeling of kinship cannot prevail among unequals, which meant that the Rhodesian tragedy was "the fact that there were hardly any whites in the whole country who really *knew* an African" (Skelton 1985:21). In Skelton's analysis the legislation and legalisation of the exclusion of Africans stemmed from insecurity. Skelton (1985:16) observed the white Europeans filled with the "fear of losing economic power and position". The white dependence on black labour meant that Africans possessed power by virtue of the fact that "without the African's labour it could not have been done – an could even not be continued" (Skelton 1985:17).

However, a serious weakness in these missionaries' approach is that they continued, like many whites in the segregated church, to respond to the challenge in a paternalistic manner. Instead of empowering the oppressed blacks to speak for themselves and articulate their needs, the missionaries ran the show. Indeed, White and Cripps campaigned for blacks to attend their respective Synods and to have voting powers. The two clergy promoted the indigenisation of their churches. Nevertheless, these two generally remained the vocal voices in crucial matters. In a number of missionary churches, leadership remained in white hands. For the most part, the white missionaries drove the agenda of African concerns. They acted as the assessors of the African oppression; they were the drawers of the petitions for African liberation. This meant that for a considerable period, the Africans remained reliant on the leadership of missionaries

121

for the issues that affected them as Africans. Without empowering the blacks to speak boldly and systematically for themselves concerning their suffering, the missionaries were bound to either fail or experience very limited success. This means that it was important to look at the problem of colonial oppression not as just a structural issue but also an issue of human capacitation.

5.3.5. Ecclesiological Bodies for the Promotion of Human Flourishing

The Second Vatican Council had far reaching implications for the Roman Catholic Church's response to the Zimbabwean context of poverty where the poor and powerless Africans were both economically marginalised and socioeconomically oppressed. Gundani (2001:66) highlights that the Second Vatican Council called for Christians to promote peace, human dignity and holistic development. He further highlights the 1971 Synod of Bishops held in Rome that called for justice in the world (Gundani 2001:67). These two epic events, according to Gundani (2001:67) were instrumental in the formation of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) in 1972 by the Rhodesia Catholic Bishops' Conference (RCBC), which "functioned as an agent for change within the Church and the nation at large" (Gundani 1972:70). Banana (1996:170) described the CCJP as "a fervent supporter of the ideals of social and political justice". Time and space does not allow this thesis to do a lengthy coverage of this association, but only to highlight that it ushered in a new definition of being church and preaching the gospel in a context of poverty. Diana Auret's *Reaching for Justice: The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace* (1992) examines the emergence and operations of the commission in Zimbabwe. Operating within the context of racial segregation and the violent marginalisation of the poor and powerless Africans, the cooperation between CCJP and the RCBC "signified a new perception of the mission to preach the Gospel which demanded a radical commitment for the integral liberation of the human being" (Gundani 2001:89-90).

Furthermore, in setting up the CCJP, the bishops demonstrated that the Christian solution to the experience of African oppression also required socioeconomic and political steps. Banana (1996:171) highlights that the CCJP dispelled sentiments that presented the liberation fighters as terrorists by affirming them as legitimate citizens fighting for the right to self-determination and dignified human existence. Of particular concern was the communist leanings of the liberation movements which created the notions of "the Communists terrorists" (Hallencreutz 1998:409). The CCJP's prominent strategy was its research and fact-finding missions to investigate, document and publish cases of injustice and violence by both the government and the liberation armies, as well as holding talks with the warring parties. By engaging the warring

parties, investigating the war atrocities, calling the perpetrators to be accountable, and providing material support for the refugees and victims of the war, the CCJP extended its ministry outside the four walls of the church and by so doing "expanded its ecclesiological outlook" (Gundani 2001:90). This meant that it operated beyond its Roman Catholic constituency.

While the CCJP represented the initiatives of the Roman Catholic Church in solving the segregated context of poverty, the Christian Council of Rhodesia (CCR) represented the ecumenical voice of the protestant churches belonging to the World Council of Churches (WCC). In addition to the theological differences between the Catholics and the Protestants, the significant difference between the two organisations was that, while CCJP played a purely prophetic role, the CCR was comprised of church leaders who were active politicians holding positions in the nationalist movements. Furthermore, the CCR got its impetus from the World Council of Churches' Programme to Combat Racism (WCC/PCR) which, according to Hallencreutz (1998:410), was set to provide technical and humanitarian assistance to liberation movements fighting against racial oppression. The WCC/PCR, through the CCR, provided financial and material support to Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), the two liberation movements in Zimbabwe (Banana 1996:169). CCR provided material support to the victims of the war like the refugees, recognised the legitimacy of the war of liberation and called on the warring parties to observe human rights and to protect the lives of the civilians. The WCC/PCR provided grants to the fighting liberation movements for humanitarian programmes such as education, medical supplies and shelter (Banana 1996:170). The Revd Canaan Banana, a Methodist minister who was instrumental in the operations of the CCR and became the first president of Zimbabwe, justified the WCC/PCR grants. Banana says their aims "were to ensure that the oppressed majority attained political emancipation and at no time was the fund intended in thought, word and deed, to buy weapons to foster a culture of violence" (1996:182). However, it cannot be disputed that this provision by the WCC/PCR constituted an unequivocal support for violent military action and violent war against oppressors. As can be imagined, the CCR's support of the liberation armies caused serious problems in Zimbabwe particularly among churches like the Anglican, the Methodists and the Presbyterians that had a double mandate of ministering to white and black Christians.

Publicly silent but privately vocal during this time were the 'evangelical' churches and separatist fundamentalists groups like the Seventh-Day Adventists. According to Bishop

Skelton, the first president of the CCR, when the council was formed on 29th July, 1964, the "'evangelical' Churches kept aloof" (1985:93). A significant reason for this aloofness was the conviction that religion and politics should be kept apart, while some fundamentalist groups such as the Seventh-Day Adventists are naturally suspicious of ecumenism.

The term 'Evangelical' is a contested term and has many meanings in Protestant Christianity. As used in this thesis, it refers mainly to the wave of Evangelicalism from American origin that began to appear in Zimbabwe in the 1950s with an emphasis on strictly biblically-based faith. When the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) was founded in July 1963, Bhebhe (1988:321) highlights that the movement listed as one of its objectives the provision of "spiritual fellowship among Evangelical Christians as a means of united action in promoting Bible teaching, prayer and Evangelical ministries in accordance with the Evangelical faith outlined in the Fellowship's statement of faith". As Bhebhe (1988:321) further shows, the aim of all the EFZ's activities were "the perfecting of individual believers, the edification and revival of the Church of Jesus Christ, and the salvation of lost souls." The EFZ emphasized spirituality and resisted ecumenism, especially as represented by the World Council of Churches. Furthermore, as Bhebhe (1988:324) shows, the Evangelicals regarded the liberation movements as terrorists and advancing Communism under Russian influence. Since the Rhodesian government was considered a Christian government, Evangelicals saw it as their duty to pray for the protection and victory of the 'security forces' over the Communist 'terrorists' (Bhebhe 1988:325). The main interest of this group was evangelism and authentic discipleship. The group's privatisation of the Christian faith, reflected by the absence of any reference to socioeconomic and political issues, is noteworthy considering that it emerged during the time when the African quest for political liberation was gaining momentum. It is significant to note that the EFZ was formed before the ZCC took a definite stance for engaging in socioeconomic and political issues. However, it will be incorrect to say that EFZ was only otherworldly focused, just as it would be incorrect to say that the ZCC was only thisworldly focused. Bhebhe (1988:322-324) highlights that the EFZ made "mild and apologetic protests" about the colonialist policies that were unfavorable for African well-being. However, overall, the EFZ conceived of a clear distinction between the State and the Church.

5.4. Theological Education and the Shaping of African Resistance

Thus far, this study has only grappled with the ideas and actions of white missionaries. This section concentrates on the developments in theological education and leadership development of the African clergy within the context of poverty.

5.4.1. The Challenge of African Church Leadership Development

Although churches like the London Missionary Society (now the United Congregation of Southern Africa), the Dutch Reformed Church, the Anglican and the Wesleyan Methodist had some black South African missionaries, the leadership of these churches was predominantly European (Linden 1979:95; Moyo 2010:109–110). According to Moyo (2010:66) the "church that developed in Zimbabwe during the first seven decades rarely offered administrative responsibilities to Africans". According to Söderström, a European missionary who taught theology at the United Theological College (UTC) in Harare, Africans were not given administrative roles because the missionaries doubted whether "African Christians were mature enough to become pastors" (1984:81). In particular, the missionaries "doubted … the ability of indigenous pastors to organise and take initiatives" (Söderström 1984:81). Thus, the development of a responsible African leadership took some time. Skelton also attribute this reluctance, particularly in the evangelical Churches, to a "suspicion of the 'political' tendencies of African Christians, who would keep straying away from the strict pietistic pattern" (1985:92).

Furthermore, in the initial stages of some missionary churches, the better equipped African leaders were South African evangelists who came from a context where both Christianity and formal education had long been established. The Roman Catholic Church arrived in Zimbabwe in 1870s but ordained its first black priest, Simon Tsuro, in 1947. The Anglican Church, which at its birth in Zimbabwe in 1890 had a strong team of African catechists from South Africa, ordained its first African deacon in 1918, who attended his first Diocesan Synod in 1921 and was ordained as a priest in 1923 (Hallencreutz 1998:42). The Wesleyan Methodist Church which also had African missionaries at its inception in 1891, ordained its first African priest in 1910, Josias Ramushu, who had no formal theological training but worked in the circuit under the supervision of the white missionary Rev H. Oswald Brigg (Gondongwe 2011:91). The Lutheran Church first ordained an indigenous pastor in 1937, J.B. Hove, who worked as a teacher in the church and received a three-year theological training at the Oscarsberg in South Africa, graduating with a certificate in 1931 (Söderström 1984:79–80). Furthermore, as highlighted by Söderström (1984:34), the passing of high responsibility to African clergy occurred late, although often the evangelists were the first to establish the preaching points and the missionaries came later to establish a permanent mission settlement. Furthermore, although the central leadership of the churches was in European hands, the "indigenous staff of evangelists did the basic work in the parish" (Söderström 1984:34). Interestingly, even staunch

fighters for the liberation of Africans such as the Catholic Bishop Lamont, also believed in the 1960s that Africans, estimated at five million in number, had still not amassed enough human capital to manage the country and thus still needed a settler-led government (Moyo 2010:161).

An earlier section considered Maundeni's (2004:202) observation that colonial segregation prevented the incorporation of indigenous people into the state structure to be developed as skilled cadres in the management of a modern capitalist economy. A similar trend can also be observed in the missionary churches, as missionaries preferred to keep the management of the churches in their hands with the indigenous people as roving evangelists, in a similar fashion to a African tribal chief who remains in his kraal but sends his headmen to the people (Söderström 1984:83). This system produced authoritarian missionaries who wielded enormous power over their African evangelists since the "missionary was the 'paternal' guardian of predominantly passive native believers who never questioned what he directed" (Waruta 1990:33). A sizeable number of African ministers broke away from missionary domination to start their own independent churches, and some of them were a success, proving false the missionary doubts about African leadership.

5.4.2. Theological Education and African Engagement with the Context of Poverty

This study has already highlighted that the missionaries were at the forefront in industrial skills development to equip Africans to enter into the emerging westernised, monetised and industrialised economy. While nearly all the mission churches immediately embarked on literacy and industrial training, formal theological training of pastors developed slowly in colonial Zimbabwe. The exception is the Wesleyan Methodists who included a theological division for training pastors when they established Waddilove Institute in 1900 to train nurses, teachers and industrialists. The common strategy for theological training was the incorporation of evangelistic skills into the teacher training, resulting in a teacher-evangelist as the end product. Using this strategy, the planting of a church occurred hand-in-hand with a school. However, as highlighted by Bhebe (1979:146), the greatest problem was that while entrusted with such a great responsibility of evangelism and literacy the evangelist-teachers were barely trained and poorly remunerated and thus soon lost effectiveness in the ministry, much to the detriment of their work.

The Wesleyan Methodists began to offer formal theological education for ordained ministry to Africans in 1900. Other churches followed several years later. As Zvobgo (1996:336-346) shows, in the 1920s the Anglicans and the American Methodist Episcopal Church started

theologically training Africans, while in the 1930s African theological training was started by the Seventh Day Adventist Church and the Dutch Reformed Church, while the Roman Catholic Church ordained its first two African priests in 1947. However, admission requirements for training for ordained ministry were often strident and the ideal candidates with the requisite literacy skills were very few since primary education was still in its infancy and underfunded. By 1951, Thorpe (1951:112) reported that in 1949 the first Africans to complete secondary education in the Colony had sat for the Cambridge Certificate, because at that time all Africans who wanted higher education could only get it in South Africa. For the illustrative purposes of this thesis, we focus on the theological training that began at the Methodist's Waddilove Institute. The theological education that began at Waddilove evolved and developed a unique life that played a robust political role in both colonial and independent Zimbabwe.

Gondongwe (2011:83) highlights that, at Waddilove, the entry qualification to be trained as a teacher-evangelist was a Standard Three,[74] while a Standard Four holder was exempted from literary subjects. The training period was three years, in which the first year concentrated on Standard Four examination, and the other two years concentrated on evangelist training which covered: Preaching, Bible study, the Gospel of John, Genesis, Ruth, Matthew and field work (Gondongwe 2011:83). Research on the quality of the education suggests that emphasis was not placed on critical theological knowledge but on the equipping of the Africans with the pastoral skills needed to preach and bring sinners to God (Gondongwe 2011:83).

The academic requirement to train for ministry ordination was a post-Standard Six education and a competent critical knowledge of John Wesley, including his sermons 1-44 and the doctrines contained in them, his views on slavery and his doctrine of scriptural holiness (Gondongwe 2011:86). The theological wing was moved to Epworth Theological College in Harare in 1953 to be close to the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. It offered a two-year Certificate in Theology for ministerial formation that was comprised of Theology, New Testament, Church History, Christian Ethics, History of Methodism and Homiletics (Gondongwe 2011:93). The following text from Thorpe provides some useful insights into the nature of the indigenous clergy in the Methodist church between 1900 and 1960.

> Up to the time of writing, our own candidates for the ministry have been almost without exception, trained teachers, and often with evangelist-training as well. Ministerial responsibilities in a backward country

---

[74] The initial primary school grade was Sub-standard 1, then Sub-standard 2, followed by Standard 1, which means that Standard Three was the fifth level of primary education.

involve candidature at a relatively advanced age, and during the three different spells of training at the institution the necessary testing is accomplished. But we are on the threshold of a new age. There is the prospect now that our candidates, in increasing numbers, will be matriculates, or at least of Junior Certificate standard and a theological course of greater intellectual range will become possible (Thorpe 1951:117).

Firstly, from the above text, the ordination of indigenous clergy required candidates to first be trained as teachers and evangelists.[75] Furthermore, the ideal candidates for the ministry were usually advanced in age and married to fit the conservative African traditional culture. A further point of great interest in the above quote is the reference to the anticipation that emerging ministers would be matriculates or junior certificate holders, which highlights that developments in primary and secondary education had a direct effect on theological education.

Furthermore, Gondongwe (2011:94) highlights that, in 1948, the theological department at Waddilove Training Institution only had three tutors, Revd W.A Hoskins with an MA degree, Revd Fredick Hudson without a degree, and Enoch Musa without any academic degree but employed as an African tutor mainly focussing on training the evangelists. This reflects that African theological education had meagre resources. It must also be borne in mind that the ideal candidates were often few. Such training purely aimed at producing clergy who would function at confessional level and not at a critical level that would challenge the status quo. If they were critical, then it would have to be towards their traditional religions and not the established socioeconomic and political contexts in which they lived.

As both theological and secular education improved for the black Africans, theologically formulated resistance against the impoverishing policies of the colonial government emerged and grew stronger. This does not mean that the elementary theological training already offered at the time did not produce Africans who challenged the colonial status quo. Combined with the association of liberal missionaries such as John White and Arthur Shirley Cripps, as already noted in the above sections, a few African pastors emerged who sought an interplay between eternal hope and the present. The Methodist minister, Thompson Samkange (1893-1956), a Waddilove graduate, provides a useful test case of black ministers who with meagre theological training rejected the missionary escapist hope and called for hope for the future that is alert to present racial oppression and exploitation of blacks. Samkange emerged as one of the leading black Christian voices in the 1930s and 1940s, the period of a great economic recession which

---

[75] The Evangelical Lutheran Church followed the same system; pastors first worked as teachers and evangelists for a length of time (Söderström 1984:80).

resulted in government policies that added to the suffering and oppression of the already suffering and oppressed Africans.[76]

Samkange was a contemporary of another Waddilove graduate, Esau Nemapare, also a Methodist and another earliest African critic of white domination, who resisted working under European supervision. Samkange admired John White and Arthur Shearly Cripps, missionaries who displayed the balance between future hope and the present material needs of the poor in their ministries. According to Ranger (1995:16), in 1945 Thompson Samkange stated: "Some of our people think Christianity is a plan made by the advanced nations to tame us, they gave us the Bible and they take the land from us" (*sic*). In recent times, this statement has been popularised by Jomo Kenyata and Desmond Tutu.[77] For Samkange, Christianity, instead of taming us, ought to agitate Christians to do good and be concerned with justice. In Samkange's conviction, "Christian hope had to embrace the public as well as the private sphere" (in Ranger 1995:16).

Furthermore, in Samkange's perspective, "'advancement' had to be spiritual as well as material" (Ranger 1995:8). He was persuaded that adherence to spiritual disciplines enabled the believer "to enter into the earthly kingdom promised by white preachers of 'Christian civilization' as well as into the heavenly kingdom promised by God" (Ranger 1995:9). In this statement Samkange dispelled the idea that Christianity is a white people's religion with no relevance to the present needs of the Africans and powerless to lead them into the future. He argued that the traditional ancestral spirits "cannot save us from sin and cannot offer us security in the future life as does Christianity" (in Ranger 1995:16). In this statement Samkange intends to show that Christianity is therefore not a plan made by Europeans to tame Africans by giving them the Bible in order to take the land away from them (in Ranger 1995:16). Rather, "In spite of all this the Church stands for Christian justice and fair play, this it has done and is still doing with good results" (in Ranger 1995:16). Samkange was in this statement referring to the increasing Christian voices calling for the end of racism. The point was that there had to be a

---

[76] In 1931, the government enacted the Maize Control Act that killed African agriculture while protecting and promoting the agriculture of the white people.

[77] According to Tutu: There is a story, which is fairly well known, about when the missionaries came into Africa. They had the Bible and we, the natives, had the land. They said, 'Let us pray', and we dutifully shut our eyes. When we opened them, why, they now hand the land and we had the Bible. It would on the surface, appear as if we had struck a bad bargain, but the fact of the matter is that we came out of that transaction a great deal better off than we had started (1996:ix). In later years Mazrui's (1978:108) attributed the same statement to Jomo Kenyatta, founding President of Kenya as follows: "The white man came and asked us to shut our eyes and pray. When we opened our eyes it was too late – our land was gone".

balance between other-worldliness and this-worldliness, the future heavenly issues and the present earthly issues.

Samkange increased his resistance against both white oppression in general and the missionary oppression over black Christians, in particular the inequality between missionaries and the black ministers in the church. Missionary efforts at upgrading the material welfare of the Africans were also distorted by the huge income gap between white clergy and black clergy (Musodza 2008:97–98). Furthermore, in mission churches in both colonial and independent Zimbabwe, pleas by black clergy for better remuneration often attracted appalled responses from the church leadership giving an impression that preachers of the gospel should not expect any measure of comfort in this present world (Gondongwe 2011:126). In 1938, Samkange attended the International Missionary Conference at Tambaram in Madras where he met Albert Luthuli, Nehru and Gandhi, which increased his resolve to fight racial oppression (Ranger 1995:63-64). He admired the ideals of the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa, sought to promote political consciousness among the blacks, and severely challenged the inequality between white and black people (Gondongwe 2011:263). On 12 July 1943, Samkange was elected president of the Southern Rhodesia *Bantu* Congress to campaign for democracy. Samkange succeeded in rallying the Bantu Congress to be an active campaigner for African liberation, the litmus test being the successful staging of the 1948 general strike of the workers. Samkange' quest to balance the hope for the future and the present earthly needs resulted in a useful contribution to the beginning of the fires of nationalism.

Beginning in 1959, theological education and training of pastors in Zimbabwe shifted from a confessional level to a critical level and shifted from a denominational approach to an ecumenical approach with establishment of the Epworth Theological College which changed its name to United Theological College in 1976 (Matikiti 2009:155–157). The Methodist Church had in 1954 moved its theological college from Waddilove to Epworth so it could be near the newly established University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, established in 1952. Beginning in 1959, the United Methodist Church joined Epworth College, followed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (Gondongwe 2011:98–100). The College changed its name from Epworth Theological College to United Theological College (UTC) to reflect the ecumenical drive behind it. The college's close association with the University exposed its students to highly qualified lecturers. The new curriculum at the UTC signalled the emerging shift from training pastors who would just attend to the spiritual needs of the congregation to training more holistic ministers who were

politically conscious and critical thinkers. The new curriculum included subjects such as Christian Ethics, Sociology of Religion, Psychology of Religion, African Theology, and Black Theology (Gondongwe 2011:104). These subjects had the potential to awaken political consciousness and promote a holistic theological perspective towards issues.

It is important to realise that the raising of educational standards at UTC also reflected an improved secondary education in mission schools. Missionaries introduced secondary education for Africans in 1939 (Zvobgo 1996:264-271) for a variety of reasons, including helping the emerging "young generation to live a more meaningful life, both on the spiritual and material level" (Söderström 1984:91). However, the colonial government and the general white populace were opposed to these efforts, fearing the ramifications of an enlightened but oppressed African population. We have already seen the settler's opposition to critical education, which could produce a "dangerous native", and their preference for industrial training, which only produced a compliant, "good native" (West 2002:14). The actions of people like Thompson Samkange, noted above, has provided indications about the potential of an educated African.

In the 1970s, changed from a denominational college to an ecumenical college offering critical higher theological education, UTC became a theological "hotbed of political consciousness" (Matikiti 2009:157). Missionaries such as the Revd Dr Hugo Söderström of the Lutheran Church were sensitive to the African quest for self-rule. Furthermore, some lecturers at the college like Dr Crispen Muzobere and Max Chigwida were political activists, while others held offices in political parties fighting for liberation from colonialism. Furthermore, the college had affiliations with prominent leaders in the liberation struggle such as Revd Ndabaningi Sithole, leader of ZANU, and Bishop Abel Muzorewa of the United African National Council (UANC) who became the Prime Minister of the ill-fated Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. Revd Canaan Banana, the first ceremonial President of Zimbabwe, studied at UTC and later taught there. As Chitando highlights, many of the church leaders in Zimbabwe "have a lot in common with the black ruling elite" (2002a:142) having fought in the struggle together. However, the bitter rivalry between the different political parties which often ensued in clashes that resulted in fatal causalities indicates the intra-party chaos that must have often prevailed at UTC (Matikiti 2009:157). However, what is important to realise is that the policy of Africanising church leadership in the 1960s and the provision of critical theological education resulted the emergence of nationalist black clergy (Chitando 2002a:142).

5.4.3. African Theological Challenge to the Church's Acceptance of Segregation

An earlier section (5.3.5) considered some ecumenical voices that sought to promote African human flourishing. Three main church bodies emerged to represent concerns of different Christians: the Rhodesia Catholic Bishop's Conference (RCBC), the Christian Council of Rhodesia (CCR) and the Evangelical Fellowship of Rhodesia (EFZ) which was comprised mainly of evangelical churches that tended to remain on the fringes of political discourse, preoccupied instead with spiritual issues. Although the EFZ had a department dealing with social concerns, it gave higher priority to spiritual concerns such as evangelism. It was the entrance of mega-church pastors into its leadership towards the late 1990s that gradually brought the EFZ into the national limelight.

However, in general, the emergence of theologically based political resistance to colonial segregation can be viewed as the maturation of the liberal education received in missionary secondary schools. Shamuyarira (1974:143) shows the nationalist leader Joshua Nkomo, criticising the missionaries for preaching the equality of all people before God but at the same time supporting a system that racially divided those people, making them unequal. According to Shamuyarira (1974:143), Nkomo evaluated the missionaries' ambivalent attitude towards segregation as a lack of moral courage, saying, "The Christian philosophy is good but the men that preach it are bad". In Nkomo's view, the European missionaries did not have the courage to practice what they believed and preached. Our analysis above, of European missionaries who spoke against the European socioeconomic marginalisation of the Africans, raised the issue of courage.

Tapping from the biblical heritage bequeathed to him by the missionaries, the nationalist Shamuyarira concluded that the church's support for policies that infringed on the human flourishing of blacks violated good neighbourliness as taught in the Bible:

> God is not interested in just a part of human life, but in the whole of it. The church should never fail to raise the voice of conscience of fundamental principles of equality, human dignity, and justice. It cannot support a qualified franchise, and the Land Apportionment Act, and still pose the question 'Who is my neighbour?' (1974:142–143).

Shamuyarira opposed the growing pessimism with Christianity among the nationalist leaders and within the guerrilla moment, and the growing call to embrace African traditional religions instead of Christianity. In defence of Christianity, Shamuyarira argued:

> The teachings of the church are revolutionary enough to provide such a base, if its leaders would make it clear that the neighbour you should love is of any race. If Jesus was to return to Rhodesia in flesh today,

132

> there is no doubt who would be his neighbours and where he would stand on the all-important question
> of political, social and economic equality (1974:146).

In this passage the nationalist articulated God's option for the poor and oppressed. These nationalist feelings tapped into the teachings received in mission boarding schools. According to Chitando (2005:193), President Mugabe declared that the nationalists were brought up in Christian institutions and thus derived their backgrounds from association with the churches. Sundkler and Steed (2000:640) point out that mission boarding school life was probably the greatest contribution by the churches to political consciousness. It can therefore be said that the black resolve to engage in the war of liberation was a theological revolution. Although the missionaries had failed to observe what they had taught to the mission schoolchildren, these very teachings would later germinate into resistance against both missionary hypocrisy and cowardly ambivalence that acquiesced the colonial segregation, marginalisation and the exploitation of the poor and powerless African masses.

5.5. An Evaluation of the Church's Responses Poverty in Colonial Zimbabwe

From Moltmann's eschatological vision, how may we assess the church's responses to poverty in the segregated colonial period in Zimbabwe?

5.5.1. The Historicity of the God of Hope and the Option of the Poor

The examination of Moltmann's notion of the God of hope (in Chapter 2) revealed that God opts for the poor and is historically engaged in their historical situation to liberate and empower them. For Moltmann God's liberating and empowering participation in the exodus and his suffering in Christ's death, showed him to be a God of hope for the future who is interested in the present historical situation of exploitation of the poor. In the light of Moltmann's notion of the historicity of the God of hope it can be said that the missionary mainline churches preached the gospel of future hope and also took active interest in the material needs of the poor in colonial Zimbabwe. This chapter has highlighted and affirmed that the missionaries, through their mission stations enabled the migration of Africans from their simple economy of nomadic hunters and subsistence farming and introduced them to the new monetised, time-oriented and industrialised economy. Although preaching a message of future hope, the missionaries also attempted to improve the socioeconomic life of the indigenous people. Furthermore, the chapter observed that mission stations such as the Dutch Reformed Church's Morgenster Mission provided programmes that specifically focused at empowering the blind and the deaf and so rescued them from social marginalisation as pitiful victims of witchcraft and enabled

133

them to live in human dignity. Thus to a significant extent the missionaries acted as agents of the historicity of the God of hope.

However, these significant positive activities that communicated God's historicity were generally the efforts of a few courageous missionaries who chose to go against the tide of the colonial times. Except in these few exceptions, (this chapter did not provide an exhaustive list, but only a few notable examples), the eschatological vision of a large section of the missionary mainline church in colonial Zimbabwe was deficient of the historicity of the God of the hope that opts for the poor and marginalised. This deficiency of the historicity of the God of hope made the missionary mainline church vulnerable to co-option by the oppressive colonial settlers. In some cases the church provided the theological basis for the discrimination and exploitation of the indigenous people (see 5.3.2). In some cases, the lack of the historicity of the God of hope resulted in the church's cowardly resignation and acceptance of racial segregation and the impoverishment and exploitation of the indigenous people as an evil to be tolerated in this world that would only be addressed in the world to come. The large majority of the missionary mainline church in colonial Zimbabwe willingly accepted the segregated nature of the colonial state. Thus the few missionaries who dared to challenge the evil status quo were maligned as troublemakers. The emergence of African Initiated (or Initiated) Churches (AIC) such as Ezekiel Guti's Zimbabwe Assemblies of God in Africa (ZAOGA) was, among other issues, a rejection of the inequality of believers in the segregated church of the colonial era.

5.5.2. The Kingdom of God and the Sanctity of the Life of the Poor

From a Moltmannian perspective, the kingdom of God discussed in Chapter 3, which marks the horizon of the fulfilment of eschatological promise will result in recreated and restored abundant and loved life. Moltmann's firm persuasion that the kingdom of God belongs to the poor affirms the sanctity of the life of the poor and the oppressed in this present earthly life. According to Moltmann:

> 'Sanctification today' means first of all rediscovering the sanctity of life and the divine mystery of creation, and defending them from life's manipulation, the secularization of nature, and the destruction of the world through human violence. Life comes from God and belongs to God, so it has to be sanctified through people who believe in God. The earth is not 'unclaimed property' and nature is not 'ownerless'. It is God's beloved creation. So it must be encountered with reverence and drawn into the love for God (SoL 172-173).

134

This challenges the church to realise that to expect the kingdom of God must translate in the promotion and defence of the sanctity of the life of the poor and marginalised. This is a stern rejection of any idea of sanctification that tramples on the value of life and God's creation in present life.

From a Moltmannian perspective, it is observed that the church in colonial Zimbabwe was partial its affirmation of the sanctity of human life. The missionaries vigorously challenged the African traditional cultural and religious systems that violated the sanctity of human life, even to the point of colluding with colonialists in the toppling of indigenous kingdoms (Carnegie 1894:106–107). Yet, except in a few cases and often by a few missionaries, the missionary vigour applied in breaking the oppressive African traditional systems disappeared when it came to dealing with the oppressiveness of the colonial systems over Africans. The segregated nature of the church in colonial Zimbabwe reflects a compromised understanding of the sanctity of life of all human beings. The unequal treatment of the locals and the missionary tendency to empower the Africans mostly for efficient service in European enterprises demonstrated a compromised understanding of the kingdom of God's affirmation of the sanctity of life.

Furthermore, the syncretistic tendencies among Africans of reliance on Christ for eternal salvation and reliance on African traditional religions for their immediate needs that they do not see the kingdom of God as concerned about promoting the sanctity of their material wellbeing (Bourdillon 1983:40–41; Banda 2010:1–10). It is debatable if the African worldview of socioeconomic reality has been sufficiently influenced and empowered by the life-affirming and life-restoring kingdom of God to the extent that they can see it as promoting the full sanctity of the African life. Gondongwe (2011:123) highlights the huge disparity in the stipends between the Methodists European ministers and their African counterparts who often struggled to feed their families while preaching the same message of the kingdom of God. That within the same sect one minister could have his bodily needs reasonably catered for, while another minister starved because of a different pay system based on race presents serious questions about the equality of the sanctity of life.

5.5.3. The Communality of the Church and the Protection of Dignified Life

According to Moltmann the church of hope (in Chapter 4) is a communality of believers in which this communality functions as a protection of dignified human existence. However, rather than the communality of believers, inequality prevailed in the segregated church in colonial Zimbabwe. Missionaries such as Bishop Gaul, although in one hand promoting multi-

racial worship yet still doubted the equality of all races and even provided theological arguments to deny them an equally fully dignified human recognition (Evans 1948:31). The communality of the church did not protect the human dignity of all God's people resulting in the marginalisation, exploitation and the impoverishment of the indigenous people. The communality of the church as imagined by Moltmann calls for a church that makes space for the poor and the dehumanised in order to protect and affirm their human dignity. The Bible condemns the segregating against the poor (James 1:2-7) because the communality of the church should be a bulwark that protects the sanctity of the life of the poor. There problematic issues in Moltmann's ecclesiological framework constructed in Matthew 25. However, he nonetheless provides a justifiable plea for the communality of the church to defend the sanctity of the life of the poor. The segregated nature of the church essentially means that the weaker people were kept away from the life-giving strength of the communality of the church.

5.6. Conclusion

Using the eschatologically-oriented ecclesiological ethical perspective derived from Moltmann in Part I, this chapter analysed the church from its arrival in precolonial Zimbabwe to the end of colonial rule in 1979. The chapter limited its unit of analysis of the poor to black people, because the missionary enterprise initially arrived in Zimbabwe principally interested in evangelising African people. The chapter established that the church arrived in precolonial Zimbabwe proclaiming a message of eternal life and socioeconomic development. The missionaries were concerned about the illiteracy and the lack of technological and industrial development. In their preaching of the gospel to the Africans the missionaries endeavoured to introduce them to the emerging monetised, time-oriented and industrialised economy. For a considerable period, the missionaries functioned as agents of Christianisation and modernisation. However, the chapter noted that the missionary efforts to Christianise and modernise the Africans were undergirded by colonialism and racial superiority. Although some missionaries attempted to treat Africans as equal human beings, the relationships between the missionaries and the African converts was often like that of parent to child (Skelton 1985:90–91). Although the missionaries aided the processes of colonising the Africans, there is no doubt that they also contributed immensely to enabling the Africans to rise up and break the power of colonialism over their lives.

Assessed from Moltmann's eschatological vision of the church of hope for the poor, it cannot be doubted that the missionaries noted African poverty and attempted to respond to it (Bourdillon 1983). However, the church in the colonial era was a segregated church with rich

136

and powerful European members on one side and poor and marginalised African members on the side. This shows that ecclesiological ethics in the colonial church was not informed by eschatological hope in the Moltmannian sense. Furthermore, God's option for the poor was not observed, as the poor and powerless Africans were only empowered to become skilled proletariats, not truly human. The level of education and skills development that was granted to them was only for the purpose of usability to the European businesses. Seriously disturbing from a Moltmannian perspective is the colonial church's being accustomed to death-before-life and resignation to the power of segregation. Rather than challenge death-giving power of racial segregation some churches succumbed to it as a fact of present earthly existence that could only wait until the eschaton before it can be uprooted.

Chapter 6: Eschatology and Ecclesiological Reponses within the Liberated Context of Poverty in Zimbabwe

6.1. Introduction

This chapter continues the analysis of ecclesiological ethical developments in the Zimbabwean context of poverty by focusing on the church in the independent period of black majority rule. According to the 2006 Kairos document, *The Zimbabwe We Want* (ZWWD), when Zimbabwe gained its independence in 1980, there was so much promise in its new black ruling elite (ZWWD:8). The masses, who had endured the bloody and costly war for the country's independence, were optimistic that socioeconomic and political life would improve in the new independent state. The new rulers kept rolling out promises of a new state anchored on the equality and prosperity for all the citizens. The country had the potential to be a leading economic and politic giant in Africa since "it inherited the second most advanced and diversified economy on the continent after South Africa" (Magure 2012:3). Much to the credit of his leadership acumen, Ian Smith built a strong and industrialised Rhodesia against the odds of international sanctions imposed on him for his Unilateral Declaration of Independence from Britain on 11 November 1965. The embargo left Smith reliant only on South Africa and Portugal. When the black government came into power it received a well-oiled and functioning state that had the potential to develop into an economic giant once the economic sanctions were lifted and the country admitted into the family of international nations (ZWWD:8-9). Furthermore, Zimbabwe "became a favourite nation within the donor community and international organisations" (Chitando 2002b:2). According to Mwakikagile (2007:272) President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania congratulated Robert Mugabe on his inauguration in 1980 as Prime Minister by admonishing him, "You have inherited the Jewel of Africa. Keep it that way."[78] The current state of socioeconomic and political brokenness in the country amply demonstrates that the African led government has not been able to maintain the jewel it inherited from the colonialists.

This chapter examines how the church that entered the precolonial territory proclaiming the gospel of eternal hope and socioeconomic development has grappled with the context of

---

[78] It is difficult to prove the authenticity of these words attributed to the late first president of Tanzania. However, whether true or false, the attributing of such a statement to Nyerere, a leading icon for African emancipation and self-determination, highlights that when Zimbabwe gained its democratic independence in 1980, (the first of the last three remaining countries, including Nambia and South Africa), some serious disillusionment about African rule was emerging even among the African leaders themselves.

poverty in Zimbabwe after the breaking of oppressive colonial rule. The chapter opens (6.2) by highlighting the ecclesiological ethical challenges faced by the church in the liberated post-colonial Zimbabwean state.[79] This is followed by (6.3) a brief narration of socioeconomic and political decline in the new state and how this posed an ecclesiological ethical challenges. Section 6.4 examines the rise and growth of the spiritualised engagement of poverty in prosperity Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe. Section 6.5 examines the significance of the prosperity Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe while section 6.6 examines the ecclesiological eschatological challenges addressed to the prosperity movement. The chapter closes with a critical evaluation of prosperity Pentecostalism as a means of responding to poverty. The point that will be highlighted in this chapter is the church's tendency to offer simplistic solutions to complex socioeconomic and political problems.

6.2. The Ecclesiological Ethical Challenges of the Liberated State

This section highlights the ecclesiological ethical challenges faced by the church in the liberated state. The Kairos document of 2006, *The Zimbabwe We Want* (ZWWD), written by the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC), the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), noted as follows:

> The Church entered the dispensation of the new Zimbabwe with a largely other worldly detachment from things social and political except for the Roman Catholic CCJP and the ZCC, who even amid objections from some of their members, thought through the relevance of the Gospel values to the political and economic realities of the nation (2006:13).

If the ZWWD's analysis was correct, the church's otherworldliness can be explained by its apprehensiveness towards the new state because of the Leninist-Marxist leanings of its new rulers (Bhebhe 1988:32–326). Hallencreutz (1998:449-450) highlights that there were concerted Christian attempts to resist "what they feared would be a Marxist takeover of Zimbabwe". However, the African rulers of the new liberated state, despite their Leninist-Marxist orientations, wanted the church to work with them and so invited the church to be their development partner. In keeping with its core motivation for waging the bitter struggle to break

---

[79] African Indigenous Churches (AIC), known in Zimbabwe as *AmaPostoli* are not included in this analysis of the churches. This is largely because they have not written much about their own theology. Most of the literature available concerning *AmaPostoli* are interpretations from secondary sources. However, AICs do not present an ecclesiological response to poverty that can be wholly differentiated from prosperity gospel. For some elements of the AICs are similar to those found in prosperity movement, for example, the belief in prophets and prophetesses who have the power to mediate God's blessings of material prosperity and the use of anointed oil and water to attain material prosperity.

colonial rule, the new African-led government began its reign with a policy of national reconciliation and reconstruction to eradicate poverty and enable the formerly dehumanised African self to redeem its lost, authentic humanity. Robert Mugabe, then executive Prime Minister, called on the church to be actively involved in the building of the new state. Hallencreutz (1988a:276) highlights that on 30 April, 1982, Mugabe addressed the Heads of Denominations and impressed upon them the need to participate in the government's various developmental programmes. The Prime Minister challenged church leaders to lead their churches to cooperate with the government's efforts to improve education, health, rural agriculture, rural life, and to promote social cohesion and morality in their communities.

The immediate challenge that faced the church at Zimbabwe's independence was the redemption and restoration of African human dignity. Hallencreutz (1988a:280) and Maxwell (1995:108,110,112) show that the church entered the new era well aware of the challenge of dealing with its shameful past support of the colonial dehumanisation of African humanity. The ZCBC, on 17th April, 1980, the eve of the inauguration of the new country's first democratically elected leader, Robert Mugabe, issued a pastoral letter entitled *A Statement of Roman Catholic Bishops of Zimbabwe* (1980). The bishops congratulated the new nation and the new government by pledging their "whole-hearted cooperation and support in the difficult but rewarding task of nation building that lies ahead". The ZCBC pledged itself to promote both spiritual and material life in the new state. Thus, the bishops would not just busy themselves with the souls of the people; they would also promote socioeconomic and political developments. In a letter entitled *Our Way Forward,* issued on 28 November, (1982), ZCBC announced, in Section 5: "The Christian believes that through Christ he enters into a life-giving relationship with God. Christ came to bring all men fullness of life (John 10:10), and to free them from those bonds which impede that full life". This statement conveys both the spiritual and the material; the statement seems to indicate a spiritual relationship with God that has implications on the material life of the believer. In Section 6 of the same letter, the Bishops proceeded by stating:

> But this individual freedom implies to a social dimension, for it must be rooted in the wider context of the 'Kingdom of God'. Christ preached and inaugurated a Kingdom (Mk. 1:15; Lk. 11:17-21) in which men would live in love, justice, peace and freedom, and thus attain fullness of life. The Christian by his love and dedication must work for the promotion of this Kingdom (Lk. 9:2-6).

In the two sections of the Catholic Bishops' letter is highlighted the spiritual and material, the present and the eschatological future in a manner that enlists the church to participate in the

socioeconomic and political life of the country. *Our Way Forward* was holistic as it expressed the Christian social vision, the State, the Church, the Citizen and worker. It closed by proclaiming a year of 'National Transformation' wherein Christians and citizens of Zimbabwe "may be faithful to the love and justice demanded by Christ, so that we may move together on our way forward to build up a new, just, peaceful and prosperous Zimbabwe".

Ironically, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), on the other hand, which played a crucial role in raising material support for the armed movements in the struggle against colonial rule, did not immediately warm up to the new African ruled state. Hallencreutz (1988a:267) highlights that *The Herald* newspaper of 10 November 1981 reported the State President, the Revd Canaan Banana, singling out the ZCC in his criticism of some church organisations in Zimbabwe for adopting a "wait and see" attitude towards the development of the country. To the State President's dismay, the church organisations that had actively participated towards its liberation from colonial rule were being ambivalent towards the new state. The reason for the ZCC's ambivalence seems to have been that its key leaders did not fully support Mugabe's ZANU-PF party. According to Hallencreutz (1988a:257) the President of the ZCC, Percy M'Kudu, was an active supporter of Revd Ndabaningi Sithole of ZANU, while the General Secretary, C.D. Watyoka was an ally of Bishop Abel Muzorewa, leader of the United African National Council (UANC) and the former Prime Minister of the short-lived state of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. To complicate matters for the ZCC, Bishop Muzorewa, as head of the United Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, continued to maintain an active involvement in the ZCC Executive Committee and his leadership of his UANC in addition to his continuing of extreme criticism of the new rulers (Hallencreutz 1988a:271). Thus the ZCC leadership that was antagonistic to the new state, combined with the fact that the ZCC did not immediately express its allegiance to the new state, heightened the new government's distrust and suspicion towards the ecumenical group. The government intervened and spiritedly agitated for the dismissal of the Secretary General, Mr Watyoka, which was done on the 30th of April 1982 (Hallencreutz 1988a:270–275). It was after the departure of ZCC's Muzorewa-aligned general secretary on 30 April 1982 that the organisation began to work closely with the new government in the rebuilding of the new state (Hallencreutz 1988b:276,282-285; Maxwell 1995:113). However, to allay all suspicions, the new church hierarchies ingratiated themselves with the ruling elite, endorsing and spearheading the state's vision for national development and "even submitt[ing] to state interference in their own affairs" (Maxwell 1995:108). Eventually the ZCC and the State became too close, to the point that the ecumenical body lost its critical influence.

Other Christian organisations that played a role in improving the quality of life of the poor included the Catholic Commission of Social Service, the World Lutheran Federation, Christian Care and World Vision. Missionary churches undertook efforts to rebuild the broken economy and to build infrastructure from scratch, such as schools, hospitals and dams (Moyo 1988:382; Gundani 1988). Furthermore, ZCC and Catholic's Silveira House conducted seminars on leadership training and development with the aim of "mobilizing, conscientizing, and motivating the people at grass-roots level" (Moyo 1988:383).

6.3. The Damaged Jewel and the Ecclesiological Ethical Challenges

This section concentrates on the nature of the church's engagement with socioeconomic and political reality in independent Zimbabwe in which African hopes of political independence and self-rule soon turned into disillusionment and disappointment.

6.3.1. From a Jewel to Shreds

Whereas, in 1980, Zimbabwe could be called by Julius Nyerere as a 'jewel' (Mwakikagile 2007:272) by year 2000 it had lost its lustre to the point that Thomas Mapfumo, a popular musician, called the dilapidated state *Mamvemve* (a Shona word meaning 'shreds'). In concert with Mapfumo's downgrading of Zimbabwe's jewel status to shreds, Maundeni (2004:191) described the country as "a clear case of development failure". Furthermore, Maundeni (2004:191) noted that instead of developing the economy after dismantling colonial rule and taking power in 1980, the ruling elite reversed all the economic gains that were achieved before and just after independence. Rather than maintain the jewel, it was soiled and crushed into pieces. The country has, since its independence in 1980, faced serious economic crises, at one time attaining the unenviable feat of holding the highest world inflationary rate of 231 million percent in 2008 (Zimbabwe Independent 2008). Chitando and Togarasei describe the now discarded Zimbabwe dollar currency as having depreciated to the extent that "pick-pocketing disappeared as petty thieves realised that the local currency was of absolutely no use" (2010:154). Moreover, with the unstoppable hyperinflation, rare figures such as trillions and billions of dollars became part of common speech (Chitando & Togarasei 2010:154). In fact, by the time the multi-currency regime was implemented in 2008, it was no longer a surprise to hear of products with prices in the range of several quintillion Zimbabwean dollars. The Jewel had turned into shreds. In the colonial era the challenge to the church of hope was the impoverishment of the Africans in the segregated economy. In the independent era, the

challenge that faced the church was the impoverishment of the poor by the corrupt and economically unimaginative ruling elite that resulted in the country turning into a failed state.

The culture of segregation that marginalised the poor and powerless Africans based on race assumed new forms in the liberated state. Fay Chung's reference to the failure of the Zimbabwean state to deliver to its promises of liberation from colonial rule have already been noted (in 1.4). Chung (2006:269–273), a veteran of the struggle and a bureaucrat in the new government from 1980 to 1995, attributed the country's rapid socioeconomic decline to poor national leadership combined with cronyism, patronage, nepotism, tribalism and profiteering. In this new form of segregation, the poor and powerless who had no rich and powerful connections were marginalised from the national economy. Chung (2006:299) highlights how in the mid-1990s poor national leadership without foresight and critical thinking, naively adopted the International Monetary Fund and World Bank concept of an Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP), believing that it would result in automatic economic flourishing. However, the promised economic panacea soon turned into a poisoned chalice resulting in "very rapid de-industrialisation" (Chung 2006:266). As Verstraelen (1998:25) expresses it, ESAP "served the powerful, leaving the poor even poorer" through the ruling elite's corruption in the liberalisation of the economy. Furthermore, beginning in year 2000 a form of black empowerment that uncritically favoured the veterans of the country's liberation struggle emerged in which participation in the revolution and association with the ruling ZANU-PF became essential qualifications for access to participation in the national economy, which resulted in driving out investors and causing serious de-industrialisation. Theoretically, this form of economic participation aimed at redressing the wrongs of colonialism and the realisation of the fruits of political freedom for the poor. However, it was practically driven by greed and corruption resulting in chaotic implementation that did not make economic sense and ushered in unprecedented economic suffering in the country. Thus, its intended purpose was lost as at the end of the day only empty factory shells stripped of all equipment and unemployed citizens are all that remained as the legacy of the indigenisation policy.

Furthermore, even home grown economic policies have exacerbated the shredding of the jewel. Successive versions of economic indigenisation that began with the repossession of farms from white farmers in year 2000, distributing them to the black farmers have only increased in turning Zimbabwe from a breadbasket to a basket case. McLaughlin's *Education with Production in Zimbabwe: the Story of ZIMFEP* (2002) highlights how the attempt for a school education that included practical and industrial skills failed to live to its promises. Furthermore,

since its independence in 1980, the government has continually appointed ministers with sizeable allocations of funding for job creation and the promotion of small and medium business cooperatives but this has not adequately addressed the serious levels of de-industrialisation. As a result, Zimbabweans have become so highly displaced, migrating in droves to such an extent that neighbouring South Africa ended up having special visa regime for Zimbabweans only in order to manage their unprecedented influx into the republic. These examples illustrate that the jewel inherited by the Africans from Smith, which he built with very limited resources and under severe international sanctions has been shredded.

6.3.2. The Church's Acknowledgement of an Unfulfilled Role

The *Zimbabwe We Want* Kairos document (ZWWD) prepared by the three main bodies representing the churches in Zimbabwe is a useful instrument of measuring how churches fulfilled their call to give hope for the poor in a context of failed governance in independent Zimbabwe.

Firstly, the Kairos document emerged as Zimbabwe celebrated its Silver Jubilee under the most severe socioeconomic and political stress, as already noted in the preceding sections. In its first section, ZWWD highlighted that while Zimbabwe had "so much promise" in 1980 when it became independent, it had slid to a state of "yet so much disappointment" by its Silver Jubilee (ZWWD 8-13). The Kairos document asked where the nation went wrong to end up in such an unenviable position after making a good start at its independence. However, the idea that Zimbabwe made a good start is seriously flawed as it both overlooks and underplays the Gukurahundi atrocities in Matebeleland and Midlands between 1980 and 1987, which resulted in great loss of life, human displacement and retarded development in these regions (Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe & Legal Resources Foundation 1997). The Kairos document listed nine factors as contributors to Zimbabwe's malaise and the "inability of the Churches to speak with one voice on national Issues" (ZWWD 12) was listed as the ninth factor. [80] As an ecumenical document, reading through the list one gets the feeling that the first eight items were actually listed as a precursor towards the ninth point of critiquing the church's failure to play an effective role in enhancing an enabling socioeconomic and political atmosphere in Zimbabwe.

---

[80] The other items listed as the cause of Zimbabwe's movement from a position of promise to a position of disappointment were the failure to produce a home-grown democratic constitution, the unsolved land issue and the international sanctions that had resulted in international isolation (ZWWD 9-13).

In highlighting the church's lack of constructive influence, the Kairos document wondered how the situations of hopelessness could obtain in a country where over 80% of the population, included national leaders, claimed to be Christian (ZWWD 12). As already noted (in 1.4) the document's dismay at the irreconcilable contradiction of highly Christianised nation sliding into anarchy affirmed that the church was part of the problem in Zimbabwe's crisis and thus could also become part of the solution. Essentially, the ZWWD pointed to the ineffectiveness of the Zimbabwean church in the public space and thus called for the church to address its failure to be the light and salt.

The Kairos document further noted that even some church leaders acted as "accomplices in some of the evils that have brought our nation to this position [of disappointment and depression]" (ZWWD 13). Hence, it noted: "Church leaders have not always provided exemplary leadership" (ZWWD 13). The aim of the ZWWD was to provide a vision for the reconstruction of the broken nation that once held a bright promise. In daring to face up to the governing politicians and articulate an ideal socio-political and economic situation, the church effectively announced that if "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" (Chitando & Manyonganise 2011:95-96). As stated in the Kairos document, the ultimate blame was upon "a Church leadership that has done well in trying to *mitigate the impact of the current hardships, but has not adequately responded to the causes of the suffering its constituency and the nation as a whole"* (ZWWD 13, italics added). In this statement, the document highlights that the problem was certainly not that the church leaders had failed to respond at all. Rather, the church leaders had responded amiss, only dealing with surface issues instead of the root causes and providing simplistic solutions to complex problems. In stating the above, the ZWWD noted that church leadership had tried to address the crisis in Zimbabwean without a full understanding and a serious appreciation of the socioeconomic and political factors at play.

6.3.3. The Political Dynamics in an Ecclesiological Ethic in a Context of Poverty

It was noted in the section above (in 6.2) that the missionary churches pledged their support to the new state, even though the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) lingered in making its commitment. Whereas the earlier section simply noted the commitment to development, this section looks at how the churches thought about the political dynamic of the ecclesiological ethic of hope in a context of poverty. On April 17, 1980, the eve of the inauguration of Zimbabwe's Independence, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Council (ZCBC) issued a congratulatory statement to the new government, simple entitled *A Statement of the Roman*

Catholic Bishops of Zimbabwe. In section 6, the statement declared that "the purpose, task and goal of Zimbabwe as a State" is to enhance "the common good of its people" by realizing that the reason for setting up any political community is that "[t]he common good of its people is the whole meaning of its existence" (ZCBC, April 17 1980). A year later, the Bishops celebrated the new nation's first independence anniversary with a pastoral letter entitled, *First Anniversary of Independence, 1981*. The letter acknowledged the country's achievements in developments in the fields of education, health services, land distribution, decent wages, the opening of opportunities for employment to previously marginalised masses and the successful new initiatives for commercial enterprises (ZCBC, April 10, 1981). In 1982, ZCBC's Pastoral letter entitled *Our Way Forward* contained five sections, in which Section III dealt with the state and the economy. In essence, the pastoral letter provided a socialist Christian perspective. The Bishops charged the State to realise that it has the God-given duty "to represent the interests of the people and to provide the necessary social, political, and economic structures and services to promote the common good of the society as a whole and to protect the rights of the individual" (ZCBC 1982). Furthermore, drawing from Pope John Paul II's emphasis on the supremacy of the person above things and the supremacy of human labour above capital, the Bishops called on the State to realise that "[i]n organising the economy, the needs and interests of the people are sovereign" (ZCBC 1982, para 13). Consequently, in order for the needs and interests of individuals to flourish, the State must neither allow an "unbridled capitalist laissez-faire approach" that leaves the poor and powerless at the mercy of the rich and powerful (Our Way Forward, para. 14), nor should the State exercise tight control over the economy that takes away the free economic participation of the citizens (ZCBC 1982, para. 15-19). In their pastoral statement, the Bishops placed the primary responsibility of the citizen's material wellbeing in the hands of the state; the state must ensure that just and fair economic activity prevails. In 1984, in their New Year's message entitled, *Socialism and the Gospel of Christ*, issued on January 1, 1984, the Bishops built on their 1982 letter and affirmed the Government's efforts to enable the citizen to be self-reliant, as well as their efforts to share national wealth among all the country's citizens.

The link between failed black governance and poverty was readily acknowledged by the missionary churches in the new state. The Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe has been at the forefront in highlighting the link that exists between poverty and bad governance. The prominent Catholic priest in Zimbabwe, Father Oscar Wermter (2003:32) stated: "A healthy economy rests on clean politics". The direct implication of Wermter's statement is that there is

a link between Zimbabwe's economy and its unclean politics. He added: "In Zimbabwe we have the added difficulty that the present government and ruling party claim practically an *absolute* right to govern, based on the revolution that brought them to power" (Wermter 2003:33). The ruling elite rule purely based on having fought in the country's war of liberation, monopolising the state's economic resources. Rejecting the ruling elite's monopolisation of the state, Wermter (2003:33) said, "Development needs the active and free co-operation of all the people". He added, "If there is not freedom of expression, no right to information, no freedom of association and political action there will not be any development" (Wermter 2003:33). In this statement, Wermter traced the state of socioeconomic poverty prevailing in the country to the undemocratic tendencies of the government of the day. Elsewhere, Wermter asks: "What has democracy to do with bread-and-butter issues?" (2003:114). He illustrates that democracy has everything to do with bread-and-butter issues by telling an imaginary story of a Member of Parliament who only visits his constituency during election time to be elected into office but is absent from the constituency during the term of his office, thus hampering socioeconomic development (Wermter 2003:114–5). The illustration points out the lack of accountability by the members of parliament to the people who elected them hoping that they would spearhead development. Many constituencies in Zimbabwe have continually witnessed absentee and non-performing members of parliament who are repeatedly voted into office, making a mockery of the practice of periodically holding elections in the country. According to Wermter (2003:116), "Voting for the right candidate means better healthcare. Voting for the wrong one means sickness and disease".

The missionary churches addressed failed national governance by confronting it with a voice of condemnation. Noteworthy is the 1984 pastoral letter of the ZCBC entitled *Socialism and the Gospel of Christ* (1984) in which the Bishops express their regret that the ruling elite were not fulfilling the social justice they were proclaiming. The Bishops noted that the politicians and public servants were preaching self-reliance to the masses but were not themselves prepared to render the same selfless service and sacrifice they expected from the ordinary people, particularly in the rural areas. Disappointingly, not even political leaders who came through the Catholic mission schools were coming to the front, despite having been taught to share their knowledge and skills with the less privileged by serving them in the still-to-be-developed areas of the country as teachers, doctors and nurses. The Bishops asked: "How many of them have understood that they received their education not as "private property", but as something to be shared with their poorer brothers and sisters?" (ZCBC 1984). To Father

147

Wermter (2003:115), even some Catholics believe that the CCJP should stay away from politics, when in fact the commission should address "bread and butter issues question like building schools and hospitals in poor areas, creating jobs and making sure workers get just wages".

Although the various critical voices against the corruption and ineptitude of those running the economy have not stopped the ruling elite from doing as they please, it is important to note that the clergy's criticism often does reach its intended recipients. President Mugabe is reported to have dismissed as "nonsense" the criticism from the ZCBC that the citizens were extremely angry at his oppressive rule and poor economic policies (Reuters, May 04, 2007).[81] Mugabe is reported to have "warned that his government could start treating the clergy as political foes" (Reuters, May 04, 2007). He reportedly warned the bishops that by criticising his government, they treaded in very dangerous waters and is quoted lamenting: "They have gone wrong, sadly, very sadly. This is an area we warn them not to tread. It was a sorry letter, a disgraceful piece of work, an error, a disastrous error and we shall tell them when we meet them" (Reuters, May 04, 2007). This response from the President shows that it is risky business for the church to criticise government policies and actions (Chitando, Taringa & Mapuranga 2014:185). The ZCBC has endured severe criticism from Mugabe for their relentless criticism of his misrule that has resulted in great poverty and suffering in the country. The CCJP presented a report to Mugabe evidencing the atrocities against the Ndebele, in the Midlands and Matebeleland in the 1980s (Hallencreutz 1988a:254). Kirchick (2007) reports that Mugabe responded by ominously warning them that the churches in Zimbabwe, "must abandon forever the tendency or temptation to play marionette for foreign so-called parent churches whose interests and perspectives may, and often will be, at variance with the best interests of our country". In other words, the criticism of the government policies turned the critics into the enemy of the state.

An earlier section (5.3.5) noted that, in the colonial period, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) exhibited very strong leanings towards otherworldliness. Although with time, the EFZ warmed up to the new state and began to be engaged in socioeconomic and political issues, an element of otherworldliness continued to pervade the organisation for a considerable time. Bhebhe (1988:326) highlights that, once the fears that ZANU-PF would turn the country into an anti-religious communist state were allayed after 1983, the group began to seek avenues

---

[81] In this thesis, expect in a few unavoidable situations, reference from the news media only indicate historical occurrences that are best authenticated by the news reports.

of cooperation with the government. While in 1963, at its formation, the EFZ limited itself to purely evangelistic and spiritual goals, in 1986 it adopted a mission that also accounted for socioeconomic and political issues. Bhebhe (1988:327) reports that the EFZ expressed a commitment to promoting and coordinating development and relief assistance in needy areas and also being a representative voice for its members in matters of church and national needs. The progressive warming up towards the new state can also be attributed to the joining of the EFZ by prominent leaders of mega Evangelical churches like Ezekiel Guti of Zimbabwe Assembles of God in Africa (ZAOGA), Andrew Wutawunashe of Family of God (FOG) and other Evangelical leaders from a middle-class, educated and professionalised background. The presence of younger and educated clergy from professional backgrounds as varied as law and business management, articulate and with ambitions to make a Christian impact in the society (although lacking the training of a rigorous critical theological curriculum), meant that the EFZ would not remain on the fringes of national socioeconomic and politics. Thus, a concern for social justice began to take root.

However, the worldview of the EFZ has continued to be informed by privatised spirituality and evangelism. As Bhebhe (1988:328) highlights that Evangelicals sees their primary role as that of preaching Christ and evangelising the world. This means the efforts by the Evangelicals of addressing poverty are not so much focused in promoting human flourishing but in evangelism. In responding to poverty and socio-political issues, Evangelicals "believe their involvement must be on their own terms on the basis of their own priorities" (Bhebhe 1988:328). A notable example was the EFZ's Target 2000 campaign that began in late 1990s with the aim of ensuring that every square of Zimbabwe was evangelised by year 2000. Similarly, when national discussions for a new constitution began in the late 1990s, Revd Andrew Wutawunashe, then President of the EFZ, called for Zimbabwe to be declared a Christian state. What can be seen in this Evangelical overture and quest for massive Christianisation of the country is a belief that as more people become Christian, particularly those in socioeconomic and political strategic positions, national material prosperity will be realised and poverty will be uprooted. This theological ethical framework relies on an uncritical interpretation of 2 Chronicles 7:14.

However, a significant problem in the EFZ's strategies of socioeconomic and political response is an otherworldliness and a concern to change the world with the gospel that lacks a well-developed critical thinking. Confronted about the impoverishing nature of Mugabe's policies, EFZ leaders often resort to an uncritical interpretation of Romans 13:1-7 and refrain from criticising the state. There is a strong belief that the true believer should not try to change the

world through political activism but by fervently seeking for divine intervention because "when one is leading a life of prayer, everything can be left to God" (Mukonyora 2008:141). Turning to texts such as 2 Chronicles 7:14, Matthew 7:7 and 1 Timothy 2:1-2, the Evangelical option is not a prophetic one but a priestly reliance on divine intervention.

Furthermore, evangelicals tend to be fragmented and to compete against each other, often lacking leadership that has undergone rigorous theological training. What Bhebhe (1988:317) pointed out in 1988, that Evangelicals "have numerous elementary and often sub-standard and poorly staffed Bible schools all over the place", remains true today. Recently, Rugwiji (2014:1017) mourned the absence of critical Old Testament scholarship in Zimbabwe by attributing it to the "invasion" of the country by bogus theological colleges and universities offering degrees that do not require any basic pre-requirements and have no rigorous course of training. Rugwiji (2014:1017) classified these cheap and rigour-free degrees as "degrees from under trees" to highlight that these degrees can be cheaply obtained from anywhere, even under a tree in the bush. Although Rugwiji did not make any reference to the Evangelical churches, what he describes is true in many Evangelical circles in Zimbabwe. Rather than pull resources together to develop a well-resourced theological college, evangelical churches continue to individually run poorly-funded colleges. As a result, they lack well-developed and theologically critical ecclesiological ethical approaches to addressing their context of poverty.

Erica Bornstein (2002:5) highlights that Christian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Africa "emerge from a history of missionaries who provided economic development services during the colonial era". She adds that before the emergence of the NGOs "missionaries were at the forefront of offering agricultural assistance, education, and self-help programs for Africans where colonial states did not" (Bornstein 2002:5). Bornstein's observation affirms that traditional churches have always been concerned about addressing poverty in Africa. In post-independent Zimbabwe, Christian-oriented NGOs such as World Vision International and Christian Care added an approach to economic development that has a religious slant (Bornstein 2002:5). Furthermore, the Zimbabwean government's loss of credibility with international donors has resulted in the channelling of poverty-alleviation funds through NGOs. In this way, since some of the leading NGOs are faith-based, it means that churches have ultimately "performed much of the work that a radically downsized Zimbabwean state could no longer accomplish" (Bornstein 2002:5).

There is recognition that Jesus' message about abundant life includes salvation from socio-economic poverty, making socio-economic development among the poor an urgent issue.

150

Bornstein (2002:11) explains that in the ZCC, through its humanitarian wing Christian Care, "the concept of holistic development, spiritual and material poverty were addressed to enable a Christian, abundant life". This translated to such acts as borehole drilling in rural areas so the poor could have access to clean water and irrigation.

This section has mainly concentrated on the activities of the Catholics, the mainline Protestant churches and the Evangelical churches in independent Zimbabwe. While the Roman Catholic Church has tended to be very critical of the government's corruption and bad governance, the ZCC has tended to function closely with the state, while the Evangelical churches tend to function independently. An important point of agreement among the churches examined in this section is the recognition of the role of government in addressing poverty. That is, there is a consensus that poverty is a socioeconomically and politically structural issue. While all the churches practice some form of charity and poverty relief to the poor, there is a recognition that the government must implement good policies in order to truly address poverty. The Catholics adopt a prophetic critical strategy which, which from a Moltmannian view tends to reflect an awareness of the historicity of God of that opts for the poor and the kingdom's call for the love and protection of life. The ZCC's general approach is one of strategic partnership that prefers avoidance of aggravating the state with critical criticism and through its humanitarian winger, Christian Care to pursue aid and relief work. However, in the Zimbabwean context of poverty riddled with corruption and poor national leadership with public leaders who only work for themselves an apolitical approach to charity leaves the church vulnerable to co-option by the corrupt state resulting in the church being used by corrupt politicians to do their dirty work. The EFZ 'priestly attitude' of uncritically praying for the state as ordained by God and hoping to that the situation will be transformed by seeking divine intervention and evangelisation is underpinned with dichotomous view of reality, the spiritual and the physical, the things of this world and the heavenly things.

6.4. The Rise and Growth of the Spiritualised Engagement of Poverty

Pentecostal prosperity which has propounded a highly spiritualised approach to poverty eradication. Mainline Christianity in Zimbabwe in all its forms is increasingly being eclipsed by Pentecostal prosperity Christianity. This section examines the responses of prosperity Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe.

6.4.1 Prosperity Faith and the Engaging of Sociopolitical and Economic Barriers

Prosperity Pentecostalism is the gospel of victorious and prosperous socioeconomic Christian living. It is the gospel geared towards the empowerment of the poor to be victors and conquerors over their socioeconomic and political impossibilities in their immediate contexts (Asamoah-Gyadu 2009:40; Kügler 2012:40). Prosperity theology derives its name from its emphasis that "God's promised generosity, as demonstrated with Abraham, *is* available for every believing Christian on earth today" (Kalu 2008:255, italics added). Furthermore, affluence in material possessions are viewed as signs of God's favour and the only marks of a true faith in God (Maxwell 2006:9; Van der Watt 2012:45). Unlike the classical Pentecostal focus on holiness and self-denial that was suspicious material 'things of this world', prosperity Pentecostalism takes the exact directly opposite view to affirm spiritual right to possess and enjoy the material 'things of this world'(Maxwell 2006:9; Martin 2008:14). Thus, whereas traditional Pentecostalism stresses other-worldly holiness, the prosperity movement asserts this-worldly material prosperity.

The impact of the prosperity gospel in Zimbabwe, like in most of Africa, is related to the socio-economic and political paralysis currently obtaining in the country (Gifford 1993:146–189, 1998; Marshall 2009:167). Since the colonial period in Zimbabwe, when Ezekiel Guti's now quasi-prosperity church, ZAOGA [82] emerged, the gospel of prosperity has intensified as the socioeconomic and political situation in the country worsened (Maxwell 1998; Togarasei 2011; Biri 2012; Biri & Togarasei 2013; Chitando 2013; Vengeyi 2013; Chitando, Gunda & Kügler 2014). The willingness to turn to prosperity prophets and pastors has tended to increase the more the poor and powerless have found themselves overwhelmed by socio-economic structures that continually impoverish them and hinder their efforts to be extricated from the claws of poverty. Under their failed, corrupt and oppressive national governments, the poor of Africa daily bear the brunt of tattered socioeconomic and political systems, shocking levels of poverty and unemployment, chronic scarcity of basic supplies, state violence and political injustice, high levels of criminality, insecurity, and violence on a continent reduced to pariah status (Marshall 2009:167; Kalu 2008:259). In Zimbabwe, just like across the continent, this

---

[82] Maxwell's (2007) research demonstrates that Ezekiel Guti's ZAOGA church has progressively shifted from its 1960s-era holiness orientation towards a prosperity orientation. Furthermore, Guti is a product of Gordon Lindsay's Christ for Nations Institute where the flamboyant prosperity pastor Benson Idahosa of Nigeria also trained.

socioeconomic and political paralysis has provided a fertile ground for the emergence and growth of the prosperity gospel.

Furthermore, the prosperity Pentecostal movement has emerged not just out of the context of poverty, but essentially out of a disillusionment with mainline Christianity's otherworldliness that has not provided the poor with needed spiritual resources for coping with a context of poverty. As Maxwell shows, Ezekiel Guti and ZAOGA emerged within a colonial Rhodesian "cauldron of poverty, social upheaval, and political unrest" (2006:66) as a spirituality for countering white ecclesiastical domination. This means that the prosperity movement is "[r]ooted in [the African] struggles for survival" (Maxwell 2006:96). Furthermore, as Maxwell's (1998:351) analysis of ZAOGA shows, while prosperity movements draw "upon various American versions of the prosperity gospel to legitimate … excessive accumulation, its own dominant prosperity teachings have arisen from predominantly southern African sources and are shaped by Zimbabwean concerns". Mainline churches have generally been found wanting when it comes to seeking solutions to the things referred to by Maxwell as "the struggle for survival" and "Zimbabwean concerns". There is also a strong notion among prosperity churches that mainline churches are irrelevant to the struggles and concerns of believers. Gifford (1992:163) presents Bonke referring to the mainline churches as dead, "graveyard churches" without Jesus and with a dead religion that is used by Satan "to keep people from God". This statement captures a serious disgruntlement with mainline churches. The poor find that the gospel of prosperity "speaks to [them] where they are" (Kalu 2008:259). In other words, the socioeconomic context of poverty in Africa has provided a fertile ground for prosperity theology to thrive (Mwaura 2008:186).

6.4.2. The Replacing of Visionless Politicians with Visionary Prophets of God

A significant problem in the Zimbabwean context of poverty is failed national leadership. The inability of national leadership to provide visionary and sustainable socio-economic solutions has resulted in Christians preferring prophets and pastors who offer messages on how to experience breakthroughs where politicians, economists and industrialists have failed. The charismatic nature of the prosperity prophets, coupled with their visionary, decisive and astute leadership, quickly win the trust of the poor and powerless population in a context where both state and the politicians have emerged as "violent, bankrupt and immoral" (Maxwell 2006:185). Incidentally, according to news reports a significant number of politicians including government ministers patronise prosperity churches and attend seminars on deliverance from poverty (The Daily News 2014; NewsDay Zimbabwe 2015b). Because prosperity prophets

exude tremendous socioeconomic visionary power, promising God's favour on the poor and economically marginalised, the context of poverty provides them ample space to thrive. To their great credit, their ostentatious lifestyles model the success of their proclamation. To the poor who have been bruised and brutalised by the impoverishing short-sighted and corrupt policies of their national superintendents, the visionary images of prosperity prophets speak life and hope. News media constantly highlight that the prosperity prophets now fill the vacuum created by failed political and socioeconomic leadership in post-independent Zimbabwe (NewsDay Zimbabwe 2013; 2015c). The prophets have emerged in the current socioeconomic and political scene as those who can lead poor and powerless Zimbabweans to realise the unrealised fruits in the African quest for liberation from white domination of Rhodesia.

Foundational to overcoming poverty in prosperity theology is the mediating power of the anointed prophet or pastor. In Zimbabwe, the current trend is for leaders to refer to themselves as the 'anointed prophet', although some prosperity leaders are content with just the title 'pastor'. Men dominate the movement; women are few and in most cases seem to find their calling based on being wives of the prophets. The leaders claim to be anointed by God to perform great miracles, particularly the liberation of God's people from the powers of the devil that inhibit their human flourishing. The prophet or pastor, often called the 'man of God', presents himself as the mediating power of God's blessings, healing and liberation to the ordinary people. The presence, the words, and actions of the prophet are synonymous to those of God. In prosperity theology, the power needed by the poor to overcome their poverty is sought in relation to the anointing of the prophet. The poor seek the intervention of the prophet to deliver them from the bonds of poverty.

6.4.3. The Presentation of Poverty as a Spiritual Condition

Prosperity theology holds that material prosperity in this present life is the birth right for all Christians. Believers can and must experience material prosperity now, but only if they adjust their understanding of God's word. Key passages for the prosperity interpretation include 2 Corinthians 8:9 and 3 John 2, which function as constructs of the realised eschatological doctrine that material prosperity is a Christian birth right to be enjoyed in this present life. This theme is illustrated by the Nigerian couple of Pastor Chris and Pastor Anita's who have a large following in Zimbabwe.[83] In their co-authored one stop spiritual resource guide, *A Topical*

---

[83] Media reports suggest that Pastor Chris and Pastor Anita have recently divorced, and Pastor Chris now runs Christ Embassy on his own (TimesLIVE 2014).

Compendium Volume 3 (2011), with such topics as *Called into Prosperity* (2011:15) and *All Things are Yours!* (2011:18) they announce that prosperity is a birth right of every Christian. Believers are constantly reminded to live with the fact that, as God's children, they were born to prosper (Oyakhilome & Oyakhilome 2011:15,17,18,19). Pastor Chris asks rhetorically: "Do you know that God has given you the right to live?"(Oyakhilome 2011:35).

If material possessions and health are birth rights of the believer in this present life, it means that poverty must be summarily rejected as demonic and reserved for pagans. Thus, poverty is demonised and paganised. Prophet Makandiwa (2013), in a series of messages from 2013 with the title "Financial Summit", preached a sermon called *Discover Vision, Execute Mission,* in which he declared: "every time the devil wants to kill people, he sends poverty first". The prophet averred: "Poverty is the forerunner of the devil; poverty goes ahead of the devil and prepares a way for the devil" (Makandiwa 2013). To substantiate his claim he argues Jezebel's conspiracy to kill Naboth succeeded because the queen first starved the people in Naboth's city by ordering a fast (1 Kings 21). Therefore, in the prosperity genre, poverty prepares the way for the devil; there is nothing blessed about poverty, it must be resisted at all costs.

In a context of poverty where survival for the poor and powerless is a *real* daily miracle, prosperity theology provides a vision of supernatural triumph. According to prosperity theology, believers in impossible contexts must have a conquering faith that believes all things are possible with God. Such a faith is marked with positive confessions and positive declarations of breakthroughs. A positive faith verbally denies the negative situations, it mentally envisions prosperous conditions and verbally declares and decrees them into being. Repeatedly, Prophet Angel and his wife, Prophetess Beverly, in their co-authored daily devotional bookless *Power for Today: Jump Starting Your Day: Daily Devotional* (2014), make the point that words have the power to bring death and life – poverty and prosperity depend on whether one utters positive things or negative things. For example, in a devotional entry entitled "Self Entrapment", Angel declares: "The biggest trap in your life *are your words, they make you or break you.* Your own words can seize you, for life and death are in the power of the tongue" (21 January 2014, italics added). When confronted with socioeconomic impossibilities, rather than murmuring and mourning in resignation, Angel (2014:21 January) says believers must rather "talk… [their]…way out" of crisis (see also (Oyakhilome & Oyakhilome 2011:40). Related to this is the supposed difference between 'fact' and 'truth' where *fact* is the real situation on the ground, in this case one's poverty and *truth* is seen as that said by God, who transcends what is seen by the naked eye, namely, that the believer is not

poor but rich.[84] The truth is what God says, as interpreted by the prophet, not the factual reality on the ground. Therefore, the poor should say, 'I am rich!'[85] In prosperity theology, words either curse or bless. They are messengers to effect the actions of the person who utters them; one reaps according to the words of their utterance (Asamoah-Gyadu 2007:349).

At the beginning of this section, it was pointed out that, in prosperity theology, overcoming poverty requires the mediating power of the anointed prophet or the pastor. Indeed, the man of God acts as intercessor and mediator between the poor and God, by praying for the poor, laying hands on them to deliver them from the spirit of poverty and uttering prophetic words of prosperity on the poor. Above these things, the mediating role of the prophet is the ground upon which the poor must plant their seed in order to reap prosperity. The principle of sowing and reaping, which is means sacrificial giving to God through the anointed prophet, is a basic principle of breaking poverty in prosperity theology (Deuschle 2003:74). The doctrine emphasizes that the "spiritual and material fortunes of a believer are dependent on how much he gives, spiritually and materially, to God (mostly through the pastors and prophets, who are God's representatives), who will reward him by 'prospering' him" (Marshall 1992:15). Kenneth Hagin, Sr, who is regarded as the father of the prosperity movement, emphasizes this principle in his *Biblical Keys to Financial Prosperity* (1995) in a chapter titled *"Honour Your Pastor and Receive God's Blessings"*. Similarly, the Zimbabwean prophet, Urbert Angel, who claims to be a disciple of Hagin, Sr, in his *God's Get Rich Quick Scheme: Secrets to the Quickest Way of Getting Rich God's Way* (2013) authoritatively intones that God wants Christian to get rich and has rolled out to all believers an agriculturally-based 'Get Rich Quick Scheme,' based on the unchangeable law of seedtime and harvest as long as the earth still exists (Angel 2013:11-13). Angel turns to 1 Kings 17:7-24, to the example of the widow of Zarephath who was greatly blessed because she fed the hungry prophet Elijah with her last food reserves. From this biblical narrative, Angel argues that the rich soil upon which Christians should plant their seed in order to harvest rich blessings is the anointed men of God and giving to the poor, or tithing and offering to the church (Angel 2013:15, 60, 87, 89). For Angel, the soil that is

---

[84] Prophet Angel similarly proclaims: "Cease from declaring negative confessions, instead decree and declare life into your situation, say the same things which God has declared over your life. Don't get entangled by facts, speak truth and act upon it" (Angel & Angel 2014:21 January).

[85] The devotion on the 2nd of January 2014 closes with the following prophetic declaration:
"I am what God says I am; I have what He says I have. I claim my wealth today. God delights in my prosperity and his cities shall be built by my prosperity. He gives me power to get wealth and He may establish his covenant upon the earth. In the name of Jesus" (Angel &Angel 2014:2 January).

fertile enough for the seed of the poor to yield rich blessings is the people anointed by God, specifically: "Men of God with great anointing" (Angel 2013:87). To affirm the mediating power of the prophets, Angel says that, before the believer plants his or her seed, a great consideration must be given to the prophet's level of anointing and the following questions must be asked: "What do they have? Do they have plenty or less? What achievements do they possess? What is the impact they have made on earth?" (Angel 2013:87).

That there is more blessings in giving to the anointed men of God than the local church and the poor poses serious ecclesiological ethical questions in the light of God's option for the poor and the many biblical texts that teach that it is blessed to give to the poor (e.g. James 1:27). Related to this is the problem of wealthy pastors who continue to command the poor to give to them only for the pastors to build expensive church buildings, buy private jets and even make personal investments in stock markets. According to recent media reports, Prophet Walter Magaya is reported, on at least two occasions, to have bailed out the Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA) when the association had no money to send the national soccer team for international matches first, with US$28,000 (The Sunday News 2015), than a few months later with US$54,000 (NewsDay Zimbabwe 2015c). Considering the government's inability to fund the national soccer team due to lack of funding against the priority of national service delivery, the prophet's donation, given the prevailing state of poverty in the country, raises theological ethical questions. The nature of this philanthropic act signals the gap between the richer pastors who can prioritises soccer matches and the poor congregants who struggle for daily basic necessities. However noble it may seem to assist national sports teams to fulfil international fixtures, it poses theological questions to perform such a task with money raised from the sacrificial offerings of the poor who have "deprive[d] themselves for the pastor in the hope of receiving a hundredfold from the little they have" Lado (2006:25). Studies link prosperity theology's principle of sowing and reaping more to fundraising than to actually empowering the poor (Harrell 1975:35, 74,105,229; Horn 1989:35).

6.5. The Nature of the Church of the Poor in Prosperity Pentecostalism

This section looks at the eschatological ecclesiological challenges that are posed by prosperity theology to the church in a context of poverty such as Zimbabwe.

6.5.1. The Incorporation of Material Wellbeing in the Church's Liturgy

A significant positive element of prosperity theology in Zimbabwe is that it has brought social progress and development into church discourse in a way that it was never before. In prosperity

157

theology, the church is concerned not just with spiritual liberation; it is also concerned with socioeconomic liberation (Maxwell 2006:111; Asamoah-Gyadu 2007:348; Kalu 2008:257; Ojo 2008:171; Kügler 2012:13; Angel 2013). Prosperity Pentecostalism counters the resignation and determinism in which the poor often fall. In other words, "the gospel of Jesus Christ – with its promise of liberation, deliverance, forgiveness, grace and restoration – can never be a gospel of poverty" (Asamoah-Gyadu 2009:41). The prosperity movement has positively contributed to the inspiration for the poor to solve their poverty.

Essentially, in prosperity churches the liturgy of the worship service is not about the affections of the heart towards God, but also God's affections towards the believer's socioeconomic and political wellbeing. In the liturgy of the prosperity Pentecostal churches, believers do not only meekly confess their sins but they also rebuke the devil and his demonic forces for stealing their health, their wealth and their peace. In the liturgical genre of prosperity Pentecostalism to believe in God demands that believers assert themselves and claim back what the devil has stolen from them. In observing the Lord's Supper, by eating of the body of Christ and drinking the cup, they feed not just their spiritual bodies, but also take into their physical bodies the victorious Son of God which results in miraculous healing and empowerment for all kinds of victories. That is, liturgy does not just centre on God's deliverance and liberation of the Christian from the pangs of hell, but also from the pangs of physical hunger, thirsty and bodily nakedness and socioeconomic and political oppression. Therefore, the worship service in prosperity churches, far from being just a spiritual event, is also a political and socioeconomic event. The worship service in Pentecostal prosperity churches does not end without a segment for the deliverance and liberation from the spirit of poverty, demonic forces of laziness and all spiritual bonds that bring poverty (Maxwell 1998).

It is significant that the gospel of prosperity attracts "both entrepreneurs and young people in search of opportunities" (Lado 2006:25). Research by the Centre for Development and Enterprise in South Africa affirms that Pentecostalism translates progress and development into a church discourse. Pentecostalism does this by enabling congregants "to discover their potential and interests, … influencing productivity by enhancing hard work and motiving members to achieve higher standards of living, as well as upholding high ethical standards in a society burdened by persistent moral failures" (Ojo 2008:32). In this effort, Pentecostal spirituality has become a crucial stimulus to Christians "trying to define, initiate, and promote development that touches on the personal lives of members" (Ojo 2008:32). In particular, the emphasis on prosperity and success works to "provide an impetus towards development" (Ojo

2008:32). The Centre for Development and Enterprise made positive acknowledgement of the positive socioeconomic role of both traditional Pentecostalism and Prosperity movements in its two reports, *Under the Radar: Pentecostalism in South African and its Potential Social and Economic Role* (Southall & Rule 2008) and *Faith on the Move: Pentecostalism and is Potential Contribution to Development* (Berger 2008). The preaching, for example from Bishop Oyedepo of Nigeria, challenges Christians to pursue material wealth in the present world, thus bringing the topic of economic progress and development within the purview of the church pulpit. In Ojo's (2008:29) observation, signs such as: "Jesus is the answer to all problems. So keep asking" may not make sense to policy makers as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. However, these signals reflect "large-scale grassroots mobilisation that has been achieved though such religious claims" (Ojo 2008:29). However, as Ojo (2008:32) further notes, "what is not so clear is how to link development at the domestic level, which is the main emphasis of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, to development at the institutional level, much so desirable in modern Africa". As noted by Togarasei (2011:341) the raging irony is the fact that the "Pentecostal gospel of prosperity thrives in a context of poverty".

6.5.2. An Emphasis on Active Membership in the Church Community

Furthermore, prosperity Pentecostal churches, in keeping with their roots in classical Pentecostalism, are churches of the Holy Spirit resulting in an emphasis of the priesthood of all believers. It is common to hear statements such as the 'the Holy Spirit is the bishop of this church' to reflect prosperity Pentecostal churches' self-understanding as initiated, empowered, driven and dependent on the guidance and presence of the Holy Spirit. Hence Prophet Angel calls his church "The Spirit's Embassy". Thus there is in Pentecostal prosperity churches a strong emphasis on the charismatic gifting of the laity. Moltmann's notion of the church as the grassroots community in which every believer is aware of his or her spiritual gifting and actually uses it is alive in prosperity churches. For instance, communality is central to Tom Deuschle (2003), the founding pastor of Celebration Church, a leading Pentecostal prosperity church in Zimbabwe that promotes a culture of entrepreneurship among its members. In his book, *Building People, Building Dreams: How a Church Can Change a Nation* (2003), in Chapter 8, entitled "A Church for All Nations", he lists seven principles that have enabled his church to "build people and build dreams" (2003:100). Four of these principles (principles two, four, five and seven) affirm the communal nature of the church. Deuschle emphasises that the members of the church cannot be effectively pastored unless they actively participate in the

church's programmes and cell home groups (2003:106).[86] For Deuschle, "there is a difference between being a church member and a church partner" (2003:104); therefore, whoever places membership in his church must take active responsibilities in the church (Deuschle 2003:104). This highlights a keen interest in the priesthood of all believers. Moreover, this sense of communality also serves as an important resource of empowering the poor (Togarasei 2011:345).

Furthermore, an impression of a sense of communality is also demonstrated in Deuschle's understanding of Paul's teaching in Ephesian 4:11-12, that the role of Christian leaders is "to prepare God's people for works of service" as a call to "building people and building dreams" (2003:69-70). Here Deuschle gives the passage an entrepreneurial interpretation which is in tandem with the entrepreneurial worldview of Pentecostal prosperity church leaders (Balcomb 2007:31; Marshall 2009:182). As Balcomb (2007:31) indicates, Pentecostal prosperity pastors function as examples of entrepreneurship in that "most of them have, sometimes against considerable odds, built their churches with little or no help from any established church organization". Throughout his book, Deuschle (2003) highlights how his ministry is a result of intense standing against all kinds of odds. To fulfil the entrepreneurial pastoral mandate, he set up Victory Business Forum "to help raise up, disciple, and train business people and professionals to carry out the mandate of bringing God's kingdom to the earth" (2003:71, 72-73).

As has already been pointed out Pentecostal prosperity churches discourage their members from being seekers of employment and encourage them to be providers of employment (Deuschle 2003:55,70-72,78). [87] Likewise, to inculcate the mentality of entrepreneurship among the young people of his church, Deuschle's church provides opportunities and forums where these young people "interface with successful Christian business leaders and learn the values and principles that have guided their careers to success" (Deuschle 2003:78, 79). A sense of communality can be sensed in this provision for mentoring of the young people and networking with the already established entrepreneurs. There is a strong sense in which the

---

[86] Deuschle: Principle 2: "We emphasize the kingdom of God, and the expression of that Kingdom in the earth is the local church" (2003:102). Principle 4: "As much as we believe in the church as the vehicle which the family of God is established, God uses people as His instrument to do this" (2003:103). Principle 5: "We teach people that their walk will deepen only after identification, involvement, and investment". Principle 7: "Cell groups are a lifestyle" 2003:106).

[87] Togarasei (2011:340) explains that, to the prosperity Pentecostals, the "word job (employment) is said to be an abbreviation of 'Just Over (being) Broke'. To be employed therefore is to be 'just over being broke', to be just a month away from poverty".

aspiring entrepreneurs will not find themselves struggling alone without anyone to pick them up.

This section has highlighted that prosperity Pentecostalism is a church for the poor in that there is a deliberate focus on the poor where they are offered spiritual means of responding to their poverty. As noted above (6.5.1.) the question remains concerning the extent to which prosperity Pentecostalism has effectively addressed the context of poverty in Zimbabwean. However, a critical contribution is the inculcation of dissatisfaction with the context of poverty among the poor and the constant reminder to the poor of the availability of spiritual resources of overcoming their own poverty.

6.6. The Problems of Prosperity Pentecostalism in a Context of Poverty

This section examines the problematic challenges in the prosperity movement in a context of poverty.

6.6.1. Eschatological Hope that Undermines God's Future Justice for the Poor

While prosperity theology promotes the material wellbeing of the poor in this present age, it has a very poor (and at times, non-existent) theodicy resulting in mocking those who die in this life poor and powerless. The over-realised eschatological perspective in prosperity Pentecostalism fails to account for the wrongs suffered by the poor in this age – their impoverishment, exploitation, marginalisation and even death at the hands of the ruthless and greedy elite – the wrongs that will never be addressed in this life. Without any qualification, the idea that poverty is a curse and that the poor are poor because they lack faith grossly undermines and overlooks the many socioeconomic and political factors that cause poverty that are beyond the control of the poor and powerless. It also overestimates the power of the poor in a manner that eventually mocks them.

Because of the prosperity gospel's "emphasis on God's act on behalf of the believer here and now, eschatology is not in the spotlight" (Horn 1989:2). Prosperity theology overlooks the fact that God's promise of hope for the future is also a promise that justice will be served to God's poor (Matt 25). The eschatological promise that tears will be wiped away, that pain and mourning will be put to end assures the poor that their loses in this present life will be rewarded. In a context of poverty such as in Zimbabwe, where the poor endure poverty on account of evil governance, corruption and patronage, the message of prosperity theology misses the God's promise of socioeconomic justice to the poor in the promised future. The realised eschatology

of prosperity theology negates God's promises to the poor and marginalised that justice will be served in the coming heaven.

A serious problem in prosperity theology is the idea of God's option for the rich and powerful, those who are able to plant seeds. At the very least, this notion is an assault to the basic teachings and practices of Jesus. The God presented in prosperity theology is a God who is interested in those who give money, uninterested in those who have no capacity to give. Kügler (2012:13) rightly points out that "Jesus calls the poor happy not because they are poor but because God will put an end to their precarious situation". The question of theodicy can only be adequately answered in relation to God's promise of the glorious future where the fair, just, loving and sovereign God will settle all forms of inequalities. Therefore, to emphasise present earthly comfort, which in this present life is generally achieved by the rich and powerful, is to undermine God's promised future where the exploited will be comforted (Matt 25). The undermining of God's future justice for the poor often leads prosperity prophets to be willingly co-opted by the evil regimes of Africa in the perpetuation of evil socioeconomic structures.

6.6.2. The Commoditisation of the Church in Prosperity Pentecostalism

A significant development within the prosperity movement is the commoditisation of the church by the church leaders (Banda & Senokoane 2009:220). According to Moltmann, as has already been noted, "[e]very statement about the church will be a statement about Christ" (CPS 6). In other words, the church exists because of Christ and for his glory only. Yet, in the prosperity movement, the church is increasingly identified with the anointing of the prophets than with Christ. While it can be pointed out that the prophet's anointing points beyond the anointed to God the anointer, nonetheless the highly oligarchical nature of the prophets over their ministries raises questions about whether every statement about their ministries is a statement about Christ. Among their followers there seems to be far greater loyalty to the prophet's anointing than to the church. Furthermore, the emphasis is not on the institutional church but on where the Spirit of God is currently 'moving', by which is meant the miraculous activities of the prophets. It is common to hear statements that prioritise the believer's vertical relationship with Christ in a manner that undermines Christ's commitment to the church as expressed in passages such as Ephesians 5:24-26.

Since the loyalty of the church members is tied to the anointing of the charismatic leader, fragmentation in these churches is high as the leaders "struggle for clients in a competitive religious market, [as] members appear to be easily worn to new congregations *when an aspiring*

leader breaks away to form his own church (Marshall 1992:16, emphasis added). In Zimbabwe, each prominent prophet that has emerged in the scene has literally caused a decline in membership in the other prophets' churches. It is difficult to agree with Asamoah-Gyadu's (2007:350) observation that "one of the most distinguishing theological features of modern African Pentecostalism is its radicalization of the biblical idea of the priesthood of all believers. The Pentecostals emphasize that God is directly accessible in the experience of the Spirit, thus in principle destroying the necessity of every kind of external priestly mediation". If this was true, the great treks to the shrines of Africa's mega-prophets such as TB Joshua and Pastor Chris would not enjoy their current popularity.

An emerging ecclesiastical model in the prosperity movement is the shift from the use of the word *church* to *ministry* to refer to the church. With this shift from 'church' to 'ministry' has emerged an entrepreneurial approach to doing church to the extent that the church "can easily [be] mistake[n] … for any successful business enterprise." (2005:358). Studies on leading prosperity pastors in Zimbabwe reveal that these leaders are oligarchical and commoditise their followers to the extent that they are only accountable to themselves (Togarasei 2005:360; Maxwell 2006:107,134; Banda & Senokoane 2009:220; Biri 2012:2). Furthermore, as Togarasei (2011:341) points out, some of the churches are registered as private companies owned by the founders. This creates serious tensions at the death of the founders, which could leave the church in the hands of family members who have no interest in the church. In general, prosperity prophets operate as brands of their movements, hence any criticism against them incurs a serious backlash because it is an attack of their brand. As Marshall (2009:181–182) explains, in prosperity movements finding a church and 'doing God's work' means the accumulation of personal wealth and self-aggrandisement. She adds:

> In a marked departure from mainline Protestant and older Pentecostal churches, the model of church organization came increasingly to resemble that of small (or large) private enterprise, and an internal economy developed based on shared faith and new networks. Church activities proper were joined by subsidiary revenue-generating activities: the sale of media productions for the most part, but in the largest ministries, Bible colleges, private universities, banks, medical clinics, and on-line subscriptions. Approximately 80 per cent of the churches and ministries founded thought the late 1980s and 1990s have become de facto the private property of their founder-leaders (Marshall 2009:182).

This entrepreneurial approach to church leadership, with the founder prophet functioning as if a CEO or a president of a personal company, can be traced to the 1950s American revival evangelists, about whom Harrell (1975:106) says their "outstanding ministries were not built

on gifts alone but on the financial and organisational skills of the evangelists". [88] Among prosperity churches in Zimbabwe, the leader is far from being "only a first among equals" as claimed by Asamoah-Gyadu (2007:350).

It is thus also difficult to agree with Asamoah-Gyadu's (2007:350) view that prosperity churches have "an anti-hierarchical tendency" that recognises the "prestige or anointing of an extraordinary gifted charismatic persons" only as a mark of difference and superiority. A glance at the leaders of prosperity churches in Zimbabwe, and elsewhere in Africa, leads to a different conclusion. The prestige of their anointing catapults the charismatic leaders into a league of their own, beyond impunity, as their unique "ordination puts them in a special category of 'untouchables'" (Kanyandago 1999:166). This often results in the abuse of "the power of ordination" (Kanyandago 1999:166) which leads "to overbearing and dominance over the members of the church" (Banda & Senokoane 2009:214). Gifford remarks (1992:166), "If human beings are basically depraved and evil, one needs a strong state to save people from themselves. Thus this Christianity provides the theological justification for authoritarianism".

6.6.3. The Undermining of the Communality of the Church

In Pentecostal prosperity churches, the value placed on communality is often simultaneously contradicted by the heavy emphasis placed on personal piety as a basic quality of attaining material prosperity. Embedded in this approach is a causal relationship between faith and blessedness, believing and receiving. Thus, one's material or physical condition reflects one's state of faith. This causality is similar to the African traditional religious reliance on magic. Prosperity Pentecostals have a tendency to emphasise mentoring and effective networking in one breath and then in the next breath completely undo it by placing a high premium on religiosity. For instance, Deuschle (2003:71) declares: "*Without* an economic revival based on *biblical principles*, we can say goodbye to Africa" (italics added). Broken down to its barest minimum, Deuschle attributes poverty in Africa and in Zimbabwe in particular to disobedience to God. Deuschle does not seem aware that he has merely recycled and pentecostalised the very tenet that founded the basis of European slavery of Africans: the belief of a blessed Europe and a cursed Africa (Mugambi 1997a:44). Furthermore, Deuschle's devoted linking of

---

[88] According to Harrell (1975:106), "Oral Roberts, T.L. Osborn, Gordon Lindsay, and A.A. Allen had instinctive business sense…their wives were important business partners. On the other hand, the history of the revival is littered with bankrupt organizations – the failures of men with great gifts but little talent for business. … The typical organization of the revival by the late 1950s was non-profit evangelist association. The association was generally controlled by the evangelist, his wife, and several key supporters".

Christianisation and improved national economy is blind to the fact that the economies of the First World countries of the West have grown tremendously ever since became less religious, to be specific – as they became less Christian and more secularised (Vengeyi 2011:234). Mugambi expresses this perennial irreconcilability of the apparent contradiction that contemporary Africa continues to be, perhaps, the most 'religious' continent in the world, and yet its peoples remain the most abused of all in history" (1995:33). This triggers one to ask, "How could it be that the peoples who continue to call on God most reverently are the ones whom God seems to neglect most vehemently? Could it be that irreligion is the key to success, and that religion is the key to backwardness?" (Mugambi 1995:33). This prompts one to ask what it is about the First World countries' turning more secular and less Christian that has caused economic boom, and vice versa.

Deuschle's position cancels all the value he has placed on communality by urging his congregants to set up structures for mentoring and networking to enable those in business to "express and develop their God-given gifts and talents" (Deuschle 2003:71). This is because he promotes piety in a manner that undermines the essential value of the community to one's economic success. A serious syncretistic element emerges. Ultimately, whatever real value may be derived from the community of the church ends up being of incidental value, replaceable by individual piety. It is significant that the five core values of Deuschle's Victory Business Forum are silent on communality but are loudly vocal on piety, as they promote: firstly, obedience to God demonstrated by tithing and giving to the local church; secondly, commitment to use one's life, career and resources to advance the kingdom of God; thirdly, a life of ethical integrity; fourthly, submission to the authority of the local pastor and leadership of the local church, and fifthly, standing up for Godly values and defending one's natural and spiritual family against all enemies (Deuschle 2003:72). This betrays that, according to his conviction, economic success is a result of one's faith in God and not so much the mentoring and networking he mentions in his book. This is depicted in this testimony of a believer, quoted by Deuschle:

> The most significant lesson I have had to learn was that of God's immeasurable desire to bless me financially through my giving. Through the ministry of anointed men and women of God, I have learned to put into practice the biblical principles relating to sowing and reaping, faithful tithing, the power of sowing into the life of a man of God, and the role of a business person in providing for the vision of the man of God. It is with this desire in my heart that I work toward establishing VBF as a place of servanthood and place of prosperity" (Deuschle 2003:74).

This shows that in the Pentecostal prosperity churches, due to their entrepreneurial and individualistic manner, resource mobilisation for development is higher. However, there is less emphasis placed on the community than on the effect of one's faith. The undermining of community and the promotion of individualism can be seen in Deuschle's list of eight principles, in a chapter titled, "Vision: The Power Within You", which is silent on the importance of community (2003:119-122). The only positive reference to other people is made in principle seven: "Consult others who are successful and wise" (Deuschle 2003:121). Throughout the chapter, other people are most referred to as possible hindrances to the attainment of one's vision, thus giving a high impression of individualism.

Thus the question that emerges is: "do prosperity churches really make room for the poor? (Asamaoh-Gyadu 2009:40; Lado 2006:25). Little room is afforded to the poor by the demand of exorbitant amounts of money to use as seed-money in order to attain a state of blessedness one is left asking, "what would happen to the many … [Zimbabweans]… who do not have that sort of money [and property]?" (Asamoah-Gyadu 2009:40). This mockery of the poor is spotlighted in Marshall's (2009:176) quoting of the Nigerian Bishop Oyedepo's proclamation, "Wealth in the kingdom of God does not answer to prayers, nor does it have respect of fasting, it only answers to qualitative covenant exercises". In this framework, the poor who do not have the money with which to participate in the covenant exercises are marginalised in the same way they are under the unjust socioeconomic systems of patronage.

This undermining of communality and eventual exclusion of the poor in the prosperity gospel raises questions about the applicability of the prosperity framework in a rural set-up where most poor Zimbabweans live. Asamoah-Gyadu (2009:40) appropriately intones that, due to "its emphasis on material wealth, charismatic Christianity in Africa has largely remained an urban phenomenon". Asamoah-Gyadu (2009:40) doubts if the prosperity message can be helpful to "many young people who peddle gum, candies, bananas, peanuts, and fried-pastries to eke out a living." Asamoah-Gyadu (2009:40) analyses that, whereas for Africans, "viable religion has always meant that which lead to power, strength, vitality and abundance;" prosperity churches "aggressively pursue what can only be called North American levels of materialism". Therefore, as Kügler (2012:13) has pointed out, it is not fair to blame the poor for their poverty "by telling them that lack of faith is the reason for staying poor".

Thus what emerges is not communality but obedience, not just to God, but also the pastor of the church. In this sense, the pastors become the mediating agents in overcoming poverty. The blessing or the anointing of the pastor and not the networking power of the community becomes

the critical resource for overcoming poverty (Biri & Togarasei 2013:82–83). The church that emerges in this framework is a church that is not oriented on the communality of the congregation, but on the leaders who project themselves as mediators of the miraculous power for material prosperity. By belonging to their churches and tapping into their divinely anointed power, the poor will overcome their poverty and attain great prosperity. This message is always reflected in their church advertisements.

6.6.4. The Problem of De-economisation of Socioeconomic and Political reality

What is referred as *de-economisation* can also be described by words such as de-politicisation and de-historicisation. 'De-economisation' is used here to capture the tendency so prevalent in prosperity Pentecostalism to deny the link between poverty and the prevailing socioeconomic and political context. As has been indicated above from the implicit and explicit declarations of the prosperity Pentecostal prophets, the emphasis on what needs to be fixed to address poverty is placed on spiritual conditions in a manner that ultimately spiritualises and de-economises socioeconomic and political reality. Although the following passage repeats some aspects that have already been discussed above, it presents classic example of de-economisation of socioeconomic reality. The excerpt highlighted by Vengeyi (2011:223–224) appeared in *The Herald* newspaper on 01 August 2009 with the title *Refrain Your Tongue from Evil* written by one Sarah Tikiwa.

> Did you know that your life is the expression of what you have been confessing over the years? In other words, you are what you are today because of the confessions you made yesterday. Where your mouth goes is where your life goes. 1 Peter 3:10 says: "For let him who wants to enjoy life and see good days (good whether apparent or not), keep his tongue free from evil, and his lips from guile (treachery, deceit)". Do you love life and desire go see good days? Do you want to see things go on well in your life irrespective of the dwindling financial situation in the world? If you answer is Yes, God says: The first thing you must do is refrain your tongue from evil! In this scripture lies the key to living happy, successful and prosperous life. Those who tell lies cannot experience everlasting prosperity. The Bible says: "The lying tongue is for a moment." (Proverbs 12:19). Lying is not only when someone testifies falsely: it is more than that. It connotes when you say something different from what God has said. Anything you say that is contrary to God's Word is a lie, according to the Bible. So, if your desire is to enjoy life and see good days, God is saying to you: Tame your tongue. Refrain from speaking evil. Do not say things that are not consistent with God's Word. You can achieve this by making a conscious and deliberate effort to speak the Word of God always and on all occasions. You will definitely prosper and see good days.

This excerpt de-economises, depoliticises and de-historicises poverty by categorically stating that poverty is not due to socioeconomic and political factors but the state of religiosity. Thus the overcoming the complex socioeconomic and political factors that breed and promote

poverty is reduced to divine rituals by "suggest[ing] something like a superstitious cargo cult from an anthropology text: it we follow these rituals, divine forces will bring us rich gifts" (Jenkins 2006:91).[89] This de-economisation of socioeconomic and political reality reflects the simplistic, anti-intellectualism, and uncritical hermeneutical approach in prosperity theology that discourages a rigorous search for socioeconomic solutions (Gifford 1987:82; Bowman 2001:223).

The de-economisation of socioeconomic and political reality invariably results in the mutual patronisation between prosperity prophets and corrupt governments officials. Media houses in Zimbabwe have repeatedly highlighted the consistently pleasant mutual patronisation between the mega prophets and government officials to the extent that the prophets and ruling elites become each other's apologists and promoters (Martin 2008:12). A de-economised approach to poverty eradication results in "[p]astors with clienteles in the religious sphere … opportunistically cosy[ing] up to powerful people with clienteles in the political sphere" (Martin 2008:12).Old Testament prophets challenged the oppression of the poor because they understood that poverty was not just a spiritual issue, but also a political and historical issue. Gifford (1987:86) highlights that the uncritical spiritualisation of poverty "eliminates any interest in systemic or institutionalized injustice". Furthermore, the spiritualization of everything "leaves no room for social involvement, except that of exerting influence by the example of one's personal holiness" (Gifford 1987:86).

Furthermore, a de-economised approach to poverty eradication result in failure to challenge the deterministic and passivity worldview about socioeconomic and political in Africa (see 8.5.2). The idea that one's religiosity determines one's economic wellbeing promotes socioeconomic passivity that ultimately perpetuates uncritical dependency on the prophets and pastors as the agents of blessedness. In this regard, prosperity theology fails to act counter-culturally in Africa as the same religious tendencies that lead to reliance on lucky-charms and traditional healers such as *izangoma* and *izinyanga* are retained but are replaced with the miracle-producing articles of the prophets and faith healers such as, anointed water, anointed, branded armbands, prescribed spiritual formulae and rites. In one of his regular columns on faith and ethics in a leading Sunday newspaper in Zimbabwe, *The Daily News on Sunday* (2015), Bishop Noah Pashapa, complained that biblical spirituality has been replaced with superstitious spirituality.

---

[89] Gifford (1993:181) and Jenkins (2006:91) highlight that the book of Job was probably written to dispel such simplistic answers to complex problems.

Pashapa noted the prevalence of 'superstition-promoting' churches where the sovereign, omnipotent, omniscient and all-loving God has been replaced by "some alternative semi-magical 'spiritual-power' often embodied by the 'cult-leader'".

Furthermore, the de-economisation of poverty eradication results in the apparent contradictory affirming of hard work and yet undermining its necessity to socioeconomic prosperity. Indeed, in prosperity Pentecostalism, hard work is taught and affirmed. Sloth is abhorred. However this is contradicted and trivialised by a preoccupation with curses and demonic oppression. Ojo (2008:32) does well to highlight the paradox in prosperity gospel of affirming hard work and yet trivialising it at the same time by posing the question:

> how should we understand and seek to address the tensions caused by modern professionals, such as medical doctors and scientists, who, after being trained at receiving training in some of the best universities of the world, return to Africa to become pastors and founders of Charismatic churches, despite the shortages of personnel in their professions?

Highlighted in Ojo's statement is the problem of trivialisation of the ethic of productive work as the means of accumulating wealth is centred on 'name it, claim it and have it'. What can be expected when one's worldview is constructed on a tenet such as that of the Nigerian Bishop David Oyedepo, who says wealth depends on knowledge and application? (Marshall 2009:176). Ultimately, the prosperity gospel does not sufficiently empower the poor out of poverty because it thrives on the "law of survival of the fittest" (Gifford 1993:182). Gifford (1987:78) has mourned the absence of "a social ethic… social awareness, or political responsibility [and] any call to political action" in the preaching of prosperity preachers, like in Bonnke's Harare 1986 crusades.

6.6.5. Sacralisation of Accumulation, Self-Aggrandisement and Greed

Prosperity theology also tends to promote individual licence because there is no ceiling to how much one can attain. In prosperity churches one is bombarded with the message to dream as big as one can, without restraints, because its cornerstone is "no limit to wealth and property, and thus desire" (A Mbembe quoted in Marshall 2009:169). Wealth is pursued for its own ends. This is coupled with the consumerist and competitive tendencies fostered by the quest for the best. As Asamoah-Gyadu (2009:38) points out, "Wealth, health, success and ever-soaring profits in business are coveted, cherished and publically flaunted as signs of God's favour".

As has been pointed out, the prosperity idea of the seedtime and harvest-time emerged as a means of meeting the needs of media evangelists. It fails to criticise selfishness and greed but

169

actually promotes it (Gifford 1993:186). The anointed man of God does what he wants, as he wishes. There is no financial accountability for the leaders – making money is linked to God's work. Thus, as Jenkins (2008:93) points out, "At its worst, the gospel of prosperity permits corrupt clergy to get away with virtually anything".

Material flamboyance in the prosperity churches also exhibits itself in the way prosperity leaders commoditise their churches. Marshall (2009) has already highlighted how prosperity pastors use the notion of doing God's work as a means of accumulating personal wealth. Referring to Southern Nigeria, she points out, "The advent of the doctrine of prosperity and the Word-Faith moment provided the discursive and symbolic platform on which to integrate the Born-Again experience of redemption with social mobility, conspicuous consumption, and the legitimation of wealth in a time of scarcity" (Marshall 2009:180). It is this element that marks the big difference between classical Pentecostalism and the prosperity movement. While the in classical Pentecostalism 'doing God's work' amounted to renouncing the world, associating with the poor and the downtrodden, the prosperity gospel presents the "possibility of achieving private wealth through God's work" (Marshall 2009:181). Marshall's Southern Nigerian narration of the Southern Nigerian phenomena where pastors possess fleets of luxury cars, preside over marble-tiled, air-conditioned churches with the latest sound systems and Windows XP on the office computers, and produce weekly televangelism programmes showcasing miracles and divine healings are not too far from that of contemporary Zimbabwe. Recently, self-appointed prophet Angel (born on 6 September in 1978) boasted that his wealth was over US$60 million in a Business Indaba hosted by the Midlands State University's Centre for Entrepreneurship Development in Gweru, Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe Situation 2013). The news reported Prophet Angel clarifying that this wealth had not been acquired through the church but through his own business enterprises. If the amazement of the opulent claims did not lie in his youth – that at such a tender age, with no known commercial enterprises registered with the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange, he would audaciously claim such wealth at a public forum—then the incredulity lay in his boastful proclamation of the price of his tastes. For the Prophet Angel was quoted declaring:

Many people think that the church looks after me, but the truth of the matter is that the church cannot afford my lifestyle. I have very expensive tastes and that is why I am in business and make so much money. Money makes me happy and I have lots of it. I have never been broke all my life. If for some reason all my assets and business interests in Zimbabwe are taken from me, I am not worried because there are at least three other countries I can go to where I would still be a multi-millionaire (Zimbabwe Situation 2013).

If the Apostle Paul's affirmation and defence of his right to a decent livelihood in 1 Corinthians 9 is considered, then there is no justifiable case against Angel having the value of the wealth he claimed. What is problematic and unpalatable is the ostentatious pose with which the announcement was made. Even worse was the fact that the grandiose display was made in an address to university students hedged in by poverty unprecedented in the history of independent Zimbabwe. Yet the prophet of God was not prepared to share this wealth with them. Perhaps an even worse problem is not that the self-appointed prophet bragged about his expensive tastes but that in a context of poverty, bombarded with a multi-media culture of materialism, consumerism, licence and competition, the prophet of God failed to realise that the essence of being a prophet of God is to exhibit the kingdom of God, which in its very nature is counter-cultural.

In marked difference to what the biblical giants of faith who renounced and forsook their right to wealth (Heb. 11), modern day prosperity preachers flaunt their wealth and consider it noble to boast about it a manner not befitting a prophet of God. To a significant extent, Angel's attitude is that *'doing God's work'* is "a means of access not only to a new form of personal accumulation, but to a world of transnational connections, images, and imaginaries" (Marshall 2009:182). The problem that arises is that of "sacralising greed and covetousness" (Asamoah-Gyadu 2009:41). As Van der Watt (2012:49) complains, "The competition for the hearts and minds of the poor and gullible is so intense that self-promoting and marketing is being taken to outrageous heights and the damage thus being don the Christian witness is incalculable". The main problem with the flamboyant boastings of the prosperity pastors is that it is just inconceivable to imagine Jesus and his disciples ever standing in public galleries to make such utterances about personal wealth. What prosperity prophets fail to realise is that "just as the Bible does not glorify poverty, neither does it glorify greed" (Asamoah-Gyadu 2009:41). Gifford (1987:83) finds that the gospel of prosperity justifies the disproportionate affluence of the rich over the poor by claiming that wealth is God-given. At Bonnke's Harare 1986 crusade, Kenneth Copeland is quoted to have preached that God had communicated to him, "I want them to learn what you have learnt. I want them to know that they needn't be poor any more. If it works for you it will work for them. If it works in the USA, it will work in Africa" (in Gifford 1987:84). Before that, Idahosa had apparently proclaimed, "Kenneth Copeland does not prosper because he is an American; there are Americans in the ghetto. Pastor Bonnke does not prosper because he is a German; there are Germans (living in poverty). They prosper because they have a heavenly Father" (in Gifford 1987:84). Therefore, what results is a

Christianity that is intent on amassing wealth to the extent of de-Christianising itself. Lado (2006:25) has concluded that it is "impossible not to speak of fraudulent practice when one sees these 'pastors' profiting from a context of economic crisis and pauperization to enrich themselves on the back of the poor".

6.7. A Critical Evaluation of Church Responses to Poverty in Zimbabwe

From a Moltmannian perspective, how may we assess the church's responses in the Zimbabwean context of poverty?

6.7.1. The Historicity of the God of Hope and the Option of the Poor

In the light of Moltmann's notion of the historicity of the God of hope (in Chapter 2), it can be seen that just as the colonial segregated church lacked deep appreciation of the historicity of God that opts for the poor, the same can be noted in the church in independent Zimbabwe. The churches are generally divided in their response to the Zimbabwean context of poverty (Muzondidya 2011:32). The ZCBC have generally continued to be critical and called on the state to rule with justice and righteousness. ZCC has increasingly tended to tread carefully not antagonise the state but shying away from critical political engagement and investing greater efforts in humanitarian efforts through Christian Care. While EFZ has explicitly adopted the Romans 13 approach to see the state as God-ordained and has increasingly become the apologist for the repressive state.

Just as the church in the colonial period operated in a segregated context, the same is true in the independent period except that segregation is now economic and political by manifesting itself in cronyism, patronage, nepotism, tribalism and profiteering (Chung 2006:269–273). In context of repressive, corrupt and unimaginative national government (Verstraelen 1998:25; Muzondidya 2009; 2011; Kaulemu 2010:47) a culture of the survival of the fittest and politically connected has emerged and this culture is rapidly entrenching itself in the society. While in the earlier days of the country's independence, ecclesiological voices emerged to challenge the state to rule rightly, critical voices at ecclesiological level are increasingly becoming mute. In a sheer lack of appreciation of the historicity of God that opts for the poor prominent church leaders defensively sacralise the repressive state as God ordained (Banda & Senokoane 2009:221–226). Against the cry of many suffering masses, the prominent Christian leaders congratulate the repressive state even when it wins the national elections under contested circumstances and glowingly proclaim:

> Yet it was also clear, particularly to people of spiritual perception that a divine mandate continues to rest on Zanu-PF and its leader, President Mugabe, to serve the people of Zimbabwe by leading them into their own economic, political, social and even spiritual 'Promised Land' (Wutawunashe 2014).

To attribute the theme of the exodus to the repressive state against the cries of massive multitudes of hungry and jobless citizens who blame it for their suffering, reflects both a faulty understanding of the biblical exodus and accuses the hungry and the jobless of lying about their painful situation. The failure of appreciating the historicity of the God hope has left many church leaders vulnerable to "Mugabe's nationalism" (Raftopoulos 2009:227). In an apparent show of national loyalty church leaders continue to ingratiate themselves with the leaders in repressive state and even offer them magnanimous gifts (presumable from their churches' coffers, see 9.2.2.). The church leaders' uncritical embrace of Mugabe's nationalism, coupled with lack of understanding of God's option for poor, has resulted in their uncritical endorsement of the indigenisation policy while ignoring the cronyism, patronage, nepotism, tribalism and profiteering that has become associated with it. In the mindset of the leaders who have supported the state is that poverty is caused not by bad socioeconomic and political policies but by spiritual forces such as individual sins, generational curses and even the devil's conspiracy against Zimbabwe. On the other hand, just like in the colonial period, other ecclesiological voices silently acknowledge the evilness of the oppressive and corrupt regime that impoverishes its people but resignedly accept oppressive rule as a fact of this present world that will be decisively dealt with in the life to come. From a Moltmannian perspective, an awareness of the historicity of God that opts for the poor and the marginalised must lead to a church that boldly stands against the socioeconomic and political structures that oppress and impoverish the poor and powerless.

6.7.2. The Kingdom of God and the Sanctity of the Life of the Poor

In Moltmann's eschatological vision the anticipated kingdom of God (in Chapter 4) restores damaged and hated life to abundant and loved life by challenging the socioeconomic and political factors that endanger life. For Moltmann the hope for the kingdom of God "calls people out of their apathy and pessimism to active participation in the movements for liberation" (EoH 36). That is, the hope for the kingdom of God actively protects the sanctity of the life of the poor and oppressed. Rather than resign to panic and escapism that delivers life over to the destructive forces, hope for the kingdom of God pursues the liberation of the oppressed because God accords sanctity to their life.

Concerning the prosperity Pentecostal prophets who sacralise President Mugabe's impoverishing despotism, Moltmann's discontentment with charismatic spirituality that neglects the sanctity of life must be noted. Moltmann asks,

> Where are the charismata of the 'charismatics' in the everyday world, in the peace movement, in the movements for liberation, in the ecology movement? If charismata are not given us so the we can flee from this world into a world of religious dreams, but if they are intended to witness to the liberating lordship of Christ in this world's conflicts, then the charismatic movement must not become a non-political religion, let alone a de-politicised one (SoL 186).

This challenges the tendency of the prosperity Pentecostal prophets to be co-opted by the state, as has become so prevalent in Zimbabwe. Moltmann criticises the charismatic movement for its neglect of sociopolitical and economic issues affecting poor. However, overall, the kingdom of God challenges all ecclesiological communities that they cannot anticipate the future kingdom of God of life and righteousness and yet allow, or condone or even flee from a context where the sanctity of the life of the poor is violated.

6.7.3. The Communality of the Church against Clericalism and Individualism

The notion of the communality of the church (in Chapter 4) challenges the clericalism of the mainline churches that results in the underutilisation of the communality of the church. It also challenges the idolisation of the prophets and pastors in the prosperity Pentecostal churches that presents them as the only mediators of God's blessings that ultimately promotes an individualistic faith. For Moltmann the priesthood of all believers and the giving of the charismata to all believers affirms the trinitarian character of the church of mutual interpenetration and interdependence.

Moreover, from a Moltmannian perspective, the optimistic and success orientation of prosperity Pentecostalism fails to acknowledge God's presence among the poor because it treats their poverty as a curse and abandonment by God (SoL 192). Not only does this undermine God's expressed preference for the poor but is also fails to notice God's presence among the poor that is expressed in Christ's affirmation of the poor as "the least of his brothers" (Matt 25:40) and God's declaration that his strength is made perfect in weakness (2 Cor 12:9). Against the charismatic movement's preference for the rich and glamorous Moltmann points to Paul's declaration that God's power is present among the suffering and weak to strengthen them (2 Cor 13:4). Therefore, the poor and handicapped should be included in the community of God's people. The church in the Zimbabwean context of poverty is challenged towards a communality that protects and empowers the poor to respond meaningfully to their poverty.

6.8. Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the various ecclesiological ethical approaches to poverty in Zimbabwe. The chapter highlighted that churches like the Roman Catholic Church, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop's Conference (ZCBC) and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) often take critical stand against oppressive socioeconomic and political structures. The Catholic bishops, through their critical pastoral letters, often call the government to be accountable to its citizens for its failed socioeconomic policies. On the other hand, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) that began with a critical stand towards the government policies in the early stages of Zimbabwe's independent period later succumbed to government intervention and became less critical of the state. Through its charity wing Christian Care, ZCC has participated in relief aid to the poor in times of crisis. Rather than take a vocal stance, ZCC has opted to engage the Zimbabwean context of poverty from a neutral stance that does not antagonise the ruling elite. The Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), with its emphasis on individualistic and privatised faith, began with an aloof approach but sought to influence the government through prayer and evangelism. They believed that massive evangelism and conversion would lead to a national rightness and just rule that would eventuate in improved socioeconomic life.

And yet, poverty continues to ravish Zimbabwe, despite all the attempts by the current government to vehemently deny it. Observable facts on the ground in Zimbabwe show that poverty will continue in the midst of the many efforts to eradicate it. Liberation from the colonialists has proved only beneficial for the ruling elite, but for many the socioeconomic realities are rapidly gravitating retrogressively to precolonial times when the first missionaries arrived. This challenges the church in Zimbabwe to consider a framework of effectively responding to the current state of poverty. The perspective constructed in Moltmann's thinking that emphasises socio-political and economic structures that affirm and preserve the human dignity of all human beings can enable the church to construct a framework of poverty-alleviation that has a measure of sustainability.

PART III:

Towards an Empowering Church of Hope in a Context of Poverty

The main question of this research is: How might Moltmann's concept of the 'church of the poor' assist in the search for an ecclesiological eschatological framework for responding to poverty? Part I assessed Moltmann's concept of the church of hope for the poor in relation to God's historicity, the kingdom of God and the communality of the church. Part II used Moltmann's conceptualisation of the church of hope for the poor to assess the dominant responses to poverty by the church in the colonial era and the church in the independent era. Part III uses the three themes derived from Moltmann's eschatological scope, the historicity of the God of hope, the kingdom of God and the communality of the church to formulate an ecclesiological ethical framework for liberating and empowering the poor to respond to poverty meaningfully. In pursuit of an eschatologically informed ecclesiological perspective of responding to poverty, the first chapter of the section (Chapter 7) concentrates on the communality of the church of hope as an essential resource for empowering the poor to respond to their poverty meaningfully. The second chapter of the section (Chapter 8) highlights that the church should be informed by the historicity of the God of hope in empowering the poor to participate in economic life. The section closes (Chapter 9) by highlighting how the kingdom of God that promotes life calls the church to develop a public theology model of addressing socioeconomic and political structures that suppress the poor and powerless. This arrangement of starting with the communality of the church, and moving to the historicity of the God of hope and closing with the kingdom of God affirms that the church's eschatological nature challenges it to play a critical and empowering role in a context of poverty.

Chapter 7: The Communality of the Church of Hope as Resource in Addressing Poverty

7.1. Introduction

In light of the significance that Moltmann gives to the communal nature of the church, this chapter begins the application of Moltmann's ecclesiological ethical thinking by constructing a notion of an empowering and liberating church of hope in a context of poverty. The church, as an eschatological community, lives in this present world but is on the exodus towards God's Promised Land. It is a community of hope for the future. For Moltmann, this eschatological nature of the church calls for an ecclesiological ethical imagination of an empowering church in a context of poverty. Assessed against the human-enabling historicity of the God of hope, the life-affirming kingdom of God and the communality of the church, Moltmann's notion of the church of hope for the poor calls for an imagination of the church that is sensitive to the needs of the poor. This chapter (in 7.2.) begins by affirming the priority of engaging poverty in the church's ministry in this present world. The chapter further (in 7.3) affirms the essentiality of communality in the church's response to poverty. In order to arrive at a model of communality that is relevant to the African context, section 7.4 proposes the African kraal as a metaphor of effective communality in an Zimbabwean context of poverty. The chapter will highlight that communality is an essential resource for empowering and liberating the poor.

7.2. The Priority of the Church's Engagement of Poverty

A movement towards a meaningful ecclesiological ethic of responding to poverty first requires the settlement of the question of the priority the church must give to addressing poverty. The question is: given the hope for a glorious future, to what extent should the church prioritise eradicating poverty? This question can be asked differently: can the church be a truly eschatological community and yet be unconcerned about addressing poverty in this present world? In Moltmannian terms, it is contradictory to think of the church of Jesus Christ, a community of hope waiting for God's coming in his kingdom, that considers addressing poverty as a non-priority or even a low-priority to its mission.

Christopher Wright's seminal missiological work *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (2006), recognises addressing poverty in this world as a top priority that is inseparably integrated in the mission of God. Bible scholar Longenecker's *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World* (2010) places addressing poverty within the

preaching of the gospel to such an extent that it just does not make gospel sense to think of being church and yet not address poverty. According to Wright (2006:265), the exodus, which functions as "the primary model of God's idea of redemption" that is key to understanding the meaning and significance of the cross of Christ, calls for holistic mission and forbids any one-sidedly spiritual or any one-sidedly political view of the mission of God. Calling for an integrated approach to mission that recognises the priority of addressing poverty in this world, Wright (2006:268-271) emphasises that the exodus was a comprehensive act of redemption; it did not just liberate the Israelites from spiritual oppression; it also liberated them from political oppression (Ex 6:8), economic oppression (Ex 1:11) and social oppression (Ex 1:15-16). Drawing from Bible scholar Walter Brueggemann, Wright (2006:286) asserts that the biblical issue in both Testaments is not one of either deliverance from concrete socioeconomic-bondage or deliverance from spiritual bondage but of deliverance from both situations. Basing on James' stern warning against placing a gap between faith and works, the spiritual and the material, Wright concludes that since "faith without works is dead, mission without social compassion and justice is biblically deficient" (2006:288). He further reminds that Jesus' messianic anointing to preach the good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoners, sight to the blind, and liberation to the oppressed, also contained the Hebraic Jubilee: "to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour" (Luke 4:19).[90] The Jubilee was an event of socioeconomic liberation and restoration. Just like the kingdom of God, the jubilee "serves both as a *symbol of future hope* and also as an *ethical demand in this present*' (Wright 2006:302, italics added). While pointing to the coming future of recreated and perfect eternal existence, the jubilee showed that God was concerned about the comprehensive life of his people, their spiritual wellbeing and their physical wellbeing. Therefore, addressing poverty is an essential part of the mission of God.

Longenecker (2010) analyses Paul's recollection of the plea made to him and his evangelistic team by the Apostles in Jerusalem to "continue to remember the poor" (Gal 2:10). Out of this analysis, Longenecker demonstrates that responding to poverty was integral in the ministry of the early church. He further highlights that poverty featured prominently in the socioeconomic and political context of Jesus' earthly ministry (Longenecker 2010:116). Furthermore, Longenecker (2010:117-119) finds it significant that Jesus confirmed his messiahship to the inquiring John the Baptist (Matt 11:3) by pointing to his work of liberating the sick and the poor (Matt 11:4-6) instead of his bringing of judgement upon the wicked (Matt 3:7-12). In this

---

[90] Quoted from Isaiah 61:1,2

Jesus presents his work of being relief on the suffering as an essential credential of his messiahship. It is significant that Jesus responds to John not by announcing his might power but by announcing his curative powers demonstrating that "the materially poor and vulnerable were of special significance and concern to [him]" (2010:124). Longenecker (2010:120) draws from James Dunn to underscore that Jesus encountered the poverty of the poor people he ministered to as a "social condition, with social causes, often the result of greed and manipulation … [by] those members of society who controlled economic and political power, and were willing to use that power ruthlessly". Thus Christ's concern for the poor took cognisance that "the poor were also downtrodden and oppressed, often pushed by circumstance to the margin of society" (Dunn, in Longenecker 2010:129). He further shows that the New Testament Church followed Christ's example and made caring for the needy "a powerful component of evangelistic activity" (Longenecker 2010:127). Thus the stipulation by the Apostles in Jerusalem to Paul to "remember the poor" (Gal 2:10) highlights that the church generally considered caring for the poor as an essential component of preaching the gospel.

Paul's declaration that it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35) demonstrated that "supporting the weak involves using material resources to offset the economic needs of others" (Longenecker 2010:151). In demanding the equitable treatment of the poor in the Lord's Supper, a meal partaken with eschatological expectation, Paul demonstrated that "remembering the poor was to lie at the heart of the eschatological identity of [Christian] communities" (Longenecker 2010:155). This further highlighted that remembering the poor "was itself a practice integral to an embodied proclamation of the good news" (Longenecker 2010:155). The emphasis of equitability in the Lord's Supper places the caring of the poor in an eschatological perspective. In other words, it is a serious mockery for Christians to expect to share together in the future heaven while starving one another in this present existence.

Therefore, a movement towards an effective ecclesiological ethical framework of empowering and liberating the poor must begin with the realisation that God's promise of a glorious future does not negate material life in this present earthly existence (Gutierrez 1983:7; Ela 2005:59; Myers 2011:57). It is indeed true, as Tripole (1981:654) points out from Matthew 12:48-50 that Jesus only recognised as part of his family "whoever does the will of my Father in heaven". Yet, as also highlighted in passages such as the parable of the Good Samaritan, it is not true that Jesus expresses no preferential option for the suffering, powerless and marginalised. Bedford-Strohm highlights that responding to the needs of the poor is so fundamental in Judaeo-Christianity that "'Theo-logy'–talk about God–is impossible without talking about the

179

human historical experiences of slavery and oppression and God's action in history to overcome such oppression" (2008:145). In fact, as Bedford-Strohm further underscores, from a biblical perspective caring for the poor (Isa. 58:10, 11) is not a sacrifice brought to God to satisfy his commandments, but a "resource for a good life" (2008:145). Thus fighting poverty by the church flows out of worshiping the living God who loves life and gives it abundantly (John 10:10). This effectively means that in addition to the urgency to prepare human beings for the heavenly future and to minister to their spiritual needs "it is part of the church's mission to address economic issues" (Nürnberger 1994:119). This is even more urgent when we consider that God's ultimate goal depicted in the Old Testament *shalom* and kingdom of God in the New Testament comprehensively includes the immanent and transcendent needs of the human beings (Nürnberger 1994:119-120). The exodus and the Christ-event show that any deficiency in these categories of human needs makes the God of hope restless for he wants his shalom to reign in his world and among his people (Nürnberger 1994:119).

7.3. A Theological Recognition of the Seriousness of Poverty

Moreover, the church must prioritise poverty eradication because of the theological seriousness of poverty. Poverty dehumanises God's people created in his image, therefore the church should not glorify poverty. Smit (2003:55) grapples with Luke Pato's statement: "To be African is to suffer". In Smit's (2003:55) assessment, Pato's statement should not be interpreted anthropologically, but historically and contextually. In this Smit emphasizes that poverty is a historical reality resulting in the real experience of suffering in Africa, which must be addressed urgently. If poverty is viewed anthropologically then it is likely to be tolerated as a normal part of life. But if it is understood historically and contextually, perhaps we may realise its pain and its consequence and seek to address it.

Highlighting the severity of the historical and contextual suffering in Africa, Smit says, "Poverty impacts all other forms of suffering, even suffering caused in other ways, making it different, often making it worse, and more difficult to bear or alleviate" (2003:55). In concert, Magezi (2007:105) highlights from Hunter that poverty is "pain … a disease … [that] attacks a person not only materially, but also morally". Poverty takes away even a person's moral standing. As Magezi (2007:105) further shows from Hunter, poverty "eats one's dignity and drives one into despair. Poverty is like living in jail, under bondage, waiting to be free". This underscores that the church should take the reality of socioeconomic poverty seriously and seek to deal with it.

For Smit, taking poverty seriously is integral to being the church of Jesus Christ. For he points out,

> Could it perhaps be that suffering, especially in radical poverty, challenges the Christian church to see in such a fundamental way that the very being of the church is itself at stake? Could it possibly be that, if we fail to see this – to perceive, to accept, and to understand – we fail to remain church? Could it indeed be true that what we do will depend on what we see, what we see will depend on who we are, and what we fail to see will impact on our integrity itself? (Smit 2003:57-58).[91]

This passage stresses that the church ceases to be the church of Jesus Christ when it ignores the concrete suffering of the poor and exploited. The implication of Smit's statement is that the church's failure to see poverty reflects the quality of the church. This also points to the communality of the church that fails to be a resource for empowering the poor to overcome their poverty. When the hope for the glorious future blinds and numbs the church from the pain and suffering of the poor or when it uses eschatological hope to disengage itself from the present experiences of the poor, both the church and the hope for the future become false representations of Christ and his promised future.

Smit (2003:58-59), motivated by Karl Barth, argues that Protestantism has become so moralistically oriented to the point of seeing human beings only as sinners and not sufferers of real pain. This also captures the view that suffering is a result of the fall, which ultimately motivates the church to approach human suffering from a purely soteriological point. Smit's observation from Barth also speaks against the uncritical lampooning of African poverty as a lack of faith by prosperity Pentecostalism. Moltmann's concept of church of hope for the poor that advances God's preferential option for the poor rejects the moralistic view of salvation that emphasises sin over historical suffering. The miracles of Jesus show that his mission was not just a moralistic affair only concerned with sinners (Smit 2003:59). Rather, in Jesus's miracles is revealed

> God's grace in its radicality and unconditionality, addressed to humanity in sloth and misery – not only to sinners, but to God's creatures, the partners in the covenant, in sin and suffering as a result of the power of evil. In the act of reconciliation in Christ, God overcomes all these barriers in free grace and omnipotent mercy. That is the message and reality of the kingdom, the heart of the gospel, the content of all theology, the reason for abundant joy, and the calling of the church (Smit 2003:59-60).

In this passage, Smit affirms God's opposition to all the forces that infringe on the existence of his people. There is nothing glorious or spiritual about the suffering of God's people. Suffering

---

[91] Smit makes this statement motivated by the call for an ethics-of-seeing from Heinz Eduard Tödt.

violates God's glory. As Smit's (2003:59) highlighting of Barth indicates, the shame which falls on God's people essentially violates his glory, and furthermore, the enemy who kills people, tormenting them with fear and pain, is primarily God's enemy. Essentially, eschatological hope is a theology of life in the midst of death and despair. It reminds the church that it is a community awaiting God's abundant life, and this abundant life is already operational in the present. As Smit (2003:59) shows in his reflection on Barth, the church of hope must take seriously all evil forces that cripple people from living authentic human lives by scuttling their breath and harassing them with fear, despair and pain, including poverty.

What is entailed in the eschatological recognition of the seriousness of poverty? Insightfully, Conradie (2001:178) maintains that it is simplistic and unproductive to just announce "the gospel of new life without a clear *prophetic warning* concerning the threats of life" italics added). The reference to 'prophetic warning' points to God's judgement, which requires that the threats to life be clearly identified and addressed (Conradie 2001:179). Indeed, "[n]o hope for resurrection is possible without the cross" (Conradie 2001:179). The logical conclusion of a prophetic vision of new life informed by the resurrection and the cross is double-mandated to the rich and the poor. This double-mandated vision can be illustrated by Isaiah 40:4-5's (a significant passage to Moltmann) reference to the lifting up of the valleys and the lowering of the mountains, leading to the revelation of the glory of the Lord with all people experiencing the glory *together* as one. The gospel of new life calls the poor out of the valleys of poverty and it calls the rich to come down from their mountains into communality with the poor. As prophetic message of judgement, in order to contribute towards a meaningful framework for eradicating poverty, the poor must be empowered to take responsibility for their poverty and be empowered to respond to it in a meaningful way. Equally, the vision of new life confronts the rich, in reference to the responsibility of the state of blessedness towards the poor (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

A prerequisite towards being a constructive church of the poor is an eschatological recognition of the seriousness of the reality of poverty in this life. In the Zimbabwean context of poverty, it is noted that the spirited arguments that the church should just be primarily concerned with spiritual salvation and keep away from socioeconomic and political issues ignores the fact that Africa today bears the economic and psychological scars of the church's theological answers to the Native Question (see 5.3.2.). Having provided a theological basis for the racial subjugation, economic and political marginalisation and the proletarianisation of the poor and

182

powerless Africans, the church cannot suddenly decide to prioritise evangelism and downplay socioeconomic and political engagement.

7.4. Communality as an Essential Resource in Responding to Poverty

The ensuing question is: *if the church ought to give fighting poverty a top priority, what capacity does the church have to fulfil this mandated task?* Moltmann would promptly respond to this question by pointing to the church's communality. An important step in moving towards an ecclesiological ethic of poverty eradication is the understanding of the communality of the church as an essential resource for the human capacitation of the poor. Moltmann's problematic use of Matthew 25 nonetheless highlights that the protection and humanisation of the poor requires the communality of the church. As was highlighted in Part II, the church in Zimbabwe, both during colonial times and in the present independent period has not done enough to protect the poor from being exploited by the rich and powerful. According to the analysis conducted in Part II, a key component of addressing poverty in Zimbabwe theologically, in addition to socioeconomic issues, must also include questions about the church as a community and the politics of race and governance. In the midst of racial segregation that marked the colonial state and poor and corrupt governance in the liberated state, it is the communality of the church that acts as a bulwark against the exploitation and marginalization of the poor and powerless.

Communality expresses the relational and communal nature of the church as captured by Moltmann's notion of "relational ecclesiology" (CPS 20). In Moltmann's eschatological framework, the church is a community of hope; a community initiated by the promise of God and eagerly waiting in anticipation of its fulfilment. It can be noted that in mainline missionary churches, communality is *underutilised* by the monopolisation of the ministry of the church by the church hierarchies that ends up undermining the priesthood of believers (Mugambi 1997:11; Ela 2005:23). Ela says the priesthood of believers has been replaced with "clerical imperialism that has so long kept the Christian communities in a colonial state of infantilism and irresponsibility" (2005:24). In Ela's assessment, what is lacking in the churches in Africa is not the clergy, but "the awakening and recognition of various ministries indispensable for the survival of the communities" (Ela 2005:24). At the same time in Pentecostal prosperity churches, communality is *undermined* by the individualistic spirituality.

In mainline missionary churches, poverty eradication strategies are often initiated by church hierarchies and generally have no liturgical significance as they occur outside the main worship life of the church. According to Haddad (2001:12), based on her South African context, there

is validity to the conclusion by Wilson and Ramphele that the church is better placed to work with poor people than all other religious and secular institutions. Haddad however notes that "as an institution, the church generally has been unable to harness for effective social transformation" (2001:12–13). This is largely due to poor organisation of the communality of the church. Furthermore, although Maphosa and Chinyoka (2014:4) found that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe did not entirely depend on foreign donations for its poverty-alleviation programmes, internal resource mobilisation among missionary mainline churches in Zimbabwe, which means that the viability of poverty intervention strategies often depends on the availability of foreign donor funding.

Haddad has decried the patriarchal nature of the institutionalised churches that often marginalises women, resulting in women "devis[ing] their own micro-development strategies which harness the resources of both the spiritual and material realms" (Haddad 2001:6). Similarly, Oduyoye (1997:75) found that women in the established churches responded to their marginalisation by the patriarchal church hierarchies by forming parallel associations and fellowships to champion the cause of women. Interestingly, Oduyoye (1997:72) observes that women within the congregation were more loyal to their several societies and fellowships than to the congregation as a whole. According to Oduyoye, this was because the women found satisfaction in "the support and care provided by the informal Church community more than the ministration provided by the officially appointed ministers and lay leaders of the established structures" (1997:72). This meant that the church had not provided them with the support they needed to overcome their struggles.

Ironically, the generally well-coordinated poverty alleviation strategies of the mainline missionary churches have not stopped them from losing members to the 'quickly-get-rich-schemes' of the prosperity churches, which could highlight dissatisfactions with the relief and development approach of the mainline missionary churches. Moltmann's communality of the church of hope challenges the above noted church responses to poverty, which underutilise and undermine the communality of the church, and in the process further dehumanise the poor. The framework must understand that communality is a crucial resource in the capacitation of the poor.

7.5. The African Kraal as a Metaphor of a Church in a Context of Poverty

It is proposed that in the Zimbabwean context of poverty, the African kraal be used as a metaphor of the communality of the church that prioritises poverty-eradication by empowering

the poor believers to address their poverty meaningfully. The metaphor of the kraal provides tools for addressing the underutilisation and undermining of the priesthood of believers in the churches. This section will unpack the metaphor of the kraal and apply it to the church of hope for the poor.

7.5.1. The Problematic Nature of Metaphorical Language in Theology

Scripture describes the church with a wide range of metaphors and images to help us understand the nature of the church. The biblical metaphors of the church include family images, such as the church as family (1 Tim 5:1-2) and the church as the "bride of Christ" (Eph 5:32). The bible also depicts the church in agricultural images, such as "an olive tree" (Rom 11:17-24). Furthermore, the church is also imagined with architectural images like "a building" (1 Cor 3:9). Again, there are also images of the church from human anatomy, such as the church as "the body of Christ" (1 Cor 12:12-27). Horton (2011:727–733) highlights that the church is portrayed with political images of a city and nation. Grudem (1994:859) insightfully warns that the use of many different metaphors in the New Testament shows that there should not be an exclusive focus on any single metaphor. According to Grudem, each of the metaphors used for the church can help us to "appreciate more of the richness of privilege that God has given us by incorporating us into church" (1994:859).

The significance of metaphors in theological discourse is highlighted by Louw, who says "a metaphor is a figure of speech in the theological vocabulary to present, comprehensibly and meaningfully, the unknown (revelation) in terms of the known (creation)" (2000:49). Indeed, while metaphors can be useful hermeneutically "to clarify the significance of concepts within relations" (Louw 2000:46), they can also be problematic, complicating and further shrouding the very truth they are employed to shed light on. For example, the metaphor of God as father can lead to the association of God with negative experiences of one's fatherhood in childhood and in a patriarchal culture lead to a view of God "as a symbol of oppression" (Louw 2000:46). As Dulles (1987:17–18) points out, metaphors are used in ecclesiology to illuminate the mystery of the church. Affirming the legitimacy of the metaphors in Christian faith Dulles (1987:20) says, "Any large and continuing society that depends on the loyalty and commitment of its members requires symbolism to hold it together".

The metaphor of the African kraal adopted by this study is not a biblical one, although biblical data can be summoned to back it up. In his essay *Placing Christianity at the Centre of the Healing and Re-awakening of Africa* (2014), Mvume Dandala, the Presiding Bishop of the

Methodist Church in South Africa, proposed the metaphor of the African cattle kraal as a metaphor that would cajole the African church to play a curative role in a hopeless continent broken socioeconomically and politically. This study adopts the African kraal as a metaphor of the church in a context of poverty in order to address the underutilisation and undermining of the communality of the church of hope. However, the metaphor is not used indiscriminately. In order for the African kraal to fruitfully illustrate the empowering nature of the church of hope for the poor in Zimbabwe, patriarchal elements which oppress and exploit women and children, its tribal nature that promotes nepotism and its communalistic nature that fosters oppressive uniformity needs to be rejected (see 7.5.3). These oppressive and exploitative elements must be subjected to the critique of the liberating and empowering work of the cross of Christ in order to result in a church of hope that truly liberates and empowers the poor and the powerless in a context of poverty.

7.5.2. The African Kraal as a Metaphor of the Communality of the Church

The significance of the kraal to African wellbeing was noted by one of the earliest Anglican missionaries in colonial Zimbabwe, the Bishop Thomas Gaul in his essay, *The Possibilities of an African Kraal* (1905). Kraal can refer to the settlement of the people or the cattle pen. An African kraal broadly refers to the settlement of the people under the leadership of their headman, chief or king depending on the situation. The settlement was generally in a circular format, at the centre of which was the cattle kraal or the pen, *isibaya*. The settlement was referred to as kraal because of the cattle kraal it surrounded. As Gaul (1905:11) rightly pointed out, both the circular arrangement and the placing of the cattle kraal in the centre was for the purpose of defence from enemies and security from wild animals.

For most tribes in Southern Africa, the cattle kraal forms an essential background to African communal life. As Dandala points out, the cattle kraal is the power that holds all the African institutions together by giving them "the pivotal concept of interconnectedness from which life flows, around which it revolves and through which it is held together" (2014:6). By its location in the home, the cattle kraal has communal, religious, socioeconomic and political function to Southern African tribes. The kraal is the burial place of the head of the family, making it the shrine of the family by being the boarding place for the ancestors of the family, or the tribe. The cattle pen is also the place where various religious rituals are conducted. Furthermore, the kraal is a place for meetings, the *inkundla* or *Lekgotla* where important matters related to the wellbeing and security of the community are considered and settled (Gaul 1905:122; Dandala 2014:7). Gaul (1905:122) noted among the Mashona that the kraal meetings could be brief or

run into many days, and touched on various issues such as land and its communal division, governance and rights of property. In addition, the kraal is also a place of instruction and discipline. Thus, the "wealth of the family, the values of the family and the faith of the family are all held together, with the kraal being the point of convergence" (Dandala 2014:7).

The African kraal should be seen within the wider African philosophy of *ubuntu*. Undergirded by the *ubuntu* communal philosophy of *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* are at least two practices that promote the communal interdependence and empowering of the poor that can be seen in the African kraal. These two practices are the concept of *ilima,* meaning to work together to accomplish a particular heavy task, and *ukusisa,* meaning to temporarily allocate a small herd of cattle to the care of a poor family, with the aim that when the cows had increased and the owner collects his cattle back, he will permanently give a small fraction to the poor man to establish his own kraal. In the practice of *ilima,* when a family had, for example, a field to be harvested, it would make a call to the neighbours to come and assist so that work that would normally take a long time would be accomplished within a short space of time. The practice of *ukusisa* has short term and long term goals. In the short term, it meant that out of the allocated small herd, the poor family had milk, manure for their fields, and tillage power. It further provided to the family's boys, who formerly had no responsibility, something of value to preoccupy their time. In the long term, *ukusisa* deliberately intended to empower the poor by providing a means by which they could own cattle and thus establish their own kraal. This must not be seen as feudalism, for although "in the process the rich became richer, but [by *ukusisa*] they also empowered others to acquire their own property" Moyo 1999:33). As Moyo points out in traditional African societies, the belief in the unity of the cosmos, which meant that riches ultimately belonged to God and the ancestors imposed upon the rich the responsibility to share with the poor and to act as "insurance against insecurity since the poor could not be refused if they were in need" (1999:52).

It is significant to note that, in traditional African culture, there were no street children, vagrants or squatters as systems were in place within the community to not only take care of the needy, the poor and the strangers, but also to empower them so that they were self-sufficient. A basic tenet in the African kraal was that all people are "entitled to basic human rights such as food and accommodation" (Moyo 1999:54). Tribal chiefs and kings had granaries, *isiphala senkosi,* raised from the contributions of their subjects to feed the poor (Machingura 2012:182–183).

7.5.3. The Problem of the African Kraal as a Metaphor of Communality of the Church

As already noted above (in 7.5.1) there are a number of factors that limit the potential of the African kraal motif to foster a viable and sustainable framework for poverty eradication. This section will highlight some major problematic issues in the African kraal that must be addressed, so that the metaphor can become an empowering and liberating one in a context of poverty.

A significant challenge to the African kraal metaphor is its patriarchal nature that marginalises and oppresses women. Haddad (2001:6) has pointed out that a theology of development must recognise "that unequal power relations exist between men and women". Haddad's observation of unequal power relations between men and women is true in African traditional cultures where women have limited property rights and limited access to material wealth. This absence of property rights leaves women utterly dependent on men for both the access and the protection of their wealth. Patriarchalism propels men to a status where they are not accountable to their wives and children in how they manage and use the scarce material resources upon which the family is dependent. This leaves the entire family's material welfare vulnerable to men's poor decisions. Therefore the kraal must be de-patriarchalised in order to depict an empowering church.

Furthermore, the African kraal also tends to stifle the rights of children by projecting them in terms close to a man's possessions, which leaves children, particularly girls, open to exploitive and oppressive practices such as the marrying away of young girls to older men. Not only does this stunt the socioeconomic development of women, it ultimately perpetuates women's dependence on men for their socioeconomic wellbeing. Although, in modern Zimbabwe inheritance laws now recognise and affirm the equality of the girl-child with the boy-child, socio-cultural norms continue to be underpinned by patriarchal perspectives. This means that the rights of human equality given to the girl-child by the national constitution are often subverted by socio-cultural norms. Therefore, the African kraal must be challenged to recognise, protect and promote the human dignity of the children, particularly the human dignity of young girls who often find themselves at the lowest end of the social structures.

In addition, the economic viability of the African kraal is limited by the traditional religious belief in limited cosmic good (see also 8.5.2). As Van Rooy highlights 'good' does not necessarily refer to material possessions, but to "vital force, power, prestige, influence, health, good luck" (1999:238). The belief that the vital force needed for individuals to attain material

prosperity often creates competition instead of co-operation within the community which cripples social cohesion. This often leads to reliance on magical powers as members seek to control each other by holding each other under spells so that the one with the powerful magic emerges as the one great influence and control over the community.

Furthermore, the African belief in limited cosmic good cripples the quest for progress and excellence by its fear that if one's progress surpasses that of others, jealous neighbours will bewitch him or her. There is also fear that one's progress, rather than being celebrated by the community, may be viewed as a result of witchcraft, which basically means that one has not only monopolised the cosmic powers that bring wealth, but has gone a step further to shut out other members from accessing the life-giving cosmic power. Therefore, life in the African kraal is characterised by intense religious activity to possess and control the vital sources that enable one to be wealthy and keep others from effectively drawing from it. As a result, rivalry, jealousy, witchcraft, enhancing one's spiritual security, and casting spells on others to frustrate their progress, undermine and even undo cohesion and cooperation among community members in the African kraal. Ultimately, more effort is invested in religious efforts that seek to lay hold of and control the cosmic powers than in the actual physical efforts that bring socioeconomic progress. Prosperity Pentecostalism has fed into the African belief of limited cosmic powers.

Furthermore, the communal nature of the African kraal often translates into a form of communism that breeds dependency instead of interdependence. Furthermore, the communalistic nature the African kraal often breeds uniformity and conformity that stifles unprecedented progressive creativity. Stories abound among Africans of people who were hindered from pursuing their creative ideas simply because no one in the family's past generations had pursued those goals. One also finds communities who are overcrowded in unproductive lands and unwilling to resettle elsewhere where there is better land because of fear of leaving the graves of their ancestors. However, the understanding of the good life represented by the African kraal can provide an understanding of an empowering communality that can be useful in the development of a theology of poverty eradication in Zimbabwe.

The Church in Africa can build on the traditional understanding of the good life. For Christians, all that one owns has been received from God and every member is, individually, a steward of what ultimately belongs to God. Traditionalists believed they received whatever they had from or through the ancestors, who expected them to share with others and to look after one another (Moyo 1999:52). The Christian community ought to be a community of sharing since it owes

189

its existence to a God who shared his life with humanity in Jesus Christ. It is a community in which all members ought to be keepers of one another. Christians are more than an extended family; they are a universal family of God through Christ (Moyo 1999:57).

7.5.5. A Theological Basis for the Model of the Church as an African Kraal

The New Testament presents the church as a communal body. Moltmann emphasises the *koinonia* and *diakonia* aspects of the church to highlight that, in the church, there was fellowship and service among the Christians. The New Testament understanding of the reality of the church emphasises the aspects of the *koinonia* and *diakonia*, which affirm the church as an institution of fellowship and service. According to Hill (1987:185), the English word *church* derives from the Greek adjective *kuriakos* to mean "belonging to the Lord" which was itself a shorthand from *kuirakon doma* or *kuriakos domos* meaning "the Lord's house". In its original meaning, the word meant the building in which Christians met for worship and later developed to refer to God's people. Hill (1987:186) points out, 'church' is always used in the bible to translate the Greek word *ekklesia,* which primarily meant not a building but an official assembly. Furthermore, *ekklesia* derives from *ekkaleo* meaning 'to summon' or 'to call out,' the Latin equivalent being *convocatio*, meaning convocation, a calling together, an assembly, originally began as a secular political word for the Athenian democracy, a meaning which it carries in Acts 19:32, 39, 41. Hill (1987:186) points out that the meaning of *ekklesia* in the New Testament is wholly determined by its use in the Septuagint (LXX). In the LXX, *ekklesia* is used to translate the Hebrew *qahal,* which basically means "a convoked assembly" with reference to the assembly of Israel convoked by God, as can be seen in passages such as Deuteronomy 5:19; 23:2-9 and Mic 2:5). Furthermore, in the New Testament, the definition of the *ekklesia* is with reference to Jesus Christ, which means that the church is the community of those who have placed their faith in him. Hence, Moltmann's already noted emphasis that, without Christ, there is no church. As used in the New Testament, *ekklesia* primarily refers to the actual gathering of Christians to worship (1 Cor 11:18, 14:19, 35) which naturally extends to mean the community of Christians in particular locations and eventually to the universal community of Christians. Furthermore, the 'one another' passages or the communal passages such as "be devoted to one another in brotherly love" (Rom 12:10); "share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality" (Rom 12:13) and "always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else" (1 Thess 5:15b) are examples of biblical texts that call Christians towards a life of communality. The church is commanded to be a community where there is fellowship and service to one another and reaching out to the needy. For example, the church is

commanded to be a place where of devotion to one another (Rom 12:10), sharing with the needy (Rom 12:13), and bearing of one another's burdens (Gal 6:2). In these few examples is highlighted *koinonia* and *diakonia*.

7.6. The Notion of Poverty as Lack of Participation in the African Kraal

When the abovementioned problems in the African kraal are addressed, the metaphor can enhance an ecclesiological ethic of poverty-alleviation by informing a communality of the church that acts as a bulwark against the dehumanisation of the poor in Zimbabwe. Moltmann's emphasis that the church is a serving fellowship calls for a responsible interconnectedness and independence in the churches' response to poverty in Zimbabwe. In proposing the kraal as a model of the church, Dandala (2014:8) says, "the church has to accept the responsibility for the restoration of links between faith, wealth and responsible living". In the African kraal, the chief is the father of all, he is regarded as *ubaba* and views his subjects as his children, *abantwana,* which impresses upon him the responsibility to rule over his people with justice and to provide materially for all the needy people in his kraal (Moyo 1999:54).

Furthermore, while guarding against the sacralisation of patriarchy, Dandala (2014:8) calls the church to "review its ministry structures ensuring that the senior members of family have their authority restored, for them to offer leadership, educate, support and foster accountability". Dandala is not promoting patriarchy but is acknowledging the necessity of good authority and leadership in human communities without which there is chaos and no vision. This thesis has noted with concern that Moltmann confuses authoritarianism and hierarchy and promotes the priesthood of all believers in a way that potentially undermines pastoral authority. Indeed, it is noted that Moltmann has no desire to promote anarchy in the church but the thriving of all believers. The New Testament, while affirming the priesthood of all believers, insists that churches must have clearly defined structures of leadership that provide spiritual leadership but attends to the concerns of the poor and marginalised (e.g. Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim 4:7-10). If the church will be a good African kraal, where the poor and powerless are not marginalised and exploited but are protected and empowered to be responsible and meaningful socioeconomic players, then visionary leadership is non-negotiable.

Furthermore, the kraal model challenges the individualism, dependency syndrome and the secularisation of material possessions in the responses to poverty of the mainline churches. Mainline missionary Christianity promoted individualistic response to poverty. It further created a dichotomy between the secular and the sacred and projected material reality as a

secular realm to be avoided. Related to the aforementioned problems is also the overall problem of urbanisation, which has both detribalised and secularised many Africans, resulting "in a situation where God has been dislodged from people's lives" (Getui 1999:67).

The kraal model also challenges the manipulation and exploitation of the poor in the prosperity churches that has resulted in mega-rich pastors and churches that commoditise their follower. African Pentecostal prosperity pastors and prophets fit well in Getui's (1999:67) observation that in Africa "many rich, powerful and propertied do not support the local economies". Instead, they "drain the local resources by keeping foreign accounts" (Getui 1999:67). The concept of *ukusisa* in the African kraal challenges the practice by Pentecostal prosperity prophets and pastors of personalising the tithes and offerings given by the poor. When the poor are given something, it is often the leftovers from the tables of the 'men and women of God.' In prosperity Pentecostal churches, resources that ought to benefit the community, in particular the poor, become the personal property of the prophets and pastors. The little the poor have, instead of being gathered and used to empower them through African concepts such as *ilima* and *kusisa,* is all consumed by the prophets and pastors, resulting in the phenomena of mega rich pastors with magnificent auditoriums and poor congregants (Togarasei 2011:343).

Oduyoye (1997:71) highlights that Africans are traditionally communal. Thus, the one clear, essential function of the church in Africa "is that of providing an active support base for a people traditionally accustomed to living in caring communities" (Oduyoye 1997:72). Hence, congregational life is extremely essential to African existence. Furthermore, the advent of urbanisation and migration has broken the traditional extended family structure, which has heightened the communal relevance of congregational life to the African wellbeing as it serves as a community and support group (Oduyoye 1997:72).

The need for human-enhancing communality among poor African Christians is elaborated by the societies and fellowship that erupt in the churches as structures of support in times of need and in life in general. A significant fact in African churches is that when women form their informal parallel structures within the church (Haddad 2001:6), they often end up having a uniform that serves as a particular mark of belonging. This highlights the significance of community as a critical resource in responding to poverty.

7.7. Conclusion

Using Moltmann's notion of the communality of the church of hope this chapter underscored the priority of engaging poverty in the church's eschatological mission. The chapter provided

biblical basis the prioritisation of responding to poverty in the church's mission. Evidence adduced from both the Old and New Testaments suggests that in the mission of the church that is truly prompted by eschatological hope takes seriously the material needs of the poor. It recognises that poverty is socioeconomic and political condition that must be addressed socioeconomically and politically. The chapter argued that communality is an essential resource in responding to poverty, as it protects the poor and also provides means of empowering them to respond to poverty meaningfully. The African kraal was used a motif that conveys the empowering and liberating essence of the church. Therefore the communality of the church should not be undermined and underutilised, it should be enhanced in order to be a bulwark to protect the needy from poverty.

Chapter 8: The Historicity of God as a Place of Human Capacitation of the Poor

8.1. Introduction

By reflecting on Moltmann's notion of the historicity of God, this chapter seeks to construct a framework of human capacitation of the poor that can be used by churches in Zimbabwe to empower the poor to participate meaningfully in their context. A factor that dominates in a context of poverty is human socioeconomic powerlessness that hinders human flourishing, resulting in dependency syndrome. Thus, following Bedford-Strohm, this chapter motivates that poverty should not only be defined in terms of lack of material things but also as the lack of ability to participate meaningfully in the creation of material things needed for human flourishing. In grappling with Pope John Paul VI's call for the enhancement of the 'God given potential' of the poor, Speckman argues that Africans rank among the world's poor people "because they constantly and wilfully undermine their own [human] potential" (2007:xvii, 1). Yet, as pointed out earlier (in 5.3.3.), missionaries pursued the socioeconomic empowerment of Africans in Zimbabwe. It was also noted that, albeit with a degree of ambiguity, prosperity Pentecostals also emphasise the human capacitation of the poor. However, given the fact that the Zimbabwean context of poverty continues to be dominated by human un(der)development, the ecclesiological ethic of poverty-alleviation must continue to seek the enabling of the poor to develop their 'God given potential' so that they can begin to take responsibility for their own socioeconomic recovery. This thesis believes that Africans have human creative power, but lack the development of this God given potential. Thus the chapter will begin (8.2) by advocating for a definition of poverty that begins with lack of participation. This will be followed (8.3) by describing how the historicity of God is a space for the human development of the poor. The question that emerges concerns the criteria that ought to be used in the human development of the poor, the chapter (8.4) will argue that a liberating and empowering capacitation of the poor must aim to enable the poor to exercise their being in the image of God. The chapter (8.5) will present some African hindrances to human development that stand challenged by the historicity of the God of hope. The chapter closes (8.6) by arguing that discipleship in the context of poverty must be entail a form of empowerment.

8.2. Poverty as Lack of Participation

An essential aspect needed for the development of an ecclesiological ethical framework of poverty-alleviation is a definition of poverty that provides possibilities for the human

capacitation of the poor. While acknowledging some truth in the structural perspective, the experience in Zimbabwe (and in many parts in the world) demonstrates that an overly fixation with structural aspects often does little to solve the poverty. Furthermore, an approach to poverty eradication that only concentrates on structural issues fails to understand the complexities of poverty that exist outside the condemned structures of poverty.

How then should the church define poverty? In order to develop a meaningful ecclesiological ethic of poverty alleviation, poverty must be defined in a way that leads to an ecclesiological ethic that accounts for human development, equipping and empowering the poor to be imaginative and responsible socioeconomic players. Bedford-Strohm draws attention to the statement of the Advisory Chamber of Social Order of the German Protestant Churches Federation (EKD) entitled *Just Participation: Empowerment for Personal Responsibility and Solidarity* that was issued on 11 July 2006. Bedford-Strohm highlights that the statement defined poverty as "a lack of participation" (2008:157). According to this statement, poverty should not just be limited to the lack of material things, hunger, homelessness and nakedness. Indeed the lack of material things lowers the quality of life. However, to define poverty only in structural and material terms can easily lead to responses that only centre on charity and relief. Bedford-Strohm highlights from the EKD statement that poverty is the "inadequate participation in society" (2008:158) that leaves people dependent on charity. Therefore, an appropriate ecclesiological ethics of addressing poverty is one that enables people to "become responsible for themselves so that they are not dependent on welfare" (Bedford-Strohm 2008:158).

Theologians with a keen interest on poverty eradication such as Speckman (2007), Myers (2011) and Kritzinger (2012) have drawn attention to the need for a shift from viewing poverty from the perspective of economic growth to an understanding of poverty that takes into account the human development of the poor. This understanding of poverty is in line with the views of contemporary influential community development specialists. David Korten (1990) formulated his people-centred-development model to emphasise human capacitation of the poor as key in addressing poverty. Myers called for an approach to poverty that transforms the poor to assist them in "finding and enjoying life as it should be, as it was intended to be" (2011:3). Poverty must be defined in a way that leads to solutions that empower the poor to be independent and become agents of uplifting other poor people.

Myers (2011) used a transformational development approach that draws from development practitioners and specialists, like Robert Chambers, a view of poverty as entanglement in

disempowering webs. Myers also draws from John Friedmann's view of poverty as lack of access to social power, Isaac Prilleltensky's view of poverty as diminished personal and relational well-being; Jayakumar Christian's view of poverty as disempowering system; and Ravi Jayakaran's view of poverty as a lack of freedom to grow. According to these development specialists, poverty should not just be defined in terms of lack of material things, but in holistic terms including deficit, entanglement, lack of access to social power, diminished personal agency, disempowerment and the lack of freedom to grow (Myers 2011:113-133). An approach to poverty eradication that is oriented on human development, acknowledges that the causes of poverty are not just the socioeconomic and political oppressive and exploitative structures; but also physical factors, social factors, psychological factors and spiritual factors (Myers 2011:133-143). A holistic ecclesiological ethical approach to poverty aims at bringing a "positive change in whole of human life materially, socially, psychologically and spiritually" (Myers 2011:3). Musing over the disciples' healing of the crippled man instead of giving him alms (in Acts 3:1-10), Speckman posits that a useful strategy for poverty eradication must transcend beyond the giving of crutches and wheelchairs and provide "'sturdy legs' for destitute communities to stand on" (2007:*xxvi-xxvii*). Thus, poverty must be defined in such a way that it pays attention to the inability to be productive and self-reliant; the problem of lack of capacity and power to engage one's socioeconomic context meaningfully. While there is truth to the structuralised definition of poverty, in contexts with developing economies such as Zimbabwe, a useful definition of poverty must also place conditions on the poor in order to lead to an ecclesiological ethical framework of poverty-eradication that includes the capacitating of the poor with human responsibility. As Bedford-Strohm (2013:31) avows, ["t]he exclusion of the poor is irreconcilable with the Christian faith. The goal of the economy should be on the participation of all members of society".

8.3. The Historicity of the God of Hope as Space for Human Development

Moltmann's notion of the historicity of the God of hope provides useful resources in the development of an ecclesiological ethic of responding to human powerlessness in a context of poverty. In this section, I will seek to demonstrate how the historicity of the God of hope can function as an important element in the framework of poverty-alleviation in Zimbabwe by its affirmation of God's empowering solidarity with the poor and powerless people, which leads to their human liberation and self-determination.

8.3.1. The Historical Space between the Promise and its Fulfilment

Moltmann presents the historicity of the God of hope in a way that makes it a space of human development (Harvie 2009:147-168). For Moltmann, the God of hope does not stand aloof, unengaged in the earthly struggles of his people – particularly the poor and powerless – only waiting to meet and bless them at the fulfilment of his promises. Vehemently and consistently affirmed in Moltmann is that "[t]he messianic traditions of Judaism and Christianity do not speak of an apathetic God, who is enthroned in undisturbed holiness in heaven" (Moltmann 1974b:414). Instead, these messianic traditions "show us the God who suffers with His forsaken creation because He loves it" (Moltmann 1974b:414).[92] By 'suffering', Moltmann refers to God's concern about the plight of the poor and powerless to the extent of being actively involved in liberating them from oppression. Moltmann's eschatological concept is underpinned by a quest to overcome the human powerlessness of the poor by being alert to the experiences of human powerlessness which are "now the order of the day … in every sector of life" (1983:ix).

Musing over the Exodus, Ela (2005:28) asked the question: "What can men and women in black Africa who seek deliverance from political and economic oppression look for in a reading of Exodus?" The Exodus serves here as the image of the future promises of God. Ela responded to his own question by stating:

> The praxis of the Christians struggling in situations of injustice must be reckoned with in any effort to understand the living faith. We must reflect on this activity, bring it into confrontation with the gospel, and make explicit the theological intent it expresses (2005:28).

What Ela highlights here is that the hope for God's future has political implications. It is incongruent to firmly believe that God has reserved a precious future for his people and yet neglect their struggles in this present life. In a resemblance to Moltmann, Ela says, "The God of the Old Testament, the God of the Promise, continually shows human beings a future of hope, which enables them to criticize the existing situation" (2005:29). Thus space of hope is the space of critical engagement with the existing situation.

---

[92] Ela (2005:30): "If the God of preaching, when all is said and done, is simply the god of the theodicies, that is, of Greek metaphysics, then God is nothing but a supreme, eternal idea, having no connection with anything that happens on earth, where human beings live their lives. Devoid any openness to the world, God cannot become involved in the drama, for God cannot compromise the divine purity in any historical becoming".

8.3.2. The Opposition to Threats of Life in the Historicity of the God of Hope

If the God of hope promises his people a glorious future and yet participates in their historical situation, *what is his attitude to the material existence of his people in this earthly existence?* Moltmann is consistently insistent that God, who has a glorious future prepared for his people, is concerned about the material wellbeing of his people in this present life. Moltmann is firm on the belief that the God of hope "is the God of the poor, the oppressed and the humiliated" (CG 329). It follows that the gospel of hope does not only proclaim the future; it also proclaims the good news to the poor and oppressed of liberation from all forces of oppression. However, prominent in Moltmann, is a liberative[93] understanding of the historicity of the God of hope. With particular reference to the Exodus, the Old Testament prophetic writings and Christ's decisive commitment to the poor, oppressed and powerless, Moltmann affirms the God of hope's historical engagement with his people as life-affirming in this present life. The God of hope is life-affirming; not life-denying (HH 372). God is opposed to the "vicious circles of oppression" (Moltmann 1974b:416) in which the poor and powerless are enslaved. For Moltmann, God is concerned about human oppression because he created human beings for freedom, in his image (Moltmann 1974b:414).

Therefore, the *Zwischenraum* is an ambit of transformed and empowered human existence that stands opposed to the Christian tendency to dichotomise existence in terms of body and soul, spirituality and secularity, faith and politics, church and world (HH 371). The principal point of Moltmann's eschatological ethos is that to behold God's future promise is *not* to be rendered socioeconomically and politically powerless and irrelevant in this present world. Rather, eschatological hope has socioeconomic and political dimensions since, "Christianity stands with all its powers in the dawn of the future and must therefore bring the 'power of the future world' into the troubled spots of the present, personally, socially, and politically" (HH 371). Thus, eschatology, as the doctrine of hope, is "the doctrine of the future for which one can hope, and *simultaneously* the doctrine of the action of hope which brings the hoped for future into the sufferings of the present age" (HH 371, italic added). By this statement, Moltmann affirms that the anticipated promised future has transforming and empowering value in this

---

[93] Moltmann has a broad concept of freedom: "The cry for freedom is, therefore, *universal*. It is the hunger of men. It is the longing of nature. It is the passion of God, as it was revealed in the crucified Christ. …So long as men have not been reconciled to nature and nature to men, there is no complete happiness. So long as God himself suffers in His passion and has not yet come to His rest in a new creation corresponding to Him, everything is living in hope and is not yet in a fulfilled joy. The struggle goes on; the victory is not complete" (Moltmann 1974a:414-415).

present life. Eschatological hope is not just about the future, it is simultaneously about the power of the future in the present life of earthly existence. From an eschatological perspective, "the present [must be understood] as the *presence of the future*" (HH 371, italics added). Eschatological hope raises questions about humanity in the present world filled with suffering.[94]

Therefore, all structural and systematic threats and hindrances to material wellbeing must be resisted. For Moltmann, the eschatologically-directed Christian message does not deny humanity the right to material wellbeing; much to the contrary, it proclaims the new humanity in a way that causes Christians to be concerned about pain and suffering in this world and to rise up against all threats to "true humanity" (HH 375).

8.3.3. The Role of the Poor in the Historicity of the God of Hope

The theme of human development can be constructed out of the fact that the Exodus was the creation of new persons set free from the power of Egyptian servitude (Ela 2005:31-33). In the exodus, God showed himself to value the historical situation of human beings by getting involved in that history and fulfilling his divine promise there (Ela 2005:34). God's interest in the historical situation of his people means that "we cannot posit the happiness of human beings, justice and freedom, reconciliation and peace, in a beyond having no connection with the realities and situations of the present world" (Ela 2005:34). God's hope is not an abstract reality that can be spoken of "without recalling the social and temporal reality is the locus of God's interventions and revelation alike. There God proposes to human beings a collective project of communion and oneness" (Ela 2005:35). God's revelation calls for human transformation.

Concerning the role the poor ought to play in addressing their poverty, Moltmann does not generally go beyond the need to resist evil structures. Moltmann is clear about God's action for the poor and powerless – God's option for the poor. (EH 46). Therefore, those who behold the promise of hope must take decisive steps against oppression. Moltmann (1974a:417) finds Paul's charge to Christians to be strong and to resist the yoke of slavery because of the freedom they have received from Christ (Gal 5:1) as a call to resist even socioeconomic and political oppression. Moltmann finds Christ's declaration that for God nothing is impossible (Mark

---

[94] For Moltmann, in view, God's commitment to make the mountains low and the valleys high so that all men together shall see the glory of the Lord makes Christian faith "the resurrection faith of the prisoners, the blind, the guilty, the oppressed and the misused. It is faith which leads to creative life precisely where death is ruling" (1974a:418).

10:27), affirmed by the resurrection of Christ, which by itself, depicts God's "inexhaustible possibilities" (1974a:418). Therefore, to have"[f]aith means to be resurrected into this creative freedom of God and to act out of its possibilities" (Moltmann 1974a:418). Here Moltmann provides a framework from which the poor and powerless Christians must view their state of poverty and powerlessness. By their faith in the resurrected Christ, the poor and powerless have access to God's inexhaustible possibilities by which they should confront their powerlessness and poverty.

The idea that the poor must resist their evil oppression and that the oppressive and exploitative actions of the rich and powerful must be condemned has strong biblical basis. There are several historical examples where the poor amassed their collective strength and successfully rose up against their oppressors and exploiters. However, noble and biblically based as it is, in Africa this approach to poverty eradication tends to limit itself to structural issues of poverty while paying less attention to human development.

At the most, the responsibility placed by Moltmann on the poor and powerless does not transcend beyond this statement:

> The message 'God is king' makes the liberation of the people possible, and actually brings it about; and yet liberation is also the act of the prisoners, who liberate themselves, who break out of their imprisonment and return home on their own feet (WJC 96).

Thus, for Moltmann, the role that the poor can play towards their liberation from poverty seems to be limited to resisting and challenging the socioeconomic and political structures that impoverish them. Moltmann's preferred cause of action by the poor arises out of the fact that he has tended to have a strictly structural view of poverty. However, his exclusion of the poor from conversion betrays his tendency to only structuralise poverty (WJC 102). Moltmann's view is that God has blessed the poor and powerless to the extent of placing no condition on their salvation, which not only potentially implies redemption by virtue of poverty (Beck 2010:118), it also has the potential to keep the poor locked in socioeconomic structural victimhood. Furthermore, it is an approach that does not empower the poor to do a constructive self-critique that can help themselves to view their poverty objectively. While the rich and powerful do make the poor poor, in many various ways the poor also make themselves poor. Moreover, in some cases, the factors that cause poverty may be outside the prevailing structures. Thus, while Moltmann's structuralisation of poverty does provide some crucial benchmarks that can be used in empowering the poor to deal with their own poverty, a search

for an effective role that the poor ought to play in alleviating their poverty must look beyond Moltmann.

8.4. The Criteria of the Image of God in the Enabling of the Poor

If the historicity of the God of hope can be imagined as a space of the human capacitation of the poor, what should this capacitation entail? Moltmann's theological thought places a high value on enabling oppressed humanity to discover their being as created in the image of God. This section brings into focus Moltmann's emphasis on the image of God as critical criteria in enhancing the human flourishing of the poor.

8.4.1. The Image of God and the Right to Life

According to Myers (2011:3–4), the poor must be empowered "to recovery … [of their] true identity as human beings created in the image of God and to discover … [their] true vocation as productive stewards, faithfully caring for the world and all the people in it". The creation of humankind in God's image has a significant effect on Moltmann's view of human beings because it indicates their special position in God's order of creation. The 'image of God' which Moltmann understands as "God's claim upon human beings" (OHD 21) [95] overarches Moltmann's eschatological hope. For Moltmann, both the Old and New Testaments narrate God's dealing with people in history to liberate and redeem them "from their sinful godlessness and their deadly inhumanity, and *thus also the realization of their original destiny through having been created in the image of God"* (OHD 21, italics added). The perspective that emerges in this statement is that the restoration of humanity to its original destiny in the unmarred image of God is the eschatological end of God's historical dealings with human beings (OHD 22). According to Moltmann:

> On the ground of the creation of man and woman in the image of God, on the ground of the incarnation of God for the reconciliation of the world, and on the ground of the coming of the kingdom of God as the consummation of history, the concern that is entrusted to Christian theology is one for the humanity of persons as well as for their ongoing rights and duties (OHD 20).

Being created in the image of God grants human beings the 'right to life'. Influenced by the United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights,* Moltmann argues that human rights capture the broad spectrum of the 'right to life' (OHD 4). This emphasis on the image of God and the right to life provides an essential benchmark for the human development of the poor.

---

[95] For Moltmann, human rights are essentially linked to the fact that human beings are created in God's image, which affirms life, freedom community and self-determination (OHD 22).

201

The quest for God's promised future does not negate the right to life of human beings; it affirms it and protects it. To be in the image of God, for Moltmann, means to have the 'right to life'.

Moltmann's view is that human rights to life, freedom, community, and self-determination "mirror God's right to the human being because the human being is destined to be God's image in all conditions and relationships of life" (OHD 17). Therefore, human rights are not humans' rights *per se;* human beings do not give themselves human rights. Rather, the fundamental human rights are "God's rights to–that is, his claim upon–human beings, their human dignity, their fellowship, their rule over the earth, their future" (OHD 20). Moltmann lists four 'fundamental' human rights that are concomitant to being in the image of God and constitute what it means to be truly human.[96] The first fundamental human right is the freedom of conscience, which entails freedom to be fully responsible before God in all areas of life (OHD 23-25). The second fundamental human right is the right for human beings to live in social communities (OHD 25-26). The third fundamental human right is the right to exercise dominion over the earth and to live in community with non-human creation (OHD 26-28). The fourth fundamental human right is the right to one's future, to self-determination and to the responsibility for one's future and the future of one's descendants (OHD 28-29). As has been pointed out, this list of fundamental human rights is permeated with the notion of the 'right to life', which means to be denied rights is therefore to be denied humanity (Gibb 2006:70).

That human rights are ultimately God's rights is affirmed in the sequence of liberation, covenant and the demands that mark God's covenantal relationship with his people (OHD 21-23). Furthermore, the oppression of Israel was tantamount to attacking God. Thus the historicity of the God of hope, his option for the poor and powerless and his historical engagement in their situations of poverty, oppression and powerlessness evidence God's determination to exercise his right to ensure that all human beings have a dignified human existence as demanded by the fact of their being created in his image. Moltmann's conviction is that the Christian faith transcend "beyond human rights and duties to stand for the dignity of human beings in their life with God and for God" (OHD 20). Therefore, "[i]n a world which is not yet the kingdom of God, Christians cannot leave any area of life without witness to the divine liberation, the covenant of God, and the dignity of human beings" (OHD 22). If being

---

[96] For Moltmann: "God's claim upon human being was and is experienced in concrete events of the liberation of human beings, in their covenant with God and in their rights and duties inherent in their freedom. Image of God, as destiny, points to God's indivisible claim upon human beings and therefor to their inalienable dignity" (OHD 23).

in the image of God means a right to life, it means that anything that infringes on this right ought to be resisted.

8.4.2. The Human Dignifying Nature of Work

Another important benchmark of liberated humanity that emerges in Moltmann's thought, intimately connected to the image of God, is his positive view of work. Moltmann's view of work directly flows out of his view of the image of God and the right to life. The focus of this section does not allow for a detailed discussion and evaluation of the intricacies in Moltmann's theology of work.[97] This section will only highlight that Moltmann links work with the image of God in a manner that promotes the human capacitation of the poor. The idea in this section is that it is not enough to just give charity to the poor without capacitating them to be effective socioeconomic participants.

Moltmann emphasises that work must be dignifying, "meaningful for human beings" (OHD 37). Moltmann's redemptive view of work responds to the negative attitudes towards work in pre-modern societies that viewed work as belonging to slaves or lower class citizens and the negative views of modern industrialised societies where productive work is essentially a badge of self-affirmation and social recognition (OHD 37). Whereas in premodern societies meaningful life was attained outside of work since work was considered burdensome and enslaving, modern societies have taken a diametrically opposite position, viewing work as the basis of their self-worth, social recognition and human essence (OHD 37, 41-42). Furthermore, Moltmann's theology of work is against the utility and necessity of work; and essentially denies the justification of human worth by work.

In *Theology of Play* (1972), he emphasised that work be approached as play, out of freedom and not necessity. Moltmann argues that creation is "God's play, a play of his groundless and inscrutable wisdom" (Moltmann 1972:17) to indicate that God created not out of necessity but from his creative nature (see 2.3.3). Thus, creation is a display not of God's need, but a display of his glory. In a context of poverty such as Zimbabwe, the theology of work as play challenges poor Christians to desist from a survival approach to work and adopt a creative approach. The raging question is 'how long will Zimbabweans who live in rich soils continue to rely on foreign creativity to solve their poverty?' By anchoring his theology of work as play on the image of God, Moltmann challenges the poor to live-out their being in the image of God by

---

[97] Cosden's *A Theology of Work: Work and the New Creation* (2004) provides a useful analysis of Moltmann's theology of work.

exercising their creative power towards work. As a benchmark of human liberation, work as play enlists Africans to develop their God-given creative power and exercise dominion over the earth. To unpack the implications of the responsibility God gave to the humans to name the animals, Myers says: "Naming, organising, and rationalising, are the beginning of science. The ability to reason and to act is a form of social power. The way this organizing and naming is done implies judgments of value and worth" (2011:67). This highlights that the poor must be helped to discover creative power and to implement it in eradicating their poverty. To some extent, the splendour of developed countries is testimony to the fact that work which leads to development must look beyond subsistence mode.

Moltmann highlights the biblical affirmation of God as a worker (ODH 40; Exod. 20:9-11) to assert that work is good and must not be shunned. The Hebrew word *barà,* used for God's act of creation, distinguishes God's creative work from all possible human works (OHD 40). However, "in and through their work in the world human beings can and should correspond to the creative activity of God" (OHD 40). Work is good; it was instituted before the fall, meaning that the curse was not on the reality of work, but only on work after the fall which became inflicted with toil, pain and uselessness (OHD 40). Therefore, deliverance from sin does not release human beings from work, but transforms work from cursedness to blessedness (OHD 40). Moltmann further highlights that God's command of the Sabbath rest (Ex 20:9-11) is an affirmation of the goodness and meaningfulness of work (OHD 41).[98] The Sabbath command takes the sting of pain, toil, and burdensomeness out of work. Thus, from a Sabbath perspective, work is "limited by the goal of rest and joy in existence" (OHD 41). Work produces livelihood for human beings; by glorifying God and partaking of his Sabbath they present themselves before him, which means that work must be marked with joy, freedom and playfulness.

Moltmann's view on work provides a useful benchmark for a framework of poverty eradication in Zimbabwe. Firstly, it challenges authorities to ensure that workers are given meaningful work, and it challenges the able-bodied who shun work to value and love work. By taking up work, they fulfil God's mandate to rule over creation. Furthermore, no human being should be hindered from fulfilling God's mandate to exercise rule over the earth by being denied the right to work (Moltmann 1983:5).[99] Thus, all human beings have the right to the earth's life giving

---

[98] Moltmann says: "The commandment to work and rest is based on its correspondence with the creating and resting of the Lord. In work and rest human beings, in their way, take part in the creative world process and in the joy of the Creator" (OHD 41).

[99] Moltmann highlights that humanity's great wickedness (Gen. 6:5) did not cancel both the designation of humanity being created in the image of God and the mandate to rule over creation (Gen. 1:27-28). Reflecting on

resources; "each and every human being has the basic economic right to a just share in life, nourishment, work, shelter, and personal possessions" (OHD 27).[100] Therefore, the image of God in human beings is violated when a few people exclusively dominate "the basic necessities of life and the means of production" (OHD 27). To infringe on the human right to work is effectively to infringe on the right to life. All human beings should have equal access to the right to life by having equal access to work. Furthermore, the exploitation of the poor is defrauding them of their right to life. It effectively means living off the life of the poor and powerless.

This provides a useful framework for addressing poor working habits among many poor Zimbabweans. It also provides a useful framework for addressing the disdainment of work in prosperity movements. Often prosperity churches members are discouraged from being employees in a manner that undermines the dignity of work. As Togarasei points out, church members are exhorted to "strive to be employers themselves. The word job (employment) is said to be an abbreviation of 'Just Over (being) Broke'. To be employed therefore is to be 'just over being broke', to be just a month away from poverty" (2011:340). While the intention is to encourage entrepreneurship among church members, this belittles the value of work, as the entrepreneur is not seen as a worker. Moltmann reminds us that work is good and that God is a worker. This highlights the urgency of dignified work to overcoming poverty.

From an eschatological perspective, Paul affirmed both the value of work and its necessity to virtuous Christian living and as a remedy to dependency syndrome (1Thess 5:11-12). Paul affirmed the dignity of work by engaging in it himself as an example to emulated (2 Thess 3:7-9). He further affirmed work as necessary to a productive and orderly life and as necessary for the creation of food (2 Thess 3:10). Those who rely on stealing for their food and those who are parasitical dependent on others are commanded to work (2 Thess 3:10; Eph 4:28). In these instructions Paul stresses that eschatological hope neither devalues work nor paganises it.

God's pronouncement of his blessing on Noah after the flood in Genesis 9:1-3, which is a renewal of Genesis 1:28-30, Moltmann says: "It is in conditions of wickedness and Flood that God repeats the covenant given at creation, and renews his blessing. So even in the wickedness we cause and suffer, God's covenant and human dignity remain" (1983:5).

[100] Expressed differently: "Economic human rights are just as inalienable a part of man's likeness to God as his right to political freedom. Anyone who disregards these rights is disregarding God" (Moltmann 1983:7).

8.4.3. The Significance of the Environment to Life

The environment is an important benchmark of liberated humanity in Moltmann's theological scope. In fact, the right to work has direct implications on the natural environment. On the basis of God's charge to human beings to 'till and keep' the earth (Gen. 2:15), Moltmann stresses that human beings fulfil their creation in the image of God only when they exercise dominion over the earth in accordance with the lordship of the Creator over the earth (OHD 27). That is, to plunder, exploit and destroy nature contradicts the earth's rights and dignity (OHD 27). Moltmann's point effectively means that God has granted the earth rights. Human beings must respect ecological rights, as they have been granted rights to derive from nature "life, nourishment, work, shelter and personal possessions" (OHD 27). Myers highlights the issue of environmental stewardship by saying: "Since God owns the earth but has entrusted it to human kind, the critical metaphor for us is that of the steward and the principle of stewardship" (2011:63).

8.5. Aspects of African Human Un(der)development Challenged by the Historicity of God

This section examines some key aspects in human un(der)development in Africa that are challenged by the historicity of God. By being aware of God's engagement in their historical situation, Africans should address these factors that hinder their human progress.

8.5.1. The Problem of Deep-rooted African Self-Doubt

The consequences of the missionary denial of human equality between Africans and the Europeans (Evans 1948:31) continue to this day through deep-rooted African self-doubt. Ela (1994a:21) has noted that "Africa is this ancient land where humanity has been treated with contempt for many centuries". An earlier section highlighted Tutu's (1997:37) expression that Africa's initial encounter with the early European missionaries paradoxically resulted in improved life but declined African self-confidence, filling them with self-disgust and self-hatred. Similarly, Ela has mourned that Africans experienced Christianity in a disempowering manner, as the God preached by the missionaries was so remote and so foreign to African human history that he did not protect the Africans from being exploited and oppressed (Ela 2005:29). These statements indicate the ambiguous roles of both Christianity and western civilisation in Africa; they left the Africans empowered and disempowered at the same time, which resulted in religious and cultural schizophrenias that have continued to reign over Africa (Tutu 1997:37).

With reference to both Christianity and colonialism, Speckman notes that Africans have endured a history that left them "with a feeling of worthlessness" (2007:*xiv*). The feeling of worthlessness presents itself in the deep-rooted African self-doubt and a syndrome of dependency, mostly on European human power. Steve Biko, the architect of the Black Consciousness Movement of South Africa, posed the question: "What makes the black man[101] fail to tick?" (1978:28. As he mused over the problem he further asked and provided the answer as follows:

> Is he convinced of his own accord of his inabilities? Does he lack in his genetic make-up that rare quality that makes a man willing to die for the realisation of his aspirations? Or is he simply a defeated person? The answer to this question is not a clearcut one. It is, however, nearer to the last suggestion than anything else (Biko 1978:28).

In this passage, Biko highlights the deep-rooted African self-bankruptcy and self-defeatedness. The effects of the history of slavery and colonialism and its theology of African non-peoplehood run deep in the African psyche and socialisation precisely because they emptied out of the Africans the confidence to be authentically human (Evans 1945:31; Tutu 1997:37; West 2002:28; Ela 2005:21). Ecclesiological ethics must address the absence of the accountable and responsible African self that was diminished by being subject to the inferior Native Affairs law of the white settlers, a separate law for the Africans that demanded less accountability and responsibility from them than from the white settlers. Governance under a separate, inferior law, which took away the rights to be fully human and fully accountable, was combined with the deliberate crippling of the African socioeconomic capacity by limiting access to full civilisation through good quality education, scientific and industrial skills and the broad range facets of managerial responsibilities. This took away the power of self-determination, answerability and human responsibility and created a mentality of dependency on white settler management.

The challenge of theological ethics in Zimbabwe is to provide Africans theological resources for constructive migration from deep-rooted broken and humanly powerless African selves to

---

[101] It can be assumed that 'man' is used here to refer to both men and women. However, given the patriarchal nature of the traditional African set-up during colonial times, whereby men had the responsibility to protect and provide for their families, the question can still be asked from a masculine perspective to critique the manner in which, in their position as heads of families and clans, African men fatally succumbed to white domination. The African cause continues to be betrayed by its patriarchs, who continue to feed on their children, drive them into exiles as despised migrant workers, while mortgaging their nations' resources to Western powers for guns and all sorts of weapons; things not used for national development but for cowing their subjects into impoverished citizenry.

empowered and responsible African selves. Christianity in Africa, whether in the traditional form of mainline Christianity or modern prosperity Pentecostalism, continues to disempower black Africans by its failure to take Africanness seriously in order to enhance an effective dialogue about African cultural practices to be discontinued and to be continued upon Christian conversion. This is true even in Evangelicalism's attempts to promote biblical Christianity. There is often no constructive dialogue with the African mindset, worldview and religious heritage. Instead of a dialogue in order to bring about transformation, Africanness is often wished away as if non-existent, or as if amassing more evangelical doctrines will transform the African worldview. Rather than addressing the specific issues affecting African humanity, priority is given to a defence of evangelical doctrines and correct hermeneutical biblical interpretation, as if these alone are sufficient to recover damaged African humanity.

8.5.2. The Human Crippling Power of the African Traditional Worldview

Furthermore, an ecclesiological ethics of human development is necessary in Zimbabwe to address the crippling power of the African traditional worldview on socioeconomic imagination and activity. A strong tenet in the African traditional worldview is the "presupposition of the idea of limited cosmic good" (Van Rooy 1999:238). Whereas in missionary mainline churches the African traditional worldview tends to be ignored, Pentecostal prosperity churches emphasise individual faith in a manner that ultimately gives credence to the African view of limited cosmic good. The uncritical and undue emphasis on the spirituality of the individual in prosperity churches tends to downplay human responsibility in a manner that ultimately feeds into the African notion of limited cosmic good.

The African worldview is basically religious (Mbiti 1990:5). A strong element of this African religiosity is the belief in the cosmic good as the vital force that enables one to achieve success (Moyo 1999:50). The idea is that success is not so much determined by what people do, but by how they are predisposed to cosmic powers. As Moyo (1999:51) explains, in African traditional worldview the "spirits are powerful members of the community who, when they get angry, can bring untold suffering upon their descendants". Thus, the spirits are believed to "oversee the day-to-day activities of their descendants to ensure the traditions laid down by their ancestors are adhered to and that the family lives together in harmony with a great deal of concern for each other" (Moyo 1999:51). This line of thinking promotes the idea that material possessions do not necessarily reflect hard work, but reflect how one is predisposed to cosmic powers that grant success. This belief often undermines hard work, since success does not come from hard work, but from cosmic powers. This explains the prevalence of African reliance on prophets,

sangomas and all sorts of magical and spiritual practitioners who promise powers for getting rich. Rather than maximise human development, the common tendency among Africans is to seek to individually monopolise this limited power, to possess it, control it and increase it at the expense of others (Van Rooy 1999:238).

The effects of the belief in limited good in the neglect of the ethic of responsibility in African are far-reaching, eroding human responsibility and promoting determinism, fatalism and passivity (Nyamiti 1997:58). There is a tendency in African traditional perspective to ignore that success is a result of diligent work, natural ability, or dependability at work that opens greater opportunities (Van Rooy 1999:239). Rather, success and prosperity are viewed as results of black magic that set in motion the mystical "life-force" (Van Rooy 1999:239). Furthermore, belief in limited cosmic power promotes the idea that God is "sometimes believed to be the Lord of magic, and Himself subject to its influence" (Nyamiti 1997:58). This explains the general tendency of overreliance on magical powers as a way of dealing with poverty.

Therefore, ecclesiological ethics in the Zimbabwean context of poverty challenges the socioeconomic crippling power of the African traditional worldview, as well as the prosperity theology that tend overly undergird economic activity with religious power than with God-given human creative power.

8.5.3. African Political Independence without Human Liberation

Directly related to deep-rooted African self-doubt is the problem of African political independence without human liberation. By 1980, when South Africa and Namibia were the only two African countries who had not yet achieved majority rule, Mugomba and Nyaggah (1980) mourned that political independence in Africa had not translated to developed African human power. The evidence for this tragedy was the failure of the new African governments to successfully maintain and grow the viable economies and institutions inherited from the erstwhile colonialists. In Zimbabwe, in addition to the problem of deep-rooted feelings of human worthlessness, there are also strong notions of human powerlessness and few viable solutions to the socioeconomic and political malaise obtaining in the country. Both the rulers and the ruled do not seem to know what to do to arrest the growing reality of poverty. The news channels continually report President Robert Mugabe and his ZANU-PF party blaming poverty in Zimbabwe in the Western European imperialists (Hartnack 2006; Express 2008; The Zimbabwe Independent 2013). This ironically means that the western imperialists blamed for African poverty in colonial times continue to be blamed for African poverty in black-ruled

independent Zimbabwe. Without discounting the negative effects of Western globalisation and the European and American sanctions imposed on Mugabe and his ZANU-PF lieutenants on the national economy the Zimbabwean quest for political independence has generally lacked viable socioeconomic development. Mugomba has long pointed out it is "naïve and absurd to blame African underdevelopment and its psychological, political, economic and social consequences on colonial control and exploitation alone" (1980:40). He emphasised that Africans should shoulder the responsibility for the continent's lack of development. Similarly, Van Rooy (1999:237) pointed out that Africans cannot continue to blame colonialism, exploitation by the West or capitalism for Africa's poverty, without any self-introspection about their contribution to their own poverty. In addition to being the ancient land where humanity has for long been treated with contempt (Ela 1994:21), Africa is also a newly liberated land ransacked by its corrupt and visionless rulers. In a Zimbabwean context full of poverty and hunger, Chitando (2010:198) has spoken of a "*spectacular failure of imagination* by post-colonial African leaders and citizens" (italics added). The many initiatives of poverty eradication, some internationally funded and others locally initiated, have only succeeded in leaving Africans constantly entrenched "at the bottom of the pile" (Chitando 2010:198, see also ZWWD 32-33).

Progressive human development in Zimbabwe, as in some parts of Africa, has also suffered from the African tendency to regress to an idealised past, to the "world that is valuable to historians and archaeologists" (Speckman 2007:*xviii*). There is great value in the nostalgic philosophies of Negritude, Black Consciousness and the African Renaissance, as they attempt to restore what Africa has lost. Yet, Africa's past was one that only benefited the ruling elite, a past where tribal chiefs and kings ruthlessly oppressed their subjects, collaborating with slave traders and colonisers while benefiting from the plunder of their own people (Boesak 2005:67; Ela 2005:24). One gets the unpleasant feeling that to be truly African is to cling to the known past, despite its chaotic ruthlessness, and to be afraid of facing the unknown future. In Zimbabwe, the attempts to redress the socioeconomic exploitations of colonialism have not only been chaotic and corrupt. More than this, they have also revealed serious shortages of human imaginative and entrepreneurial strength, as those who were given land and business enterprises only succeeded in destroying them. Rather than produce, the new owners only ate what they found and left the land and the businesses resting derelict. It cannot be denied that Zimbabwe is a "young and maturing democracy" (Chitando & Manyonganise 2011:94) still recovering from the complex effects of colonisation, the liberation struggle and coming to

terms with being a modern self-ruling nation. However, we must find it extremely depressing that "the splendours of Harare and Bulawayo in postcolonial Zimbabwe resemble those of precolonial Great Zimbabwe, in which armed agencies (within and outside the state) exercised extreme violence to suppress a multitude of the poor while maintaining in power a few rich members of the state elite"(Maundeni 2004:205). It is even more depressing that there is so much preoccupation with restoring these ancient despotic hegemonies, instead of transforming the current system to enhance the human flourishing and the human rights of the citizens. This absence of a culture of transformative human capacitation while visionless leaders cling onto power is a worrying trend which needs to be urgently attended to.

Political independence without human liberation in Zimbabwe is a result of the predominant tendency of regarding political independence as a destination and not a process of building an independent state (Maundeni 2004:195). The unfortunate situation in Zimbabwe, and elsewhere in Africa, is that political independence seems to be *only* understood as attaining political power, reclaiming from the white people everything expropriated from the black people and enjoy it *all now* as rewards and benefits for a hard-won independence. This scope of thinking fails to realise that political independence is a responsibility to govern a state, build infrastructure and take the state into the future. Thus, there is the need to shift from perceiving political liberation as inheriting white settlers' achievements to an understanding of the responsibility to govern in the state in a manner that promotes socioeconomic and political viability and sustainability (Maundeni 2004). The tendency to occupy power simply for self-aggrandisement can also be seen among many church leaders, who use their churches to amass personal wealth. The socioeconomic imagination is consumerist rather than creatively industrialist. Political liberation with human development means a commitment to move forward.

Kenyan theologian Julius Gathogo (2008:46–53) has wondered how an African continent with all its claimed subscription to the *ubuntu* philosophy can also at the same time be full of *unyama/ubulwane* (animal like behaviour) such as tribalism, oppression of women and corruption. Africa's wonderful dreams, be they *ubuntu*, the African Renaissance, or political independence, have all suffered from one common factor: untransformed African human capacity. One finds that many modern African states are, in reality, an untransformed perpetuation of the loathed former colonial systems for:

> Here and there, violence tends to become a real method of government. Under the iron-fisted regimes and
> the absurd dictatorships that have led to the political emasculation of millions of Africans and to the

strangulation of their societies, we find once again the weight of slavery, whose influence in the formation

of the political systems of contemporary Africa should be underlined (Ela 2005:26).

Ecclesiological ethics in Zimbabwe, just like in most of Africa, stands challenged to attend to the problem of African political independence without human liberation.

8.5.4. The Problem of the Suppression and Exclusion of African Women

An earlier noted the suppression and exclusion of women from the point of view of the African kraal (7.5.3). This section highlights that the suppression and exclusion of women continues to remain a challenge in modern Zimbabwe. Thus the problem of political independence without human liberation noted in this study is inclusive of the plight of African women, who endure the extended brunt of poverty and powerlessness. Interestingly, as early as the 1920s, E. W. Smith (1928:125–126) noted the negative effect of colonialism on African rural women who were left alone to tend to their homes as husbands migrated to the emerging business of the white settlers. [102] Recently, Biri and Togarasei (2013:81) have noted the tendency by Zimbabwe's government of adopting policies for poverty reduction that have no regard for gender imbalance. Even the Government of National Unity (GNU) "did not bring notable change that empowered women" (Biri & Togarasei 2013:81).

8.6. Discipleship as Empowerment in the African Kraal

The previous chapter (Chapter 7) proposed the African kraal as a useful way of thinking about Moltmann's notion of the church of hope. The chapter proposed the image of the African kraal because of its communality that is undergirded by the *ubuntu* philosophy. The kraal, whether at family level or tribal level, was a traditionally a place of empowerment. When the elders of the community converged in the kraal, they would from time to time assess the socioeconomic situation of their people under their care. The concept of *ukusisa* involved a transfer of animal husbandry skills so that the person receiving assistance would be able to stand on their own and pass the knowledge to others.

In a context of poverty, with the church of hope functioning as the African kraal, discipleship will involve socioeconomic empowerment. It must be a form of discipleship that attends to the deep-rooted African self-doubt (8.5.1.), the human crippling power in the African traditional worldview (8.5.2.), the African political independence without human liberation (8.5.3.) and

---

[102] According to Smith (1928:125-126): "An undue share of the agricultural work is thrown upon the women, or much of the work is not done, and consequently insufficient food is grown. The men bring back disease".

the suppression and exclusion of women (8.5.4.). Brand (2002:198, 201–204) highlights that African Christian theology needs to address African contextual problems, by reconciling Christian commitment with liberation praxis, by being relevant to the sociopolitical context and by empowering the oppressed address their predicament meaningfully and being accountable to the church of the poor.

Cameroonian Catholic theologian Marc-Jean Ela (1994a:32–35; 2005:8,116) has suggested a model of empowering the poor he calls a "theology under the tree" or "shade-tree theology". He views this as a theology developed not from the libraries or offices but alongside the poor, a theology that "develops among brothers and sisters searching shoulder to shoulder in which this word touches them" (Ela 2005:*vi*). An earlier section (in 2.2.1) noted Moltmann's call for the reading of the "Bible with new perception, with new eyes" (EH 7) in order to address the problematic issues that are unique to the current times. Ela's idea of 'theology under the tree' aptly responds to Moltmann's call. This ultimately calls for a new hermeneutical framework of reading the Bible together as men, women and children that responds to the cries of the oppressed and impoverished in the Zimbabwean context of poverty. In view of the fact that in contexts of poverty it is the women and children who often bear the full brunt of poverty, the new hermeneutical framework of the African kraal must translate to a 'reading the bible together' that liberates and empowers women to be responsible participants in the context of poverty, and protects the human flourishing of children.

In Ela's shade-tree theology, the believers gather in small groups to read the scriptures and interpret them in the light of their own particular situations. For Ela, the point of departure for theological reflection is the present context in which poverty and suffering are experienced. Ela (1994b:140) expresses that the "urgent problems of contemporary Africa become the obligatory locus of theological research…it is no longer enough to pose the questions of faith on the level of culture alone". Rather, "[w]e must also pay attention to the mechanism and structure of oppression at work" (Ela 1994b:140). This means that the response to poverty cannot be arbitrary; it must respond to specific aspects of oppression and impoverishment. This means that theological reflection, particularly contemplating on the significance of the death of Christ is a useful means of empowering the poor to assume personal responsibility for the addressing of their poverty. For Ela (1994:34), the church in Africa must realise that "on the cross, Jesus changed an instrument of humiliation into an instrument of struggle for life". Therefore, the cross calls us "to the places where, in Christ, our history opens up the eyes of our faith to a God struggling to abolish all sorts of inhumanity from the land of Africa" (Ela

213

1994:34). This means that Africans, with their cry for liberation must "come back to the foot of the cross to let the liberating potential of the gospel shine" (Ela 1994:34). Encountering the historicity of God should have liberating and empowering effect on the poor.

The approach to discipleship as human capacitation must appreciate the inseparable link between the Fall and poverty that is note adequately addressed in Moltmann's overly structuralised perspective of poverty. Moltmann's exclusion of the poor and oppressed from conversion seems to undermine the personal effect of sin on the poor and keeps them away from a significant step in the beginning of a new, transformed and empowered life of salvation in Christ. Poverty can be traced to sin, neither in the manner done in prosperity Pentecostalism where poverty is viewed as a curse, nor in the racist ancient colonial projection of the dark Africa linked to the curse Ham. Poverty is traced to sin in the sense of the universal fallenness that has stunted humanity's creative power, resulting in a human failure to fulfil God's mandate to exercise dominion over the earth. (Gen. 3 and Rom 5:12,18-20). Myers' emphasis that "[t]here is an adversary working against our desire to enhance life" (2011:3) expresses Jesus announcement that the devil opposes God's desire to give his people abundant life (John 10:10). In the ultimately sense, the enemy of the poor is not the oppressors and exploiters, *per se*. Satan is at work actively opposing God's program of giving his people abundant life. Indeed, when Satan is read out of God's eschatological hope, the historicity of God ceases to make sense (cf. Myers 2011:65).

From a sober perspective, there is some merit in the early missionaries' link of African poverty to African traditional religions, just as there is some merit to the contemporary prosperity Pentecostal linking of poverty to the curse. The problem with these approaches is their lack of constructive dialogue with African reality. Human capacitation is necessary because "[p]overty is not simply an economic imbalance but also oppression by principalities and powers holding the poor captive" (Alvarez, Avarientos & McAlpine 1999:57). An effective theological ethical approach to poverty eradication in Zimbabwe must liberate and empower the poor to exercise the power of human responsibility concomitant in their being in the image of God. The poor ought to be empowered to discover their God-given power, especially in view of being made in the image of God.

In the church of hope, discipleship that is informed by the empowering nature of the historicity of God should take into account the definition of human development in Korten's people-centred approach. For Korten human development is a

214

process by which members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to *produce* sustainable and justly distributed *improvements* in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations (Korten 1990:67).

Korten's approach prioritises the importance of discipleship that empowers the poor to see their responsibility in the addressing of their situation. Speckman (2007:25-26) rightly highlights, for Korten human development hinges on process, production and improvements by enlisting the poor, enabling them to be productive and empowering them address their context of poverty. The understanding of the church as an African kraal highlights that in the church of hope worship should also entail equipping the poor to participate socioeconomically and politically.

8.7. Conclusion

This chapter focused on the need for the human capacitation of the poor in a context of poverty. It argued that the historicity of the God of hope is a place of human development. The chapter broadened Moltmann's overly structuralised definition of poverty by highlighting that the poor are not just because of sociopolitical and economical structures that marginalise and exploit them but also because they have no power to participate socioeconomically. While the recognition of disempowering socioeconomic and political structures is true, it is also necessary to recognise that poverty is also caused by a lack of human capacitation. Therefore, poverty must not only be defined in terms of a lack of material goods. This chapter argued for a definition of poverty that promotes the capacitation of the poor adopted from Bedford-Strohm's reliance on the Advisory Chamber of Social Order of the German Protestant Churches Federation (EKD) entitled *Just Participation: Empowerment for Personal Responsibility and Solidarity,* which defines poverty as a lack of participation. The African motif of the African kraal can be used as metaphor for the church that empowers the poor by means of encouraging their participation in economic life. The motif of the African kraal helps the church to realise how communality can function as a resource for empowering the poor. Human capacitation enables the poor to realise their being in the image of God. From the perspective of human capacitation of the poor, discipleship plays the role of empowerment.

Chapter 9: The Kingdom of God in Shaping the Church's Public Role in a Context of Poverty

9.1. Introduction

The previous chapter highlighted how Moltmann's notion of the historicity of God could inform the need for human capacitation in responding to contexts of poverty. This chapter draws from Moltmann's notion of the kingdom of God a concept of the public role of the church in a context of poverty. This chapter uses Moltmann's understanding of the kingdom of God to highlight the importance of churches engaging sociopolitical and economic structures to fight poverty in their communities.

Moltmann describes his theology as "a passion for the kingdom of God" (EiT *xx*). Furthermore, for Moltmann, theology "springs out of a passion for God's kingdom and its righteousness and justice" (EiT *xx*). Hope for the glorious kingdom of God should spur a theological reflection on the things in this world that contradict the glory of the kingdom. Moltmann adds that, following a passion for the kingdom, "theology becomes imagination for the kingdom of God in the world, and for the world in God's kingdom" (EiT *xx*). In other words, his interest is to enable the church to bring the liberating power of the kingdom of God to oppressive contexts. This chapter will attempt to draw from Moltmann's notion of the kingdom a model of public theology that can inform an ecclesiological ethic for responding to poverty. It can be said that to adequately empower the poor, the church needs to empower its theological framework of socioeconomic and political reality. Thus, the question of this chapter is: *How can God's promised kingdom enhance an ecclesiological ethic that enables a meaningful engagement with poverty?* This chapter calls for the church of hope to think *publically* about poverty and hence develop an eschatologically informed public theological model of engaging poverty. Section 9.2 examines Bedford-Strohm's models of political theology and critically embraces his public theology model as an idea framework for responding to poverty in the Zimbabwean context of poverty. In section 9.3 is examined how the kingdom of God should inform an ecclesiological ethic of hope in a context of poverty. The chapter closes (9.4) by examining how theology can be empowered to engage the public space in the Zimbabwean context of poverty.

9.2. Bedford-Strohm's Models of Political Ethics in a Context of Poverty

Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, in his essay, *Poverty and Public Theology: Advocacy of the Church in Pluralistic Society* (2008) highlights four theological models used by Christians when responding to poverty. This section studies these four models and considers some situations in which they have presented themselves in Zimbabwe's context of poverty.

9.2.1. The Charity Model

According to Bedford-Strohm (2008:146), the charity model understands "the option for the poor primarily or even exclusively as a call for Christians to live the commandment to love one's neighbour in their daily life by helping and assisting those who are in need". Bedford-Strohm(2008:146) explains that this model distinguishes between benevolent actions and political actions and attention is exclusively limited to acts of benevolence. Biblical texts that refer to the option for the poor are interpreted "as personal calls to action, and political readings are explicitly rejected as ideological misuse of the Bible" (Bedford-Strohm 2008:146). In other words, this model will practise the feeding of the hungry and clothing of the naked, but will refrain from action against the rulers or the institutions that are responsible for the poverty in the society. As Bedford-Strohm (2008:146) points out, the theological basis of the charity model is an interpretation of Luther's notion of the two kingdoms that separates the heavenly kingdom, which is considered spiritual and holy, in opposition to the earthly kingdom, which is viewed as physical and worldly.

The charity model is succinctly captured in Kretzschmar's reference to "a very narrow theology … [that is] largely ignorant of the content and implications of [the] faith" (Kretzschmar 1997:313). In this narrow theology, "Christian faith is reduced to the private, personal concerns of individuals and separated from the needs and concerns of the wider society in which we live" (Kretzschmar 1997:313). In other words, this model has a privatised view of the Lordship of Christ, limiting it to personal life while excluding it from life's social and ecological aspects (Kretzschmar 1997:313). The charity model has a narrow definition of salvation and consequently a narrow understanding of the mission of the church. It is a dualistic model that confines the mission of the church to spiritual things such as saving souls and private worship while socioeconomic and political issues are considered 'dirty business' to be shunned by Christians (Kretzschmar 1997:313). This approach to reality can be seen in missionaries with pietistic roots that believed in a life of simplicity and promoted a dichotomous Christian view of reality, separating the sacred from the secular (Beidelman 1982:60-62,185-190).

On one hand the charity model takes literally Jesus' statement that his kingdom does not belong to his world (John 18:36) and that it is profitless to gain this world and yet lose one's soul (Mk 8:36; Matt 16:26). However, texts that speak of political issues, such as hunger and liberation in Luke 4:18-20, are interpreted spiritually. This creates a distinction between spiritual reality and secular reality, resulting in a form of secularisation of some reality (Kretzschmar 1998:13). [103] The charity model has a conservative and a liberal approach. While the conservative approach believes in purely giving alms, the liberal approach believes that aid must go beyond merely giving fish to include imparting fishing skills so that the poor will be self-reliant. However, the oppressive political and socioeconomic conditions that are responsible for the reality of poverty are left unaddressed. Churches often adopt the charity model as a way of staying clear of politics. Research highlights that in politically charged context such in present Zimbabwe, churches often strictly define their mission in terms of preaching the otherworldly gospel while avoiding challenging oppressive unjust laws and systems (Mukonyora 2008; Kaulemu 2010:49; Chitando & Manyonganise 2011:100–101). Confronted by a severe socioeconomic and political crisis, Evangelical Christians often resort to divine intervention over political activism on the pretext that Christians should not be involved in worldly issues (Mukonyora 2008). [104] The closest means of addressing the oppressive political and socioeconomic systems is prayer for the rulers and a belief in the power of evangelism in the hope that massive Christianisation, particularly the conversion of the ruling elite, will translate into improved socioeconomic and political conditions.

In Bedford-Strohm's analysis, neglected in the charity model is the "inseparable relationship between individual ethics and social ethics" (2008:146). By this statement, Bedford-Strohm draws attention to the fact that political dimensions permeate individual and social actions. This means that Christians who are truly concerned about the poor and the powerless "must look for every possible means of overcoming the causes of such distress including the political ones" (Bedford-Strohm 2008:146).

---

[103] Secularisation can be traced to the Renaissance period when the Constantinian unity between Church and State was broken, resulting in the differentiation that became common particularly after the Reformation period (Cook 1983:7; Kretzschmar 1998:16-17).

[104] For example, as Mukonyora (2008:149) shows, Pius Wakatama, a leading journalist and evangelical Christian, condemned fellow evangelical Christians for compromising their Christian values by remaining civil servants, at one point telling a known women minister: "You just don't belong among those crooks and warmongers….Get out of that Babylon" (cf. Wakatama, The Daily News, April 24, 2000).

9.2.2. The Fundamental Critical Model

According to Bedford-Strohm (2008:146), the fundamental critical model rejects the privatised notions of the charity model, believing that socioeconomic and political conditions responsible for poverty must be addressed. Bedford-Strohm (2008:146) highlights that the fundamental critical model links the option for the poor inseparably to political actions that are fundamentally opposed to western capitalism. The fundamental critical model thus apportions the poverty of poor nations to the direct consequences of global capitalism and the military might of the powerful nations of the world. It derives its fundamentalist nature from its method of criticising political and socioeconomic phenomenon from a confessional perspective rather than a critical one. For instance, militarily might and capitalist nations are viewed in quasi-antichrist and anti-church terms that ought to be resisted by the Christian church. Unlike the apolitical response to poverty in the charity model, the fundamental critical model is political and binds the option for the poor to a specific political action that is often considered to reflect certain theological truths. This model, which is common among ecumenical bodies and church councils, adopts a political action towards poverty that involves *confessional* declarations (Bedford-Strohm 2008:147). This confessional approach does not so much involve daily political discourse concerning right and wrong political approaches to poverty "but clear acts of resistance and objection to the privileges of the rich powerful world" (Bedford-Strohm 2008:147). At the 1983 World Council of Churches assembly, with reference to the powerful nations of the world, Ulrich Duchrow spoke of "the misuse of powers in politics, economics and technology [as] increasingly display[ing] demoniac features" (1987:91). Drawing from C. Harper and Revelation 13 and 18, Duchrow concluded that in the triumphal monopolisation of the global space by the powerful countries, the poor and powerless of the world were being confronted by a "twisted face of a 'demonic monster'"(1987:91). Duchrow challenged the church to resist the mighty powers of global capitalism and declared that the standpoint for the church was "not simply a question of a better society but of a choice between Christ and antichrist, between church and anti-church" (1987:94).

In Zimbabwe, Christian leaders and ecumenical bodies have displayed variations of the fundamental critical approach. A number of prominent church leaders have been uncritically "drawn to Mugabe's nationalism" (2009:227) and become "Mugabean" (Chitando, Taringa & Mapuranga 2014:180) in their approach to the problem of poverty by uncritically linking it to the evil machinations of Western powers that want stir regime change in the country. These church leaders continually defend President Mugabe's rule as divinely mandated "to serve the

people of Zimbabwe by leading them into their own economic, political, social and even spiritual 'Promised Land'" (Wutawunashe 2014). To Revd Wutawunashe, the violence, corruption and mismanagement associated with ruling elites does not seem to matter as long they pursue the policy of land redistribution and economic indigenisation. Hence Revd Wutawunashe (2014) views Mugabe's policies as "clearly reverberat[ing] with His (God's) own vision for a nation as reflected in the Bible in His journey with His people from Egypt to the Promised Land, through the leadership of such 'political Prophets' as Moses, who was succeeded by Joshua". Other prominent church leaders such as Prophet Emmanuel Makandiwa, Prophet Uebert Angel and Archbishop Ezekiel Guti have been reported in the news as making statements in support of Mugabe and his policies (The Herald 2015a; Zimeye 2013; NewsDay Zimbabwe 2014). The lack of critical political consideration is reflected in the news reports that Prophet Walter Magaya's outbid all potential buyers in a fundraising event hosted by the president's wife, Mrs Grace Mugabe, for the purchase of her pictorial biography for a staggering US$50,000 (The Herald 2015b). The same news reported that the second highest bidder, Brainworks Capital, an investment company only managed a distant US$20,000. When the comments, thoughts and actions of these prophets are teased out, the prophets confuse Mugabe's standing up against the powers of Western globalisation with actually empowering poor and marginalised Africans.

The same attitude can equally be seen from the other side of the fence, where other Christian leaders also uncritically assume that the mere removing of Mugabe from power will solve poverty in Zimbabwe. Chitando and Togarasei (2010:159) note the problematic "emergence of party-aligned pastors". Although they only mention churches who 'sounded Mugabean' it is important to note that on the other side of the fence there were some pastors who also sounded 'sounded Tsvangiraen'. What emerges from both fences is that the fundamental critical model relies on a very simplistic and fundamentalist use of scriptures and theological images that do not pay attention to complex nature of economic reality.

In Bedford-Strohm's (2008:148) assessment, while this model is firmly grounded on the basic dimensions of the gospel, it lacks grounding in economic and political theory. The fundamental critical model does not balance its confessional dimensions with sound understanding of the socioeconomic and political reality. What is needed is a model that promotes "the necessary debate about the economically most appropriate ways to develop an economy which guarantees a life in dignity for every human being" (Bedford-Strohm 2008:149). Instead of mere paternalistic defence of the poor, a useful ecclesiological ethical model of addressing poverty

must acknowledge the complexity of socioeconomic and political reality and promote the search for sustainable responses to poverty by enhancing debates "based on empirical evidence and political and economic reasoning" (Bedford-Strohm 2008:149). Chitando and Manyonganise (2011:101) observe the tendency of church leaders in Zimbabwe to shun critical reflection on the details of socio-economic situations and to hastily seek divine intervention in a manner that "absolve[s] human beings of their responsibility in creating the crisis as well as their role in its resolution" (Chitando & Manyonganise 2011:101). Ultimately, the tyranny of the state is experienced as the attack of the devil on the kingdom of God (Ndlovu 2012:45). Once the tyranny of the state is spiritualised or demonised, theological questions and reflection about socioeconomic issues become confined to spiritual issues while ignoring ethical issues. The belief is that, eventually, massive Christianisation will result in improved economic and political life. The end result is a Christian attempt at uprooting poverty that deliberately disregards socioeconomic and political dynamics.

9.2.3. The Political Advice Model

The political advice model is the pragmatic approach that is interested in providing solutions that work. As Bedford-Strohm explains, this model "responds to a need which is regularly expressed by policymakers, who deal with concrete problems at specific times with specific needs" (2008:149). The model seeks to meet the needs of policymakers who are primarily concerned with pragmatic questions and less with ethical, moral and theological questions. "The political advice model tries to react to that situation by focusing the energy on effective think-tank work promoting solutions that have a chance of being chosen in the political process" (Bedford-Strohm 2008:149). Since this approach is interested in solutions that work, the political advice model does not necessarily use theological or biblical thought patterns but "a language which sounds technical even though it seeks to reflect concerns coming from a Christian ethical approach" (Bedford-Strohm 2008:149). This approach is different from the fundamental critical approach, which relies on passionate confessional statements about the evil nature of global capitalism by theologians, because it allows for input from church-based experts who can give practical advice for concrete situations. This primary preoccupation with practical politics at the exclusion of moral, theological and biblical values is the greatest weakness of this model. Its pragmatic orientation opens the political advice model to "the danger of being so close to the concrete daily issues of the policymakers that it becomes blind for the wide space that the gospel opens and which gives free sight to visions disclosed to us

within the 'iron cage [105] '" (Bedford-Strohm 2008:150). In other words, the model's preoccupation with solutions that work undermines theological and moral considerations that should underpin a just and peaceful society.

The political advice model can be seen in the missionary collaboration in the colonisation of Zimbabwe. Filled with pragmatic optimism, missionaries believed the might of European colonisation and civilization would result in the socioeconomic transformation of Africa. This can also be called the advocacy model; it refers to the public statements of the church leaders through their various forums. It also refers to attempts made by the church leaders to enter into dialogue with government leaders. The problems surrounding 'the voice of reason in crisis' approach is well illustrated by the problems that faced the 2006 Kairos document *The Zimbabwe We Want,* a result of a combined effort by the ZCBC, ZCC and EFZ. In a positive sense, the ZWWD demonstrated that if state rulers failed to fulfil their responsibility of providing a vision for the nation, the church would step in and provide the needed guidance (Chitando & Manyonganise 2011:95-96). However, the furore that accompanied the drafting and the issuing of the ZWWD demonstrated the problem faced by the church when it lacks a well-grounded public theology. Firstly, the final document was rejected by various stakeholders as a state-manipulated and watered-down version of the original document, which highlighted the leader's inability to resist state interference and manipulation. Thus, ZWWD failed to fulfil the role it was crafted to fulfil. Secondly, rather than being informed by theological doctrines, the document was more informed by the social teachings of the Roman Catholic Church (Masengwe 2008:34). Thirdly, in what could be seen as a show of nationalism the church leaders tended to yield to President Mugabe and endorse his Africanism without spirited commitment to the concerns of the opposition parties (Thornycroft 2006). The attempts by churches in Zimbabwe to advocate for the poor were often affected by the clergy's lack of knowledge on political and socioeconomic issues. This is because theological training is not well informed politically and well-informed laity are excluded. This section has established that a serious problem in the Zimbabwean context of poverty is that there is a strong link between the pursuit for the kingdom of God and an uncritical and disengaged approach to socioeconomic reality.

---

[105] This phrase is from Max Weber.

9.2.4. The Public Theology Model

The public theology model rejects the charity model's denial of the role of the church in political life. The public theology model affirms the necessity of Christian critical consideration of socioeconomic and political reality. Like the fundamental critical and political advice models, the public theology model affirmatively believes that Christian ethics and the church must play a role in political life. It "clearly affirms the public role of the church as an agent in civil society" (Bedford-Strohm 2008:150). In the public theology model "the option for the poor leads to *advocacy* and *advice*" (Bedford-Strohm 2008:150). Whereas the fundamental critical model binds Christians to a specific political option for the poor (9.2.2.), the public theology model adopts this option for the poor but seeks for solutions to poverty that both promote the human flourishing of the poor and the viability of businesses. Unlike the pragmatic approach, which has no value dimension in the political advice model, the public theology model understands that the "church is not neutral in the political debate [and] understands itself as an advocate for the poor" and therefore must "explicitly include the value dimension in its contribution to the public debate" (Bedford-Strohm 2008:150). The public theology model takes into account the relationship between "firm moral grounding and economic and political theory" (Bedford-Strohm 2008:148). The public theology model operates from the understanding of the necessity for the "debate about the economically most appropriate ways to develop an economy which guarantees a life in dignity for every human being" (Bedford-Strohm 2008:149). Therefore, grounded in biblical, theological and ethical traditions and also in socioeconomic and political theory, with the intention of promoting a shalom society that enhances both human flourishing and the flourishing of the economy, the public theology model engages socioeconomic reality (Bedford-Strohm 2008:151). Its form of engaging socioeconomic reality includes public statements and acts of civil disobedience not so much "as acts of confessional witness and resistance against 'the system' (whatever that system is) but [as] an integral part of a strategy of public communication in a democratic society to promote political steps to overcome poverty" (Bedford-Strohm 2008:151).

Bedford-Strohm's public theology model that emphasises advocacy and advice provides a means for appropriating Moltmann's ethic of the church of hope in a context of poverty. To fulfil effectively the role of advocacy and advice it demands that the church understand its mission holistically. We have already noted the concern by Chitando and Manyonganise (2011:101) that church ministers in Zimbabwe define the mission of the church narrowly and are too quick to call for divine intervention and shy away from a critical analysis of

socioeconomic and political reality. To bolster their argument, Chitando and Manyonganise (2011:102) point out that most church leaders in Zimbabwe suffer from a limited appreciation of politics. They point out that "most church leaders do not have an appreciation of the dynamics within the area of politics and therefore find it difficult to engage politicians" (Chitando & Manyonganise 2011:102). Constructive Christian advocacy and advice demands that church leaders develop a sound socioeconomic and political theory (Bedford-Strohm 2008:151). As Chitando and Manyonganise (2011:102) put it, "there is need to increase the levels of political literacy of many leaders in [Zimbabwe]".

9.3. The Kingdom Informed Ecclesiology of Hope in a Context of Poverty

Bedford-Strohm challenges the church in a context of poverty to play an *advocacy* and *advice* role. In the notion of the kingdom of God in Moltmann is embedded aspects that enable the church to fulfil the public theology role set by Bedford-Strohm. This section explores the public theology model from the perspective of the kingdom of God.

9.3.1. The Present Righteous Rule of God

In a context of poverty the church of hope can play the advocacy and advice role by being motivated by the present righteous rule of God that is already operational in the present. We have noted (3.2.2) that for Moltmann, the kingdom of God is already present, but *only* in the form of the coming kingdom (WJC 97). Moltmann sees the kingdom of God as inseparably linked to Jesus, to the extent that we cannot imagine the kingdom of God without Jesus, and vice versa (1993b:5). The kingdom is God's liberating rule, inseparably linked to Jesus and exhibited by him through his messianic works of healing the sick, liberating the demonically oppressed and embracing the excluded and oppressed.

This study deeply appreciated Moltmann's belief that the kingdom of God is already radically present and operative in the here and now. How extreme reservation was made to Moltmann's idea of the kingdom of God being only present in the form of coming (3.5.5). This study finds it a serious incongruence in Moltmann's vision of the kingdom of God to believe in the inseparable link between the kingdom of God and Jesus Christ, to witness his liberating work, to hear his proclamation that the kingdom has come upon you (Matt 12:28) and yet believe that the kingdom is present only in the form of appearing. Moltmann's view of the kingdom of God as present only in the form of coming risks reducing the work of Christ to an impersonal system.

Jesus Christ demonstrated the real arrival of the kingdom of God by promoting the human flourishing of the poor and marginalised, and in the process fulfilled the messianic prophecies.

As Torrance affirms, "With his (Christ's) advent and presence, the transcendent kingdom of God that had so long been the object of longing of God had arrived and was active among men, women and children for their salvation" (2009:349). Christ's salvific work is an encounter with the personal God, and thus with the real presence of the kingdom of God. As Bauckham and Hart (1999:161) point out, by his activities Christ "not only *demonstrates* the coming of the kingdom but also *illustrates* what the kingdom is like and what difference it is making in the world". By his salvific and liberating works Jesus illustrated and demonstrated that the kingdom is God's liberating rule, the Shalom rule of God. This challenges the church to be concerned about oppressive systems that hinder the poor and powerless from experiencing God's liberated life.

9.3.2. The Promotion and Protection of Life in the Kingdom of God

In a context of poverty the church of hope can play the advocacy and advice role by being motivated by the affirmation of the sanctity of life in the kingdom of God. In the kingdom of God, life is loved, protected and promoted. According to Moltmann, the kingdom of God promotes life for, where Jesus is, there is abundant life, loved life and protected life. In his earthly ministry, Jesus displayed a commitment to promote and protect life. As exhibited in Jesus, the arrival of the kingdom of God arrives with the promotion and protection of life. Hence this study's belief that the kingdom of God cannot be conceived as present only in the form of coming. Reaching out to Zacchaeus, he announced, "Today salvation has come to this house …For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:9,10). The similar perspective is expressed in John 10:10, where he declares his mission as one that gives abundant life. According to Bauckham and Hart, the kingdom of God is "a political image" (1999:160). This means that the kingdom of God depicts "God's relationship to his whole creation, but also to the natural world" (Bauckham & Hart 1999:60). That is, "the kingdom of God is a fully comprehensive image of the achievement of God's unlimited sovereignty over all things eternally" (Bauckham & Hart 1999:160). God is concerned about his entire creation and all his people. Taken alongside Jesus's statement in Matthew 5:45 that God causes his sun to rise on evil people and good people and that he sends rain on righteous people and unrighteous people, it depicts God as the merciful and righteous King whose reign is life-promoting and life-protecting.

This challenges the church towards a public role in this present world. Harvie expresses the agony in Moltmann's theology of economics when he asks:

> Is it true that theology can affirm the goal of economic being the production of wealth, which is a type of salvation for the world? Or is it not more theologically astute, from the standpoint of an ethics of hope for the Kingdom of God, to affirm that the goal of Christian involvement in economics is the affirmation of life and liberty to those who currently are unable to achieve it within the current structures of a global economy? (2009:196).[106]

At the centre of this Harvie's is how does the kingdom of God affect and shape the context of poverty. From a Moltmannian perspective the church must promote socioeconomic and political structures that enhance and protect human flourishing.

9.3.3. The Promise of Restoration of Life in the Kingdom of God

The promise of restoration of life in the kingdom of God calls the church to play the advocacy and advice role in a context of poverty. In its perfect and complete form, the kingdom of God is in the future. In its future perfected form, it is the promise of restoration of life. God's promise for the future new creation of this world contradicts the present reality and calls Christian theology to desist from promoting the status quo of evil regimes. How from a soteriological perspective we are already living restored life in the present (Col 3:1-4). The Holy Spirit is already at work in the life of the believer who is the temple of God. It was pointed out (in 3.5.4.) that Moltmann tends to emphasise the coming form of the kingdom in a manner that overlooks that the fact that we hope for the future because of what God has done in this earthly present. As Ladd (2001:658) points out, the "kingdom is not abstract principle; the kingdom of God *comes*". That is, "it is God's rule actively invading the kingdom of Satan" (Ladd 2001:658). Therefore, the principal power of death has been defeated. This challenges the churches to resist earthly principalities that impoverish God's people.

9.4. Towards a Public Theology for a Context of Poverty

This section looks at the factors that need to form the process of doing a public theology in a context of poverty.

9.4.1. Empowering Theology to Engage the Public Space in Zimbabwe

Can theology in the Zimbabwean context of poverty be transformed into a useful public theology which will appropriately respond to this context of poverty? Dirkie Smit (2007:379) recalls hearing the following deeply distressed question from a concerned black theological student: "How can it be expected of us to make a contribution if we have nothing to share?"

---

[106] Harvie asks these questions when rejecting the assertion by Stackhouse and McCann that the whole point of economic activity is the creation of wealth.

Although the question was not directly posed to him, he empathised with the frustration and the anguish in the question of the soon to be ministers in churches in Africa and says:

> They (the African theological students) dream the Christian dream of shalom, of justice, peace, participation, and the integrity of creation. They experience the urgent need of their people for economic participation, sharing, and empowerment. They see, they live, they share, the daily suffering of the poor and the marginalised. Then they go to university, and they attend conference on development and economic justice. They begin to understand something of the all-pervasive power of the global economy, of the almost untouchable structures of "production, distribution and consumption of material goods and services". And they realise their own powerlessness and the powerlessness of their people, of their congregations, of their churches. *How can it be expected of us to make a contribution if we have nothing to share?* (Smith 2007:379, italics added)

In this lengthy quote, Smit highlights the powerlessness expressed by the theological students concerning political and socioeconomic matters. Although we may be stretching the quote too far, one can sense an African disillusionment not just with Christian spirituality, but also theological education that does not translate into a meaningful engagement with socioeconomic problems face in African communities.

Likewise in the Zimbabwean context of poverty, theology stands challenged to develop to be a useful and empowering enterprise in the midst of raging poverty. The burning question is: to what extent is theology in Zimbabwe able to contribute sustainable solutions to the poverty that is ravaging the country? Chitando (2010:196) finds studying theology and religious studies in Africa is considered valueless because it is viewed as lacking the power to address the continent's socioeconomic and political problems. In addition, Chitando and Manyonganise (2011:102) point out that the "theological training that most church leaders have, does not pay attention to crucial issues such as politics and economics". In other words, the pastors and the churches have not had their theological minds empowered to critically reflect about socioeconomic and political issues. In fact in some cases both critical theological training and an in-depth appreciation of socioeconomic and politics are dismissed as things of this world. Kombo (2001:113), points out that, "Traditionally, most of Africa does not regard theology as a discipline that can in its own right contribute to the solution of the problems of Africa". The testimony of this in Zimbabwe is in the prevalence of substandard and ill-equipped theological colleges that are dotted around the country (6.3.3).

A serious challenge, particularly among evangelical churches, is a theological over-reliance on the churches of the "West" in nearly everything: funding, textbooks and the faculty. [107] "Christianity presented the Gospel as a message to be believed and not to be reflected upon, as in some way belief was thought to guarantee the liberation and civilization that the African soul badly needed" (Kombo 2001:113).

The lack of giving serious attention to theological education lies in a poor understanding of what the church is and the significance of theological education to the being of the church. In many cases, there is serious gap between the laity, the leaders and the academy. Smit (2004:135–144) highlights that there are at least three different forms of being 'the church' that are inseparably interlinked. According to Smit there is the church at *congregational* level (2004:135-139) which gathers regularly to worship and observe the sacraments. The second form of the church is at the level of *denominational and ecumenical* bodies (Smit 2004:139-143) this being the 'mother' bodies to which congregations belong. According to Smit (2004:143-144), the third form of the church is at *individual Christian* level as they individually interact in public life as they live-out being a disciple of Christ who is carrying the salt and light in the world. In order to develop an empowering theology for engaging a context of poverty there is need to bring these three forms of the church together. In their assessment of theological developments in Zimbabwe during the national crisis that intensified from year 2000, Chitando, Taringa & Mapuranga (2014:85) noted a disconnect between the academy and the congregations to the extent that even the theological discourses formulated in the academia did not percolate to the generality of church-based political activists. This meant that much of what was publically encountered as the church, whether at congregational level, or individual level or denominational level had largely not received critically thought-through theological input.

9.4.2. An Ethics of a Good Society

In response to the troubled student's question: "How can it be expected of us to make a contribution if we have nothing to share?" Smit (2007:379-398) suggests in an essay entitled *Reformed Ethics and Economic Justice?* that the question be answered in three ethical

---

[107] "There is a sense in which Christianity in Africa is the White man's religion. The denominations we belong to, the liturgies we use, the hymns we sing, the theologies that govern our beliefs and conduct, be they liberal or evangelical, are all made in the West. Most of the Christian books we read originate from the West and usually written for Western readers. This is not to blame the Western church: its time to say to the African Christians to begin to think and do things for themselves" (Kinoti, in Kombo 2001:117). (Kinoti, Vision for a Bright Africa 1997:74)

perspectives, namely, the ethics of "a good society", "an ethics of being" and "an ethics of doing" (2007:381). A kingdom of God-oriented public theology of engaging poverty must start with the following question as expressed by Smit (2007:381): "So, what kind of society are we dreaming of? What kind of economic justice do we long? How do we envision a society, whether globally, regionally, nationally, or locally, where justice dwells". Smit's question can be asked from the eschatological perspective we are considering in this study as follows: in view of the hope of the kingdom of God, what society should we be dreaming of?

Perhaps the answer to the question about the society we should be dreaming of should begin with the question 'what kind of society do we currently have in Zimbabwe?' This will enable the identification of a starting point and the issues to be dealt with. As pointed out in the previous chapter, the Zimbabwe we currently have is a society marked with imaginative powerlessness and a lack of vision. The 2006 Kairos document the *Zimbabwe We Want Document* sought to fill this gap. Vengeyi (2011:230,234) highlights that black people in Zimbabwe have undergone systematic disempowerment at the hands of the state, in both the former colonial state and the independent state. Under the colonial government, blacks were systematically impoverished and so forced to serve European economic interests. As already highlighted above, in independent Zimbabwe, the new politically and economically powerful ruling elite further impoverish the poor, pushing them to the periphery.

According to Moltmann, hope for the kingdom of God calls on Christians to promote life. The following statement from Moltmann has already been highlighted: "Where Jesus is, there is life. There is abundant life, vigorous life, loved life and eternal life" (OC 19). In concert with Moltmann, Smit says the church contributes to a vision of a just society by a tenacious commitment to life, in the affirmation of life against death, in the proclamation of the Triune God as "the God of life, of creation, of care, of hope" (2007:385).

It is unfortunate that the 2006 Kairos Document did not promote any meaningful dialogue considering that it emerged in a context of darkness with the sole purpose of bringing Zimbabweans from all works of life to dream and dialogue together about the country they would like to have and to belong. The problem did not lie with the document *as such*, for the problematic issues would have been amended and improved during the discussions. However, not much discussion took place after the launch of the document largely because the church in Zimbabwe in all the three levels as identified by Smit above (9.4.1) failed the test of the ethic of a good society as it also become dominated by the political polarisation in the country. There was also a disconnect between the three levels of the church, the congregation, the

denominational and ecumenical and the individual believers. The problem lay with denominational and ecumenical leaders who allowed the state, which was viewed by the citizens as repressive and corrupt, to control the vision of the desired society resulting in a contested vision. The failure of the Kairos document to promote a genuinely Christian dialogue on the vision of the wanted Zimbabwe was largely due to the fact that the original vision of the church was side-tracked by the contest between the visions of different political parties. As Muzondidya (2011:32) highlights the disunity within the church has created an opportunity for the ruling elite "to exploit their differences, embracing the conciliatory church leaders and their churches while dismissing the critical ones as 'enemies' of the state and siding with the opposition". The opposition parties also do the same and dismiss church leaders who are critical of their policies as enemies of the oppressed. Thus an ethics of a good society requires that the church to rise above party politics and visions and be committed first and foremost to the historicity of the God of hope that opts for the poor, the kingdom of God that promotes life and the communality of the church.

9.4.3. An Ethics of Being

Furthermore, the movement towards a public theology for a context of poverty according to Smit requires, in addition to the question about 'vision' the question about 'being'. Smit says the question about vision must progress to:

> *"'Who are we?'* Do we embody our vision? Are we the kind of to people who live this vision? Are we the kind of community where people are formed who carry, embody, who implement this vision? In other words, are we people of *integrity*, who practice what we preach? (2007:385).

Smit's question can be asked from the eschatological perspective of this thesis as follows: what does God's life-promoting and life-enhancing agenda call us to do in our context of poverty? According to Smit, Christians, both as individual believers and collectively as the church, must model economic justice in their communities before they demand it from their public officials. With reference to his South African context, he asks incisively: "Does our church practice economic justice? Do we as families and individual believers contribute to economic justice?"(Smit 2007:385). In other words, it is insufficient for the church and its members to only embrace and support the local government's visions for improved lives without practically participating in them. In Smit's (2007:385) perspective, it is a demonstration of a lack of integrity to support the vision for a better a life and yet expect the implementation of the vision from others. Smit (2007:386-392) further highlights that economic justice is embedded in the centre of being 'church', both in the narrow sense of the local congregation and in the broad

sense of the wide church community. Smit (2007:386-389) shows that true worship furthers economic justice by transforming individuals, empowering them and binding them to be a fellowship in which members help each other and become God's agents in a distressed world. For Smit (2007:392) this is essential for, *"[w]e contribute by who we are. We contribute by the kind of churches we are and by the kind of Christians we are"*. This demands that both the church and individual believers be constantly renewed for by their renewal as they come back to the basics of Christian living the church contributes to economic justice.

A serious problem that stands in the way of promoting life in Zimbabwe is the problem of a lack of integrity among church leaders who should provide the leadership in the quest for the vision of the good society. This lack of integrity killed the the hopes of the *Zimbabwe We Want* 2006 Kairos document as some of the leaders of the process were viewed as partisan to political parties and not the quest for the Zimbabwe we wanted. It has been highlighted how prophets and church leaders take advantage of the poor. The ethical problems surrounding prosperity Pentecostal leaders in Zimbabwe are well-captured in *Prophets, Profits and the Bible in Zimbabwe* (2014). They have earned the pejorative title tile of *gospelpreneurs* to highlight their often highly suspicious emphasis on wealth being given to them personally (6.6). Furthermore, instead of promoting good national governance and modelling godly leadership, many prominent church leaders have openly sided with Robert Mugabe's oppressive regime. A commitment to the historicity of the God of hope that opts for the poor, the expected kingdom of God that promotes life and the communality of the church that embraces the poor should stir the church to be the church of Jesus Christ that promotes loved-live and protected-life.

9.4.4. An Ethics of Doing

The approach which Smit considers to focus on 'issues' asks the question: "What are we to do when we are faced with specific 'issues'?" (2007:392). With this question, Smit seeks to challenge the church to develop an ethics of doing, that is, an ethic of actively responding to issues. Smit's question can be asked from the eschatological perspective of this thesis as follows: what are we to do about poverty in the light of God's life-promoting and life-enhancing kingdom? It is common to hear that we should be spreading the salvation of the kingdom of God. However, there is no integrity in a doctrine of salvation that is only concerned with the eternal destiny of the soul while ignoring its needs in the present.

Hauerwas (1995:8) calls for a holistic understanding of salvation by saying:

> I have little use for the current fascination with individual salvation in either its conservative or liberal guises. Such accounts of salvation assume that God has done something for each person which may find expression in the church, I do not assume that salvation is first and foremost about my life having 'meaning' or insuring 'my' eternal destiny. Rather, salvation is being engrafted into practices that save us from those powers that would rule our lives making it impossible for us to truly worship God

Applied to how the kingdom of God should shape an ethics of doing in a context of poverty, Hauerwas' point is that salvation given by God's kingdom should result in practices and actions that promote God's vision of life. As Ela (2005:36) points out, "the expectation of another world calls for another kind of world" to highlight that the expectation of God's kingdom should result in seeking to transform this world.

Smit suggests that the church work out a framework by which it will decide how to respond to the distressing situations. In his essay *On Learning to See? A Reformed Perspective on the Church and the Poor* (2003) he calls for the church to develop an ethics of seeing. Moltmann's problematic use of Matthew 25 draws attention to the need for an ethics of seeing. Smit (2003:65) highlights that the church in its six forms of worship and local congregation, denominations and the ecumenical church, individual believers and voluntary initiatives and activities, has a unique capacity to see poverty at various levels. A holistic response to poverty requires that it be seen from different levels from individual believers, movements, ecumenical church, denominational, local congregations and from a liturgical perspective (Smit 2003:65-66). Appreciating the complexity of poverty, Smit (2007:393) draws from Damon and Tödt six aspects that can be broken into three stages of a process for making ethical decisions. The first stage, which he calls "seeing", involves, *firstly*, seeing, accepting, and describing the problem as a moral problem; *secondly*, analysing the situation; *thirdly*, considering possible responses available. The next stage, which he calls "judging", involves, *fourthly*, evaluating applicable norms and criteria, *fifthly* listening to the opinion of others. The third stage, which he calls "acting", involves, *sixthly*, taking the decision and acting (Smit 2007:393-396). Kombo (2001:111–112) highlights that the challenge of theology in Africa is to "make African work and to offer tangible contributions on the global stage". This calls for "creativity and critical thinking …in the construction of theology that will fit …Africa and bring a positive contribution to the global theological situation" (Kombo 2001:112). This call is particularly important in grappling with the prevalence of the socioeconomic powerless in Zimbabwe even in their immediate contexts.

9.5. Conclusion

The concentration of this chapter was on the significance of the political implications that emerge in Moltmann's conception of the kingdom of God to the Zimbabwean context of poverty. The chapter highlighted that the kingdom of God is an important subject among Christians in both mainline and Pentecostal prosperity churches. Some Christians, particularly in the mainline churches, hope for the kingdom of God, which leads to otherworldliness and a disengagement from political issues. On the other hand, prosperity Pentecostals attempt to bring the kingdom of God to bear in the socioeconomic and political realm. However, in the case of prosperity Pentecostals there is no critical theological reflection on the dynamics that inform the socioeconomic and political reality. Attempts at solving poverty focus more on the state of one's spirituality than on the nature of one's political ethics.

Indeed, there are serious problems in Moltmann's understanding of the kingdom of God, particularly its tendency to structuralise poverty. Furthermore, Moltmann has not provided a clear definition of the kingdom of God. However, there is strength in Moltmann's emphasis that the hope for the kingdom of God must translate not into a neglect of the world and a disengagement from it, but into an engagement with the world that seeks to transform it in light of the coming glorious kingdom of God. This challenges Christians in Zimbabwe to respond to poverty responsibly and meaningfully. Moltmann's hope for the kingdom of God challenges the church in a context of poverty to develop a theology of engaging this world in the light of the coming kingdom.

233

Chapter 10: Concluding Remarks

The stated aim of this study was to investigate how Moltmann's eschatological concept of the 'church of hope for the poor' might assist in the search for an empowering and liberating ecclesiological ethical framework for poverty alleviation in Zimbabwe. The study was divided into three major parts. Part I examined Moltmann's eschatological ecclesiological ethics of addressing poverty. Chapter 2 examined how Moltmann's understanding of the historicity of the God of hope functions as a basis for his vision of a church of hope. The chapter examined how Moltmann presents the interplay between God's historicity and eschatological hope in a manner that calls for the promotion of the human flourishing of the poor in this present life. The historicity of God demonstrated that eschatological hope does not cancel the value of material life in this present earthly life before the eschaton. Chapter 3 highlighted the significance of the kingdom of God in Moltmann's eschatological vision. In Moltmann, the object of Christian hope is the kingdom of God. For Moltmann, the kingdom is to be anticipated with great expectation because it will bring glorious recreation of the earth. The kingdom of God promotes and restores life and calls on the church to reject being accustomed to forces of death that inhibit the human flourishing of the poor. The kingdom of God restores abundant life and demands that all who wait for it must reject all forms of socioeconomic and political death. The kingdom of God that restores abundant life challenges apathy towards life in the present. However, Moltmann's notion of the kingdom of God is insufficiently defined. In addition, Moltmann believes that the kingdom lies in the future and not in the present. For Moltmann, the kingdom of God is present only in the form of coming. This futuristic understanding of the kingdom fails to account for biblical texts and theological doctrines that affirm that the kingdom of God is already present but will be fully enacted in the final eschaton. Chapter 4 focused on Moltmann's human-dignifying communality of the church of hope which is an ecclesiological expression of his doctrine of the social Trinity. Opposed to the idea of a state church or a hierarchical church that takes away the activity of the congregation, Moltmann calls for the church to reform from below into 'grass-roots' communities. For Moltmann, the church can enhance the material wellbeing of God's people by becoming grassroots communities. In a context of poverty, what is needed is an ecclesiology that accounts for God's historicity, the kingdom and the communality of the church. Drawing from his understanding of the historicity of the triune God and the kingdom of God, Moltmann argues that the true church of Jesus Christ is a church for the poor, which means that the church challenges the

socioeconomic and political structures that marginalise and impoverish the powerless. Of great significance to Moltmann's eschatological vision of the church is that the hope for God's future eternal kingdom invigorates a passion for justice for the human dignity of the poor in this present world. This places pressure on the church to confront, on behalf of the poor, the structures that hinder their material wellbeing.

Part II of this study used the insights drawn from Moltmann to evaluate the church's engagement with poverty in Zimbabwe. Chapter 5 concentrated on the church's engagement with poverty in the colonial period. This chapter noted that the missionary mainline churches that dominated the religious scene during the colonial period were instrumental in introducing Africans to western civilisation. However, the church in colonial times was a segregated church. While at one time it empowered the Africans and attempted to defend them, it also promoted their abuse and their proletarianisation by the white settlers. In many ways, some missionaries adopted the racist tendencies of the segregated colonial state. Chapter 6 examined the ecclesiological ethical approaches to poverty by the various ecumenical bodies in independent Zimbabwe. The chapter highlighted that churches attempted to grapple with the socioeconomic and political challenges that confronted the new state. However, Christian groups like the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace often took a critical stand against oppressive socioeconomic and political structures. For this, they were met with serious resistance from the ruling elite. Other groups such as the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe are often limited in their constructive engagement in socioeconomic and political reality due to their uncritical approach to reading the bible. Whereas during the colonial period the mainline churches worked closely with the state, the situation changed in independent Zimbabwe and it is the Pentecostal prosperity prophets who have emerged as the representatives of the church.

Part III attempted the formulation of an ecclesiological ethic of poverty-alleviation in the Zimbabwean context of poverty. Chapter 7 highlighted the communality of the church as crucial resource of responding to poverty. The metaphor of the African kraal was employed as a paradigm of the church that empowers the poor. The chapter noted that the dominant Christian responses to poverty in Zimbabwe undermine and underutilise the communality of the church. A disregard for communality sets the poor against each other instead of bringing them together to harness their efforts. Chapter 8 focused on the need for the human capacitation of the poor in a context of poverty. It argued that the historicity of the God of hope is a place of human development. The chapter responded to Moltmann's problematic definition of the poor that tends to focus on sociopolitical and economical structures that marginalise and exploit the poor.

Poverty must also be understood as a lack of human capitation that leads to a lack of participation in economic life. The motif of the African kraal can be used as a metaphor for the church that empowers the poor with means of participation in economic life. Furthermore, Ela's notion of theology under a shade-tree provides a model of discipleship that empowers the church of hope. The concentration of this chapter was on the significance of the political implications that emerge in Moltmann's conception of the kingdom of God to the Zimbabwean context of poverty. Chapter 9 highlighted that the kingdom of God must result in a public theology that is able to play an advocacy and advisory role that is well informed by socioeconomic and political reality. This means that the church of hope must not just be otherworldly; it must also be well-versed in the things of this world so that it plays a useful role.

Moltmann's creative eschatological ecclesiology, despite the problems highlighted in this study, challenges the church in the Zimbabwean context of poverty to be an agent of human flourishing. From Moltmann's perspective, hope for eternal life calls the church to use the anticipated future life as a blueprint to transform the present context of suffering. In other words, the truly hopeful church is actively engaged in transforming the present. Hope does not mean resignation. Rather, true eschatological hope is empowering. The hopeful church does not turn against the world; it confronts it in order to transform it.

Furthermore, as seen from Bedford-Strohm, the church in Zimbabwe must awaken to the public role of being an agent of advocacy and advisory. This requires that it be grounded in sound political and socioeconomic theory. As noted from Smit's call, the church in Zimbabwe must keep the dream of a just society alive amidst the many threats against life by supporting those who are working in this regard. Furthermore, the church itself must begin to practice justice: "If we act justly, and continuously reform and renew our own structures and lives, we contribute in many ways to economic justice" (Smit 2007:396). Furthermore, the church of hope must develop an ethic of seeing and doing. This requires that the church broaden its definition of salvation.

Bibliography

Alvarez, J., Avarientos, E. & McAlpine, T.H. 1999. Our experience with the Bible and transformational development, in B.L. Myers (ed.). *Working with the poor: New insights and learnings from development practitioners*. Colorado Springs: Authentic. 56–77.

Alves, R.A. 1975. *A Theology of human hope*. St. Meinrad: Abbey.

Andrews, C.F. 1935. *John White of Mashonaland*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Angel, U. 2013. *God's get rich quick scheme: Secrets to the quickest way of getting rich God's way*. n.p.: Spirit Library.

Angel, U. & Angel, B. 2014. *Power for today: Jump-starting your day: daily devotional*. Issue 5 ed. n.p.: Spirit Library.

Asamoah-Gyadu, K.J. 2007. "Born of water and the Spirit': Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity in Africa, in O.U. Kalu (ed). *African Christianity: an African story*. Trenton: Africa World. 339–357.

Asamoah-Gyadu, K.J. 2009. Did Jesus wear designer robes? The gospel preached in Africa's new Pentecostal churches ends up leaving the poor more impoverished than ever. *Christianity Today*. (November):38–41.

Auret, D. 1992. *Reaching for Justice: The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace Looks Back at the Past Twenty Years 1972-1992*. Gweru: Mambo/CCJPZ.

Balcomb, A. 2007. Well healed and well-heeled: Pentecostals in the new South Africa - Their message, structures and modes of socio-political intervention. *Missionalia*. 35(3):30–42.

Banana, C. 1996. *Politics of repression and resistance: face to face with combat theology*. Gweru: Mambo.

Banda, C. 2010. *The sufficiency of Jesus Christ in Africa: a Christological challenge from African traditional religions*. Saarbrucken: LAP Lambert Academic.

Banda, C. & Senokoane, B. 2009. The interplay between the Christian sacralisation of human authority and political repression in Zimbabwe. *Religion & Theology*. 16:207–245.

Bauckham, R. 1977. Moltmann's Eschatology of the cross. *Scottish Journal of Theology*. 30(04):301–311.

Bauckham, R. 1987a. *Moltmann: messianic theology in making*. London: Marshall Pickering.

Bauckham, R. 1987b. Theodicy from Ivan Karamazov to Moltmann. *Modern Theology*. 4(1):83–97.

Bauckham, R. 1995. *Theology of Jürgen Moltmann*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.

Bauckham, R. 1998. *God crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament*. Cumbria: Paternoster.

Bauckham, R. & Hart, T. 1999. *Hope against hope: Christian eschatology at the turn of the millennium*. Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans.

Beck, T.D. 2010. *The Holy Spirit and the renewal of all things: Pneumatology in Paul and Jürgen Moltmann*. Cambridge: James Clarke.

Bedford-Strohm, H. 2008. Poverty and public theology: advocacy of the church in pluralistic society. *International Journal of Public Theology*. 2(2):144–162. [2015, April 02].

Bedford-Strohm, H. 2013. Poverty, wealth and ecology-a theological perspective. *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif: Supplement 5*. 54:24–36. [2015, November 28].

Beidelman, T.O. 1982. *Colonial evangelism: a socio-historical study of an East African mission at the grassroots*. Bloomington: Indiana University.

Bentley, W. 2003. The kingdom of God in Moltmann's eschatology: a South African perspective. Unpublished MA thesis. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Bentley, W. 2005. The Kingdom of God in Moltmann's eschatology : a South African perspective. *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif*. 46(3 & 4):326–335. [2015, November 27].

Berger, P.L. 2008. *Faith and development: a global perspective*. Johannesburg: Centre for Development and Enterprise.

Bhebe, N. 1979. *Christianity and traditional religion in western Zimbabwe:1859-1923*. London: Longman.

Bhebhe, S.M. 1988. Church and state in Zimbabwe: an evangelical appraisal. In *Church and state in Zimbabwe,* edited by C. Hallencreutz & A. Moyo. Gweru: Mambo. 313–333.

Biko, S. 1978. *Steve Biko, I write what I like*. New York: Harper & Row.

Biri, K. 2012. The silent echoing voice: aspects of Zimbabwean Pentecostalism and the quest for power, healing and miracles. [Online], Available: http://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/6609 [2014, April 03].

Biri, K. & Togarasei, L. 2013. "...but the one who prophesies, builds the church" Nation building and transformation discourse as true prophecy: the case of Zimbabwean Pentecostal women. In *Prophets, profits and the Bible in Zimbabwe: Festschrift for Aynos Masotcha Moyo*, edited by E. Chitando, M.R. Gunda & J. Kügler. Bamberg: University of Bamberg. 79–94.

Boesak, A.A. 2005. *The tenderness of conscience: African renaissance and the spirituality of politics*. Stellenbosch: Sun Media.

Bonino, J.M. 1975. *Doing theology in a revolutionary situation*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Bornstein, E. 2002. Developing faith: Theologies of economic development in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Religion in Africa*. 32(1):4–31. [2014, April 06].

Bosch, D.J. 1980. *Witness to the world: the Christian mission in theological perspective*. Atlanta: John Knox.

Bourdillon, M.F.C. 1983. Christianity and wealth in rural communities in Zimbabwe. *Zambezia*. 19:38–53. [2014, August 16].

Bowman, R.M. 2001. *The word-faith controversy: understanding the health and wealth gospel*. Baker.

Brand, G. 2002. *Speaking of a fabulous ghost: in search of theological criteria, with special reference to the debate on salvation in African Christian theology*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Bullen, J. 2008. *Empandeni interlude, 1899-1903: journal of a woman missionary, Josephine Bullen, SND de Namur, at the turn of the century in Rhodesia*. B.R. Tiernan, (ed.). Pietermaritzburg: Cluster.

Burgess, M.M. 1996. The vindication of Christ: a critique of Gustavo Gutiérrez, James Cone and Jürgen Moltmann. Unpublished DTh thesis. Pretoria: University of South Africa

Carnegie, D. 1894. *Among the Matabele*. London: Religious Tract Society.

Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe & Legal Resources Foundation. 1997. *Breaking the silence, building true peace: Report on the disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980-1989*. Harare: CCJP & LRF.

Chester, T. 2006. *Mission and the coming of God: eschatology, the trinity and mission in the theology of Jürgen Moltmann and contemporary evangelicalism*. Milton Keynes: Paternoster.

Chikanya, T.N. 2012. The relevance of Moltmann's concept of hope for the discourse on hope in Zimbabwe. Unpublished MTh thesis. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Chirongoma, S. 2006. Women, poverty, and HIV in Zimbabwe: an exploration of inequalities in health care. In *African women, religion, and health: essays in honour of Mercy Amba Ewudziwa Oduyoye*, edited by I.A. Phiri & S. Nadar. Maryknoll: Orbis Books. 173–186.

Chitando, E. 2002a. Church and Land in Zimbabwe: A Phenomenological Investigation. *International Congregational Journal*. 2(2):138. [2015, July 09].

Chitando, E. 2002b. "Down with the devil, forward with Christ!" A study of the interface between religious and political discourses in Zimbabwe. *African Sociological Review / Revue Africaine de Sociologie*. 6(1):1–16. [2015, June 30].

Chitando, E. 2005. The sacred remnant?: Church land in Zimbabwe's fast track resettlement programme. *Studies in World Christianity*. 11(2):182–199. [2015, July 09].

Chitando, E. 2010. Equipped and ready to serve? Transforming theology and religious studies in Africa. *Missionalia*. 38(2):197–210.

Chitando, E. 2013. Prophets, profits and protests: prosperity theology and Zimbabwean gospel music. In *Prophets, profits and the Bible in Zimbabwe: Festschrift for Aynos Masotcha Moyo*, edited by E. Chitando, M.R. Gunda & J. Kügler. Bamberg: University of Bamberg. 95–112.

Chitando, E. & Manyonganise, M. 2011. Voices from faith-based communities. In *Zimbabwe in transition: a view from within*, edited by T. Murithi & A.Mawadza. Pretoria: The Institute of Justice and Reconciliation. 77–111.

Chitando, E. & Togarasei, L. 2010. "June 2008, verse 27": the church and the 2008 Zimbabwean political crisis. *African Identities*. 8(2):151–162.

Chitando, E., Taringa, N.T. & Mapuranga, T.P. 2014. Zimbabwean theology and religious studies during the crisis years (2000-2008): a preliminary study. *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*. 40(1):173–189.

Chitando, E., Gunda, M.R. & Kügler, J. 2014. *Prophets, profits and the Bible in Zimbabwe: Festschrift for Aynos Masotcha Moyo*. Bamberg: University of Bamberg.

Chung, F. 2006. *Re-living the Second Chimurenga: memories from the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe*. Uppsala: Nordic African Institute.

Cone, J.H. 1997. *God of the oppressed*. new rvd., ed. Maryknoll: Orbis.

Conradie, E.M. 2001. Eschatological dimensions of a "Theology of Life". In *Christian hope in context.* Vol. 1, edited by A. Van Egmond & D. Van Keulen, D. Meinema: Zoetermeet. 163–204.

Conradie, E.M. 2008. The justification of God? The story of God's work according to Jürgen Moltmann: Part 1. *Scriptura: International Journal of Bible, Religion and Theology in Southern Africa*. 97:76–90. [2015, February 24].

Cosden, D. 2004. *A theology of work: work and the new creation*. Milton Keynes: Paternoster.

Cripps, A.S. 1927. *An Africa for Africans: a plea on behalf of territorial segregation areas and their freedom in a South African colony*. London: Longmans, Green

Dachs, A.J. & Rea, W.F. 1979. *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe, 1879-1979*. Gweru: Mambo Press.

DailyNews Live. 2015. *Celebrating sending graduates to streets*. [Online], Available: http://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2015/10/14/celebrating-sending-graduates-to-streets [2015, November 20].

Dandala, H.M. 2014. Placing Christianity at the centre of the healing and re-awakening of Africa. Unpublished Paper. Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University.

Van Der Merwe, W.J. 1981. *From mission field to autonomous church in Zimbabwe*. Pretoria: N.G.K.T.

Deuschle, T. 2003. *Building people, building dreams: how a church can change a nation*. Harare: Hear the Word.

Dorrien, G.J. 1990. *Reconstructing the common good: theology and the social order*. Maryknoll: Orbis.

Doyle, R.C. 1999. *Eschatology and the shape of Christian belief*. Cumbria: Paternoster.

Duchrow, U. 1987. *Global Economy: A Confessional Issue for the Churches?* D. Lewis (tr.). Geneva: WCC.

Dulles, A. 1987. *Models of the Church*. 2nd ed. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.

Edwards, J.R. 2002. *The Gospel according to Mark*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans.

Ela, J.M. 1994a. The memory of the African people and the cross of Christ. In *The Scandal of a Crucified World: Perspectives on the Cross and Suffering*, edited by Y. Tesfai. Maryknoll: Orbis Books. 17–35.

Ela, J.M. 1994b. Christianity and Liberation in Africa. In *Paths of African Theology*, edited by R. Gibellini. Maryknoll: Orbis. 136– 150.

Ela, J.M. 2005. *African Cry*. R. R. Barr (tr.). Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Evans, H.S.J.T. 1945. *The Church in Southern Rhodesia*. London/ Westminster: S.P.C.K./S.P.G.

Express. 2008. Mugabe blames UK for economic woes. *Express.co.uk* (London). 3 June. [Online], Available: http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/46859/Mugabe-blames-UK-for-economic-woes [2015, August 22].

Fields, K.E. 1982. Christian missionaries as anticolonial militants. *Theory and Society*. 11(1):95–108.

Fripp, C.E. & Hiller, V.W., (eds). 1949. *Gold and the Gospel in Mashonaland, 1888, Being the Journals of: The Mashonaland mission of Bishop Knight-Bruce. The concession journey of Charles Dunell Rudd*. London: Chatto & Windus.

Gann, L.H. 1965. *A history of Southern Rhodesia: early days to 1934*. London: Chatto & Windus.

Gaul, C. 1905. The possibilities of an African kraal. *The East and the West: a Quarterly Review of the Study of Missions*. 3:121–129.

Gaul, W.T. 1900. *Mashonaland Report*. RHL/USPG, D Series, 134 (A), 1900, Will. Mashonaland, Report, January 19th, 1900.

Gaul, W.T. 1901. RHL/USPG, D Series, 138(b), 1901, Will. Mashonaland to Rev. H.W. Tucker, June 6th, 1901.

Gelfand, M. (ed.). 1968. *Gubulawayo and beyond: letters and journals of the early Jesuit missionaries to Zambesia (1879-1887)*. London: G. Chapman.

George, K. 2009. Constructions and constructiveness in the theological worldviews of Jürgen Moltmann and Sergei Bulgakov. Unpublished PhD thesis. Murdoch University.

Getui, M.N. 1999. Material things in contemporary African society. In *Moral and ethical issues in African Christianity: a challenge for African Christianity*, edited by N.K. Mugambi & A. Nasimiyu-Wasike. Nairobi: Acton. 59–72.

Gibb, R. 2006. *Grace and global justice: the socio-political mission of the church in an age of globalization*. Milton Keynes: Paternoster.

Gifford, P. 1987. "Africa Shall Be Saved". An Appraisal of Reinhard Bonnke's Pan-African Crusade. *Journal of Religion in Africa*. 17(1):63–92.

Gifford, P. 1992. Reinhard Bonnke's mission to Africa, and His 1991 Nairobi crusade. In *New dimensions in African Christianity*, edited by P. Gifford Nairobi: All African Conference of Churches. 157–182.

Gifford, P. 1993. *Christianity and Politics in Doe's Liberia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University.

Gifford, P. 1998. *African Christianity: Its Public Role*. C. London: C. Hurst.

Gondongwe, K. 2011. African ministers and the emergence of resistance to colonial domination: the development of indigenous clergy in the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe from 1891 to 1980. Unpublished PhD thesis. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Goodall, N. 1954. *A history of the London Missionary Society, 1895-1945*. Oxford University.

Grenz, S.J. 2004. *Rediscovering the Triune God: The Trinity in Contemporary Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress.

Grudem, W.A. 1994. *Systematic theology: an introduction to biblical doctrine*. Leicester: IVP.

Gundani, P.H. 2001. *Changing patterns of authority and leadership: developments in the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe after Vatican II (1965-1985)*. Harare: University of Zimbabwe.

Gutierrez, G. 1983. *The power of the poor in history*. R.R. Barr (tr.). London: S.C.M.

Gutierrez, G. 1998. Liberation theology and the future of the poor. In *Liberation the future: God, mammon and theology*, edited by J. Rieger. Minneapolis: Fortress. 96–123.

Haddad, B. 2001. Theologising development: a gendered analysis of poverty, survival and faith. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*. 10:5–19.

Hagin, K.E. 1995. *Biblical keys to financial prosperity*. Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin Ministries.

Hallencreutz, C.F. 1988a. Ecumenical challenges in Independent Zimbabwe 1980-1985. In *Church and state in Zimbabwe*, edited by C.F. Hallencreutz & A. Moyo. Gweru: Mambo. 251–311.

Hallencreutz, C.F. 1988b. A council in crossfire: ZCC 1964-1980. In *Church and state in Zimbabwe*, edited by A. Moyo & C.F. Hallencreutz. Gweru: Mambo. 51–113.

Hallencreutz, C.F. 1998. *Religion and Politics in Harare 1890-1980*. Uppsala: Swedish Institute of Missionary Research.

Harrell, D.E. 1975. *All things are possible: the healing & charismatic revivals in modern America*. Bloomington: Indiana.

Hartnack, M. 2006. Mugabe blames West for Zimbabwe's woes. *The Washington Post*. 26 July. [Online], Available: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/07/25/AR2006072501368.html [2015, August 22].

Harvie, T. 2009. *Jürgen Moltmann's ethics of hope: eschatological possibilities for moral action*. Surrey: Ashgate.

Hastings, A. 1994. *The church in Africa:1450-1950*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Hauerwas, S. 1995. *In good company: the church as polis*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame.

Hill, E. 1987. Church. In *The New Dictionary of Theology, edited by* J.A. Komonchak, M. Collins, & D.A. Lane. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan. 185–201.

Hoekema, A.A. 1979. *The Bible and the future*. Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans.

Horn, J.N. 1989. *From Rags to Riches: An Analysis of the Faith Movement and Its Relation to the Classical Pentecostal Movement*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Horton, M. 2011. *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Horton, R. 1971. African Conversion. *Journal of the International African Institute*. 41(02):85–108.

Hudson, W. 1982. *The Marxist philosophy of Ernst Bloch*. London: Macmillan.

Isichei, E.A. 1995. *A history of Christianity in Africa: from antiquity to the present*. Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans.

Jenkins, P. 2006. *The new faces of Christianity - believing the Bible in the Global South.* New York: Oxford University.

Kalu, O. 2008. *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University.

Kanyandago, P. 1999. Management of power and the challenge of democracy in the African church. In *Democracy and reconciliation: a challenge for African Christianity*, edited by L. Magesa & Z. Nthamburi. Nairobi: Acton. 163–182.

Kaulemu, D. 2010. Church Responses to the crisis in Zimbabwe. *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*. 8(1):47–54. [2014, March 29].

Keller, C. 1996. Pneumatic nudges: the theology of Moltmann, feminism, and the future. In *The future of theology: essays in honour of Jürgen Moltmann*, edited by M. Volf, C. Krieg, & T. Kucharz. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans. 142–153.

Kim, N.V. 2004. *A church of hope in the light of the eschatological ecclesiology of Jürgen Moltmann*. Universite catholique du Louvain: Unpublished PhD thesis.

Kirchick, J. 2007. *Mugabe and the churches*. [Online], Available: http://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2007/08/mugabe-and-the-churches [2015, August 30].

Knight-Bruce, G.W.H. 1892. *Journals of the Mashonaland Mission:1888-1892*. London: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Lands.

Knight-Bruce, G.W.H. 1895. *Memories of Mashonaland*. London: E. Arnold.

Kombo, J.O. 2001. Creativity, critical thinking and theology. In *Christian hope in Context II. (Studies in Reformed Theology),* edited by A. Van Egmond & D. Van Keulen. Meinema: Zoetermeer. 110–129.

Korten, D.C. 1990. *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*. Connecticut: Kumarian.

Kretzschmar, L. 1997. The gap between belief and action: why is it that Christians do not practise what they preach? *Scriptura*. 62:311–321.

Kügler, J. 2012. The (possible) function of the beatitude of the poor in the context of the struggle against poverty. *Acta Theologica*. 32 (Supplementum 16):1–16. [2013, November 05].

Ladd, G.E. 1974. *The presence of the future: The eschatology of biblical realism*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans.

Ladd, G.E. 2001. Kingdom of Christ, God, Heaven. In *Evangelical dictionary of theology*. 2nd Ed. ed. W.A. Elwell, Ed. Grand Rapids: Baker. 657–661.

Lado, L. 2006. African Catholicism in the face of Pentecostalism. In *African Christianites* (Concilium no. 4), edited by E. Metogo, Ed. London: SCM. 22–30.

Linden, I. 1979. *The Catholic Church and the struggle for Zimbabwe*. London: Longman.

Lockhart, J.G. & Woodhouse, C.M. 1963. *Rhodes. [With Plates, Including Portraits.]*. London.

Longenecker, B.W. 2010. *Remember the poor: Paul, poverty and the Greco-Roman world*. Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans.

Louw, D.J. 2000. *Meaning in suffering: a theological reflection on the cross and the resurrection for pastoral care and counselling*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Machingura, F. 2012. *The Messianic Feeding of the Masses: An Analysis of John 6 in the Context of Messianic Leadership in Post-colonial Zimbabwe*. Bamberg: University of Bamberg.

Magezi, V. 2007. *HIV/AIDS, Poverty and pastoral care and counselling*. Stellenbosch: African Sun Media.

Magure, B. 2012. Foreign investment, black economic empowerment and militarised patronage politics in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*. 30(1):67–82.

Makandiwa, E. 2013. *Discover Vision, Execute Mission: Financial Summit*. [DVD]. Harare: United Family International Ministries.

Maposa, R.S. & Chinyoka, K. 2014. Marching forward as soldiers of Christ? the contributions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church to the Reconstruction of Zimbabwe, 2000-2013. *Scriptura*. 113:1–10.

Marshall, R. 1992. Pentecostalism in Southern Nigeria: an Overview. In *New dimensions in African Christianity*, edited by P. Gifford. Nairobi: All African Conference of Churches. 7–32.

Marshall, R. 2009. *Political Spiritualties: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria*. Chicago: University of Chicago.

Martin, D. 2008. Another kind of cultural revolution? In *Faith on the move: Pentecostalism and its potential contribution to development*, edited by R. Southall & S. Rule. Johannesburg: Centre for Development & Enterprise. 7–19.

Masengwe, G. 2008. The church's role in social healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe: An analysis of reconciliation in the National Vision Discussion Document of the Churches of Zimbabwe. Unpublished MTh thesis. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu/Natal.

Matikiti, R. 2009. United Theological College: a centre for ecumenical education in Zimbabwe? *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*. 35(Supplement): 153–166. [2015, November 24].

Maundeni, Z. 2004. Why the African renaissance is likely to fail: the case of Zimbabwe. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*. 22(2):189–212. [2014, April 30].

Maxwell, D. 1998. "Delivered from the Spirit of Poverty?": Pentecostalism, Prosperity and Modernity in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Religion in Africa*. 28(3):350.

Maxwell, D. 2006. *African gifts of the spirit: Pentecostalism & the rise of a Zimbabwean transnational religious movement*. Harare/ Athens: James Currey/Weaver.

Maxwell, D.J. 1995. The church and the democratisation in Africa: the case of Zimbabwe. In *The Christian churches and the democratisation of Africa*, edited by P. Gifford. Leiden: E.J. Brill. 108–129.

Mazrui, A.A. 1978. *Political values and the educated class in Africa*. London: Hienemann.

Mbiti, J.S. 1990. *African Religions & Philosophy*. Gaborone: Heinemann Educational Botswana.

McCall, T.H. 2010. *Which Trinity? Whose Monotheism?: Philosophical and Systematic Theologians on the Metaphysics of Trinitarian Theology*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans.

McDougall, J.A. 2005. *The pilgrimage of love: the trinitarian theology of Jürgen Moltmann*. Oxford: Oxford University.

McIlroy, D.H. 2009. *Trinitarian Theology of Law: In Conversation with Jürgen Moltmann, Oliver O'Donovan and Thomas Aquinas*. Milton Keynes: Paternoster.

McLaughlin, J. 2002. *Education with production in Zimbabwe: the story of ZIMFEP*. Harare/Gaborone: ZIMFEP & FEP:

Meeks, D. M. 1979. Moltmann's contribution to practical theology. In *Hope for the church: Moltmann in dialogue with practical theology*, edited by T. Runyon Nashville: Abingdon. 57–74.

Meeks, D. M. 1996. The future of theology in a commodity society. In *The future of theology in a commodity society. In The future of theology: essays in honour of Jürgen Moltmann,* edited by M. Volf, C. Krieg, & T. Kucharz. Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans.

Meeks, D. M. 2006. The social trinity and property. In *God's life in Trinity*, edited by M. Volf & M. Welker. Minneapolis: Fortress. 13–21.

Moffat, R., Moffat, M. & Wallis, J.P.R. 1945. *The Matabele journals of Robert Moffat, 1829-1860*. Vol. II. London: Chatto & Windus.

Moltmann, J. 1979a. The life signs of the Spirit in the fellowship of Christ. In *Hope for the church: Moltmann in dialogue with practical theology*, edited by T. Runyon. Nashville: Abingdon. 37–56.

Moltmann, J. (1967) 1991. *Theology of hope: on the ground and the implications of a Christian eschatology.* (New Preface). J. W. Leitch (tr.). Minneapolis: Fortress

Moltmann, J. 1968. Hope and History. *Theology Today*. 25(3):369–386.

Moltmann, J. 1969. *Religion, Revolution, and the Future.* D. M. Meeks (tr.). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Moltmann, J. 1971. *Hope and planning*. M. Clarkson (tr.). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

Moltmann, J. 1974a. *The Crucified God: the cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*. R.A. Wilson & J. Bowden (trs.). London: S.C.M.

Moltmann, J. 1974b. Liberation in the light of hope. *Ecumenical Review*. 26(3):413–429. [2013, September 12].

Moltmann, J. 1975. *The experiment hope*. D. M. Meeks (tr.). Philadelphia: Fortress.

Moltmann, J. 1977. *The church in the power of the spirit: a contribution to Messianic ecclesiology*. M. Kohl (tr.). New York: Harper & Row.

Moltmann, J. 1978. *The open church: invitation to a messianic lifestyle*. M.D. Meeks (ed.). London: SCM.

Moltmann, J. 1979. The diaconal church in the context of the kingdom of God. In *Hope for the church: Moltmann in dialogue with practical theology*, edited by T. Runyon. Nashville: Abingdon. 21–36.

Moltmann, J. 1980. *Experiences of God*. M. Kohl (tr.). London: SCM.

Moltmann, J. 1983. Theodicy. In *A dictionary of Christian theology*, edited by A. Richardson & J. Bowden. London: S.C.M. 564–566.

Moltmann, J. 1987. Foreword. In *Moltmann: Messianic theology in the making*, by R. Bauckham. London: Marshall Pickering. vii–x.

Moltmann, J. 1990. *The Way of Jesus Christ: Christology in Messianic Dimensions*. M. Kohl (tr.). Minneapolis: Fortress.

Moltmann, J. 1991. *History and the Triune God: Contributions to Trinitarian Theology*. John Bowden (tr.). London: SCM.

Moltmann, J. 1992. *The Spirit of life: a universal affirmation*. M. Kohl (tr.). Minneapolis: Fortress.

Moltmann, J. 1993a. *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*. M. Kohl (tr.). New York: HarperSanFransico.

Moltmann, J. 1993b. Jesus and the Kingdom of God. *The Ausbury Journal of Theology*. 48(1):5–17. [2015, August 29].

Moltmann, J. 1996. *The coming of God: Christian eschatology*. M. Kohl (tr.). London: SCM.

Moltmann, J. 1998. Theology for Christ's church and the kingdom of God in modern society. In *A passion for God's reign: theology, Christian learning and the Christian self*, edited by M. Volf. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans. 23–43.

Moltmann, J. 1999a. The world in God or God in the world. In *God will be all in the all: the eschatology of Jürgen Moltmann*, edited by R. Bauckham. Edinburgh: T&T Clark. 35–41.

Moltmann, J. 1999b. *God for a secular society: the public relevance of theology*. M Kohl (tr.). London: SCM.

Moltmann, J. 2000a. Progress and abyss: remembering the future of the modern world. *Review & Expositor*. 97(3):301–314. [2015, September 11].

Moltmann, J. 2000b. *Experiences in theology: ways and forms of Christian theology*. M. Kohl (tr.). London: SCM.

Moltmann, J. 2000c. Is the world coming to an end or has its future already begun?: Christian eschatology, modern utopianism and exterminism. In *Future as God's Gift: Explorations in Christian Eschatology*, edited by D. Fergusson & M. Sarot. Edinburgh: T&T Clark. 120–138.

Moltmann, J. 2004. Progress and abyss: remembering the future of the modern world. In *The future of hope: Christian tradition amid modernity and postmodernity*, edited by M. Volf & W. Katerberg. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans. 3–26.

Moltmann, J. 2005. Foreword. In *Pilgrimage of love: Moltmann on the trinity and Christian life*, by J.A. McDougall. Oxford: Oxford University. xi–xiv.

Moltmann, J. 2010. *Sun of righteous arise: God's future for humanity and the earth*. M. Kohl (tr.). Minneapolis: Fortress

Morse, C. 1979. *The logic of promise in Moltmann's theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Moyo, A. 1999. Material things in African society: implication for Christian ethics. In *Moral and ethical issues in African Christianity: a challenge for African Christianity*, edited by J.N.K. Mugambi & A. Nasimiyu-Wasike. Nairobi: Acton. 49–57.

Moyo, F. 2010. The bible, the bullet and the ballot: an examination of the socio-political role and impact of Christian Organisation and churches in challenging colonial rule in Zimbabwe with special reference to the period c. 1957-1980, and Malawi c. 1944 - 1964 as a camparator. Unpublished PhD thesis. Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen.

Mugambi, J.N.K. 1995. *From liberation to reconstruction African Christian theology after the Cold War.* Nairobi: EAEP

Mugambi, J.N.K. 1997. Social reconstruction of Africa: the role of churches. In *The church and reconstruction of Africa: theological considerations*, edited by J.N.K. Mugambi. Nairobi: All Africa Conference of Churches. 1–25.

Mugomba, A.T. & Nyaggah, M. (eds). 1980. *Independence without freedom: the political economy of colonial education in Southern Africa.* Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio.

Mukonyora, I. 2008. Foundations for Democracy in Zimbabwean evangelical Christianity. In *Evangelical Christianity and democracy in Africa*, edited by T.O. Ranger, Ed. Oxford: Oxford University. 131–160.

Müller-Fahrenholz, G. 2000. *The Kingdom and the Power: The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann*. London: SCM.

Mungazi, D.A. 1991. *The honoured crusade: Ralph Dodge's theology of liberation and initiative for social change in Zimbabwe*. Gweru: Mambo.

Musodza, A. 2008. An investigation of the process of indigenisation in the Anglican Diocese of Mashonaland, (1891 - 1981), with special emphasis on the ministry of indigenous Christians. Unpublished DTh Thesis. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Muzondidya, J. 2009. From buoyancy to crisis, 1980-1997. In *Becoming Zimbabwe: a history from the pre-colonial period to 2008*, edited by B. Raftopoulos & A.S. Mlambo. Harare: Weaver Press. 167–200.

Muzondidya, J. 2011. Zimbabwe's failed transition? An anlysis of the challenges and complexities in Zimbabwe's transition to democracy in the post-2000 period. In *Zimbabwe in transition: a view from within*, edited by T. Murithi & A. Mawadza. Pretoria: The Institute of Justice and Reconciliation. 7–43.

Mwakikagile, G. 2007. *Nyerere and Africa: end of an era*. Pretoria: New Africa.

Mwaura, P.N. 2008. The role of charismatic Christianity in reshaping the religious scene in Africa: the case of Kenya. In *Christianity in Africa and the African diaspora: the appropriation of a scattered heritage*, edited by A. Adogame, R. Gerloff, & K. Hock. London: Continuum International. 180–192.

Myers, B.L. 2011. *Walking with the poor: principles and practices of transformational development*. Revised & Expanded Edition. Maryknoll: Orbis.

Naude, P.J. 2006. The marks of the church in South Africa today - in dialogue with Jürgen Moltmann on his 80th birthday. *Verbum et Ecclesia*. 27(3):944–963. [2015, June 10].

Ndlovu, L. 2011. The early Brethren in Christ Church missions and the formation of new identities among the Ndebele in Zimbabwe. *Missionalia*. 39(3):193–209.

Ndlovu, L. 2012. Pentecostalism as a form of protest movement against economic decline and tyranny: the case of Celebration Church in Zimbabwe. *Serbian Political Thought*. (1):25–47. [2015, January 17].

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J. 2003. Dynamics of democracy and human rights among the Ndebele of Zimbabwe, 1818-1934. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Harare: University of Zimbabwe.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J. 2008. Who ruled by the spear? Rethinking the form of governance in the Ndebele state. *African studies quarterly*. 10(2-3):71–94. [2015, November 28].

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J. 2009. *The Ndebele nation: reflections on hegemony, memory and historiography*. Amsterdam: Rozenberg.

NewsDay Zimbabwe. 2013. Gono warns on "miracle money". [Online], Available: https://www.newsday.co.zw/2013/01/16/gono-warns-on-miracle-money/ [2015, July 14].

NewsDay Zimbabwe. 2014. Uebert Angel torches storm. [Online], Available: https://www.newsday.co.zw/2014/02/25/angel-torches-storm/ [2015, August 28].

NewsDay Zimbabwe. 2015a. Graduating to become a vendor, taxi pirate. [Online], Available: https://www.newsday.co.zw/2015/10/13/graduating-to-become-a-vendor-taxi-pirate/ [2015, November 20].

NewsDay Zimbabwe. 2015b. Zim ministers, MPs attend Magaya Pretoria crusade. 5 October. [Online], Available: https://www.newsday.co.zw/2015/10/05/zim-ministers-mps-attend-magaya-pretoria-crusade/.

NewsDay Zimbabwe. 2015c. Magaya gives Warriors $54 000 for Cosafa. [Online], Available: https://www.newsday.co.zw/2015/05/14/magaya-gives-warriors-54-000-for-cosafa/ [2015, June 24].

Nürnberger, K. 1990. *The scourge of unemployment in South Africa*. First Ed. Pietermaritzburg: Encounter.

Nürnberger, K. 1994. The task of the church concerning the economy in a post-apartheid South Africa. *Missionalia*. 22(2):118–146.

O'Collins, G. 1968. The Principle and Theology of Hope. *Scottish Journal of Theology*. 21 (02):129–144.

Oduyoye, M.A. 1997. The future of the church in Africa: its mission and theology. In *The church and reconstruction of Africa: theological considerations*, edited by J.N. Mugambi. Nairobi: AACC. 66–83.

Ojo, M.A. 2008. Transitional religious networks and indigenous Pentecostal missionary enterprises in the West African coastal region. In *Christianity in Africa and the African diaspora: the appropriation of a scattered heritage*, edited by A. Adogame, R. Gerloff & K. Hock. London: Continuum International. 167–179.

Oliver, R. 1952. *The missionary factor in East Africa.* London: Longmans.

Otto, R. 1992. God and history in Jürgen Moltmann. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*. 35(3):375-388

Otto, R. 2001. Moltmann and the Anti-Monotheism Movement. *International Journal of Systematic Theology*. 3(3):293–308.

Oyakhilome, C. 2011. *Your rights in Christ*. Folkestone: Love World.

Oyakhilome, C. & Oyakhilome, A. 2011. *A topical compendium. Vol. 3 Vol. 3*. Folkestone: Love World.

Paeth, S. 2008. *Exodus church and civil society: public theology and social theory in the work of Jürgen Moltmann*. Hampshire: Ashgate.

Pashapa, N. 2015. Christian spirituality versus superstition. *Daily News on Sunday* (Harare). September 20-26, 2015.

Peters, T. 1993. *God As Trinity: Relationality and Temporality in Divine Life*. Westminster John Knox.

Du Plessis, J. 1911. *A History of Christian Missions in South Africa*. New York: Longmans.

Porter, A. 1985. "Commerce and Christianity": The rise and fall of a nineteenth-century missionary slogan. *The Historical Journal*. 28(3):597–621. [2014, May 25].

Porter, A.N. 2004. *Religion versus empire?: British Protestant missionaries and overseas expansion, 1700-1914*. Manchester: Manchester University.

Van Prooijen, T. 2004. *Limping but blessed: Jürgen Moltmann's search for a liberating anthropology*. Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi.

Purves, A. 2004. *Reconstructing pastoral theology: a Christological foundation*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.

Puthur, B. 1987. *From the principle of hope to the theology of hope*. Kerala: Pontifical Institute.

Raftopoulos, B. 2009. The crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2008. In *Becoming Zimbabwe: a history from the pre-colonial period to 2008*, edited by B. Raftopoulos & A. Mlambo. Harare: Weaver. 201–232.

Ranger, T.O. 1995. *Are we not also men?: the Samkange family & African politics in Zimbabwe, 1920-64*. Harare: Baobab.

Ransford, O. 1968. *The rulers of Rhodesia from earliest times to the referendum*. London: Murray.

Rasmusson, A. 1995. *The church as polis: from political theology to theological politics as exemplified by Jürgen Moltmann and Stanley Hauerwas*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame.

Reuters May 04. 2007. Mugabe warns Catholic bishops over politics. *Reuters*. 4 May. [Online], Available: http://www.reuters.com/article/2007/05/04/us-zimbabwe-mugabe-bishops-idUSL0430109020070504 [2015, August 30].

Van Rooy, J.A. 1999. The Christian gospel as a basis for escape from poverty in Africa. *In die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi*. 33(2):235–254. [2014, October 20].

Ross, A. 2000. David Livingstone: the man behind the mask. In *The London Missionary Society in Southern Africa, 1799-1999: Historical Essays in Celebration of the Bicentenary of the LMS in Southern Africa*, edited by J. De Gruchy. Athens: Ohio University. 37–54.

Ruether, R.A. 1996. Christian anthropology and gender: a tribute to Jürgen Moltmann. In *The future of theology: essays in honour of Jürgen Moltmann*, edited by M. Volf, C. Krieg, & T. Kucharz. Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans.

Rugwiji, T. 2014. Towards the quest for transforming Old Testament scholarship: the impact of political and socio-economic crises on scholarship in Zimbabwe. *Old Testament Essays*. 27(3):1009–1034. [2015, August 31].

Samkange, S. 1973. *Origins of Rhodesia*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger.

Shamuyarira, N. 1974. *Crisis in Rhodesia*. London: Andre Deutsch.

Shaw, M. 1996. *The kingdom of God in Africa: a short history of African Christianity*. Baker.

Sheers, O. 2004. *The dust diaries*. London: Faber and Faber.

Skelton, K. 1985. *Bishop in Smith's Rhodesia: Notes from a turbulent octave 1962-1970*. Gweru: Mambo.

Smit, D. 2004. The impact of the church in South Africa after the collapse of the Apartheid regime. In *A new day dawning: African Christians living the gospel: essays in honour of Dr J.J. (Hans) Visser*, edited by K. Bediako, M. Jansen, J. Van Butselaar, & A. Verburg. Uitgeverij Boekencentrum: Zoetermeer. 128–149.

Smit, D. 2007. *Essays in Public Theology: Collected Essays 1*, edited by E.M. Conradie. Stellenbosch: African Sun Media.

Smit, D.J. 2003. On learning to see? A reformed perspective on the church and the poor. In *Poverty, suffering and HIV-AIDS: international practical theological perspectives*, edited by P.D. Couture & B.J. Miller-McLemore. Cardiff: Cardiff Academie. 55–70.

Smit, D.J. 2006. Church unity in freedom. In *God's life in Trinity*, edited by M. Volf & M. Welker. Minneapolis: Fortress. 73–92.

Smith, E.W. 1928. *The way of the white fields in Rhodesia. a survey of Christian enterprise in Northern and Southern Rhodesia. [With Maps.]*. London: World Dominion.

Smith, S.M. 2001. Perichoresis. In *Evangelical dictionary of theology*. 2nd Ed., edited by W.A. Elwell. Grand Rapids: Baker. 906–907.

Söderström, H. 1984. *God gave growth: the history of the Lutheran church in Zimbabwe:1903-1980*. Gweru: Mambo.

Southall, R. & Rule, S. (eds.). 2008. *Faith on the move: Pentecostalism and its potential contribution to development*. Johannesburg: Centre for Development and Enterprise.

Speckman, M.T. 2007. *A biblical vision for Africa's development?* Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: Cluster Publications.

Stanley, B. 1983. "Commerce and Christianity": providence theory, the missionary movement, and the imperialism of free trade, 1842–1860. *The Historical Journal*. 26 (01):71–94. [2015, August 29].

Stanley, B. 2000. The future in the past: eschatological vision in British and American Protestant missionary history. *Tyndale Bulletin*. 51(1):101–120. [2015, February 16].

Stocker, M. 1979. The Rudd Concession: A Reappraisal of an Intricate Controversy. *Zimbabwean History, X*. 1–20.

Sundkler, B. & Steed, C. 2000. *A History of the Church in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University.

Tanner, K. 2005. Eschatology and ethics. In *The Oxford handbook of theological ethics*, edited by G. Meilaender & W. Werpehowski. Oxford: Ohio University. 41-56

The Daily News. 2014. Bumper crowd at Judgement Night. 22 April. [Online], Available: http://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2014/04/22/bumper-crowd-at-judgement-night.

The Herald. 2015a. Makandiwa hails President. 5 January. [Online], Available: http://www.herald.co.zw/makandiwa-hails-president/ [2015, August 28].

The Herald. 2015b. *Prophet Magaya buys First Lady's book for $50,000*. [Online], Available: http://www.herald.co.zw/prophet-magaya-buys-first-ladys-book-for-50-000/.

The Sunday News. 2015. Timely boost for Mighty Warriors: Magaya to bail out Zifa. [Online], Available: http://www.sundaynews.co.zw/timely-boost-for-mighty-warriors-magaya-to-bail-out-zifa/ [2015, June 24].

The Zimbabwe Independent. 2013. Western sanctions hostility against Zim - Mugabe. *The Zimbabwe Independent*. 16 September. [Online], Available: http://www.theindependent.co.zw/2013/09/26/western-sanctions-hostility-zim-mugabe/ [2015, August 22].

Thomas, T.M. 1873. *Eleven Years in Central South Africa: A Journey Into the Interior, Sketch of Recently Discovered Diamond and Gold Fields, Umzilikazi, His Country and People, a Brief History of the Zambesi Missions*. London: J. Snow.

Thornycroft, P. 2006. Mugabe divides his church critics. 20 June. [Online], Available: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/zimbabwe/1521903/Mugabe-divides-his-church-critics.html [2015, November 27].

Thorpe, C. 1951. *Limpopo to Zambesi: sixty years of Methodism in Southern Rhodesia*. London: Cargate.

TimesLIVE. 2014. *Wife divorcing pastor Chris of Christ Embassy for cheating*. [Online], Available: http://www.timeslive.co.za/africa/2014/09/02/wife-divorcing-pastor-chris-of-christ-embassy-for-cheating [2015, July 14].

Togarasei, L. 2005. Modern Pentecostalism as an urban phenomenon: the case of the Family of God Church in Zimbabwe. *Exchange*. 34(4):349–375.

Togarasei, L. 2011. The Pentecostal Gospel of Prosperity in African Contexts of Poverty: An Appraisal. *Exchange*. 40:336–350.

Torrance, T.F. 1996. *The Christian doctrine of God: One being three persons*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.

Torrance, T.F. 2009. *Atonement: The Person and Work of Christ*. R.T. Walker, Ed. Milton Keynes: Paternoster.

Tripole, M.R. 1981. A church for the poor and the world : at issue with Moltmann's ecclesiology. *Theological Studies*. 42(4):645–659. [2013, September 09].

Tutu, D. 1996. Preface. In *Religious Human Rights in Global Perspective: Religious Perspectives*. Vol. 1, edited by J. Witte (Jr) & J.D. van der Vyvet. The Hague: Kluwer Law International. ix–xvi.

Tutu, D.M. 1997. Black theology and African theology - soulmates or antagonists. In *A reader in African Christian Theology*, edited by J. Parratt. London: S.P.C.K.

Vambe, L. 1972. *An Ill-fated People: Zimbabwe Before and After Rhodes*. Heinemann.

Vengeyi, O. 2011. "Zimbabwean poverty is man-made!" Demystifying poverty by appealing to the prophetic book of Amos. *Scriptura*. 107:223–237.

Vengeyi, O. 2013. Zimbabwean Pentecostal prophets: rekindling the "true and false prophecy" debate. In *Prophets, profits and the Bible in Zimbabwe: Festschrift for Aynos Masotcha Moyo*. (12 no. Bible in Africa Series), edited by E. Chitando, M.R. Gunda, & J. Kügler. Bamberg: University of Bamberg. 29–54.

Verstraelen, F.J. 1998. *Zimbabwean realities and Christian responses: contemporary aspects of Christianity in Zimbabwe*. Gweru: Mambo.

Viviano, B.T. 2008. Eschatology and the Quest for the Historical Jesus. In *The Orthodox handbook of eschatology*, edited by J.L. Wall. Oxford: Oxford University. 73–90.

Volf, M. 1986. An interview with Jürgen Moltmann. In *Communities of faith and radical discipleship: Jürgen Moltmann and others*, edited by G.M. Bryan. Macon: Mercer. 3–12.

Volf, M. 1996. Introduction: a queen and a beggar: challenges and prospects of theology. In *The future of theology: essays in honour of Jürgen Moltmann*, edited by M. Volf, C. Krieg, & T. Kucharz. Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans.

Wallis, J.P.R., Moffat, J.S., Moffat, E.U. & Livingstone, D. 1945. *The Matabele mission, a selection from the correspondence of John and Emily Moffat, David Livingstone and others, 1858-1878.* London: Chatto & Windus.

Waruta, D. 1990. Towards an African church: a critical assessment of alternative forms and structures. In *The church in African Christianity: innovative essays in ecclesiology*, edited by J.N.. Mugambi & L. Magesa. Nairobi: Initiatives. 29–42.

Van der Watt, G. 2012. "...But the poor opted for the evangelicals!" - Evangelicals, poverty and prosperity. *Acta Theologica 2012 Supplementum 16*. 35–53.

Weinandy, T.G. 2000. *Does God suffer?* Edinburgh: T&T Clark.

Welch, P. 2008. *Church and Settler in Colonial Zimbabwe: A Study in the History of the Anglican Diocese of Mashonaland/Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1925*. Leiden: Brill.

Weller, J.C. & Linden, J. 1984. *Mainstream Christianity to 1980 in Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe*. Gweru: Mambo.

Wermter, O. 2003. *Politics for everyone and by everyone*. (Faith and Society no. 9). Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa.

West, M.O. 2002. *The rise of an African middle class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965*. Bloomington: Indiana University.

White, J. 1923. Rhodes House Library, G.166 White to Harris, 2 Jan. 1923.

White, J. & Cripps, A.S. 1923. Rhodes House Library, G.166, White and A.S. Cripps to Harris, 21 September 1923.

Witvliet, T. 1987. *The way of the black Messiah: the hermeneutical challenge of black theology as a theology of liberation*. Translated by J. Bowden. London: S.C.M.

Wright, C.J.H. 2006. *The mission of God: unlocking the Bible's grand narrative*. Nottingham: IVP.

Wutawunashe, A. 2014. Godly counsel for party of Christian values. [Online], Available: http://www.herald.co.zw/godly-counsel-for-party-of-christian-values/ [2015, August 28].

ZCBC, EFZ & ZCC. 2006. The Zimbabwe We Want: Towards a national vision for Zimbabwe: a dicussion document. [Online], Available: www.africamission-mafr.org/zimbabwe.doc. [2014, October 21]

Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference. 1980. A statement of Roman Catholic Bishops of Zimbabwe. April 17, 1980.

Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference. 1981. First anniversary of Independence, April 10, 1982

Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference. 1982. Our way forward: pastoral statement. November 28, 1982

Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference. 1981. Socialism and the Gospel of Christ: pastoral statement. January 1, 1984.

Zimbabwe Independent. 2008. Zim Inflation Rockets To 231-million Percent. *Zimbabwe Independent*. 9 October. [Online], Available: http://www.theindependent.co.zw/2008/10/09/zim-inflation-rockets-to-231-million-percent/.

Zimbabwe Situation. 2013. *The state of religion in Zimbabwe: Prophet Angel worth US$60m*. [Online], Available: http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit_the-state-of-religion-in-zimbabwe-prophet-angel-worth-us60m/ [2015, November 30].

Zimeye. 2013. Makandiwa`s papa calls Mugabe "World's best leader". 1 June. [Online], Available: http://www.zimeye.com/makandiwas-papa-calls-mugabe-worlds-best-leader/ [2015, August 28].

Zvobgo, C.J.M. 1991. *The Wesleyan Methodist missions in Zimbabwe, 1891-1945*. Harare: University of Zimbabwe.

Zvobgo, C.J.M. 1996. *A history of Christian missions in Zimbabwe, 1890-1939*. Gweru: Mambo.